

Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies

Spring 2020 Graduate Courses

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To get a **Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies Graduate Minor (12 credit hours)**, you need to take 6 hours at the 7000 level (choose two of these three: WGS 7150, WGS 7500 and WGS 7900) and 6 hours of WGS-approved electives that are listed as 4000 and above..

WGS COURSE OFFERINGS

WGS 4500.1

Female Friendships: Fictional Critical Perspectives

Women have often been told that we are terrible at being friends because we are unkind and competitive in relation to each other. It is commonly assumed, moreover, that we will abandon our women friends for romantic relationships. "Female Friendship: Fictional and Critical Perspectives" will address these issues by engaging students in detailed readings of primary and secondary sources portraying friendships between two girls or women and requiring that they think analytically about the ways the authors studied characterize female friendships. We will examine how six novels and two memoirs, taking place in various time periods and racial and cultural milieus, portray female friendship. In each portrayal, we will study how the friendship between the two female characters begins and how it changes over time as the characters age. We will also read two recent studies, each seeking to define the specificity of friendships between women. We will examine how these studies relate to the novels and memoirs.

Kate Jensen

T/Th 3:00pm-4:20pm

WGS 4500.2

Black Feminist Theory

Black Feminist Theory and Activism is a course that centers black women's rich intellectual traditions and political commitments in the United States. Over the course of the semester, we will critically examine the theoretical underpinnings and politics of modern black feminist thought. Students will be introduced to both historical and contemporary black women intellectuals and activists through reading assignments, in-class exercises, films, and written assignments. The course gives equal weight to the articulation and *praxis* of black feminism, focusing on several black feminist activist moments and movements from the past thirty years.

The first five weeks of the course will focus on the emergence and evolution of black feminist thought. Students will read some of the key scholars and activists whose work has defined the field. The remaining ten weeks will be focused on activism. We will examine some of the critical issues around which black feminists have organized—sexual harassment, police violence against black people, prison abolition—and learn what a black feminist approach to social change and social justice looks like.

Cat Jacquet

T/Th 3:00pm-4:20pm

WGS 7500

Queer Affects and Emotions: Contemporary LGBTQ+ Cultures

This course, which will be taught in English, will examine how queer affects and emotions represented in cultural texts on or by LGBTQI+ people contribute to producing, disseminating, and transforming contemporary cultures, mostly within the Iberian Peninsula and Latin American context. Affects and emotions can be understood as "transformational" (Sedgwick 2003), as constituting an "archive of feelings" (Cvetkovich 2003), as retrospective perceptions of queer experiences and cultures (Love 2007), or as performing a transhistorical "queer touch" (Dinshaw 1999). Affects and emotions can also be understood as "the emotionality of texts," (Ahmed 2004) the way "texts are 'moving,' or how they generate affects...the way in which texts name or perform different emotions" (13). Moreover, Ahmed comments on the subversive value of emotions, and on emotions as cultural constructions. From queer shame to gay pride, affects are intimately tied to knowledge produced, disseminated, and transformed through LGBTQI+ texts and practices. We will explore foundational work on queer affect, while examining particularly the geographic and cultural specificity of Spain and Latin America. We will analyze cultural texts that probe the psychological, political, and cultural work of multiple emotions and affects. We will consider the challenges these texts pose to received notions of national identities, immigration, hegemonic gender positions, historical memory, and the intellectual conceptualization of the human experience. We will also engage with those texts by challenging how queer and brown bodies are treated, and addressing the specificity of experience in diverse geographic and linguistic spaces. This interdisciplinary course will use postcolonial, transnational, queer, and feminist approaches to address the complexities of sexualities, affect theories and emotions from perspectives that decenter and challenge centric epistemologies and methodologies. Theoretical texts and primary materials will be drawn mainly from the Iberian Peninsula and Latin American contexts, with a focus on Transatlantic approaches; primary materials may include poetry, novels, film, and social media, among others, and will all be encountered in English or in English translation.

Elena Castro

W 4:30pm-7:20pm

Related Interest

CMST 7966: Queer Futures

Queer epistemologies and histories centrally emphasize the politics and importance of queer worldmaking and futurity. This course engages queer, queer of color, and Indigenous queer theories that conceptualize and consider the possibilities of queer futures and worlds. Throughout this class, we will survey scholarship that considers: 1) How do cisheteronormative framings of the past, present, and future shape what kind of worlds we imagine; 2) How do queer bodies perform inhabitations that transgress dominant norms of gender, sexuality, race, nation, class, and ability; 3) How we can conceptualize queerness or queer worlds at the

intersections of race, nationhood, ability, bio-politics, science/medicine/technology, imperialism/settler colonialism, and animality; 4) What does it do to reorient and center queer thought on queer people of color and Indigenous thinkers, activists, and artists; and, 5) What is a *queer* future?

Dr. Ashley Mack

M 3:30pm-6:20pm