FEMINIST, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

The Major in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (FGSS) engages students in critical analyses of gender and sexuality within the broad context of race, class, and ethnicity, and the ways in which these categories shape institutional systems, cultures, and societies. . FGSS majors have excellent opportunities to develop their own concentrated area of study and individually designed research.

Students drawn to the FGSS Major are typically interested in understanding social norms, power structures, and systemic inequalities related to gender and sexuality. They may be motivated by a desire to advocate for marginalized groups, promote inclusivity, and advance social justice and equity.

A degree in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies prepares students for careers in various fields, including activism and advocacy, education, human resources, social work and counseling, law and public policy, media and communications, and non-profit organizations.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

The prerequisite for becoming a feminist, gender, and sexuality studies (FGSS) major is taking one of the gateway courses. These courses are designated annually. Students ordinarily take a gateway course during either semester of the sophomore year and declare the major in the spring semester. Gateway courses include:

Code	Title	Hours
FGSS200	Sex/Gender in Critical Perspective (FGSS Gateway)	1
SOC245	Intersectionality and Identity (FGSS Gateway)	1
FGSS277	Feminist Philosophy and Moral Theory (FGSS Gateway)	1

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Students are assigned to faculty advisors and should familiarize themselves with requirements for writing a senior honors thesis, since these may affect curricular choices for the junior year. In the fall semester of the junior year, the student ordinarily takes FGSS209. During this semester the student, in consultation with the advisor, develops a major proposal that lists the courses that will compose the student's major course of study, including a written rationale for the student's chosen concentration within the major. The Major Proposal Form, approved by the advisor and with the concentration rationale attached, is submitted to the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department office by the end of the fall semester of the junior year.

The concentration rationale is a brief explanation (500 words) of the student's chosen concentration within the major and describes the courses the student has chosen to constitute it. The major as a whole consists of 9 courses as follows: Three core courses (a gateway course, FGSS209 and FGSS405), two distribution courses (FGSS courses from an area outside the concentration), and the four courses comprising the concentration. All FGSS majors complete senior research, either in the form of a senior essay (completed as part of the Senior Seminar) or a senior honors thesis (through a two-semester tutorial with a faculty member, normally in addition to the Senior Seminar). The senior year is devoted to completion of the coursework for the concentration, work on a senior essay or thesis, and participation in the senior seminar. Non-FGSS courses may count toward the concentration if approved by the student's faculty advisor. Only two credits transferred from another institution may be applied to the major.

Every major must take the following courses:

- **One gateway course.** These are designated annually and serve as introductions to the interdisciplinary field of feminist, gender, and sexuality studies. Gateway courses examine gender as a factor in the politics and practices of the production of knowledge and of social and cultural life, with particular attention to the intersection of gender with other identity categories and modes of power—race, class, sexuality, and ethnicity.
- FGSS209. This course traces contemporary developments in feminist theory and considers how feminism has been articulated in relation to theories of representation, subjectivity, history, sexuality, technology, and globalization, among others, paying particular attention to the unstable nexus of gender, sexual, racial, and class differences.
- FGSS405. Set up as a workshop, the goal of this course is to develop an enabling and challenging intellectual environment for majors to work through intensively the theoretical, methodological, and practical concerns connected with their senior research projects.

CORE COURSES

GATEWAY AND REQUIRED COURSES

In 2019-2020, these include:

Code	Title	Hours
FGSS200	Sex/Gender in Critical Perspective (FGSS Gateway)	1
FGSS209	Feminist Theories	1
FGSS277	Feminist Philosophy and Moral Theory (FGSS Gateway)	1
FGSS405	Senior Seminar	1

Distribution requirement. A distribution requirement of two **FGSS** courses that must be from two different disciplines and should not overlap in their content with courses that make up the student's concentration in the major.

Concentration. Four courses forming the area of concentration should represent a coherent inquiry into some issue, period, area, discipline, or intellectual approach related to feminist, gender, and/or sexuality studies. Normally, the courses will be drawn from various departmental offerings and will be selected in consultation with an advisor.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

The Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (FGSS) Department is an interdisciplinary program staffed by faculty with wide-ranging research interests from across the university. The FGSS Department major and curriculum enable students to engage in critical analyses of the construction of gender and sexuality as categories of analysis and experience within the broad matrices of race, class, and ethnicity, and the ways in which these categories inform knowledge production. Our curriculum has a broad offering of courses with wide subject, geographic, and thematic coverage. Majors have excellent opportunities for

developing their own areas of concentrated study and for individually designed research. Our courses offer students historical and contemporary explorations of women, gender, and sexuality from a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives on Africa, the Caribbean, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, and South Asia, as well as the U.S.

FGSS expects its majors to:

- become skilled at reading and writing critical feminisms;
- have a well-developed understanding of the interdisciplinary, transnational and intersectional concerns of the field; and
- interrogate the historical and contemporary, local and transnational forces underlying social and economic injustice and inequality in order to promote greater possibilities for freedom and social justice.

In other to achieve these goals, students should be able to:

- form an argument using evidence
- critically evaluate the arguments of others
- analyze texts from a variety of disciplines
- situate social and political issues in their historical context
- assess how activism and intellectual inquiry are interrelated

TRANSFER CREDIT

Only two credits transferred from another institution may be applied to the major.

HONORS

Rising seniors wishing to write a Senior Honors Thesis (click here for more information (https://www.wesleyan.edu/fgss/major/senior_research.html)) must have, at the end of their junior year, an average of at least B+ in all of the courses that count for the major. These courses include the following: gateway course, FGSS 209 (Feminist Theories), two distribution courses, and the four courses from the student's area of concentration within the major. Prospective thesis writers must submit to the FGSS Chair by the last Friday in April of their junior year a transcript reflecting that they have met this requirement (or will have done so by the end of the junior year). Only students who complete the two-semester thesis can stand for honors. Students who have not achieved a B+ average will undertake the one-semester senior essay project.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Completion of a senior essay (one credit) or an honors thesis (two credits) on a theme or topic related to the student’s area of concentration within the major is required. Rising seniors wishing to write a senior honors thesis must have an average of B+ in all courses that count toward the major, including the gateway course, FGSS209, and three of the four courses from the student’s area of concentration. Prospective thesis writers must submit to the feminist, gender, and sexuality studies department chair by the last Friday in April in the second semester of the junior year a statement indicating the topic of the thesis and name of the thesis tutor.