

Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies, BA

Students who major in gender, women's, and sexuality studies (GWSS) explore the ways that gender and sexuality intersect with class, race, ethnicity, nationality, and transnational processes. Students develop interdisciplinary research and writing skills, the ability to address structural inequalities from the local to the global level, and the critical tools necessary to work toward social transformation and social justice. GWSS majors participate in two high-impact experiences that prepare them for careers in a wide range of fields. They participate in a practicum at a community-based site where they learn to integrate feminist theory and practice; then, during their senior year, they do rigorous, original research for critical or creative projects on topics of their own choosing.

Learning Outcomes

Students graduating with a major in gender, women's, and sexuality studies will demonstrate how to:

- apply feminist intersectional theory in scholarly and creative practice;
- evaluate issues, research problems, and construct arguments using GWSS tools and concepts;
- communicate effectively with diverse audiences through speech, writing, and other forms of creative and scholarly expression; and
- work collaboratively with others in diverse communities using core GWSS strengths and skills.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in gender, women's, and sexuality studies (GWSS) requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including at least 39 s.h. of work for the major. Students must maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They must also complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core.

Students may declare the major at any time. They are advised by the Academic Advising Center until they have earned 30 s.h. of credit. Transfer credit is evaluated case by case; a maximum of 12 s.h. of transfer credit may be counted toward the major. Students may count a maximum of 9 s.h. completed for another major, minor, or certificate toward the gender, women's, and sexuality studies major.

Work for the major consists of the undergraduate core, distribution requirements, and electives. The undergraduate core includes a practicum and culminates in a research seminar.

The BA with a major in gender, women's, and sexuality studies requires the following coursework.

Requirements	Hours
Undergraduate Core	9-10
Distribution Requirements	12-14
Electives	12
Capstone Courses	6

Undergraduate Core

The undergraduate core consists of three courses. GWSS:1001 Introduction to Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies examines cultural and social beliefs about sex, gender, race, class, and sexuality; GWSS:1002 Diversity and Power in the U.S. explores the intersections of race, class, and gender in the United States. GWSS:3005/SJUS:3005 Practicum teaches students how to apply feminist intersectional concepts in a practicum experience organized in collaboration with community partners.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
GWSS:1001	Introduction to Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies	3
GWSS:1002	Diversity and Power in the U.S.	3
GWSS:3005/ SJUS:3005	Practicum	3-4

Distribution Requirements

The distribution requirements (total of at least 12 s.h.) are chosen from the following lists. They include one GWSS theory course, one transnational theory course, one GWSS course with a global/comparative focus, and one GWSS or other course with a race/ethnicity focus. Students may request permission from the director of undergraduate studies to use courses not on these lists; ideally, these courses should be offered by the Department of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies (prefix GWSS). At least half of the material in global/comparative topics courses must have a non-U.S. context.

Theory

Course #	Title	Hours
One of these:		
GWSS:3100	LGBTQ/Queer Studies	3
GWSS:3200	Theories for Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies	3

Transnational Theory

Course #	Title	Hours
One of these:		
GWSS:3010/ GHS:3015	Transnational Sexualities	3
GWSS:3326/ GHS:3327	The Politics of Progress: NGOs, Development, and Sexuality	3
GWSS:3350/ ANTH:3125/IS:3350	Transnational Feminism	3

Global/Comparative Focus

Course #	Title	Hours
One of these:		
GWSS:1046/ ANTH:1046/ SEES:1046/ SJUS:1046	Environmental Politics in India	3
GWSS:2052/ RELS:2852	Women in Islam and the Middle East	3
GWSS:2108/ ANTH:2108	Gendering India	3

GWSS:2151/ ANTH:2151/IS:2151	Global Migration in the Contemporary World	3
GWSS:2222/ ASIA:2222/ WLLC:2222	Women in Premodern East Asian Literature	3
GWSS:2500/ ENGL:2570/ SJUS:2500	Love, War, Activism: Stories About Women From Across the World	3
GWSS:2571/ ENGL:2571/ SJUS:2571	Visualizing Human Rights (if not taken to fulfill the Race/Ethnicity in the U.S. Focus area)	3
GWSS:2650/ GHS:2650	Global Reproduction	3
GWSS:2674/ GHS:2674/ RELS:2674	Food, Body, and Belief: A Global Perspective	3
GWSS:2700	Transgender People, Politics, and Cultures	3
GWSS:2900/ ANTH:2191	Love, Sex, and Money: Sexuality and Exchange Across Cultures	3
GWSS:3121/ ANTH:3121	Love, Marriage, and Family in India	3
GWSS:3157/ HIST:3157	Gender, Sexuality, and Human Rights	3
GWSS:3185/ WLLC:3185	Global Women's Cinema	3
GWSS:3326/ GHS:3327	The Politics of Progress: NGOs, Development, and Sexuality	3
GWSS:3427/ HIST:3427	Family, Gender, and Society in Early Modern Europe	3
GWSS:4026/ FREN:4026	French Women Writers	3-4
GWSS:4140/ ANTH:4140/ CBH:4140/ GHS:4140	Feminist Activism and Global Health	3
GWSS:4540/ FREN:4540	Gender and Sexuality in French Cinema	3-4
ANTH:2190/ GWSS:2190/IS:2190	Love Rules: Law and the Family Across Cultures	3

