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. We are pleased to announce a new, 36-credit hour major. We hope that the lower credit hours enable our students to make timely progress towards getting an undergraduate degree, and to consider the possibility of double majoring or adding a minor from another department. As an interdisciplinary major itself, Women and Gender Studies encourages students to experience how the knowledge of one discipline enhances the depth and breadth of another. If you have questions about switching to the new WGS Major beginning in the fall, please make an advising appointment! You can read more about the new major on page 3.

In the fall, WGS is offering courses ranging from "Introduction to Women and Gender Studies" to "Women, Knowledge and Power." 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.

Sincerely,

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

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Student Spotlight

WGS Double-Major Sam Pingree on Zombies and Disability Justice

I’m Sam, and I’m double majoring in Women & Gender Studies and Social Work. This is my last semester of WGS and I’m doing my senior thesis on disability theory and the zombie apocalypse. After one of my social work professors offensively compared Autistics to zombies, I became curious about the many parallels drawn between zombies and the disabled in popular culture. Gradually, the thesis idea developed that our societal obsession with zombies is a reflection of cultural anxieties about the contagion—and containment—of disability and disabled people. My research into this led to the formation of the secondary level of my thesis, which is that able-bodied society projects their fears of the potential darkness or evil inside of themselves onto the disabled in an attempt to dissociate from it and control it. However, in doing this, they end up strengthening their own inner darkness as they willfully participate in a society that marginalizes an innocent population (the disabled) in the same ways they feared the disabled—or zombies—would marginalize them.

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Fulfilling your Core Courses with WGS

Entry Year Experience:

EYE 109 "Gender, Representation, and Resistance" 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. Books assigned for this course may include: Gender by R.W. Connell, Women at the Point Zero by Nawal El Saadawi, and Guerrilla Girls Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art by the Guerrilla Girls

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: Rewriting Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls by Mary Pipher, Dude, You're a Fag! by C.J. Pascoe and Feminist Frontlines by Richardson, Taylor & Whitner.

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 Greta Lerner, A Room of One's Own by Virginia Woolf, Handmade'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 Miranda July, The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood, Women and Heirs: Gender, Class, and the Struggle for Women’s Rights by Zillah Eisenstein, and Iran Awakening by Sheen Ebadat.

Diversity:

WGS 201: Women, Knowledge and Power

WGS 380 Politics of Difference

AND

WGS 390 Contemporary Feminist Theories

This course 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 feminism.

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

14 courses are required for the WGS major:

6 Core Courses

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

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 from among these categories:

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

6 Approved Elective Courses

A list is available at

www.usm.maine.edu/wgs/courses

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

6 courses are required 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

WGS 320 Qualitative Research Methods

Portland T: 4:10-6:40PM

Prof. Wendy Chapkis

This course provides an overview of the process of social research utilizing qualitative methods. Topics include the logic and principles of the research process, as well as specific techniques in qualitative research (e.g., writing field notes, conducting interviews, analyzing qualitative data). Prerequisite: SOC 210 with a grade of C or better or permission of instructor. 3 credits. **Suggested for all WGS students who are interested in writing a thesis.**

WGS 333 ENG 315: Madness, Medicine and Monsters: Women and Gender in Gothic Fiction

Portland Prof. Lisa Walker

Gothic literature, known for mystery, monsters, and ghosts, emerged in late 18th century. It had its heyday in the 19th and 20th centuries, but it continues today in genres such as science fiction and horror, and in postcolonial and postmodern literary discourses. Frequently portraying pursued heroines, suffering bodies and tortured minds, the Gothic is a fascinating place to explore intersections of literature, medicine, and gender. This course will focus on how Gothic fiction and film from the 18th to the 21st century depicts women as both regulated by and resistant to medical discourses of hysteria, contagion, madness, and reproduction. It will explore Gothic representations of how medicine, science and technology classify bodies in the service of controlling disease, healing the sick, and civilizing the world. In particular, it will study how female characters intervene in this nexus of knowledge and power. Readings will include both primary literary texts and literary and film criticism. Prerequisites: ENG 100 required. Suggested, ENG 120, ENG 140, or WGS 101. 3 credits.

WGS 345 Cinema & Women

Online Prof. Rebecca Lockridge

This course examines representations of women in feature-length films produced in the US and in other countries around the globe between 1960 and the present. Some of the films discussed will offer resistance to, or be influenced by, their own cultural or social context. Films will be examined through the lens of feminist theory, and will be used to explore how gender is represented in the films. 3 credits.

WST 345 ENG 445: Topics in Cultural Studies: Witchcraft

Portland M 4:10PM-6:40PM

Professor Lomaryne Carroll

This course, taught in a senior seminar format, focuses on the North American contexts of witchcraft. We will read closely historical documents related to the Salem events of 1692, events that inform many subsequent representations of North American witchcraft. That is, Salem haunts all American and global cultures, both on our own screens and in the mass media. This course explores the nature of witchcraft, both historically and as it is represented in the popular imagination, as well as the complex legacy of witchcraft today. Prerequisites: WGS 101, WST 201 or permission of the instructor. 3 credits.

