



Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at LSU

Introduction to the Program

Dr. Benjamin Kahan, Director

dwgs@lsu.edu

362 Hatcher Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

This brief presentation answers three questions:

- What is the academic focus of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at LSU?
- What are our graduates doing?
- How does our program work and what are our classes like?

What is Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies?

An **interdisciplinary program** that examines the ideological, cultural, and historical forces that have constructed and transformed gender and sexuality at the intersections of race, ethnicity, ability, class, age, and other social identity categories.

- Our premise: **gender is a fundamental principle organizing contemporary society**. Having a gender, being a gender, performing a gender, and inhabiting or exploring a sexuality are all central to who we are as human beings.
- We are proud to include faculty from every college at LSU, who represent over 25 departments.
- Our methodology draws from many fields, in particular **social sciences and humanities disciplines**.

WGSS
students are
preparing for
careers in
diverse fields

Health and Human
Services Fields

Counseling
Woman/LGBTQIA+ focused
medicine
Public Health

Media and Content
Production

Public Relations
Advertising
Broadcast and Print Media
Writing

Law, Public Service,
Education

Human Rights
Organizations
Research and Public Policy
Lobbying and Advocacy

Business and Industry

Human Resources
Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion
Woman/LGBTQIA+ focused
businesses

Alumni: Where are they now?

Tanya Rawal, PhD

- VP for Social Change at STAR.
- Research specialist on violence against women and on gender in political economy who publishes in *Salon*, *openDemocracy*, *TWM-Africa*.





Alumni: Where are they now?

Stephanie Elwood

- Holds a Master's Degree in Urban Forestry and this year won a 250K grant to help incarcerated youth.
- Runs a gardening and landscaping business in Baton Rouge.

Alumni: Where are they now?

Racheal Hebert, LCSW

- Founder and CEO of STAR.
- Named “Baton Rouge’s Most Influential Woman in Business” by BRBR 2020.



The Undergraduate Concentration

WGSS 2500

Introduction to WGSS

(ILC)

3 hrs

WGSS 2900

Gender, Race & Nation

(ILC)

3 hrs

WGSS 3150

Survey of Feminist
Theory

3 hrs

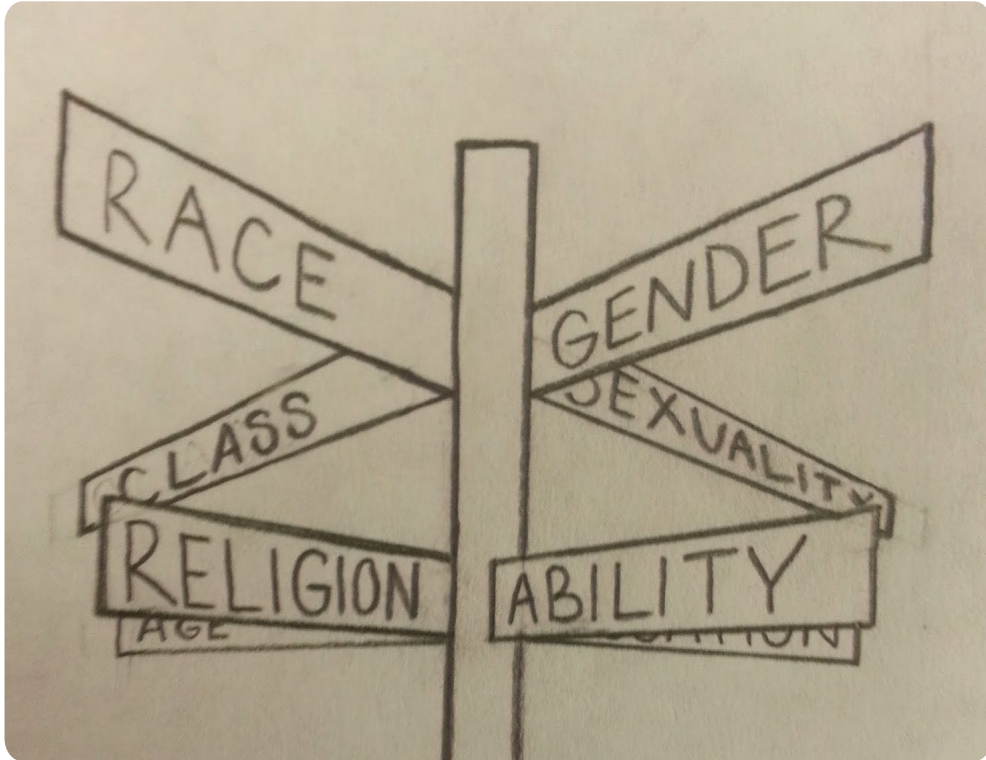
WGSS 4500

Seminar

(take 2 x= 6 hrs)

+ 18 hours approved
electives incl. one *cross-
cultural* course

(NB: flexibility for double
majors!)



Course Spotlight #1

WGSS 2500: Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

In-person enrollment limited to 40 students

Broad introduction to core concepts and questions that unite WGSS scholars:

1. How are sex and gender socially constructed?
2. How do social systems advantage or disadvantage individuals on the basis of gender, sexuality, race, class, and other social differences?
3. Within our society's structures of oppression and privilege, how does one's social location come to bear on one's knowledge?
4. How do gender, sexuality, race, class, and other social differences intersect to mediate identity?
5. How can social issues like negative body image, ableism, homophobia, mass incarceration, reproductive injustice, sexual violence, or workplace inequality be better understood utilizing interdisciplinary and multicultural curriculum?
6. What are the tenets of feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements?



Course Spotlight #2

WGSS 4500 Special Topics Seminar

- **Enrollment limited to 15**
- Recent offerings include:
- *Masculinity, Violence and US Culture* (Bryan McCann, Communication Studies)
- *Black Feminist Theory* (Cat Jacquet, History)
- *Gender and Crime* (Sara Becker, Sociology)
- *Female Friendships: Fictional and Critical Perspectives* (Kate Jensen, French Studies)
- *Psychoanalyzing Gender* (Michelle Massé, English)

Final Thoughts

Authors Barbara F. Luebke and Mary Ellen Reilly in *Women's Studies Graduates: The First Generation* observed a unique common skillset among Women's Studies graduates:

- Empowerment and self-confidence
- Critical thinking
- Community-building
- Understanding diversity and the intersectional nature of identity



Thank you!