Greetings from Women and Gender Studies!

Students everywhere are raising their voices to demand systemic, global change. They’re organizing climate strikes, Black Lives youth marches, gun control rallies, and actions by #MeToo for youth.

They you are speaking truth with fierce urgency and your messages are getting through. We have all been put on notice: the time has come to address the violence of gender, racial, economic, and environmental injustices.

USM’s Women and Gender Studies (WGS) program is dedicated to working with students to sharpen their skills of critical analysis, historical and contextual understanding, and in expressing arguments and perspectives clearly and compellingly.

Join us to experience the transformative power of a feminist education. You will explore feminist theories and activist traditions and strengthen your academic, social, and political skills. These are the career skills that will help you make a difference in your world. They are also skills that will help you pursue further education in Law, Public Policy, History, and a whole host of other fields.

You are invited for lunch (and cupcakes) at a WGS Open House on October 30, noon – 2 pm.

Come meet faculty and students in the program!

Dr. Rose

Rose Cleary
Director, Women & Gender Studies

Contents

1 Director’s welcome
2 WGS Major/Minor & Core Curriculum
3 New Faculty Spotlight
4 Spring 2020 Courses
6 Apply for WGS travel scholarship!
7 “I Am What I Am” Writing submissions by WGS students
8 WGS Alumni Spotlight
9 Come visit us!

Spring course registration opens November 4th!

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

94 Bedford Street, Portland Campus
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(207) 780-4289 WGS@maine.edu usm.maine.edu/WGS
Facebook: Women and Gender Studies at the University of Southern Maine
Instagram: USM.WGS
Major and Minor Requirements

Requirements for the 36-Credit Major:
The minimum number of credits required for the major is 36.

For students fulfilling the Capstone requirement with the Internship, the Women and Gender Studies major consists of 24 hours of required courses and 12 hours of Women and Gender Studies related courses. For students fulfilling the Capstone requirement with the Thesis, the Women and Gender Studies major consists of 27 hours of required courses and 9 hours of Women and Gender Studies related courses.

6 Core Courses (18-21 credit hours)
WGS 101 Intro to Women and Gender Studies —or—
EYE 109 Gender, Representation and Resistance —plus—
WGS 201 Rethinking Gender & Culture
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

Approved Electives Courses (9-12 credits)
A list is available at www.usm.maine.edu/wgs/courses

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 Rethinking Gender & Culture

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"
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 "Rethinking Gender & Culture" 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, WGS 101, WGS 380, 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.
Q&A with GenderSci Lab Assistant Director Heather Shattuck-Heldorn, Newly-Appointed Assistant Professor of Women and Gender Studies at the University of Southern Maine

GSL: Heather, congratulations on your new position. What most excites you about this new faculty position?

HSH: I’m most excited to be practicing science from within a Women and Gender Studies program! WGS has always been so interdisciplinary - just inherently so, really - but historically there has been either difficulty incorporating science or even friction between WGS and science programs. Which is too bad, because there’s always been so much overlap between WGS topics and scientific topics - for human biology it’s obvious, but those intersections are also there for research funding, scientific ethics, approaches to climate change - you name it. For me, I’m a biological anthropologist, and so my discipline (which aims to understand variation in human biology) really sits squarely within the topics of concern for WGS. I’m really happy to be here, launching a scientific research program that is rooted in feminist understandings of science as a social institution, research ethics, and approaches to methods and hypothesis formation. I think being here gives me the freedom to really do this explicitly, rather than adhering to disciplinary norms while adding the feminism and gender concerns on the side. I am also excited to be here because I think this is the direction programs are moving across the country - we saw that this year, there were just so many jobs (well, relatively speaking) that were looking for expertise in both feminism and science, in some way.

And I also need to say that I am just delighted to be back at my undergraduate alma mater, the University of Southern Maine. Students here are really special, we truly serve the community that we are part of, and our students are so committed, so focused. A lot of folks have families and jobs, or other things going on - and it’s just so exciting to see how learning can be so mind-expanding and create so many opportunities for folks. We’re changing lives!

GSL: How did you come to specialize in gender and science?

