

The Gender and Women's Studies Major

GWST Course Matrix

<p>Theory Class (4 credits)</p> <p>A study of theories of gender.</p> <p>Ideally, this course would be taken in a student's Junior year and would intersect with all post-Introduction to GWST classes. (Winter '17)</p>	<p>Introduction to GWST (4 credits)</p>		<p>Colloquia Classes (4 credits)</p> <p>Two required, totaling 4 credits in all. Indicative courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GWST 2981: Gender, Activism, and Social Change (Winter '17) • GWST 2982: Savior Complex: Salvation Ideology in Gender, Race, Class, and Difference. (Spring '17)
	<p>This course provides an introduction to the discipline of Gender and Women's Studies and introduces students to the basic concepts, approaches, and methods for studying the ways in which societies organize gender roles and definitions. This course is required for both the Major and the Minor.</p>		
	<p>History (4 credits)</p>	<p>Identity & Rhetoric (4 credits)</p>	
	<p>The study of gender relations in the past, and the study of how current fields of enquiry, methods, and approaches have evolved. Indicative courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GWST 2215: Selling Sex, Gender, and the American Dream: 1950-Present • GWST/HIST 2630: American Women's History • PLSC 2700: Topics: LGBT Politics and Law 	<p>Courses in this section develop an understanding of how gender constructs social identities. Indicative courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMN 2210: Gender, Communication, Culture • GWST/SOCI 2565: Men and Masculinities • SOCI 2655: Latino/a's in American Society • COMN 1015: Voice and Gender 	
	<p>Institutions & Power (4 credits)</p>	<p>Intersectionality (4 credits)</p>	
	<p>These courses identify and study the ways in which institutions construct gender. Indicative courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCI 2730: Gender in Society • SOCI 2765: The Female Offender • ECON 2280: Gender in the Economy • PLSC 2700: Topics: LGBT Politics and Law 	<p>Studies of the intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and social class. Indicative courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCI 2701: Sexualities & Law • GWST/SOCI 2420: Social Inequality • INTS 2235: Gender and International Relations 	
<p>Issues in GWST (3 courses; 12 credits)</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GWST 2700: Topics in GWST: Feminist Research Methods (Fall '16) • GWST 2700: Topics in GWST: Race, Gender & the Law (Fall '16) • GWST 2700: Queer International Perspectives (Spring '17) 			
<p>1 Capstone Course (4 credits)</p>			
<p>In their senior year, students will complete an independent project informed by gender theory. The Capstone involves both independent meetings with the Director and collective workshops with other Capstone students. (Spring '17).</p>			

*The courses shown above do not comprise a complete list of GWST courses. Students should check with the Director of the GWST Program to determine which other courses will satisfy these requirements.

Program Rationale:

The Gender and Women's Studies curriculum at the University of Denver offers undergraduate students a vibrant and rigorous course of study that cultivates a critical understanding of the important role that gender plays in the construction of identities and the social and political organization of culture. DU's GWST Program welcomes students to this major who are eager to explore the connections between and among the many meanings that gender—as well as race, sexuality, class, and disability—has in our lives, our scholarship, our communities, and our politics. As a community of faculty, students, staff, and citizens, we believe that feminism and the political and scholarly traditions it has helped to create and nurture is necessary and vital to everyone's work at the University of Denver and in the communities beyond our campus.

A major in GWST requires a minimum of 40 credit hours and must be coupled with another major, which allows students to gain disciplinary expertise in one area, as well as understanding how gender as a category of inquiry is elaborated and studied in a range of disciplines and methodological approaches. Students are also required to take three Gender and Women's Studies colloquium courses which have variable topics and may be in either the Arts and Humanities or Social Sciences.

The GWST major is broken into four primary categories of inquiry, which guide students through courses as they take at least *one* course from each area. These areas focus on **History, Institutions and Power, Intersectionality, and Identity and Rhetoric**. These areas have been selected as those that characterize our program, and are pedagogically sound in relation to the field of study as a whole. Although students may not necessarily take the courses in any particular order, the four sections represent different but related foci. Courses in the areas of **History** and **Institutions and Power** draw attention to the public, social, and cultural structuring of gender identity and sexuality and how resources are allocated unequally based on this structuring. **History** is essential to an understanding of the varied and changing ways that societies have defined gender and allocated roles and powers on the basis of gender and accompanying expectations and resources. **Institutions and Power** looks at how gender identity is constructed by social institutions such as education, the church, the family, public policy, law and the media.

The next two sections, **Intersectionality** and **Identity and Rhetoric** focus on more individual experiences of the ways in which sexual and gender identities are understood and constructed. **Intersectionality** recognizes that gender cannot be studied or understood in isolation from other structures, such as social status, ethnic allegiance, religious conviction, or access to forms of cultural capital. **Identity and Rhetoric** recognizes that gender definitions and roles need to be understood in relation to the "linguistic turn" associated on the one hand with political theorists and on the other with deconstructive thinkers. This portion of the curriculum explores linguistic structures (itself also the outcome of symbiosis with social and cultural constructions) and representation.

Conceptually, the four sections move between an understanding of social formations and the exploration of personal experience in relation to these formations. As well as guiding students through these four related but distinct areas, the courses all draw on divisional strengths in research and teaching and encourage students to explore the productive tensions between theoretical understandings of gender and community engagement through service, internships, or fieldwork. These course requirements stress the interdisciplinary nature of this field of study, and students must take one four-unit course in each of the primary areas of inquiry listed above, which replaces the previous distribution of taking two courses in both Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. This requirement will not only provide students with more flexibility as they pursue their coursework as a GWST major, but will also ensure that their coursework contributes to a coherent course of study that reflects the major's learning outcomes.