WGS 365 CRM 317: Gender and Crime

Portland M 4:10PM-6:40PM

Prof. Jim Messerschmidt

This course examines gender and its relation to crime. It explores such issues as the politics of crime, the criminal justice system, and the gendered character of crime. 3 credits.

WGS 380 The Politics of Difference

Portland W 4:10PM-6:40PM

Prof. Wendy Chapkis

This course 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 feminism.

Many WGS courses also satisfy the International requirement and a WGS minor satisfies the "Cluster" requirement.
Women & Gender Studies
Fall 2016 Course Listings

WGS 101: Introduction to Women & Gender Studies
Portland T/TH 8:45AM-10:00AM Prof. Susan Feiner
This course explores 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 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.

WGS 201: Women, Knowledge & Power
Portland T/TH 11:15AM - 1:00PM Prof. Wendy Chlipakis
This course examines the ways in which the politics of knowledge production shape both global North and South cultures and their gender relations. It explores the role of educational institutions as they function to promote antifeminist culture, and the ways women have historically resisted, subverted, appropriated, and reformed traditional bodies of thought. Attention will be given to how competition, intimidation, and other factors have inhibited the formation of feminist communities of scholars/learners. Students will practice different modes of interpretation and writing, including personal narrative, socio-historical work, and contemporary cultural analysis. 3 credits.

WGS 245/PHI 221: Philosophy of Art
Portland T 4:10-6:40PM Prof. Kate Wininger
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 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.

WGS 245: Women, Arts, & Global Tourism
Web/Online Prof. Sarah Lockridge
This course explores the role of women who produce art 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.
Faculty Spotlight Continued...

I was inspired to develop this course because the content addresses several interests of mine—film studies, visual rhetoric, and mother/daughter relationships. I have found film a valuable vehicle for teaching many important concepts in all my classes. As for the theme of this course, the importance of mother/daughter relationships was largely ignored until the publication of Of Woman Born (1976). Adrienne Rich wrote that the bond between mother and daughter—“essential, distorted, misused—is the great unwritten story.” A great many texts about motherhood, mothering and mothers and daughters followed, but few examine the role of communication in creating, developing and maintaining this most significant of human relationships. In addition, I have witnessed a lack of visual literacy in students despite the increasing emphasis on visual messages in our modern world. Cinema and Women allows me to introduce students to these topics and the rich interface between them.

Q: What inspired you to develop this course? What drew you to the material?  
A: Teaching the material changed the way I think about it. I was inspired to develop this course because the content addresses several interests of mine—film studies, visual rhetoric, and mother/daughter relationships. I have found film a valuable vehicle for teaching many important concepts in all my classes. As for the theme of this course, the importance of mother/daughter relationships was largely ignored until the publication of Of Woman Born (1976). Adrienne Rich wrote that the bond between mother and daughter—“essential, distorted, misused—is the great unwritten story.” A great many texts about motherhood, mothering and mothers and daughters followed, but few examine the role of communication in creating, developing and maintaining this most significant of human relationships. In addition, I have witnessed a lack of visual literacy in students despite the increasing emphasis on visual messages in our modern world. Cinema and Women allows me to introduce students to these topics and the rich interface between them.

Q: What are some of your favorite texts and why?  
A: Adrienne Rich wrote that the bond between mother and daughter—“essential, distorted, misused—is the great unwritten story.”

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Professor Lisa Walker on her course Madness, Medicine and Monsters: Women and Gender in Gothic Fiction

Q: What inspired you to develop this course? What drew you to the material?  
A: My nursing students in EYE 110, Literature and Medicine, inspired me to develop this course. Every semester that I teach EYE, I had really smart, really engaged nursing students who did such a great job with literary analysis. I really wanted to create an upper-level medical humanities course that might appeal to them, and to other students. The Gothic is such an interesting genre for exploring gender and sexuality, and people are now beginning to define the field of the "medical Gothic"—it seemed like a natural fit for a new Women and Gender Studies Course.

Q: What are some of your favorite texts and why?  
A: One of my all-time favorite novels is Carmilla, by Sheridan Le Fanu. It predates Dracula, and it’s about a young woman who is seduced and preyed upon by a female vampire called Carmilla. It’s a really interesting text on its own, but it’s also been adapted many times, into many forms, including Hammer Studios’ “B” horror films, adult comic books, and opera. Most lately, it’s been adapted as a web series on YouTube.

Q: Has teaching the material changed the way you think about it?  
A: Teaching the medical Gothic has really made me think of the Gothic as a whole differently. I see so many more connections between Gothic themes of evil, hybridity, and monstrousness and science, disease, and medical technology. I love it when my students point out a connection that I haven’t made, and when they suggest new books for me to read.

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Professor Rebecca Lockridge on her course Cinema and Women

Q: What inspired you to develop this course? What drew you to the material?  
A: In Cinema and Women, communication theories used to investigate varying aspects of relationships between Mothers and Daughters from the US and other nations are paired with films with similar content from the US and other nations. We use both feminist film theory and theories about visual rhetoric to guide our analysis of the written and visual texts.