

Women's Studies and Gender Studies

Major, Minor and Honours

The university offers an interdisciplinary Minor, Major, and Honours program in Women's Studies and Gender Studies (WSGS).

To complete any of these programs, students need to take WSGS 2016: Introduction to Women's Studies and Gender Studies as this is a foundational course for the program. Note, as an interdisciplinary program, not all courses are offered every year. Students are encouraged to consult the WSGS Program Coordinator to see a complete list of course offerings in a given year. The Program Coordinator will happily work with students to help them develop their specific program of study.

Minor in Women's Studies and Gender Studies

A minor in Women's Studies and Gender Studies requires the completion of WSGS 2016: Introduction to Women's Studies and Gender Studies and an additional 12 credit hours for a total of 18 credit hours. The additional 12-credit hours must be in two different fields from the cross-listed courses identified by WSGS in the list of online options and below.

Major in Women's Studies and Gender Studies

A major in Women's Studies and Gender Studies consists of 36 credit hours of course work beyond the 1000 level in two different fields. Six credit hours of the 36 credit hours are earned through the successful completion of WSGS 2016: Introduction to Women's Studies and Gender Studies and remaining courses can be selected from the cross-listed courses identified in this section of the calendar and online designated as WSGS in course offerings.

Honours in Women's Studies and Gender Studies

An Honours in Women's Studies and Gender Studies consists of 48 credit hours of courses beyond the 1000 level, of which 6 credit hours must be WSGS 2016: Introduction to Women's Studies and Gender Studies and an additional 6 credit hours must be in theory or methods. These courses could include an Honours thesis seminar or workshop of 3 or 6 credit hours. An Honours thesis, valued at 6 credit hours, is also required. The details of your program should be worked out with the WSGS Program Coordinator in your third year of study.

WSGS-2016. Introduction to Women's Studies and Gender Studies

This is the introductory course to the interdisciplinary field of Women's Studies and Gender Studies. The basis of femininity, masculinity and women's inequality are examined in the context of wider social relations, including the historical subject, literary voice and the women's movement.

WSGS-3013. Women's Studies and Gender Studies Research Methods

This is a foundational course in Women's Studies and Gender Studies methodology. It examines the feminist critique of positivism, the development of feminist research methodologies and the use of these methods in a range of disciplines.

ANTH-2533. Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality (WSGS)

This course examines male and female roles in a number of different cultural settings, especially non-Western societies. Particular attention is given to the cultural expectations of gender behaviour, the structure of economic opportunities for males and females, and how shifts in opportunity structures impact gender roles. Various examples illustrating the roles of males and females in the context of marriage, domestic group organization, economic decision making and political decision making, will be presented. Prerequisite: ANTH 1013.

CRIM-4403. Feminist Legal Studies (HMRT) (WSGS)

In this course, students will be exposed to a critical evaluation of women and criminology. Possible topics include social and legal responses to the victimization of women, social and legal intervention strategies, criminological discourses on women's criminalized behaviour, offence patterns, and women in criminology. Prerequisite: A minimum of 75 credit hours, which includes CRIM 1013 and 1023, or permission of the instructor.

ECON-2303. Gender in the Global South: A Political Economy Perspective (HMRT 2233) (SOCI 2623) (WSGS)

This course will critically examine the role of women in the global South. It will concentrate largely on the changes in these roles and their correspondence with the transition from traditional to new forms of economic organization, production, and power.

ECON-2223. The Political Economy of Women (SOCI 2643) (WSGS)

This is a seminar course examining, in depth, selected topics on the political economy of women. Potential topics include women as paid workers, domestic labour, and women and poverty.

ENGL-2583. Women Writers I (WSGS)

An investigation of women's writing in English before 1800, through poetry, (auto)biography, spiritual memoir, fiction, drama, and theory written by women. (Pre-1800)

ENGL-2593. Women Writers II (WSGS)

An investigation of women's writing in English after 1800, through poetry, (auto)biography, fiction, drama, film, and theory written by women. (Post-1800)

ENGL-3163. Queer Medias and Mediating Queer (WSGS)

This course explores intersections between the terms queer and media: representations of queer(nes)s in contemporary media, theories about how sexual identity emerges through complex forms of social mediation, and how queer countercultures have mediated (or intervened into) forces of hetero-normativity. Media forms include public monuments, DIY zines, comic strips, indie films, television, AIDS education pamphlets, novels, poetry, theatre, as well as critical theory. (Post-1800)

FNAR-2263. Images of Women in Art (WSGS)

This class is a survey of the imagery depicting women throughout history and prehistory in order to arrive at a determination of how art and society has defined the concept of "woman."