Course Aims and Outcomes:

Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies: This course explores how systems of meaning relating to sex and gender also relate to other systems of allocating power, including socioeconomic class, social status, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and nationality. Using this lens, this course explores contemporary social developments and problems.

- **Aim:** To introduce students to basic concepts of race, sex, and class, and the *intersectionality* of those concepts.
- **Outcome:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the variety of fields, approaches, and concepts that are Gender Studies.

Identity & Rhetoric: As part of the GWST Major, Identity and Rhetoric addresses aspects of culture that relate to one's own realm of experience, and examines how the language in which identities are expressed shapes the constructs of gender, race, ethnicity, orientation, and socio-economic status. Identity is explored as a politicized position in which gender plays a prominent role and which is experienced through varieties of communication.

- **Aim:** To develop an understanding of how gender impacts and constructs social and personal identities, and how that understanding manifests across disciplines.
- **Outcome:** Students will articulate the complexities of gender identity and how it informs the individual human experience.

History: The courses included under this heading provide students with a diachronic context for understanding the position of women as well as an understanding of gender in the present. These courses also involve a self-reflexive element as they trace the emergence of the field of Women and Gender Studies.

- **Aim:** To introduce the students to the field of study and its evolution, and to demonstrate how societies in the past have understood and organized gender roles/definitions.
- **Outcome:** Students will be conversant with the functions of gender functions in diverse societies at different times. Students will demonstrate increased sense of the disciplinary field.

Theory: A course in Gender and Women's Studies theories could be taken by students at any stage following the Introduction to GWST course. In the past thirty years, first Women's Studies and then Queer Studies and more recently Gender Studies have developed powerful bodies of theories to enable meaningful investigation into the nature of sexualities and gender, their relationships with each other, and with other factors determining human consciousness and life style. Many of these theories contradict each other, for instance essentialisms versus notions of complete social construction, and any course will introduce students to a wide and challenging variety of ideas and to the evolving nature of the field.

- **Aim:** To familiarize students with the complex and intriguing theories of sexuality and gender.
- **Outcome:** Students will integrate empirical observations and theoretical constructions in their course work.

Intersectionality: At base, the intersectionality paradigm holds that individuals' social, economic, and political position is influenced by the confluence of gender, race/ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, and (dis)ability. These are only a few areas in which subject position and social forces interact. These intersections help explain, for example, how social inequalities are reproduced within the context of the family, the workplace, and the political arena as well as in global perspective.

- **Aim:** An understanding of how issues of gender, social class position, race, ethnicity, religious belief, and sexual orientation intersect and overlap to produce both privilege and under-privilege.
- **Outcome:** Students will communicate the ways in which how issues of social position, ethnic affiliation, religious belief, and sexual orientation intersect and overlap.

Institutions & Power: Courses in this section examine the ways in which institutions construct gender and enforce these constructs, via such institutions as instance the legal system, education, the family, church, and health systems all have particular (and shared) concepts of gender which people adapt to, or occasionally seek to subvert. Courses in this area would typically study women and law, the family and health, church and patriarchy.

- **Aim:** To develop an understanding of the ways in which gender constructions and social and political power intersect.
- **Outcome:** Students will describe how social and political power intersects with gender constructions.

Issues in GWST (2-3 courses; 8-12 credits): The GWST program runs five variable-topics courses a year (plus at present a sixth course co-sponsored by the Honor's program). There are also a number of cross-listed GWST courses that emanate from departments in AHSS and that provide varied and scholarly investigations into gender from a number of disciplinary lenses.

- **Aim:** to deepen and broaden the students' understanding of the wide range of ways in which we see gender definitions and relations played out in our own society and globally.
- **Outcome:** Students will understand and communicate awareness of the complexities of gender and sexuality in varying and different fields.

Colloquia Classes: These classes are variable-topic classes which meet once a week and enable students to learn and interact with each other and the instructor in a more informal, intimate manner than in the four-credit classes. Because these are two-credit classes, the topics are, and should be, more specific and more focused than in other courses.

- **Aim:** To promote the focused study of a particular topic.
- **Outcome:** Students have an enriched sense of how gender works through a more focused micro course of study to be demonstrated by the sophistication of their coursework.

Capstone Course: The capstone is a variable-topics course which will be offered at the 3000 level for two credits and normally will be taken after other requirements for the major are complete. The capstone will be an opportunity to integrate methods of study and a variety of knowledge. The capstone course may include the instructor's overview of the fields of Gender Studies and Women's Studies; individual projects that allow the students to articulate their main individual interests in relationship to the larger field will be especially important. These projects may include service learning or reflection on volunteer or paid internships related to gender or women's issues, or may focus on the student's own academic research or creativity in the Arts or technology. In seminar meetings, the students will learn from, critique, and advance one another's work.

- **Aim:** To review and consolidate methods of study and streams of knowledge in the larger fields of Gender and Women's Studies and to debate and contest these methods and streams of knowledge as preparation for lifelong learning and activism.
- **Outcome:** Students will demonstrate a consolidation of their knowledge of gender and women and the changing perspectives of scholarship on these activities. This will be achieved and assessed with a project advancing her or his knowledge of issues regarding gender and sexuality. The issues may be primarily academic or more directed towards activism and advocacy.

*If this course cannot currently be financed, we would like to include it as a research/independent study with the Director or other members of the GWST faculty.