

# DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

## Overview

702 Wayne Hall  
610-436-2584

Department of Women's and Gender Studies (<http://www.wcupa.edu/womensstudies/>)

Liam Lair ([WGSCChair@wcupa.edu](mailto:WGSCChair@wcupa.edu)), *Chairperson*

The Women's and Gender Studies department consists of an interrelated group of courses offered in a wide variety of academic disciplines. This department is envisaged both as an enrichment to liberal education and as a pre-professional field. The social transformation that is taking place in society and in intellectual life is making study in this area an asset in many arenas.

The aim of the department is to integrate a feminist analysis of gender, race, sexuality, and other vectors of identity into the curriculum and to encourage inquiry into previously neglected areas, such as history, literature, and art of historically marginalized communities. The department also aims to cultivate a feminist analysis of all academic learning, with an eye towards praxis and social justice.

The Women's and Gender Studies Department provides an excellent learning environment that places an analysis of structural inequality, with a primary focus on gender inequality, at the center of the curriculum. It prepares students for careers, graduate study, and life choices through an interdisciplinary curriculum that establishes feminist values in its pedagogy and content. Women's and Gender Studies faculty are productive teacher-scholars who provide leadership and scholarship for integrating gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, nationality, and disability issues into the curriculum.

## Affiliated Faculty

Joan Woolfrey, *Department of Philosophy*

Simon Ruchti, *Department of Philosophy*

Sara Vakili, *Adjunct*

Jina Fast, *Adjunct*

## Programs

### Major

- B.A. in Women's and Gender Studies (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/arts-humanities/womens-gender-studies/womens-gender-studies-ba/>)

### Minors

- Sexuality Studies (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/arts-humanities/womens-gender-studies/sexuality-studies-minor/>)
- Women's and Gender Studies (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/arts-humanities/womens-gender-studies/gender-studies-minor/>)

## Graduate Opportunities

See the graduate catalog for more information on the Women's and Gender Studies program. (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/graduate/arts-humanities/womens-gender-studies/>)

## Policies

- See undergraduate admissions information. (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/general-information/admissions-enrollment/undergraduate-admissions/>)
- See academic policies. (<https://catalog.wcupa.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies-procedures/>)

All undergraduate students are held to the academic policies and procedures outlined in the undergraduate catalog. Students are

encouraged to review departmental handbooks for program tips, suggested course sequences, and explanations of procedures. When applicable, additional policies for specific department programs may be listed below.

## Faculty

### Professors

Martha Donkor ([mndonkor@wcupa.edu](mailto:mndonkor@wcupa.edu)) (2014)  
B.A., University of Cape Coast; M.A., University of Guelph; Ph.D., University of Toronto

Lisa C. Huebner ([lhuebner@wcupa.edu](mailto:lhuebner@wcupa.edu)) (2007)  
B.A., Bowling Green State University; M.A., University of Cincinnati; Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh

### Associate Professors

Liam Lair ([llair@wcupa.edu](mailto:llair@wcupa.edu)) (2017)  
Chairperson, Women's and Gender Studies  
Texas Christian University, B.A.; Roosevelt University, M.A.; University of Kansas, Ph.D.

Tabassum Ruby ([truby@wcupa.edu](mailto:truby@wcupa.edu)) (2016)  
B.A. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon; M.A. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon; Ph.D. York University, Toronto

Justin C Sprague ([jsprague@wcupa.edu](mailto:jsprague@wcupa.edu)) (2019)  
B.A., M.A., Old Dominion University; M.A., Ph.D., University of Maryland, College Park

## Courses

### WOS

#### WOS 100. Body Politics: Gender, Culture, and Representation. 3 Credits.

This course examines the body as a contested site of both pleasure and oppression. Considerable focus will be placed on the impact of culture on our understandings of the body, including ideas about gender, race, and sexuality. Students of all genders will be encouraged to explore how their own body image has been shaped by social norms that are simultaneously accepted and resisted. This course thereby provides an opportunity to question a variety of norms surrounding the body, including ideas about beauty, size, shape and ability. Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both)

#### WOS 199. Women's & Gender Studies Transfer Credit. 1-15 Credits.

Transfer Credit  
Repeatable for credit.

