

Thesis Q&A with Professor Lisa Walker

Q. When should students start planning a thesis and what classes should they take?

A. Students should decide whether they will write a thesis by the end of the junior year. There are several options for students to work on the thesis for two semesters. Students who know what topic they want to pursue might do an independent study with a faculty member in their area of specialization in the fall; students can conduct most of their research in the fall, and can produce a final paper for the independent study that serves as the basis for the thesis writing in the spring. The faculty member who directs the independent study is typically the thesis advisor for the following semester. A good alternative to an independent study is HON 311; in that class, students learn to do research, shape a preliminary idea into a thesis proposal, and form a thesis committee that they will work with in the spring.

Q. How should student go about choosing a thesis topic?

A. Students should choose a topic that they can stay excited about for a year! We have had students work on a variety of thesis topics, including sex trafficking, film noir, and food justice. Often times, students develop ideas for thesis topics in classes or in service work that they do in the community. It's important to find a faculty member to work with who is interested in and enthusiastic about your topic. The WGS Director can be a good resource for connecting students with faculty.

Q. How do you think a thesis will be helpful to students after graduating?

A. Thesis work helps students refine skills that many employers value, including critical thinking, research and writing skills. A thesis can be great practice for the kind of work that will be expected in graduate school, and can also be used for writing samples when applying to graduate schools. Most important, perhaps, the thesis can help students develop legitimate self-confidence in their intellectual abilities and in their ability to achieve self-directed, long-term goals.

Internship Q&A with Leah Kravette, *class of 2017*

Q. How did you decide between the internship and the thesis?

A. I chose the internship based on my post-graduate plans. When I returned to college after leaving in 2011, my ultimate goal was to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, which requires two more years of graduate school after undergrad. There are definitely social workers who focus on research, but since I know that I want to be exploring client-focused, direct service work, doing an internship now will help me decide on field placements during my MSW program and even help me figure out where I want my long-term focus to be (or not!), career-wise.

Q. When did you start planning for the internship? What project are you hoping to do at your internship sight?

A. Because I work in the WGS office, I was lucky enough to see lots of other students go through this process and started to think about it early. I began actually applying to internships in October. So far I've just applied to Planned Parenthood, because they have a great internship in the spring that is focused on helping clients navigate the healthcare system. I should hear back from them by mid-October, and then if I don't get it I'll still have time to get something else lined up.

Q. Any advice for students?

A. My advice, especially after seeing some friends go through this last year, is to think about whether you want to do an internship or thesis and then really make it a project that serves you and your goals. It's a big time commitment, at a point in college where it's easy to get distracted by other things, so if you aren't excited about your project it'll feel like a waste of time. It's totally fine to have no clue about what you want after graduation – so pick a place to intern or a topic to research that would actually be fun for you! If you do plan on going into some specific program or job, this is a great opportunity to learn some concrete skills that you can bring with you.

Q. How do you think the internship will be helpful to you after you graduate?

A. I'm hoping the Planned Parenthood internship will work out because I would be doing an intensive training about the healthcare marketplace, and then I would be supporting clients at PP with signing up and navigating it. Regardless of the folks I end up working with in my field placements or career, knowing about the various challenges and benefits to the healthcare system and how they affect each person differently will be invaluable to my work. Everyone engages with the healthcare system in some way, and as a social worker with this knowledge, hopefully I'll be able to help make access easier to understand for clients as well as for myself and my friends and family.

WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES

Fall 2016 Newsletter

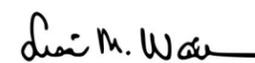
Hello all,

The Women and Gender Studies Program is the longest-standing feminist studies program in Northern New England, and continues to be one of the most vibrant. I am happy to announce that Catherine Barbarits joins us as the Assistant to the Director of Women and Gender Studies. Please feel free to stop by the office to introduce yourself to her.

This year, we move forward with the 36-credit hour major, which is official with the publication of the 2016-2017 undergraduate catalog. We hope that the lower credit hours enable our students to make timely progress towards getting an undergraduate degree, and to consider double majoring or adding a minor from another department. Please make an appointment with me for academic advising if you would like to review your options!

