Women's and Gender Studies Program

Women's and Gender Studies addresses knowledge and praxis from intersections of feminist, anti-racist, multicultural, global and ecological perspectives. Centering marginalized knowledge and practices, we critique and challenge the dominant social, political and historical production of knowledge. We examine, from interdisciplinary perspectives, how power is distributed and used along the intersections of race, class, gender, geography, age, abilities and sexualities, including studying the lives, histories and cultures of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer (LGBTQ) communities and allies. Women's and Gender Studies courses emphasize rigorous critical thinking, innovative scholarship and creativity, to assist students and faculty to radically envision different bodies of knowledge and social change. This creates an environment of learning and passionate commitment to social justice. Through curriculum, pedagogical strategies, university transformation and civic engagement, our community of learners takes up issues of oppression, resistance and social justice to make connections between personal, state and global communities. As a community of practitioners, researchers, learners, leaders and activists, we work to develop and implement meaningful social change within the university and beyond, to create the type of world where injustice and inequality are fought and to resist the daily oppressions of the current social order.

The program operates the Blanche Hersh Women's and Gender Studies Resource Center and the Empowering Students Computer Lab located in LWH-2096. The Center is place where students, faculty and staff can gather in a more informal setting. It houses a Women's and Gender Studies library of books and periodicals. Additionally, the computer lab is a place for students to work on a paper, finish an assignment or check their email in a friendly, supportive environment.

• Major in Women's and Gender Studies (http://catalog.neiu.edu/arts-sciences/womens-gender-studies-program/womens-gender-studies/)
• Minor in Women's and Gender Studies (http://catalog.neiu.edu/arts-sciences/womens-gender-studies-program/minor-womens-gender-studies/)
• Minor in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies (http://catalog.neiu.edu/arts-sciences/womens-gender-studies-program/minor-lgbtq-studies/)

Andreas G. Savas-Kourvetaris, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Chair
Brooke Johnson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Sociology, Program Coordinator

Core Faculty
Brandon Bisbey, Ph.D., Associate Professor, World Languages & Cultures
Laurie Fuller, Ph.D., Professor, Women's & Gender Studies
Nancy Matthews, Ph.D., Professor, Justice Studies
Erica Meiners, Ph.D., Professor, Educational Inquiry & Curriculum Studies
Kristen Over, Ph.D., Associate Professor, English
Olivia Perlow, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Sociology
Brett C. Stockdill, Ph.D., Professor, Sociology
Durene Wheeler, Ph.D., Professor, Educational Inquiry & Curriculum Studies

Affiliate Faculty
Tim Barnett, Ph.D., Professor, English
Vicki Byard, Ph.D. Professor, English
Aneta Galary, Ph.D., Instructor, Sociology
Stacey Goguen, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Philosophy
Kate Kane, Ph.D., Instructor, Communication, Media and Theatre
Sophia Mihic, Ph.D., Professor, Political Science
Francesca Morgan, Ph.D., Associate Professor, History

WGS-101. Women's Perspectives And Values. 3 Hours.
This course examines the philosophical basis of patriarchy and analyzes the impact of gender on the lives of women. Emphasis is placed on the effect that ethnicity, race, class and sexual orientation have in determining the status of women in our society. Feminist theory and creative writing are studied; women's voices, perspectives and values are discussed. (This is a General Education course in the area of Humanities.).

WGS-109A. First Year Experience: Sex Lives In Chicago. 3 Hours.
FYE: Sex Lives in Chicago critically examines sexualities in the social and physical space of Chicago from a feminist, sex-positive standpoint. In this course, the five foundations of the First-Year Experience (Future Planning, Integral Preparation, Research, Self-discovery and Transitions) are interwoven into the concepts of sexualities, gender and power. This course explores the diversity of sexual identities, practices, and behaviors in historical and modern Chicago. Students will discover the diversity and complexity of sexualities in Chicago through readings, speakers, films, and field experiences while simultaneously building personal and academic skills that ensure success at NEIU.

WGS-150. Women's Self-Defense. 1 Hour.
This course develops a framework for understanding violence and self-defense. Major focus is on learning and practicing awareness, prevention, assessment, verbal boundary setting and physical self-defense skills in simulated scenarios. (This course is not repeatable.).
WGS-201. Writing Intensive Program: Feminist Ideas. 3 Hours.
Feminist Ideas is intended to insure that students understand what feminist perspectives are and their relationship to Women's and Gender Studies, social issues and social change. With a focus on Organizing, Family, Health/Reproductive Justice, Violence and Work, students will learn to recognize historical and contemporary feminist leaders, understand the implications and applications of feminist ideas, apply lessons learned from past struggles to contemporary social issues and evaluate women's changing status, by race, class, age, ability, and sexual orientation and other inequalities. Prerequisites: (WSP-101 minimum grade of C or WGS-101 minimum grade of C) and ENGL-101 minimum grade of C.

WGS-202. Feminist Activism. 3 Hours.
This course, subtitled Grassroots Resistance in the U.S., focuses on women as social actors challenging gender stereotypes: organizing to reduce poverty, racism, homophobia and violence; working to expand opportunities; and confronting barriers in education, the criminal justice system and politics. Popular analyses of women and social change often limit themselves to women's roles in families and paid workplaces. Focus is on ordinary women who are working collectively in diverse social settings to empower themselves and others, exploring barriers women face, goals and strategies for social change, and the rewards and challenges of feminist grassroots activism. Prerequisite: WSP-101 minimum grade of C or WGS-101 minimum grade of C.