#### WOS 200. Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies. 3 Credits.

An interdisciplinary inquiry into the nature and causes of social conflict. The aim throughout is to find ways of avoiding destructive conflict, whether through negotiation or other means. The issue of justice as a factor in conflict receives special attention. Gen Ed Attribute: Global Awareness Pathway, Interdisciplinary Requirement  
Equivalent courses: PAX 200

#### WOS 225. Intro to Women's and Gender Studies. 3 Credits.

An interdisciplinary course designed to enable students to analyze the lived experience of women, to evaluate the impact of gender, to question the implications of changing cultural patterns, and to sample first-hand efforts for social change. Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Interdisciplinary Requirement, Writing Emphasis (select both)

**WOS 227. Let's Talk About Race. 3 Credits.**

This course is an introduction to the study and critical discussion of race within the field of Women's and Gender Studies. In particular, students will reflect on and learn skills about effective communicating on and around matters of race, race relations, and racial justice. With resources ranging from scholars in the field to public intellectuals leading public discussions regarding race, students will be exposed to resources from a range of voices in order to hone their own skills in the discussion/understanding of systems of power and domination as they relate to race. The class primarily serves as a means to sharpen communication skills, applicable in multiple social environments. Students will learn through a Women's and Gender Studies framework that asserts that the understanding of multifaceted identities is critical in understanding the dynamics of race and gender as they relate to systems of power, governance, violence, and subjugation.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Speaking Emphasis

**WOS 240. How to Do Things with Feminism. 3 Credits.**

This course is an introduction to the study of Women's & Gender Studies as an interdisciplinary field. In particular, students will reflect on the academic, professional, and community activist dimensions of the field. The course offers an overview of the development of Women's and Gender Studies within the academy and ongoing collaboration with and tensions between academic feminism and feminist activism. Students will become familiar with the methodological and theoretical tools used by feminist researchers and activists. Beyond feminist methods and theories, students will also become familiar with the professional and academic side of WGS: they will discuss the wide range of women's and gender-focused journals, professional organizations, and conferences in their subfields/disciplines. They will use an intersectional feminist framework to think through feminism(s), feminist praxis, and in particular how each of them exists in relation to power via gender and race. The ultimate goal is that they will gain the foundation for fostering feminist skills in order to create a more just and equitable society.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Speaking Emphasis

**WOS 250. Women's Self Representation. 3 Credits.**

An interdisciplinary approach to ways women record their lives.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Interdisciplinary Requirement

Distance education offering may be available.

**WOS 260. Globalization and the Ethics of Sustainability. 3 Credits.**

This course examines forces of globalization and environmental and ethical issues. The process of globalization (trade, communication technology, migration) has contributed to widening inequality within and among countries. Multinational corporations employ vulnerable people (especially women of color) for cheap labor, exploit local resources, and contribute to environmental degradation. Since the planet has its limitations, attending to the conservation of natural (and limited) resources, climate change, sustainable agriculture and forestry practices, and just fair-trade practices are at the heart of environmental and ethical issues and sustainability efforts. In this course, students will explore the social and environmental justice issues related to consumption of resources central to environmental ethics and sustainability. Students will also examine their ecological/carbon footprint and ways to reduce it through changes in the consumption of energy, resources, food, and water.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Ethics Requirement, Sustainability Pathway

**WOS 276. Sexual Identity. 3 Credits.**

Interdisciplinary introduction to meanings attached to human sexuality, exploring intersections between theories of sexual identity and theories of gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, and nationality.

Gen Ed Attribute: Interdisciplinary Requirement

**WOS 303. Intro to LGBTQ+ Sexualities & Activism in the U.S.. 3 Credits.**

The past several decades have seen an unprecedented shift in attitudes in the United States toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals, yet many in LGBTQ communities still face extreme levels of discrimination and oppression. Simultaneously, there have never been more LGBTQ people and issues in the news, movies, books, and on TV. In this class, students will consider how LGBTQ experiences are influenced by these representations, as well as how systems of privilege and oppression shape the experience of LGBTQ people in the U.S. They will question the ethics of various approaches to LGBTQ justice and liberation as they examine both historical and contemporary constructions of gender and sexuality. Students will also consider what ethical approaches might look like when engaging with legal, medical, and activist discourses in relation to LGBTQ communities. Throughout this work, they will attend to the ways in which LGBTQ identities exist at the intersections of race, class, citizenship, and disability.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Ethics Requirement

**WOS 305. Intellectual Roots of Western Feminism. 3 Credits.**

The course examines the major issues and themes that have historically been included in feminist theorizing about women's situation and experiences, including: ethical foundations, the origins of patriarchy, feminist epistemology, education, body issues, issues of difference, religion, civil rights, and psychological development. Chronologically, the course covers from the enlightenment (Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*) through Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both)