This spring, WGS is offering courses ranging from "Introduction to Women and Gender Studies" to "Contemporary Feminist Theories" and "Trauma Narrative." We also offer many courses cross-listed with other departments, so declaring a double major or minor is easy. If you have any questions, please send us an email, call the office, or just drop in at 94 Bedford Street. Please make yourself at home in the house—you can fix yourself tea or coffee, and you are welcome to hang out or study.

Sincerely,



Professor Lisa Walker
Director, Women & Gender Studies
lwalker@maine.edu
207-780-4311



WGS Director Lisa Walker

Contents

- 1 Director's Welcome
- 2 Major/Minor & Core
- 3 Faculty Spotlight
- 6 Spring Courses
- 7 New Major Requirements
- 8 Thesis and Internship Q&A

Spring registration opens
November 6th!



94 Bedford Street, Portland Campus
M-F 8:00 – 4:30
(207) 780-4862 WGS@usm.maine.edu
<http://www.usm.maine.edu/WGS>

Facebook: USM Women and Gender Studies Program / YouTube: USMWGS

Major and Minor Requirements

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NEW 36 CREDIT MAJOR:

The Women & Gender Studies Program has updated the requirements for the major. We have switched from 42 to 36 credit hours. Read below for a full description of the changes. Anyone declaring their major will automatically be enrolled under the new requirements. If you declared before Spring 2016, you can change to the new major by setting up an advising appointment with Lisa Walker (contact info on front page).

6 Core Courses (18 credit hours)

WGS 101 Intro to Women and Gender Studies —or—
EYE 109 Gender, Representation and Resistance
—plus—

WGS 201 Women, Knowledge and Power
WGS 380 Politics of Difference
WGS 390 Contemporary Feminist Theories
WGS 490 Capstone Experience
WGS 485 Internship or WGS 486 Thesis

2 WGS Topics Courses (6 credits) from among these categories:

- Science, Technology and Health
- Culture and the Arts
- History and Resistance
- Gender and Institutions

4 Approved Electives Courses (12 credits)

A list is available at
www.usm.maine.edu/wgs/courses

One topics or elective course must fulfill a Non-Western requirement. Students who will be writing a thesis are strongly encouraged to take a Research Methods course.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE WGS MINOR:

1 Core Course at the 100-level

WGS 101 Intro to Women and Gender Studies —or—
EYE 109 Gender, Representation and Resistance

1 Core Course at the 200-level

WGS 201 Women, Knowledge and Power

1 Core Course at the 300-level

WGS 380 Politics of Difference
or WGS 390 Contemporary Feminist Theories

3 Approved Elective Courses

A list is available at: www.usm.maine.edu/wgs/courses

Fulfilling your Core Courses with WGS

Entry Year Experience:

EYE 109 "Gender, Representation, and Resistance" Femininity & masculinity mean different things to different people. Why? Examining the fundamental impact of gender on all human activity—artistic, scientific, religious, economic, political, legal, linguistic, this course wonders about sexuality, deviance, normalcy & the liberating power of pleasure.

Drawing on many disciplines, we will explore ideas of gender roles in many cultures and throughout history, focusing on the following questions: **What is gender?** How is it represented historically and cross-culturally? How have people redefined its meanings and representations? Gender, Students will learn definitions of gender in diverse cultures and times; the ways gender shapes daily interactions and human relationships; and the ways social institutions distribute power, resources, and status based on such meanings and on their relations with race, ethnicity, age, class, ability, sexuality, and nation. **Representation**, students will consider the impact of mass media, education, and political discourse on gender construction. **Resistance**, students will discover how people have reconsidered, resisted, and transformed traditional gender roles & representations

Socio-Cultural Analysis:

WGS 101 "Introduction to Women and Gender Studies" This course considers the economic, political, and social status of women and men and how ideas about femininity/masculinity and feminism are promoted through the media and other vehicles of culture. Books used by this course have included: *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* by Mary Pipher, *Dude, You're a Fag* by C. J. Pascoe and *Feminist Frontiers* by Richardson, Taylor & Whittier.