HSH: Well, I’ve always been interested in WGS issues. I worked at my undergrad women’s center, have identified as a feminist for a very long time. But, like many people, I had this sort of conception that feminism was “political” and science was, you know, “objective and neutral”. Like the two couldn’t go together.

This first started to change for me when I became aware of the shockingly sexist and racist history of my home discipline, anthropology, and biological anthropology in particular. Early evolutionary biologists and biological anthropologists were deeply invested in using scientific methodologies to support racist and sexist ideologies. And the research, looking back at it, is so obviously flawed, poorly designed, etc. They were so bent on proving what they wanted to find that they simply subverted the supposedly “neutral” enterprise of science to justify their own world views.

So as I was reading about how scientists of yore were (subconsciously or not) really operating out of their own beliefs and position, it became clear that this is always true, to an extent. Scientists are not neutral. I engage in work around gender and science in order to better understand how starting positions, assumptions, background beliefs, and personal biases can end up influencing how scientists conduct research - what questions are asked, what data are used to investigate hypotheses, how analyses are conducted, and how evidence is interpreted.

I also study gender as a biosocial variable. This simply means that I study how gender (social norms, gender-related roles, gender-related exposures, etc) influence our biology. It is quite common for human biologists to consider environmental and social exposures in their work. Stress, environmental contamination, racism or discrimination, poverty, early childhood trauma - these are all examples of social variables that have clear impacts on human biology. But often, when we consider biological differences between men and women, we forget that men and women can have drastically different environments (think diet, income, education, stress levels, relationships, etc). Instead of considering possible social causes, when we find biological differences between men and women, we usually turn to sex to explain them. So we start looking for genetic relationships, hormone levels, etc. Generally, I think gender is under-explored as a contributor to biological outcomes.

For the full Q&A: genderscllab.org
WGS 101: Introduction to Women & Gender Studies
Gorham  MW 4:10pm – 5:25pm  Professor Heather Shaltuck-Heidorn
Portland MW 10:15am – 11:30am  Professor Heather Shaltuck-Heidorn
Portland T 4:10pm – 6:40pm  Professor Wendy Chapkis
Portland TR 11:45am – 1:00pm  Professor Kim Simmons
Online  Professor Sarah Lockridge

From a variety of perspectives, this interdisciplinary course explores interrelated queries and topics that emerge from the field of Women and Gender Studies. Students will read materials that address the meanings of gender in different cultures, social organizations, and historical periods. The course particularly investigates difference, specifically, how gender difference is constructed, practiced, represented, challenged, and experienced. 3 credits.

WGS 201: Rethinking Gender & Culture
Portland TR 1:15pm – 2:30pm  Professor Julianne Siegfriedt

What is gender? Is it innate or learned? How many genders and sexes are there? What is gender inequality? How does gender intersect with other categories of difference such as race, class and sexuality? How are these differences understood in various national contexts? These are some of the questions that feminist, gender and sexuality studies take up, and the questions that we will pursue in this class. 3 credits.

WGS 220: Feminist Yoga
Portland R 4:10pm – 6:40pm  Professor Melora Gregory

This class both explores the intersection of yoga and social justice and teaches yoga as a feminist self-care practice. Although yoga has been commodified in ways that promote fitness obsession and body shaming, inherent in its philosophy is establishing self-acceptance and knowing our true nature. Yoga asks us to be in the body fully and to let go of harmful constrictions of self; it offers a safe space in a framework grounded in liberation from suffering. It can be useful to help feminists find connection and joy in a sometimes frustrating and angry world. Each class will have a yoga teacher lead 30-45 minutes of discussion. 60-90 minutes of gentle physical practice, followed by breath work and guided meditation. Beginners welcome—you do not need to have any prior experience of yoga, and you don’t need to be a feminist to take the class.

Melora Gregory, the lead instructor, has been teaching yoga for 25 years. She has studied anatomy, prop active and restorative posture practice, trauma informed yoga, yoga nidra, yoga philosophy, breath awareness and meditation. 2 credits. Pass/Fail.