**WOS 306. Transnational Feminisms. 3 Credits.**

This course critically engages a range of transnational feminist theories, movements, and praxis to analyze structures of power shaping people's lives in global contexts. The course seeks to decenter a body of feminist scholarship that often assumes shared visions of gender equality. Such studies conceptualize gender issues and concerns through a Eurocentric/colonial viewpoint by overlooking differences among people with respect to race, class, sexuality, and nationality. Course readings explore the ethics of cross-cultural knowledge production, activism, warfare, commodification of women's bodies, sexualities, and local resources. The main goals of the course are to expose students to a broad range of feminist thought and action and locate transnational feminist theories in relation to colonial and post-colonial narratives. It urges students to examine their own positions within global systems that connect the (often uneven) exchange of persons, capital, and ways of knowing.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both)

**WOS 310. Feminist Activism. 3 Credits.**

Although often misrepresented or ignored, women were and continue to be active in a wide range of social justice movements. This course focuses specifically upon women activists in the United States and their resistance to structural inequalities based upon gender. In addition to social justice movements focused on sexism, this course uses intersectional theory to recognize the feminist value of women who work against racial, economic, sexual, and other oppressions.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Writing Emphasis (select both)

Distance education offering may be available.

**WOS 320. Independent Study. 3 Credits.**

Independent research and study for upper-division students. Topic to be approved by supervising faculty member.

WOS 320 Prerequisite: Successful completion of WOS 225, with a minimum grade of D-. Repeatable for credit.

**WOS 325. Special Topics. 3 Credits.**

Selected (and changing) topics, e.g., Ethnic Women; Women and Work; Love and Sexuality. Offered as projected enrollments warrant.

Repeatable for credit.

**WOS 326. Women and Witchcraft in Africa. 3 Credits.**

This course utilizes witchcraft belief and accusation as a lens through which to examine the oppression of women in sub-Saharan Africa. It examines historical and contemporary beliefs and manifestations of witchcraft, and analyzes the centrality of women (and children) as victims. It also examines the impact of witchcraft accusation on women's social and economic development.

**WOS 329. Gender and Peace. 3 Credits.**

An examination of the ways in which social constructions of gender intersect with perceptions and the experience of war.

Gen Ed Attribute: Interdisciplinary Requirement

**WOS 335. Gender, Race and Science. 3 Credits.**

Is race biological? Do men and women really have different brains? This course examines the way these and other questions have been taken up in scientific discourse. Students will approach race, gender, and sexuality as biosocial constructs. This course will ask students to question what they "know" about science and the scientific process. They will problematize scientific "objectivity" and "truth" and question foundational scientific ideas about race, sex, and gender. Students will engage feminist theories to pay close attention to the processes through which knowledge is produced, to science as a practice and an institution, and to the question of who gets to "do science" and how this affects the knowledge produced.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Interdisciplinary Requirement

**WOS 350. Lesbian Studies. 3 Credits.**

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to lesbian studies that focuses on the historical and contemporary diversity of lesbian genders and sexualities, especially as shaped by race, class, culture, and nation. Special attention will be placed upon lesbian activism as well as contestations within lesbian communities about racism, classism, and dissexism.

Gen Ed Attribute: Interdisciplinary Requirement  
Distance education offering may be available.

**WOS 366. Gender, Labor and Globalization. 3 Credits.**

This course uses sociological and women's and gender studies theories to understand, analyze, and present on domestic work, care work, sex work, and reproductive work as invisible and gendered labor that contributes to global economies. Through critical reading, writing, discussion, and speaking assignments, students will learn how to analyze and speak about how the experiences of international women workers change mainstream definitions of gender, labor, family, immigration, and globalization.

Gen Ed Attribute: Speaking Emphasis  
Equivalent courses: SOC 366

**WOS 368. Violence, Systems, and Resistance (VSR). 3 Credits.**

This course will teach students how to recognize, understand, and resist three primary forms of power-based violence that are interrelated: (1) those perpetrated by individuals, e.g. sexual assault, partner violence, mass shootings; (2) those perpetrated by hate groups, e.g. lynching, bombing, violence against trans and non-binary people; and (3) those perpetrated by the state, e.g. war, police violence. Students will study multiple forms of violence to understand the root causes and dynamics of violence (how it happens); the effects on people, families, and communities (what is the cost); and personal, community, and national resistance methodologies (what can be done about it).