Cultural Interpretations:

WGS 201 "Women, Knowledge and Power" examines the relationship between gender, assumptions about truth, and the ways both affect how we experience the world. Books from past sections of the course have included: *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness* by Gerda Lerner, *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf, *Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, and *Black Feminist Thought* by Patricia Hill Collins.

Ethical Inquiry, Social Responsibility & Citizenship:

WGS 380 "Politics of Difference" explores some of the consequences of using such identity categories as race, nationality, religion, and sex to shape culture and gender relations within it. Books assigned for this course have included: *Gender Outlaw* by Kate Bornstein, *How Does it Feel to be a Problem* by Moustafa Bayoumi, *Hatreds* by Zillah Eisenstein and *Iran Awakening* by Shireen Ebadi.

Diversity:

WGS 201: Women, Knowledge and Power AND

WGS 390 "Contemporary Feminist Theories" introduces students to such feminist theoretical approaches as post-structuralism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, critical race theory, and post-colonialism. The focus of the course is the intimate relationships between feminist theories and feminist practices, locally and globally.

Many WGS courses also satisfy the International requirement and a WGS minor satisfies the "Cluster" requirement.

WST 470: Independent Study

Professor Lisa Walker

This course provides junior and senior students with the opportunity to pursue a project independently, concentrate on a particular subject of concern, or conduct individually arranged reading or research studies under the advice and direction of a faculty member. Prerequisite: junior or senior standing and permission of the director. 1-4 credits.

WST 485: Internship

Portland

M/W 2:45pm – 4:00pm

Professor Jim Messerschmidt

The internship requires students to work closely with a group, business, or organization for one semester, and to conduct research on a related topic to be presented at the annual undergraduate research conference "Thinking Matters." Prerequisites: senior standing and Women & Gender Studies major or minor. 4-6 credits.

WST 486: Thesis

Portland

Professor Lisa Walker

The thesis allows students to pursue guided research on a topic of their choosing. The minimum length for a thesis is 30 pages and includes a substantial bibliography. Thesis students should choose three readers, including an advisor whose interests and scholarship are in line with their own. Prerequisites: senior standing and Women & Gender Studies major or minor. Offered in the spring semester only. 4 credits.

WST 490: Capstone Experience

Portland

M 1:15pm – 2:30pm

Professor Lisa Walker

All students enrolled in either the internship or thesis option are required to participate in a capstone seminar. Students are expected to co-enroll in WST 490 and WST 485 or 486. 2 credits.

Help Revive the GSSO!

Did you know you could use student funds to organize feminist events on campus? For nearly ten years, the Gender Studies Student Organization has been a group for students who are interested in gender and feminist politics. In the past the GSSO has organized panel discussions, workshops and other events that examine contemporary social issues through a gender-conscious lens. Students have also used funds to travel to conferences and events. The GSSO is currently dormant, but you could be the one to revive this important student organization! Call, email or stop by the WGS office to learn more.

(wgs@usm.maine.edu | 780-4862 | 94 Bedford St, Portland)

Women & Gender Studies

Spring 2017 Course Listings, Continued

WGS 345/ENG 491: Seminar in Literature Since 1900: Baldwin and Morrison: Double and Triple Consciousness
Portland T/Th 11:45am – 1:00pm Professor Eve Raimon

This course compares the work of two of the most influential modern African American writers: James Baldwin and Toni Morrison. The course will complicate W.E.B. Du Bois' notion of "double consciousness" as both black and American by introducing the categories of gender and sexuality. Both writers challenged received norms in these areas in strikingly different ways. As well, we will pay particular attention to the various literary and rhetorical strategies Baldwin and Morrison employ in their critiques of the failed promises of U.S. democracy. Other central themes include the artist as social critic, Jim Crow segregation, and literature as a site for a critical reimagining of history. Finally, we will examine Baldwin's and Morrison's ideas concerning the complexities of race in the twentieth-first century. 3 credits.

