Faculty

Bianca F.-C. Calabresi
Assistant Professor of English

Miriam Dean-Otting
Professor of Religious Studies

Kathryn L. Edwards
Professor of Biology

Laurie A. Finke
Director, Professor of Women's and Gender Studies

Marla Kohlman
Assistant Professor of Sociology

Michael P. Levine
Professor of Psychology

Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky
Associate Professor of English

Ellen S. Mankoff
Visiting Instructor of English

Theodore O. Mason
John B. McCoy-Bank One Distinguished Teaching Professor of English (on leave, second semester)

Clara Román-Odio
Associate Professor of Spanish

Brook J. Sadler
Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Linda M. Smolak
Professor of Psychology

Kristen Van Ausdall
Assistant Professor of Art History

The Women's and Gender Studies Concentration offers students an opportunity to engage in two important and interrelated areas of study. Students in the concentration will examine those aspects of experience that have traditionally been underrepresented (if not invisible) in academic studies—for example, the lives and works of women, the experiences of gays and lesbians. Students will also examine gender as a cultural phenomenon: as a system of ideas defining "masculinity" and "femininity," delineating differences between "the sexes," as well as "normal" expressions of sexuality. In the process, students will encounter some fundamental methodologies of women's and gender studies, and work toward an increasingly rich understanding of gender as a social construct, one that intersects with class, race, age, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and sexual identity. In addition, students will explore the methods and concepts of women's and gender studies in a variety of academic disciplines, integrating, for instance, sociology, psychology, literature, the biological sciences, and art history.

From the debates between Wollstonecraft and Rousseau to the homosocial worlds of Walker's The Color Purple and Melville's Moby Dick from Barbara McClintock's work in genetics to the gendered symbolism of Mozart's Magic Flute, students will come to understand how questions of gender are deeply embedded in the liberal-arts tradition.

The Women's and Gender Studies Concentration encourages and enables students to take responsibility for their own learning. Toward this end, courses in the concentration will invite students to participate in a range of collaborative work. This culminates in the senior seminar, where students determine the content and intellectual direction of the course as a whole. Ultimately, students are encouraged to acquire a sophisticated insight into the consequences of the social construction of gender for both women and men, an insight that empowers them to engage and question the pervasive role of gender in their own lives and communities.

First-Year and New Students

Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

WMNS 111

Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies (WMNS 111) is a wide-ranging interdisciplinary course designed to help students develop a critical framework for thinking about questions relating to gender. Through a focus on a series of cultural artifacts, ranging from poems and films to legal cases and psychiatric disorders, students will examine the historical development of gendered public and private spheres, the relation of biological sex to sociological gender, and the difference between sex roles and sexual stereotypes. They will attempt to understand how racism, heterosexism, and homophobia intersect with the cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity, and consider ways to promote more egalitarian gender relations. Look for the ♦ symbol, which designates the courses appropriate for first-year students or upperclass students new to the Women's and Gender Studies curriculum.


Curriculum and Requirements

Three units are required for the program. Of these, 1 unit will consist of either Feminist Theory, WMNS 330, or Feminist Methodologies, WMNS 331—these are offered in alternating years—and a capstone senior seminar. The remaining 2 units will consist of four courses drawn from the Women’s and Gender Studies program or departmental courses approved by the program’s Advisory Board. (See the end of this section for the list of approved courses.) No more than 1 unit in a single department may count toward the requirements for the program, and at least two divisions of the College must be represented among the 2 elective units. The women’s and gender studies Senior Seminar (WMNS 481) examines a topic central to feminist thought. It includes current feminist texts and incorporates multidisciplinary analyses of race, class, and sexuality, in addition to gender. The course culminates in a public presentation by seminar members.

First-Semester Courses

Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies

WMNS 111  (1/2 unit)
Finke

This course is designed to help students develop a critical framework for thinking about questions relating to gender, including such important contemporary issues as sex discrimination and harassment, women’s health, and developmental issues. In addition, the course will introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of women’s and gender studies, out of which some of the most innovative and challenging developments in modern scholarship are arising. Emphasis will be placed on women’s significant contributions to knowledge and culture. The course is organized around a series of cultural artifacts which students will examine for what they say about a particular culture’s organization of gender.

Aritifacts may include contemporary legal cases, such as Sears v. EEOC, or cases involving gay parents’ custody of minor children, films like Daughters of the Dust, historical documents, or diagnostic tools like the DSM-IV. The emphasis will be on developing students’ critical thinking and research skills. Enrollment limited.

Feminist Theory

WMNS 330  (1/2 unit)
Finke

In this course, we will read both historical and contemporary feminist theory with the goal of understanding the multiplicity of feminist approaches to women’s experiences, the representation of women, and women’s relative positions in societies. Theoretical positions that will be represented include liberal feminism, cultural feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, socialist feminism, and poststructuralist feminism. In addition, we will explore the relationship of these theories to issues of race, class, sexual preference, and ethnicity through an examination of the theoretical writings of women of color and non-Western women. Prerequisite: WMNS 111, any approved departmental course, or permission of instructor. Enrollment limited.

Individual Study

WMNS 493  (1/2 unit)
Staff

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and concentration director.

Second-Semester Courses

Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies

WMNS 111  (1/2 unit)
Finke

See first-semester course description.

Lesbian and Gay Cultures

WMNS 121  (1/2 unit)
Finke

This course will examine topics in the lesbian and gay cultures from theoretical, historical, literary, artistic, multicultural, and political perspectives. The class will focus primarily on American lesbian and gay history and culture, drawing upon legal, psychological, biological, cultural, ethical, and philosophical frameworks to explore the contemporary experience of gays and lesbians. No prerequisite. Enrollment limited.

Senior Seminar

WMNS 481  (1/2 unit)
Finke

The seminar will be organized around a theme to be determined by students registered for the course in consultation with the instructor during the semester prior to the beginning of the course. Previous topics include “Multicultural Feminism,” “The Streets,” “Transgressing Gender,” and “The Girl.” Prerequisite: WMNS 330 or 331 or permission of instructor. Enrollment limited.

Individual Study

WMNS 494  (1/2 unit)
Staff

Prerequisites: permission of instructor and concentration director.

The following courses have been approved for the Women’s and Gender Studies Concentration and will be offered in 2002-2003:

First Semester

BIOL 104  Women’s Health
ENGL 288.00  Introduction to African-American Literature
ENGL 319  Mean Streets, American Dreams: Hard-boiled Crime Fiction and Film Noir
ENGL 320.01 Shakespeare: Queer Shakespeare
ENGL 320.02 Shakespeare: Strange Fish and Bearded Women
ENGL 488 Richard Wright and Toni Morrison
SOCY 231 Issues of Gender and Power
SOCY 463 Intersection Theory
Second Semester
ARHS 375  Topics in Renaissance and Baroque Art: Women in Italian Art and Society in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries
ENGL 254  Nineteenth-Century British Literature: Literary Women
ENGL 433  Women in Renaissance Literature: Masculine/Feminine: Bodies/Voices
PHIL 355  Philosophy and Feminism
PSYC 346  Psychology of Women
PSYC 443  Psychology of Eating Disorders
RELN 103  First-Year Seminar: Introduction to the Study of Religion: Women and Religion
SOCY 225  Marriage and the Family
SPAN 371  Art, Identity, and Power in Women's Works from Latin America

The following courses will be offered in 2003-04:

WMNS 331  Feminist Methodologies
WMNS 333  Language, Gender, and Power