The mission of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies is to analyze and change society from the unique perspective of unequal gender relations in a world where violence and discrimination is still commonplace. In GWSS, students learn about the racialized and global dimensions of contemporary sexual discourses, practices, and histories and question the mechanisms by which non-normative sexual desire has been segregated and disciplined. GWSS generates knowledge through frameworks that are interdisciplinary, transnational, decolonial and intersectional.

Highlights

- Established in 1970 as the Women Studies Department, the department changed its name to Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies in 2011 and is nearing its 50th Anniversary as a department at the University of Washington.
- The graduate program in Feminist Studies is the first of its kind in the Pacific Northwest and one of twenty doctoral programs in the U.S.
- Women Studies/GWSS graduated its first two Ph.D. students in 2006, and has granted a total of 29 Ph.D. and 12 M.A. degrees as of Autumn 2018.
- Four Women Studies/GWSS students have received the Graduate Medal, which recognizes Ph.D. candidates whose academic expertise and social awareness demonstrate an exemplary commitment to the University and larger community.
- One of our Ph.D. graduate students won a Grammy award (2013) for best Latin Rock, Urban or Alternative album.

Education

The Department offers BA, and PhD degrees, as well as Graduate Certificates in Feminist Studies and Sexuality & Queer Studies.

Our undergraduate major provides a highly flexible and individualized approach while creating a learning community. We emphasize integrative courses that explore relationships among phenomena such as gender, race/ethnicity, and social class. Required courses focus on feminist theorizing of race/ethnicity and psychobiology of women, and synthesize these areas of academic inquiry through internships and a capstone class. The capstone culminates in a portfolio tracing the student’s path toward achieving the department’s learning goals. With over 2,000 students enrolled each year, Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies reaches far beyond our department into the entire University.

The graduate program is research intensive with a critical, theoretical orientation; its social science emphasis is distinct among women studies programs in the U.S.

Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies alumnae have translated their studies into successful careers in academia, politics, law, medicine, public health, museology, research, and social policy. In keeping with our commitment to social justice, our graduates include both volunteers and paid workers at social service organizations such as women’s health clinics, a drop-in center for lesbian and gay youth, homeless shelters, and organizations that serve those affected by domestic violence.
Faculty

Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies faculty honors include:

1. ACLS Collaborative Research Fellowship
2. Fulbright Fellowship
3. East Asian Center Travel Award
4. GPSS Gold Star Award to GWSS Graduate Program
5. Innovation in Service Learning Award, Carlson Leadership and Public Service Center
6. Mellon Area Studies Grants
7. UW Research Royalty Fund grants
8. Samuel E. Kelly Distinguished Faculty Lecturer
9. Simpson Center for the Humanities Fellowships and Grants
10. UW Distinguished Teaching Awards
11. GO-MAP Diversity Award for Community Building
12. UW Teaching Technology Fellowships

Research and Scholarship

The Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies (GWSS) at the University of Washington is widely recognized as one of the leading programs in the field. It was established in 1970 as one of the first programs in Women's Studies in the United States, and the very first in the Pacific Northwest. It is currently one of twenty doctoral programs in the country.

GWSS is reputed for scholarly expertise in women of color and transnational feminisms. We have growing foci in the digital humanities, an area where we are well-known for innovative experimental exchanges with communities through music, dance, and visual cultures (via the making of documentary films, the curating of feminist art, and building new forms of archives) and in queer studies, especially queer of color and transnational queer scholarship.

Consistent with the interdisciplinary character of the department, our faculty conduct wisely varied scholarship across the humanities and social sciences, including: illustrative feminist analyses of global commodity chains, sociohistorical studies of immigrant communities, documentary film and ethnographic studies of Native women and the criminal justice systems, feminist science studies, investigation of methodological and ethical challenges of research on minority populations, investigations of the politics of reproductive technologies, the politics of gender and visual representation in transnational contexts, analyses of gender nonconformity in contemporary South Africa, and public scholarship in feminist Chicana/Latina and Chinese art, literature, and digital production.

Our faculty collaborate actively with colleagues across the UW, including interdisciplinary centers and programs such as the Center for South Asian Studies, African Studies, the Institute for Transnational Studies, Disability Studies, the Diversity Minor, Global Health, and the Native Voices Doctoral Film Project.

Outreach

Feminists from community organizations as well as academia form our Advancement Committee. Our departmental perspective on development combines fundraising and community-building into one comprehensive plan. Through our development activities we seek a robust academic and activist network, relying on both our alumnae base and on the strong feminist groups in this region. Each year dozens of students devote thousands of hours to over 100 community agencies.

Please stop by to meet us and consider joining a nationally recognized community of faculty, staff and students devoted to social change around the world.

FACULTY (Winter 2021)

3 Professors
4 Associate Professors
2 Assistant Professors
1 Associate Teaching Professor
2 Part-time Lecturers
3 Professors Emerita
53 Adjunct Faculty
11 Affiliate Faculty

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Critical Asian Studies
Critical Race & Queer Studies
Feminist Science & Technology Studies
Feminist Science Studies
Feminist Labor Studies
Feminist Theory and Methods
Gender and Historical Studies
Globalization, Migration and Transnational Feminist Studies
“Modern Girl” Studies
Postcolonial Studies
Gender, Fandom & Speculative Fiction
Sexuality, Trans & LGBTQ Studies
Transnational Feminist Economics
Visual Culture and Gender
Women of Color and Criminal Justice
Digital Humanities
Rural Informal Economies