WGS 345/GEO 302: Gender, Work and Space
Portland M/W 11:45am – 1:00pm Professor Lydia Savage

What does your mom do for a living? What about your dad? Chances are that your mom works with other women and your dad works with other men. Chances are also good that your dad's personal income is greater than your mom's. Why? More specifically, how do the gender, race, and ethnicity of workers propel certain types of people into certain types of work? What role do location and space play in shaping and sustaining such divisions in the workforce? How can a geographic understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, and class help explain the current restructuring of the economy? How effective have women been in organizing to improve their economic and social status? What role do place, space, and location play in the success of such strategies for change? These are among the questions we will tackle in this course by focusing on urban industrialized settings in the United States. In examining these questions, we shall pay particular attention to how people have identified and defined problems about gender and work; how they have gone about analyzing these problems; how they have assembled evidence; and how they have drawn their conclusions. 3 credits.

WGS 355/HTY 365: History of Women in the United States
Portland T/Th 1:15pm – 2:30pm Professor Eileen Eagan

This course examines the social, economic, and political history of women in the United States from about 1700 to 1980. Because it is impossible to actually do this in one semester, this class will focus on the movements in which women (and their male allies) engaged to improve their position-- that is, to win equality, freedom, and a decent economic condition. In particular we will look at the role of women in politics. Because not all women, or groups of women, have had the same history we will also examine the role that class, race, ethnicity and other factors played in shaping women's lives and the way they have written about their lives. Since this is a history course we will examine the ways in which the history of women has been constructed and represented: in textbooks, films, popular culture and historical monuments and sites. In particular we will look at the role of individual historians.

In addition to looking at the history of women in the U.S. on the broad scale, we will also look at it at the local level. In particular we will focus on women in cities, New York in particular. One part of the course may be a fieldtrip to sites important to women's history. 3 credits.

WGS 390/ENG 342: Topics in Contemporary Theory: Contemporary Feminist Theories
Portland M/W 11:45AM – 1:00PM Professor Eve Raimon

This course will introduce students to a range of feminist theoretical approaches. Its particular focus will be recent theories concerning the prison reform movement and its relation to issues of gender, including women and families as well as representations of masculinity in a prison context. Since the explosion in the 90s of the women of color sentenced to prison for non-violent drug offenses, the state has permanently severed a growing number of mothers from their children. This course will study theories of how to re-imagine and reshape the prison industrial complex. It also explores the intimate relationships between feminist theories and feminist practices, locally and globally. Prerequisites: WGS 101 or EYE 109, WGS 201 or permission of the instructor. 3 credits.

Faculty Spotlight

Professor Rosemary Cleary on her course, Trauma Narrative, offered Spring 2017

Q. What inspired you to develop this course?

A. I have a long-standing interest in feminist critique of the theory beneath the practice of clinical psychology. Such critique focuses attention on gendered power relations within families, societies, and cultures.

Q. What does it mean to say that trauma is a term used to describe collective, cultural phenomena?

A. Trauma is the damage caused by abuses of power. Within most psychological theory, these effects are seen as symptoms of individual psychopathology and treated as medical problems. Feminist psychologists resist this mode of understanding, and insist, as Judith Hermann (1992) lucidly argued, that the study of psychological trauma depends on the support of social and political movements. At this particular moment in our history – when the culture of rape and racism is suddenly making headlines -- this course offers students an opportunity to consider how narratives of trauma apply to individual suffering, shared legacies, and the consequence of imagining our age as an age of terror.

Texts for the course will include:

Barker, Pat. *Regeneration*; Hermann, Judith, *Trauma and Recovery*; Morrison, Toni, *The Bluest Eye*; Spiegelman, Art, *Maus I & II*; van der Kolk, Bessel. (2015) *The Body Keeps the Score*.

other selected readings will be provided.



Professor Jessica Ouellette on her course, Digital Feminisms, offered Spring 2017

Q. What inspired you to develop this course? What drew you to the material?

A. The inspiration for designing this course came out of my interest in the viability of the web as a site for feminist action. In my field (English Rhetoric and Composition), many scholars have questioned whether or not digital technology actually inhibits "productive" feminist conversations (and feminist rhetorical action online) from multiple perspectives. Indeed, as the technologies delivering feminist messages have changed, feminist rhetorical tactics have often developed upon those that preceded them while, at the same time, giving feminist messages new life. One of the major goals of "Digital Feminisms" is to think through and make visible the various ways contemporary feminists use digital technology to adapt and/or remix earlier feminist rhetorical strategies, as well as to question how technological advances influence the opportunities and limitations for feminist organizing, protest, and action.