WGS-210. Introduction To Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Studies. 3 Hours.
The Introduction to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer (LGBTQ) Studies offers an introductory and interdisciplinary approach to studying the lives, histories and cultures of LGBTQ communities and allies. This course focuses on the multiplicity and diversity in gender and sexual expression including how race, class, ability and other identity markers shape LGBTQ lives. Examining introductory questions in gender and sexualities studies, the course addresses the intersection of identity, knowledge and action through critical thinking, analysis, active learning and social engagement.

WGS-203. Feminist Theory: Questions Of Race, Class, And Sexuality. 3 Hours.
This course, subtitled Questions of Race, Class and Sexuality, is designed to give an introduction into conceptions of feminist theories. Moreover, much of the course will be spent reading and writing about theory. We will begin with an attempt to articulate the assumptions that underlie contemporary feminist theories by tracing the theoretical conceptions they are based upon. Our focus will be on the importance of the position and situation of the subject with respect to questions of class, race, sexuality, gender, historical moment and social location. Prerequisite: WSP-101 minimum grade of C or WGS-101 minimum grade of C.

WGS-310. Lesbian & Queer Cultures: Identities, Histories & Resistance. 3 Hours.
This interdisciplinary course introduces students to historical and theoretical research through a series of topics: Identity, Sex, Violence, Activism, and Beyond. This will form the contexts for exploring issues and questions surrounding lesbian and queer cultures. Books, articles, magazines, videos, films, music, art, and more will be used. What makes up, establishes, creates, develops, organizes lesbian and queer cultures? This will be examined, in the context of various struggles over meanings and identities, considering that those meanings change over time and context and differ across race, class and other identity markers. Prerequisite: WSP-101 minimum grade of C or WGS-101 minimum grade of C.

WGS-311. Power, Knowledge & Communities: Feminists Engagements With Education. 3 Hours.
This course focuses on the role of the educational system in the constructions and reproduction of gender and racial inequality. Using both academic and popular literature to gain perspectives, we will examine relationships between school and society. Topics to be addressed include the historical constructions, representation of schooling and the teaching profession, popular culture and education, and sexuality and schooling. Prerequisite: WSP-101 minimum grade of C or WGS-101 minimum grade of C.

WGS-312. Women & Global Human Rights. 3 Hours.
Women's issues have recently been viewed through the lens of human rights. Increasingly they are included in the goals, programs and policies of international human rights organizations, from the United Nations to Amnesty International. This course will examine this shift in perspective and the impact it is having on women's lives worldwide. We will explore international human rights as they apply to women. What do we mean by "human rights"? How have these rights been socially defined, struggled over, and, in some cases, won? To what extent have women and women's rights been included in these conversations and struggles?.

WGS-313. Radical Feminist Imagination. 3 Hours.
Examination of literary works broadly representative of something called feminist imaginative response to U.S. patriarchy. The meaning of radical feminism will be explored as authors from a range of racial, class, and sexual identities are placed in dialogue with each other and with their respective socio-historical and cultural contexts. Focus will be on textual interpretation and exploring how each work attempts to develop its version of feminist consciousness. The course will investigate how these texts formulate a narrative of woman's liberation against the dominant patriarchal narratives that inform cultural consciousness and social relations.

WGS-316. Science And The Gendered Body. 3 Hours.
This course traces the history of how gender and sex are identified and studied in scientific and medical fields and how cultural conceptions of gender and sex can influence the interpretation of scientific phenomena. Readings draw from the primary scientific literature, the history and philosophy of science, and cultural anthropological analyses of science and medicine. Prerequisite: (or).

WGS-321. Internship In Women's Studies. 1 Hour.
Placement in a university or community agency that provides services to women. This will be an opportunity to test classroom concepts in a field setting.

WGS-322. Internship In Women's Studies. 2 Hours.
(See description for WGS-321.).
WGS-323. Internship In Women's Studies. 3 Hours.
(See description for WGS-321.).

WGS-331. Independent Study In Women's Studies. 1 Hour.
An intensive investigation of a special area of Women's and Gender Studies.

WGS-332. Independent Study In Women's Studies. 2 Hours.
An intensive investigation of a special area of Women's and Gender Studies.

WGS-333. Independent Study In Women's Studies. 3 Hours.
(See description for WGS-331.).

WGS-333A. Independent Study In Women's Studies. 3 Hours.
(See description for WGS-331.).

WGS-350. Women's & Gender Studies Seminar. 3 Hours.
This interdisciplinary capstone course builds on knowledge gained in other Women's and Gender Studies classes. Advanced instruction in appropriate areas such as: feminist theory and methodology, international women's movements, and other topics. Includes a component on research methods/writing. Consent of the instructor is necessary. This course is a requirement for students completing the Women's Studies Major and Minor. 
Prerequisite: WSP-101 minimum grade of C or WGS-101 minimum grade of C.

WGS-360. Queer Theory. 3 Hours.
Queer theory developed in the early 1990s out of the conjunction of feminist theory, sexuality studies, and queer activism. This course introduces students to some of the key authors and texts in queer theory, shows students how queer theory may be applied in a variety of academic fields, and examines critiques of queer theory as androcentric, Eurocentric, overly intellectual, and impractical. This course aims to foster critical thinking, writing, and discussion. We will go beyond merely digesting theorists’ work to actively engaging with the material and critiquing both commonly held assumptions and academic theories about gender and sexuality.
Prerequisite: WSP-210 minimum grade of D or WGS-210 minimum grade of D.

WGS-361. Queer Latin American Narrative And Film. 3 Hours.
This course explores the representation of sexual diversity and gender nonconformity in Latin American cultural production (narrative and film) from a perspective informed by feminist theory, LGBT studies and queer theory. Students critically engage these theoretical paradigms while developing research skills and proficiency in oral and written expression through class assignments, including a final research paper.
Prerequisite: ENGL-101 minimum grade of C.