Race/Ethnicity in the U.S. Focus

Course #	Title	Hours
One of these:		
GWSS:2571/ ENGL:2571/ SJUS:2571	Visualizing Human Rights (if not taken to fulfill the Global/Comparative Focus area)	3
GWSS:2800/ AFAM:2800	African American Women, Health, Hair, and Sexuality	3
GWSS:3431/ LATS:3550	Topics in Latina/o/x Studies: History and Culture	1-3
GWSS:3459/ HIST:3259/ SJUS:3459	Making Change, Making History: Iowa's Black Activists and Digital History	3
SJUS:1001/ GWSS:1003	Introduction to Social Justice	3

SJUS:2050/ GWSS:2050/ HIST:2150/ RELS:2250	Jews, Judaism, and Social Justice	3
SJUS:2250/ GWSS:2250/ HIST:2250	The History of Social Justice Movements	3
SJUS:3250/ ENGL:3572	Literature and Social Justice	3
ENGL:3459/ AFAM:3459	African American Literature Before 1900	3
ENGL:3460/ AFAM:3460	African American Literature After 1900	3
HIST:2266/ AFAM:2266	Civil War and Emancipation	3
HIST:2267/ AFAM:2267	African American History to 1877	3
HIST:3275/ AFAM:3275	History of Slavery in North America	3
SSW:3847	Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity	3

A Native American and Indigenous studies course (prefix NAIS) numbered 2000 or above that does not fulfill a GE CLAS Core requirement

A Latina/o/x studies course (prefix LATS) numbered 2000 or above that does not fulfill a GE CLAS Core requirement

An African American studies course (prefix AFAM) numbered 2000 or above that does not fulfill a GE CLAS Core requirement

Electives

Students must complete 12 s.h. of gender, women's, and sexuality studies courses (prefix GWSS or SJUS) numbered 1000-4999; at least 6 s.h. of the 12 s.h. must be completed with courses numbered 3000-4999. Students can count gender, women's, and sexuality studies distribution area requirement courses as electives if they were not used to fulfill their area requirements. With the instructor's permission, honors students may count a graduate-level course numbered 5000 or above toward the electives requirement.

In choosing electives, students are encouraged to pursue a course of study that emphasizes breadth and depth in a specific discipline (anthropology, English, and history, among others) or a focus area (art, writing, literature, sexuality, media, global and transnational studies, race and ethnicity, health, and so on).

Capstone Courses

These courses help students develop and create their capstone projects.

Students first take GWSS:3900 Research for Public Engagement in the fall semester of their final year, which focuses on developing advanced research, reading, and writing skills and choosing capstone topics. In the spring of their senior year, students take GWSS:4090 Senior Research Seminar, a research and writing workshop in which students work collaboratively with their classmates to complete their creative or scholarship capstone work, including creating a poster for the end of the semester Senior Research Poster Show.

Students who write an honors thesis enroll in GWSS:4095 Honors Senior Thesis in the spring semester of their senior year.

Course #	Title	Hours
This course:		
GWSS:3900	Research for Public Engagement	3
One of these:		
GWSS:4090	Senior Research Seminar	3
GWSS:4095	Honors Senior Thesis	3

Honors

Honors in the Major

Students have the opportunity to graduate with honors in the major. Departmental honors students must maintain a University of Iowa grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.33 and a GPA of at least 3.50 in the major. Students must write an honors thesis that requires two semesters of work during the senior year: fall (thesis research by enrolling in GWSS:3900 Research for Public Engagement) and spring (thesis writing by enrolling in GWSS:4095 Honors Senior Thesis).

Students who intend to graduate with honors in the major should meet with the gender, women's, and sexuality studies (GWSS) director of undergraduate study before the end of their junior year. They must also select a faculty member to serve as their honors thesis mentor before they begin their thesis work. They should meet with their mentor at least twice in the fall semester of their senior year to discuss their project. The department recommends that students consider faculty members from whom they have taken GWSS courses.

University of Iowa Honors Program

In addition to honors in the major, students have opportunities for honors study and activities through membership in the University of Iowa Honors Program. Visit Honors at Iowa to learn about the university's honors program.

Membership in the UI Honors Program is not required to earn honors in the gender, women's, and sexuality studies major.

Career Advancement

Gender, women's, and sexuality studies (GWSS) majors develop the critical skills and problem-solving abilities needed for engaging the challenges of contemporary life. Graduates work in diverse settings, such as government and nonprofit agencies, newspaper offices, human resource departments, museums, theaters, international human rights organizations, schools, and hospitals. They do fundraising, political organizing, teaching, writing, research, advocacy work, counseling, diversity training, and marketing. They become social workers, nurses, midwives, doctors, editors, librarians, business managers, grant writers, campaign directors, educational administrators, program coordinators, lawyers, and professors.

A GWSS undergraduate education provides a solid foundation for pursuing graduate degrees from schools of social work, public health, law, education, international relations, public affairs and public policy, and medicine. The major also prepares students for a wide range of graduate programs,

including gender and women's studies, history, anthropology, urban education, creative writing, political science, human rights, human sexuality, and counseling.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

Academic Plans

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The following checkpoints list the minimum requirements students must complete by certain semesters in order to stay on the university's Four-Year Graduation Plan.

Before the third semester begins: GWSS:1001 Introduction to Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies.

Before the fifth semester begins: GWSS:1002 Diversity and Power in the U.S. and two GWSS electives.

Before the seventh semester begins: one GWSS distribution course (theory or comparative/non-U.S. focus) and at least 90 s.h. earned toward the degree.

Before the eighth semester begins: GWSS:3005 Practicum, GWSS:3900 Research for Public Engagement, one more GWSS distribution course (theory or comparative/non-U.S. focus), and at least one more GWSS elective.

During the eighth semester: enrollment in all remaining coursework in the major, all remaining GE CLAS Core courses, and a sufficient number of semester hours to graduate.

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

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This sample plan is currently being reviewed and will be added at a later date.