WGS 245/ANT 255: Women, Arts, & Global Tourism
Gorham TR 12:30pm – 1:45pm  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.

WGS 265/ANT 232: Anthropology of Sex & Gender
Gorham W 4:10pm – 6:40pm  Professor Marcia-Anne Dobres

Gender is a fundamental platform for the organization of society. The social meanings given to bodies, sexuality, procreation, parenting, and work extend beyond notions of identity, interpersonal relationships, sexuality, and households. Gender also involves economics, government, religion, politics, science, technology, war, and globalization. This course rests on the premise that sex and gender are both “culturally constructed” and explores how gendered practices and beliefs serve as “systems” of differentiation. The “politics of difference” is explored across a variety of Western and non-Western cultures. 3 credits.

WGS 335/SOC 365: Sociology of the Body
Portland M 4:10pm – 6:40pm  Professor Wendy Chapkis

This course 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. Students will learn to assess social constructionist and biological determinist explanations for such differences and inequalities. 3 credits.

WGS 335/SBS 349: Trauma & Narrative
Portland T 4:10pm – 6:40pm  Professor Rose 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, historical 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 345/PHI 312: Morality in African Literature & Film
Online
Professor Kate Wininger

This is going to be an exciting and extremely varied course! Weekly work will involve seeing an African film, YouTube lectures/TED talks, looking at images of Art, reading theoretical and fictional material. This course 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 examine 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 post-colonial philosophy emerge as we explore African theory, fiction, and visual culture. 3 credits.

WGS 345/ENG 383: Baldwin & Morrison
Portland MW 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 twenty-first century. 3 credits.

WGS 345/ENG 344: Digital Feminisms: Social Action Online
Portland TR 2:45pm – 4:00pm
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.

WGS 365/SWO 365: Examining Oppression & Valuing Diversity
Online
Professor Hermeet Kohli

This course is designed to provide a framework for understanding and respecting cultural diversity. The cultural aspects of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and ableness will be discussed. A central theme in organizing the course is the examination of the role of oppression in shaping lives of members of various cultural groups. 3 credits.

WGS 365/SBS 399: Gender, Education, and Schooling
Portland R 4:10pm – 6:40pm
Professor Christy Hammer

This course addresses both historical and contemporary issues of gender through a comparative lens in education and schooling drawing primarily from behavioral and social sciences, philosophy, and education studies to explore how the philosophy of knowledge, practice of education, and the experience of schooling are gendered. Scholarly work will be supplemented with research and analysis from governmental and professional organizations. We will analyze elements of gender-fair learning including the politics and economics of schooling, social reproduction theory, gender power identity and culture, gendered moral development, and assumptions of gender differences in intellectual-cognitive functioning and brain lateralization. Study will also include gender issues in curriculum development and implementation, the “chilly climate” for girls in schools and classrooms, Civil Rights and education laws and regulations, interventions related to gender inequality in schools, the “what about the boys” education debate, patterns of gender achievement in schools, in classroom instruction and pedagogical versus “andragogical” practices, and in assessment in schools including that in both standardized and “authentic” assessment practices. Also covered is the intersectionality of gender to race and class in education, sex education, females and STEM, and the gendered nature of expectations, academic and career choices, and outcomes or what Max Weber calls “life chances”. 3 credits.
WGS Spring 2020 Courses (Continued)

WGS 365/SOC 380: Family Violence
Portland W 4:10 – 6:40pm Professor Julianne Siegfriedt

This course applies an intersectional and interdisciplinary perspective to family violence. We will explore social causes and consequences of intimate partner abuse, marital rape, child abuse, violence within LGBTQ families and relationships, and elder abuse. The role of gender, race, class, ability, age, and other intersectional aspects of identity will be explored as they relate to experiences of family violence.

The class will bring in primarily sociological and feminist theoretical approaches to understanding family violence in society. Societal responses within the criminal justice system, social service agencies, and widespread social movements will also be explored. In addition to social responses to various forms of family violence, we will review global instances of violence and the ways in which family violence is often gendered and embedded within institutions and cultures. 3 credits.

