

Description of Courses

WGST 150. Introduction to Women's Studies

(1). This course takes seriously the need to understand women's richly diverse lives from global perspectives. As a topics-based and women-centered course, Introduction to Women's Studies works to both retain the long tradition of consciousness-raising out of which the discipline emerged, as well as make use of the vast expanse of research material now available in aiding our understanding about women and gender both locally and globally. It examines the relation between experiential knowledge and more traditional forms of scholarship, and it investigates a variety of topics which include differences based on race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nation; creative responses to oppression; and women's experiences within institutions such as family, religion, media, economy, health, and the state. (3B) *Offered each year.*

WGST 155. Introduction to Gender Studies

(1). This course is an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural introduction to the critical interrogation of gender. The variability and specificity of gendered identities are explored, taking into account popular culture, post-structuralism, the queer, and embodied subjectivity—to name but a few possibilities. (3B) *Offered each year.*

WGST 160. Introduction to Feminisms (1).

This course investigates the theoretical assumptions of practitioners within various movements aimed at eliminating gender-based discrimination and introduces students to the multiplicity of ideas that have come to constitute feminist thought. Various assumptions, approaches, and philosophies of feminist, womanist, and other pro-women thought are investigated. Emphasis is placed on how these approaches are historically and socially situated, how each has its merits and limitations, and how they will inevitably conflict. (3B) *Offered each year.*

WGST 252. Women's Health: Topics (1). This course focuses on the biological, social, psychological, cultural, and political factors that impact women's experience of health and illness in the United States and around the world. Topics covered will be selected from critical topics focused on women's experience of health and illness, including childbirth, breast cancer, aging,

HIV/AIDS, and forms of psychological and physical violence. Depending on the instructors, this course may consider global issues and/or may include a significant laboratory component. May be taken for credit only one time. (Also listed as Interdisciplinary Studies 252.)

WGST 260. Topics in Women's and Gender Studies (½, 1).

Topics of importance to the field of women's and gender studies, offered to take advantage of the expertise and interests of regular faculty or visiting lecturers. Topics are announced in preregistration material each term. May be repeated for credit if topic is different. (3B) *Prerequisite: Women's and Gender Studies 150, 155, or 160, or consent of instructor.*

WGST 301. Feminist Theory (1). This course focuses on contemporary feminist theory as a site for the restructuring of knowledge. For more than three decades, contemporary feminists have been engaged in an exploration of women's diverse histories and experiences. As a result, feminist inquiry has constituted a rich, dynamic field with its own components, methods, debates, and conflicts. This course will undertake a comprehensive, in-depth exploration of this field: its functions and tensions, its modes of articulation, and its intellectual claims. Special attention will be paid to the history and current incarnations of feminist activism and their relationships to theorizing inside and outside of the academy. *Prerequisite: Women's and Gender Studies 150, 155, or 160, and one 200-level women's and gender studies course, or consent of instructor.*

WGST 306. Advanced Topics in Feminism and Politics (1). *See Political Science 306 for description.*

WGST 320. Undoing the Dimorphic Paradigm: Gender-Bending, Actual and Imaginative (1). This course problematizes the gender system dominant in Western cultures: heterosexualized sex-gender dimorphism. It focuses on "third"-ness: figures and phenomena—e.g., queerness, cross-dressing, transgender, transsexuality, intersexuality—that bridge the divide between female/feminine and male/masculine. We examine instances of and responses to "third"-ness, working across time (Renaissance to contemporary) and in various social discourses: myth, religion, and philosophy,

e.g., biology and medicine, psychology and psychiatry, history and (auto)biography, popular culture, and the arts. At various historical moments and in various contexts, we ask what anxieties invest “thirdness” and what possibilities it opens, investigating similarities and differences. And we compare various discourses and media, asking how they intersect and how they differ. *Offered every other year. Prerequisite: Women’s and Gender Studies 150, 155, or 160, and one 200-level women’s and gender studies course, or consent of instructor.*

WGST 360. Advanced Topics in Women’s and Gender Studies (½, 1). Topics important to the field of women’s and gender studies, offered to take advantage of faculty or student interest and faculty expertise. Courses will be conceived as advanced-level classes. Topics are announced in preregistration materials each term. May be repeated for credit if topic is different. *Prerequisite: 5 units in women’s and gender studies courses (including 2 of the 3 introductory courses) or consent of instructor.*

WGST 370. Senior Colloquium in Women’s and Gender Studies (½, 1). This course is designed as a “capstone” experience for women’s and gender studies majors and minors. The purposes of the course are for students to: 1) actively reflect on their women’s and gender studies education through—among other things—a portfolio; 2) research a specific area of interest in more depth and/or breadth than previous survey or topics courses have demanded; and 3) apply that research beyond the classroom so that it not only produces some positive change in the lives of others but also prepares students for life after Beloit. *Offered each spring. Prerequisite: 5 units in women’s and gender studies courses (including 2 of the 3 introductory courses, one 300-level women’s and gender studies course, and a methods course).*

WGST 390. Special Project (¼ - 1). Individual work under faculty supervision, with evaluation based on appropriate evidence of achievement. *Prerequisite: sophomore standing.*

WGST 392. Honors Thesis (½, 1). The writing of a substantial paper based on independent study or project. Qualified students may apply.

WGST 395. Teaching Assistant (½). Work with faculty in research or classroom instruction. *Graded credit/no credit. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.*

WGST 396. Research Assistant (½).

Work with faculty doing research. *Prerequisite: consent of instructor.*

Cross-listed Course Descriptions

Courses under these rubrics are listed as both courses in a department and courses that count as electives for the women’s and gender studies major and minor. Any cross-listed course may be repeated for credit if topic is different.

WGST 200. Constructing Identity and Difference (1). Courses in this category investigate constructions of gender, race, class, ethnicity, desire, and notions of (ab)normality in particular cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts. Emphasis will be placed on understanding and subverting the norms and institutions that construct identity and difference. Such courses might include: Race, Class, and Gender in Early North America, Writing Women’s Lives: Religious Biography and Autobiography, and 20th-Century Hispanic Women’s Literature. (5I)

WGST 210. Historical and Global Perspectives on Women and Gender (1). Courses in this category consider women’s and gendered identities, roles, experiences, and ideologies in historical and global contexts. They will explore ways in which events, institutions, politics, economics, cultures, and sciences have both influenced and been influenced by gender. Such courses might include: Gender and Ideology in Melanesia, Survey of U.S. Women’s History, Women Writers, Women and Gender in Islam, and the Image of Women in Latin American 19th-Century Letters.

WGST 220. Sex, Gender, and the Body (1). Courses in this category examine the interrelationships between sex, gender, and the body by considering biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors. Topics might include human sexuality, sexual identities, roles and orientations, individual bodies, and the body politic. Such courses might include: Human Sexual Identities and Psychology of Women. (5I)

WGST 230. Performance and Representation (1). Courses in this category focus on ways in which gender is performed and/or represented in

various cultural forms and contexts. Possible topics include art, media, popular culture, narrative, music, religion, and dance. Such courses might include: Burning Sapphos and Laughing Medusas, Educating Women: Gender and Schooling, Narrating a Tradition: African-American Women's Novels, Women in Music: International Perspectives, and Gender in Religious Practice.

WGST 240. Theory, Practice, and Change (1).

Courses in this category analyze relationships among knowledge production and political action. Emphases include the ideas, skills, and strategies used by change agents who work for social justice. Such courses might include: Sex and Gender Matters in U.S. Politics and Gender Ideology and Governing As We Know It.