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 also must complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences 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 degree. 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.

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.

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<tr>
<td>GWSS:1001</td>
<td>Introduction to Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:1002</td>
<td>Diversity and Power in the U.S.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:3005/SJUS:3005</td>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>3-4</td>
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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

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<tr>
<td>GWSS:3100</td>
<td>LGBTQ/Queer Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:3200</td>
<td>Theories for Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies</td>
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Transnational Theory

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<tr>
<td>GWSS:3010/GHS:3015</td>
<td>Transnational Sexualities</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:3326/GHS:3327/ANTH:3125/IS:3350</td>
<td>The Politics of Progress: NGOs, Development, and Sexuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:3350/ANTH:3125/IS:3350</td>
<td>Transnational Feminism</td>
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Global/Comparative Focus

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<tr>
<td>GWSS:2052/RELS:2852</td>
<td>Women in Islam and the Middle East</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:2108/ANTH:2108</td>
<td>Gendering India</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:2151/ANTH:2151/IS:2151</td>
<td>Global Migration in the Contemporary World</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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/REL: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:3131/ASIA:3431/REL:3431 Gender and Sexuality in East Asia 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
SJUS:1046/ANTH:1046/GEOG:1046/GWSS:1046 Environmental Politics in India 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: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: From Slave Cabin to Senate Floor 3
HIST:3275/AFAM:3275 History of Slavery in the U.S.A. 3-4
SSW:3847 Discrimination, Oppression, and Diversity 3

GWSS:3900 Research for Public Engagement 3

GWSS:1003 Research for Public Engagement 3

**Race/Ethnicity in the U.S. Focus**

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<tr>
<td>GWSS:2571/ENGL:2571/SJUS:2571</td>
<td>Visualizing Human Rights (if not taken to fulfill the Global/Comparative Focus area)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:2800/AFAM:2800</td>
<td>African American Women, Health, Hair, and Sexuality</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:3177/NURS:3739</td>
<td>Women and Their Bodies in Health and Illness</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:3431/LATS:3550</td>
<td>Topics in Latina/o/x Studies: History and Culture</td>
<td>1-3</td>
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**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.

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<td>Research for Public Engagement</td>
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<td>GWSS:4090</td>
<td>Senior Research Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWSS:4095</td>
<td>Honors Senior Thesis</td>
<td>3</td>
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**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 also must 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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<td>Academic Career</td>
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<td>GE CLAS Core: Sustainability a</td>
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**First Year**

**Fall**

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<td>Rhetoric or The Interpretation of Literature</td>
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<td>GE CLAS Core: Values and Culture b</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>CSI:1600</td>
<td>Success at Iowa</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Elective course c</td>
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**Hours** 14-15

**Spring**

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**Spring**

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ENGL:1200 The Interpretation of Literature 3 - 4
or RHET:1030 or Rhetoric
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences with Lab b 4
GE CLAS Core: Social Sciences b 3
Elective course c 2

Hours 15-16

Second Year
Fall
Major: elective course d 3
Major: race/ethnicity in the U.S. focus course e 3
GE CLAS Core: Quantitative or Formal Reasoning b 3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level 4 - 5
Proficiency or elective course f 3

Hours 16-17

Spring
Major: global/comparative focus course e 3
Major: elective course d 3
GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues b 3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level 4 - 5
Proficiency or elective course f 3

Third Year
Fall
GWSS:3005 Practicum 3
Major: theory course e 3
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives b 3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Third Level 4 - 5
Proficiency or elective course f 3

Hours 16-17

Spring
Major: transnational theory course e 3
Major: 3000-level or above elective course d 3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level 4 - 5
Proficiency or elective course f 3

Fourth Year
Fall
GWSS:3900 Research for Public Engagement g 3
Major: 3000-level or above elective course d 3
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts 3

Hours 16-17

Spring
GWSS:4090 or GWSS:4095 Senior Research Seminar h 3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab b 3
Elective course c 3

Hours 14

Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall)

Total Hours 122-128

a Sustainability must be completed by choosing a course that has been approved for Sustainability AND for one of these General Education areas: Natural Sciences; Quantitative and Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Culture.
b GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.
c Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.
d Students select at least 12 s.h. in major electives with a minimum of 6 s.h. numbered 3000 or above.
e See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.
f Students who have completed four levels of a single language or two levels of two different languages in high school or college have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Students who have completed three levels of a single language may complete a fourth-level course in the same language or may choose an approved World Language and Cultural Exploration course. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course. Contact your academic advisor or CLAS Undergraduate Programs Office with questions concerning the World Languages requirement.
g Typically this course is offered in fall semesters only. Check MyUI for course availability since offerings are subject to change.
h Typically this course is offered in spring semesters only. Check MyUI for course availability since offerings are subject to change.
i Please see Academic Calendar, Office of the Registrar website for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor or Degree Services.