

WGS PROGRAM EVALUATION SPRING 2014

CURRICULUM:

WGS Program faculty members revised syllabi to highlight goals we agreed upon in our 2012 revision of the major, and to better fit into the thematic divisions of our new major requirements. After a series of faculty meetings, the program moved to an emphasis on WGS majors meeting thematic requirements that utilize a number of disciplines in addition to the core WGS courses under the rubrics: Historical Perspectives, Cultural Contexts, Creativity/Aesthetics, Embodied Experiences/Embodiment, Power and Experiential.

The curriculum has sustained heavy losses through the departure of faculty members who have not been replaced, most recently History faculty Beatrice Farnsworth and Dandan Chen.

We can no longer offer:

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES:

HIST 205 Women as Revolutionaries
HIST 250 The Family in China in the 20th and 21st Centuries
HIST 360 History of American Feminism
HIST 361 Voices of African-American Women
HIST 285: Family and Women in Premodern China
HIST 385: Screening Asian Women

CULTURAL CONTEXTS

HIST 361 Voices of African-American Women
HIST 250 The Family in China in the 20th and 21st Centuries
HIST 210 Women and Gender in Europe, 1550-Present
HIST 385: Screening Asian Women

CREATIVITY/AESTHETICS

HIST 385 Screening Asian Women

New courses that we hope to continue include:

Christine Limpert:

WGS 385 Topics course on Gender and Sustainability under "Power" and/or "Cultural Contexts"

Jeanne Goddard:

HHS 100 - Intro to Holistic Health Studies - a physical-self-awareness-meditative-body-mind-healing course team taught with John Place under "Embodied Experiences/Embodiment" or "Experiential"

Catherine Burroughs:

ENG 367: Restoration and 18th-Century Women Playwrights under "Historical Perspectives" "Cultural Contexts" and/or "Creativity/Aesthetics"

I have appended syllabi from Siouxsie Easter, Dan Renfrew, CJ Kopp, Susan Tabrizi and Laura McClusky that are annotated with references by number to which of the Program Goals and Learning Objectives detailed below are being explicitly addressed.

WGS Key Program Goals:

- 1) acquaint students with multiple historical and cultural perspectives on gender roles, particularly as experienced by women
- 2) help students explore the formation of gender/ed identities and the relationships between variously gendered persons within local communities and cross---culturally
- 3) familiarize students with the ways in which women's and gender studies has incorporated questions of power and gender into the practice of academic scholarship and how it contributes to the on---going transformations of scholarly methods and approaches
- 4) analyze social and political issues as they pertain to the social construction of difference.
- 5) develop students' habits of responsibility and accountability to self and community in completing course work, activist work and internships

Learning Objectives

- 1) Acquaint students with multiple historical and cultural perspectives on gender roles, particularly as experienced by women:

To successfully complete WGS classes students must a) learn about different time periods and cultural groups and b) demonstrate knowledge that gender roles are not identical or static across time and culture

- 2) Help students explore the formation of gender/ed identities and the relationships between variously gendered persons within local communities and cross-culturally:

To successfully complete WGS classes students must be able to articulate a) what a "gender binary" mean, b) what other possible variations exist that categorize gender, and c) be able to articulate various criteria different societies use to determine gender

- 3) Familiarize students with the ways in which women's and gender studies has incorporated questions of power and gender into the practice of academic scholarship and how it contribute to the on---going transformations of scholarly methods and approaches

To successfully complete the WGS program students must a) take courses from multiple disciplinary perspectives, b) be able to articulate some key ways those disciplines have been affected by incorporating questions that focus on issues of

gender and sexuality and c) demonstrate knowledge of the history of feminist scholarly interventions in at least two disciplines

4) Enable students to analyze social and political issues as they pertain to the social construction of difference.

To successfully complete the WGS program students must a) demonstrate an understanding of debates about “essential” v. “socially constructed” facets of human behavior and identity, b) demonstrate knowledge of various social movements in different times and locations, aimed at creating change, and c) articulate how various racial, sexual and gender identities have changed over time in relation to historical and political events and processes.

5) Develop students habits of responsibility and accountability to self and community in completing course work, activist work and internships:

To successfully complete the WGS program students must a) complete work on time and to the satisfaction of the course instructor, b) detail internship goals and activities and complete to the satisfaction of the internship supervisor and c) be consistently reliable and responsible in the activism and /of offices undertaken on campus or in the larger community. Learn to identify how much time a given project requires and how much work self and others can reasonably be expected to accomplish.

Report back from 2014 Senior Theses

This year’s graduating majors demonstrated the value of the interdisciplinary WGS curriculum and the hard work and commitment of faculty affiliated with the program in being second readers and advisers to ambitious projects. Naveed Haris’s work questioning the meaning of modesty and veiling in "My Purdah: The Concept of Modesty Viewed Through my American Muslim Feminist Lens" was ably supported by adjunct lecturer Tina Limpert and Associate Professor of Political Science Susan Tabrizi. Brennen Dooley’s visual and written exploration of gendered body oppression through his series of self-portraits of “man-boobs” in "Moobs: The Moobment" could not have been accomplished without the mentoring of Assistant Professor of Studio Art Katie Waugh. Molly Myers’ exploration and feminist analysis of her mother’s experience raising her-“ I feel like I've been a single mother your entire life" was shaped by her work with Professor of Gender and Psychology Vic Muñoz. And last, but certainly not least, James Howard’s performance piece "Shadows of Identity: A Performance of Being" incorporated poetry, dance and critical theory in ways that could not have been possible without the guidance of Professor of Dance Jeanne Goddard as well as Professor Muñoz and myself. The value of approaching complex questions through multiple disciplinary lenses was apparent in all the senior work.

Unfortunately, the seniors also revealed a weakness that program faculty will be discussing over the next year-- students’ lack of facility with research skills and

traditional academic forms. Because a great deal of the writing that WGS courses currently require is a direct response to classroom texts, faculty need to think about ways to expand students' skills at obtaining their own knowledge. I have been taking WGS students every year to Cornell to introduce them to the concept of archival research with Special Collections librarian Brenda Marston, but clearly much more needs to be done, and small assignments seeded throughout their various course work.

Ongoing Faculty Development

It has been very difficult in the past few years to find a time where all can meet on a regular basis, we very much hope that the return of shared lunch hours and a revised course schedule next year will enable us to have informal potluck meetings on a regular basis. I have requested funds for food that will nourish these gatherings and build a stronger sense of community among faculty who don't often see each other.

In these meetings faculty can share strategies and news as well as alert others to issues they may not have yet encountered. If common needs arise ie: writing instruction issues, issues with student behavior, etc., we can try to address them as a program, rather *ad hoc* as often happens.

As Chair I remain interested in bringing guest speakers to educate faculty as well as students and in developing student leadership skills in a more formal ways, so all of these will be topics of discussion next year.