Gen Ed Attribute: Interdisciplinary Requirement  
Equivalent courses: SOC 368

**WOS 381. The Forgotten Queens of Islam. 3 Credits.**

Students will learn about prominent women in Islamic history, with a focus on the medieval period. Students will learn to read historical texts "against the grain" through the lens of feminist history.

Gen Ed Attribute: Arabic CC (select both), Diverse Community(select both), Speaking Emphasis  
Equivalent courses: HIS 381

**WOS 399. Women of Color and Material Culture. 3 Credits.**

This course is an interdisciplinary exploration of the ways that gender and race shape the histories of cultural production and material culture, aiming to problematize the historical sidelining of the contributions of women of color in global history, recognizing their deep impacts on their respective communities, on racial identity, and cultural authenticity. By centering the lived experiences and the labor of women of color, we are able to perceive of a more just and equitable world, where traditional histories have commonly elided, appropriated, or violated these contributions in historical and cultural accounts. The course will interrogate the concept of labor and production from a number of disciplinary vantage points, focusing primarily on foodways and commodity culture, all while situating women of color as the core category of analysis.

Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Interdisciplinary Requirement

**WOS 400. Internship. 3 Credits.**

This course is designed to allow students the opportunity to put into practice, outside the academic setting, the knowledge regarding women's experiences gained in other courses. Some possible sites might be a women's health clinic, a business, a newspaper, a social service agency, or an electoral campaign. There will be both an on-site and a faculty supervisor.

WOS 400 Prerequisite: Successful completion of WOS 225 or WOS 240; and two other womens studies courses, with minimum grades of D-.

Repeatable for credit.

**WOS 405. Feminist Theory. 3 Credits.**

This course focuses on the development of contemporary feminist theoretical constructs, beginning in the 1970s. Students will study classic feminist theories and ideas from this period. They will use a feminist pedagogy which emphasizes learning that is collaborative and student-centered. We value participatory, experiential, diverse, and student-centered knowledge production. Because we believe that students serve as sources of knowledge for themselves and each other, we encourage students to take initiative in and responsibility for the learning process.

WOS 405 Prerequisite: Successful completion of two WOS courses, with minimum grades of D-.  
Equivalent courses: PHI 405

**WOS 407. Queer Theory. 3 Credits.**

This course is an introduction to the study of Queer Theory, as both a discipline and a form of political resistance. Queer theory is, in a very basic nutshell, the study of identities that exist outside of rigid binary categories. For this reason, we must understand queer theory as separate from, even if closely aligned with, GLBT or sexuality studies. Queerness, in this context, does not refer to sexuality and gender, but to any identity rejected by or resistant to normative, binary categories. Thus, this course utilizes a "queer" approach (drawing on feminist, race, sexuality, psychoanalytic, literary, etc.) to ask fundamental questions about our identities (whether sexuality, gender, race, class, nationality, etc.) and how our identities are determined by and resistant to social regulation.

WOS 407 Prerequisite: Successful completion of one WOS course, with a minimum grade of D-.  
Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both)

Equivalent courses: PHI 407

**WOS 410. Feminist Research Methodologies. 3 Credits.**

This course examines feminist critiques of and approaches to various research methodologies. Students will focus on how feminist scholars challenge dominant theories of knowledge and the major methodologies employed in the social sciences and humanities, such as interview, ethnography, grounded theory, participatory research, archival research, and oral history. Students will discuss how research is shaped by the kinds of research questions they ask and the types of materials they use. The course also gives them the opportunity to develop a research proposal, including selecting method(s) of their own interest. The following questions are central to the course: Do feminist methods exist? What counts as evidence? How does feminist research approach issues of objectivity and subjectivity? What is the relationship between the researcher and subject? What key questions guide feminist research, and how can they apply those questions to a variety of research topics?

WOS 410 Prerequisite: Successful completion of WOS 405, with a minimum grade of D-.  
Gen Ed Attribute: Diverse Community(select both), Writing Emphasis (select both)

**WOS 415. Senior Project. 3 Credits.**

Preparation of research in any area of women's studies, to be decided by student and adviser. Supervision includes exercises in method and bibliography. Usually, a lengthy research paper will be the final result.

WOS 415 Prerequisite: Successful completion of WOS 225 and two other womens studies courses, with minimum grades of D-.

Repeatable for credit.