GERO-2113. The Sociology of Aging (SOCI-2523) (HMRT) (RELG) (PSYC) (WSGS)

This course explores cultural and social-structural determinants of aging through sociological theory. Students critically examine the social construction of old age as a social status through perceptions, descriptions, discussions and interactions with others, and how these relations are 'negotiated' by the older people themselves. Other topics include ageism and how various social institutions influence the experience of aging. Prerequisite: GERO 1013 OR GERO 1023, OR permission from the instructor.

GERO-3083. Gender, Sexuality and Aging (WSGS)

This course explores how gender and sexuality affects the experience of aging. It looks at how gerontology has traditionally addressed gender and sexuality; how the social construction of femininity and masculinity affects how people experience aging; and the aging experiences of older LGBTQ2S+. Prerequisites: GERO 1013 OR GERO 1023 OR permission from instructor.

GERO-3093. Images of Aging in Film (WSGS)

This course explores popular views of the elderly using motion pictures, specifically the impact of stereotypes on older people's expectations for later life. Students should be able to look at films more critically and identify images communicated through the media. Prerequisite: GERO 1013 OR GERO 1023 OR permission from instructor.

GERO-3223. Family Ties and Aging (WSGS)

This course examines a variety of issues regarding aging and the family. It considers historical and demographic trends as well as theoretical frameworks in family gerontology. The course covers a number of relationships including those of couples, siblings, and grandparents and grandchildren. It also looks at late-life transitions such as retirement, widowhood, and divorce, that affect family structures and relationships. Prerequisite: GERO 1013 OR GERO 1023 OR permission from instructor.

HIST-3033. Gender in Early-Modern Europe (WSGS)

Europe's early modern period (c. 1450-1800) was a time of political tumult, religious conflict, and seismic shifts in centuries-old institutions. The resulting social changes were profound; new roles emerged for men and women as new questions were asked and new norms evolved. This course takes a thematic approach to the changing lives of men and women, examining the role of gender in both the major events and the everyday realities of the period.

HIST-3393. Gender and Empire (WSGS)

This course explores the place of gender in the construction and preservation of empires through such topics as constructions of difference, motherhood and domesticity; civilizing missions and tourism; and contestations of power. This course operates from the premise that empires are never static: subjects in different imperial contexts, in various cases, resisted, thwarted, or reconfirmed colonial regimes.

HIST-3613: Gender and Power in Latin American History (WSGS)

Latin American gender relations have often been shrouded in stereotypes about macho men and exotic women. However, ordinary Latin Americans have defied stereotypes and challenged gender norms for centuries, and the continent is currently experiencing a powerful feminist revolution and explosion of LGBTQ organizing. This course traces the evolution of gender relations and gender identities in the continent, with a focus on the modern era.

HIST-3883. Women and Gender in Modern Canada (WSGS)

This discussion-based course examines gender and women's history in Canada from c. 1850 to c. 1980. It addresses traditional historical topics in the field (industrialization, the Great Depression, World War Two, etc.) as well as emerging topics such as sport, consumerism, and student culture. Our approach will be both chronological and thematic.

HMRT-3633. 2SLGBTQIA and Human Rights (WSGS)

This course explores socially constructed customs and structures of society that enable legal regulation of gender identity and human sexuality through the history, policies and norms that shape government action. Basic theories of gender and sexuality studies are explored before critically examining the same theories in practice through case studies. This course explores other identity issues such as race, age, disability, and class intertwine with gender and sexuality identities, and how experiences and identities shape the ways in which people resist inequality and lobby for change.

NATI-2603. Roles of Native Women (WSGS)

This course examines the traditional role of Native women within Native societies, and how that role has changed over time. It will examine the oppression that Native women have experienced, their responses to it, and the political, economic, social, and spiritual roles they have played both in their own struggles for liberation and in the struggles of their people. We will also look at the lives and voices of prominent Native women and consider the development of Native women's organizations and the influences of feminism.