Q. What's most exciting to you about the way the digital environment could be used for feminist organizing or action?

A. What I find so compelling about the digital is the way in which you can see and trace how feminist conversations have evolved, mutated, and/or changed over time as a result of technological advances. It is interesting, for instance, to think about the links between feminist rhetorical practices in the early twentieth century and feminist rhetorical practices in our present day. For example, in 1917, Alice Paul and other suffragettes famously picketed in front of the White House while holding banners with short, pithy sayings such as, "Mr. President: How long must women wait for Liberty?" Their juxtaposition of this short phrase with the image of the White House (a symbol of liberty and justice) relies on the same rhetorical tactics as memes, a genre contemporary feminists have used to make successful arguments about reproductive rights, Black Lives Matter, and sex-positivity to name a few. By making and exploring this type of connection between feminist rhetorical actions of different times and spaces, we are able to understand feminist rhetorical strategies as linked, complex, and intergenerational.



Women & Gender Studies Spring 2017 Course Listings

Page 4

WGS 101: Introduction of Women & Gender Studies

Portland M/W 10:15am - 11:30am Prof. Lorraine Carroll
Portland T/Th 11:00pm – 12:15pm Prof. Sarah Lockridge
Portland M 4:10pm – 6:40pm TBA
Web/Online Professor Sarah Lockridge

This course explores from a variety of perspectives the following inter-related themes and topics: the economic, political, and social status of women as a group and in discrete cultural contexts; the politics of representation, or how ideas about femininity/masculinity and feminism are promoted throughout the media and other vehicles of culture; the construction of “consciousness,” both through the media and through feminist tactics; women and collective action in the past, present, and future. Students are expected to practice their writing skills through formal essays. Satisfies core requirement for socio-cultural analysis. 3 credits

EYE 109 Gender, Representation, and Resistance

Portland T/Th 1:15pm – 2:30pm Professor Kate Winerger

Drawing on many disciplines, EYE 109 asks, what is gender and how is it represented historically and cross-culturally? Students consider the impact of mass media, education and political discourse on gender construction, and explore the liberating power of pleasure. 3 credits.

WGS 201: Women, Knowledge & Power

Portland T/Th 2:45pm – 4:00pm Professor Susan Feiner

This course examines the ways in which the politics of knowledge production shape culture and gender relations. It explores the ways women and men have historically resisted, subverted, appropriated and reformed traditional bodies of thought. 3 credits.

WGS 335/SOC 365: Sociology of the Body

Portland T 4:10pm - 6:40pm Professor Wendy Chapkis

Sociology of the Body examines the body as a text marked by, and rendered meaningful through, social categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, and disease. Course materials include social theory, autobiography, and fiction to explore how hierarchical distinctions are written on the body and, in turn, how such “natural” differences are then used to explain and to justify social inequality. Course readings include such texts as: *Unbearable Weight* by Susan Bordo, *Body Outlaws* edited by Ophira Edut, *Lessons from the Intersexed* by Suzanne Kessler, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. 3 credits.

WGS 335/SBS 349: Trauma Narrative *NEW*

Portland M 4:10pm – 6:40pm Professor Rosemary Cleary

This course examines the history and politics of the increasing recognition that trauma is both a core concern of contemporary clinical psychology and a term used to describe collective, cultural phenomena. We consider the social, psychological and cultural dimensions of trauma and how responses to trauma have come to be treated as medical problems in recent years. Areas of controversy within the field of trauma studies will also be explored. 3 credits.

WGS 245/ANT 299/TAH 262: Women, Arts and Global Tourism

Web/Online Professor Sarah Lockridge

This course explores the role of women who produce arts and crafts for the global tourist market. All over the world, women are improving their socio-economic status, investing in their families, and contributing to community development through their involvement in tourism. Tourism is perhaps the largest-scale movement of goods, services, and people in human history. We will learn about the historical and contemporary experiences of women from many different cultures such as: examples from Latin America, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia. Course content includes themes of cultural heritage, culture change, traditional versus tourist art, hosts versus guests, gender inequality, fair trade and community development 3 credits.