WGS 390 Contemporary Feminist Theories
Portland T 10:15am – 12:45pm Professor Heather Shattuck-Heldorn

This course provides a survey of several contemporary feminist frameworks for thinking about sex, gender, and sexuality as they intersect with race, class, nation, etc. The focus of the course is 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.

WGS 470: Independent Study

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. Prerequisites: advanced standing and permission of the instructor. 1 – 6 credits.

WGS 485: Internship
Portland TR 2:45pm – 4:00pm Professor Rose Cleary

The internship requires students to work closely with a group, business, or organization for one semester. Students will write a research paper on a topic related to their internship experience and will present that research in the spring semester. Prerequisites: senior standing and women and gender studies major or minor. 4 – 6 credits.

WGS 486: Thesis
Portland Times & Days TBA Professor Rose Cleary

The thesis allows students to pursue guided research on a topic of their choosing. Students writing a thesis should plan a two-semester sequence; WGS 486 should be preceded either by an independent study in the student’s area of interest, or WGS 484, Feminist Thesis Workshop. Thesis students should choose three readers, including an advisor whose interests and scholarship are in line with their own. The minimum length for a thesis is 30 pages, and should include a substantial bibliography. Thesis students must present their work in a public venue in the spring semester. Senior thesis students will take WGS 490, Capstone, simultaneously with WGS 486, to fulfill the capstone requirement. Prerequisites: senior standing and women and gender studies major or minor. 4 credits.

WGS 490: Capstone Experience in Women & Gender Studies
Portland TR 2:45pm – 4:00pm Professor Rose Cleary

All majors are required to select either an internship or thesis for their senior capstone experience. Students enrolled in either option are required to participate in a weekly seminar. Students are expected to co-enroll in WGS 490 and WGS 485 or 486. Offered in the Spring Semester only. 2 credits.

Study Award Scholarship

This award is offered in support of off-campus study opportunities for a University of Southern Maine WGS Major or Minor who plans to extend scholarly work in the area of women and gender. These opportunities may include, for example, attending a conference or institute or participating in a study abroad program. The application for funding should be submitted to the Director the semester before funds are needed.

Award: Up to $900
Deadline: Spring Semester. Must be submitted the semester before funds are needed.

FMI on how to apply and for information on other scholarship opportunities, please email Cathy at wgs@maine.edu
In Professor Siegfriedt’s Intro to Women and Gender Studies course, students are assigned to read Rosario Morales’ piece, “I Am What I Am” from This Bridge Called My Back and write their own version which they read for the class. What students choose to share about their lives is truly moving, breaking down stereotypes and connecting to one another as these two outstanding students demonstrate here. (Shared with permission.)

I Am What I Am

I am what I am. I am an Iraqi American, I am muslim American. I am the outcast of my own nationality. I am the Muslim feminist yet that is hard for some to understand. I am what I am but I’m being told to be different, but no matter who I impersonate I am still who I am so why can’t I be who I am? I am not a threat when I am on my knees Praying. I am still a muslim when I say I am a feminist. So you see no matter if I was what some people would call “Americanized” I’m still perceived as a threat to some. So you see I am what I am even the Muslim feminist. I am an outcast in my own religion I am an outcast in the so called “home of the free”. I am what I am. I am muslim, although a five year old muslim girl thinks I have no shame for not covering my hair. I am American although I’ve been told by many as a retail worker that I do not speak english and that I should go back to where I came from. I am an imperfection in every community but one. The community where my mind fights for equal justice and my heart fights for peace. If being pro choice, accepting of every sex, gender, religion, nationality, disability and the opportunity for all is an imperfection to you I will still be who I am. I am who I am and I am my own home when all I am known for is being a flaw.