PSYC-3183. Sexuality and Diversity (WSGS)

This course will encourage students to critically examine the diverse factors that contribute to how sexuality is conceptualised and represented. Multiple perspectives, including cultural, psychosocial, and biological, will be considered. Possible topics include sexual orientation, varieties in sexual development and expression, attraction, and psychological perspectives on sex as a commodity. Prerequisites: PSYC 2183

PSYC-3523. Psychology of Gender and Gender Relations (WSGS)

An introduction to contemporary issues related to differences in the experience and behaviour of females and males. Prerequisite: PSYC 2023 or permission of the instructor.

PSYC-4323. Seminar in Romantic Relationships (WSGS)

This course focuses on the lifecycle of romantic relationships – from initial attraction and the development of an attachment, to growth and maintenance of the relationship, to conflict and even dissolution. A social psychology perspective will be adopted, with an emphasis on understanding the basic processes involved in interpersonal relations. Classes will be heavily oriented toward discussing, presenting, and evaluating research in the field. Prerequisites: PSYC 2023 and 2413, or permission of the instructor.

PSYC-4433. Seminar in Women and Mental Health (WSGS)

This course will review and critically examine the theory and research in the area of women's mental health. Developed from a feminist perspective, this course will explore women's and girls' experiences of mental health and distress, and the ways in which these experiences have been conceptualized in clinical psychology. Topics include gender and the social determinants of health, problems prevalent among women (e.g., depression, eating disorders, personality disorders), and feminist approaches to intervention. Prerequisites: PSYC 2643 or permission of the instructor.

RELG-2233. Women and Religion (WSGS)

The course examines i) women in history and in modern times respond to socio-cultural restrictions and their attempts to create spiritual and social alternatives, ii) how notions of asceticism and sexuality are utilized as liberating and prescriptive modes. It examines feminist critiques to classical, medieval, and current texts and thinkers. We closely look at the assumptions that guide both classical texts and modern critiques.

RELG-2293. Religion and Sexuality (WSGS)

An examination of the understanding of the nature of human sexuality with specific reference to religious and theological frameworks. Issues studied may include sexuality as foundational in personal dignity and integrity, marriage, relationality, communication, the commodification of sexuality, systematic abuses and neglect of sexuality.

RELG-3233. LGBTQ2S+ with/out Religion(s) (WSGS)

This course explores how queer sexual identities and religious identities dynamically and diversely intersect each other. Multi-religious in scope, this course examines how transgender as well as LGB people continue to question, resist, leave, identify with, or even struggle to reform religion(s) and adapt their spiritualities. This course takes into account historical and contemporary religious trends that align both with heterosexist negativity as well as affirmative support for queer sexual diversities.

RELG-3653. Women and Christianity (WSGS)

Women's rights, gender sensitivities, and feminist movements both inside and outside the churches have inspired lively and complex debates within contemporary Christian theologies. By deconstructing, revising and rebuilding basic issues in theology on the basis of women's experiences and gender analysis, a substantial range of feminist theologies has emerged. This course will explore theological themes and interests central to the diversity of feminist theologies.

SOCI-2013. Research Design & Method (NATI) (WSGS)

An introduction to the main research approaches used in sociology. The course includes practical experience in developing a research program by considering research question development, research design, methods of data collection, research ethics and data analysis. Of particular interest are the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.

SOCI-2313. Deviance (WSGS) (CRIM)

Review of theory and research, with a focus on the social basis of deviance, deviance construction, and the consequences of social reactions to selected forms of deviance.

SOCI-2333. The Sociology of Chinese Women in Literature and Film (WSGS)

This course explores the sociology of women and China in recent literature and film, particularly in recent work by women in China and of those Chinese origins in Western countries. Topics include 20th century migration, settlement and early family experiences. The novels focus on three generations of families and illustrate the traditional expectations for women within China and in North America. The films include recent works by Chinese filmmakers that comment on women's place in pre-revolutionary and modern society.