Page 5

WGS 345/ENG 387: Women Writers Since 1900: 20th Century Lesbian Fiction *NEW*

Portland M/W 10:15am – 11:30am Professor Lisa Walker

This course will survey twentieth-century British and American fiction in the lesbian literary tradition, exploring how reading and writing have helped to shape lesbian consciousness, community, and culture. Readings will include classic novels, popular texts, and postmodern fiction, as well as critical essays about lesbian literature, identity, and culture. Throughout the course, we will develop and maintain a focus on issues of identity, race, class, and sexuality by discussing topics such as lesbian visibility, feminism, lesbian subcultures, and literary style. 3 credits.

WGS 345/ENG 379: Earlier Women Writers

Portland M 4:10pm-6:40pm Professor Lorraine Carroll

This course examines the work of several Early American women writers from the 17th through the early 19th centuries, therefore these authors wrote and, sometimes, published their writing within the complex contexts of colonialism, revolution, and nation building. Students will pursue several critical strands regarding women’s writing, including an inquiry into conditions of female authorship (such as pseudonymy and collective production), the relationship between private composition and publication, claims and counterclaims about gender-specific topics, intersections of sexuality, race formations, economic status, religious influences, and questions of subjectivity and citizenship. The course includes a research project based on special collections and archival materials.

WGS 345/CMS 310: Women and Cinema

Web/Online Professor Rebecca Lockridge

In this course we will analyze representations of women in cinema from several countries from the 1960s to the present. The thematic focus of this course is the relationships between mothers and daughters in differing geographic locations as they negotiate borders and borderlands—some physical, some psychological/emotional. Some of the films discussed will offer resistance to social, political and intellectual marginalizing and silencing in patriarchal cultures, others are embedded in it. We will rely on communication and feminist theory as a means of understanding the films viewed. In addition, cinematic codes used as film language are discussed to enhance appreciation of multiple meanings of cinematic content—visual rhetoric. To this end, we will study intertextuality in visual and verbal constructions as well as intersectionality between women (and men) of differing races, classes, ethnicities, nationalities, genders in social, economic and political groupings. 3 credits.

WGS 345/PHI 312: Gender in African Literature and Film

Web/Online Professor Kathleen Winerger

Looking at Gender in African cultures challenges the binary heterosexual norm of European science, law, and philosophy in profound ways. In many African cultures there is gender fluidity, women can become men and take a wife. Children born to the wife are the female husband’s children. There can be male daughters. So although we will look at issues common in gender studies in America and Europe the very idea of gender will be new in these contexts. We will pick issues involving sustainability, war, children, marriage that range over men and women’s lives. Intellectual, cinematic and literary movements have had profound impacts on generations of thinkers in West, East, and Southern African. Important recent controversies in gender and postcolonial philosophy emerge as we explore African theory, fiction, and visual culture. 3 credits.

WGS 345/ENG 445: Digital Feminisms *NEW*

Portland T 4:10pm-6:40pm Professor Jessica Ouellette

This course will focus on the relationship between digital rhetoric and feminist practices in order to consider the ways in which structures and uses of digital platforms shape political projects and vice versa. We will use various feminist conversations and projects (e.g. SlutWalk, FEMEN, #gamergate, “Feministing,” #femfuture) as case studies to think through the unique possibilities and boundaries of sharing ideas and building coalitions through the use of digital rhetoric.

How do feminist rhetorics and practices change in digital environments? How does the rhetorical landscape of the web influence the opportunities and limitations for feminist organizing, protest, and action? How do web users use digital rhetoric to address issues related to identity and embodiment, such as race, gender, class, nationality, and sexuality? And how does digital rhetoric contribute to producing and shaping knowledge about these issues? Asking these and other questions, we will consider how communications on the web shape and are shaped by global political projects dedicated to addressing gendered inequalities. We will also always consider how feminist projects are implicated in and can resist other intersecting structures of power. 3 credits.