-Nora Khuder

I Was What I Was

I was what I was, unwillingly born into the position of societal advantage, a straight white male. I performed what was expected of a male. Childhood sickness causing severe malnutrition made me physically weak, yet I was still expected to participate in the heavy lifting. I loved connecting emotionally with others, yet I was expected to keep all my emotion inside. I wanted nothing to do with sex, yet I was expected to hunger for it and crave it. I wanted to avoid scrutiny, yet ironically this was what I was expected to do. I chose to make the devil, maintain a masculine persona in order to disappear. I was what I was as a defense mechanism. Due to my sickness I struggled to perform everyday tasks, I had trouble working in school, I was always running on fumes. The consequences of these shortcomings were not scrutinized because I did not belong to a disadvantaged group. My laziness was forgiven, my acne was forgiven, my apathy was forgiven, my late work was forgiven. I knew none of my external expressions aligned with my core self but diverting from the norm meant using energy I did not have. I was what I was because I could only be what was expected of me. Then suddenly twenty years in I was two people living in one, a reinforced husk of masculinity and an anxiety-ridden core of femininity. This misalignment could not last long, it was only a matter of time before it all crumbled. This was until I realized that through proper nourishment I could change my world for the better.

I am what I am, a bisexual white woman coping with an eating disorder and gender dysphoria. Honestly, I have no idea what people expect of me, am I perceived as an oddity? I know I don’t fully pass, not even close. Do I look like a hipster? I notice people staring, I wonder what’s going through their head. Can they see my acne scarring through my incompetent makeup job? My voice and frame are vaguely masculine but most of what I can control is feminine. Is it visible that I’m at the bottom of the BMI chart? If I wear more strictly feminine attire will the point be made or will it look like I’m trying too hard? Do I deserve to be treated as a woman? If I ask someone to use a different name and pronoun will they be mad? I honestly have little idea what I’m doing, there is no official transgender training. I wasn’t socially allowed to be in on girly things growing up, so I have little practice with it. I love wearing dresses I love how they flow! But will I be judged if I wear one in public? When is the appropriate time for what clothes? There are so many cues that are not native to my point of view, I don’t know if I’m seen as impolite for an action that I didn’t know was implicit. Is there bathroom courtesy I don’t know about? All I know is that I’m doing my best to live up to other people’s expectations, hopefully their expectations now align better with who I am inside.

I am what I am, my gender is not aligned with my sex, yet my sex often governs what is expected of me. My disordered eating is nearly invisible, yet it commands my life. Honestly, I must thank my sex and race regardless of how much I feel I don’t deserve their associated privilege, if they didn’t have my back while I was at my weakest, I would most likely have been dead by now. I feel that everyone deserves the benefit of the doubt regardless of their exterior, not just those that were lucky enough to be born with societaly privileged characteristics.

-An up-and-coming trans woman
WGS Alumni Spotlight

Jesse Rae Lucas, class of 2018

1. What role does WGS play in your life? In your work?
   Working at a domestic violence resource center, my experience with WGS has been extremely helpful. I am able to apply different theories and ideas I learned in my coursework to my actual work. It has helped me remain intersectional in my work and aware of my internal biases. Being a trainer for new staff as well as for LCSW’s, I talk a lot about systems of oppression and their impact on marginalized communities, something that I feel comfortable talking about because of my WGS background.

2. How did the knowledge you gained through WGS change you?
   It really opened my eyes not only to the injustices of the world, but to a wealth of knowledge that I would have otherwise not realized existed. It has given me context to how the world works and how others see it, as well as a multitude of resources to use as I navigate work and grad school.

3. Do you have any advice for current students thinking about majoring in WGS?
   Be patient and open with yourself. There is a good chance some of the assignments are going to challenge your way of thinking, and that can be difficult. Being open to all that you can learn and being willing to shift your views of the world to be more inclusive is crucial in this program. I know after majoring in WGS I graduate with a better understanding of society and how it works.

4. What advice would you give to students who are choosing their Capstone projects (either the thesis or the internship)?
   Choose a passion of yours. I was hired by the same agency I did my internship at and I couldn’t be happier. This agency recognized my passion for the work I was doing as an intern, and that was a driving factor for why I was hired. If you choose a thesis, it is a lot of work and research, and being passionate about the subject is going to make it a lot easier and more interesting.

5. What was your favorite thing about studying WGS at USM?
   The community. I have the best group of friends because of this program. They are wonderful, beautiful, supportive, amazing people who have the same values and passions as I do. I’ve never valued a group of friends more than this one.