SOCI-2416. Inequality in Society (WSGS)

This course explores existing patterns of social inequality and debates concerning the possibility and desirability of greater equality. Taking a theoretical and historical focus, we examine the changing nature of inequality in contemporary Canadian society in the context of globalization. Throughout, we develop our understanding of how different forms of inequality - particularly social class, gender and race - intersect. One section of the course may have a service learning requirement, where students engage in volunteer work in the community, and then reflect upon their experiences through reading, writing, and discussion.

SOCI-2423. Social Problems I — Sociological Perspectives (WSGS)

The various perspectives used by sociologists to examine social problems will be described and evaluated. Concrete social problems will be examined to illustrate the use of these perspectives.

SOCI-2433. Social Problems II — Canadian Social Problems (WSGS)

Several current Canadian social problems will be examined from the above perspectives. Problems include poverty, minorities, Canadian identity, the effects of urbanization and technology, etc. Prerequisite: SOCI 2423.

SOCI-2613. Sociology of Gender (WSGS)

This course focuses on particular aspects of the social processes that shape, and are shaped by female and male social roles such as gender and power, gender and social structures of work, and feminist social movements.

SOCI-2633. Sociology of the Family (WSGS)

A critical analysis of various conceptual frameworks in family research, and a cross-cultural analysis of marriage and the family, both past and present. Particular attention will be paid to the current developments in marriage arrangements, changes in the meaning of marriage and the family, as well as the future of the family.

SOCI-3173. The Sociology of Women and Education (WSGS)

With the rise of neo-conservative governments in Canada, we see changes in schooling and higher education due to the restructuring of government finances and privatization. By beginning from the standpoint of women engaged in mothering, classroom teaching, graduate studies and university teaching, this course examines the impact of re-structuring on gender, ethnicity and class in the classroom and in higher education.

SOCI-3223. Globalization and Gender (WSGS)

Globalization and Gender will examine how definitions of gender and sexuality are reproduced, negotiated and deployed in the context of globalization and transnational flows. Through a critical inquiry into a variety of texts, i.e. theoretical texts, ethnographic case studies and analysis of media representation, students will examine the topics of citizenship, global labor flows, migration, militarization, neoliberalism and the construction of the gendered global subject. They will study both the opportunities and challenges that are inherent in postcolonial and transnational feminist scholarship and activism.

SOCI-3243. Sociology of Men and Masculinities (WSGS)

In this course, students will examine the social production of masculinities in North America and the impacts of these gender expressions on the lives of boys and men, and girls and women. Students will be introduced to theoretical perspectives used to understand the lives of men and boys, while examining topics such as fathering, the social construction of men's bodies, the ways the media (re)produces notions of masculinity, and sports masculinities.

SOCI-3323. Sociology of Women & Law (WSGS)

This course will explore the relationship of women to the state and to law. The ways in which criminal and family law influence gender relations in society will be analyzed, including the implications of legal intervention and non-intervention in family relations. Sex-specific and sex-related legislation, concerning such issues as sexual harassment, rape, pornography, and affirmative action, will also be examined. Theoretical concepts and issues, such as the position of women within capitalism, patriarchy, sexuality and reproduction, formal and informal control, will be addressed.

SOCI-3413. Employment Equity Policy and Gender Inequality at Work (WSGS)

This is an advanced course on the organization of gender inequality in the labour force and the policies aimed at creating equal opportunities for women. We begin by studying how gender segregation is organized in the occupations of teaching, clerical work, and other professions. Secondly, the course examines, from a sociological perspective, the federal and provincial government policies which are aimed at the equal and fair treatment of individuals regardless of sex: pay equity legislation, employment equity programs, contractual provisions and human rights legislation on fair employment practices.

SOCI-3583. Research for Social Change (WSGS)

This seminar course encourages students to explore how research can inform social justice and social change. Examining specific debates from the fields of feminist research, Indigenous methodologies, and critical race theory, students will gain new understandings in the various ways research can both reproduce and challenge operations of power and privilege. This course offers students the opportunity to engage in debates around these methodologies as they consider how to do research for social change.

SOCI-3663. Queer Sociology (WSGS)

This course explores the social construction of queerness in heteronormative societies. Students apply sociological concepts and theories to the study of queer identities, communities, and sexual practices. They examine social and political responses to queerness, and the ways in which these responses shape the lives of queer people.