Gender and Sexuality Studies

Course Listings and Descriptions

Fall 2020
Gender and Sexuality Studies Program

Welcome to the Program in Gender and Sexuality! We are an interdisciplinary program committed to the study of a range of questions raised by the category of gender. We look closely at the intersection of gender with numerous categories of analysis and identity, including race, sexuality, class, disability, and nationality. As you’ll see when you look at the wide array of cross listed courses, you can study history, anthropology, literature, sociology, and a host of other fields, all of which allow you to engage with the issues of gender and sexuality across time and space.

Our courses give you the opportunity to explore a range of approaches: feminist theory and women’s studies; transnational and third-world feminisms; the experiences of women of color; gay, lesbian, queer, transgender and transsexual studies; gender as inflected by race, class, religion and nationality; and gender and science.

All students in the program are required to take the core course, “Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Gender and Sexuality.” This year the class will be taught in the Spring 2021 (GNST 290).

Students can choose to concentrate or minor in G&S Studies. Some students create an Independent Major in Gender and Sexuality. We can help you plan that if you’d like to consider that option. Feel free to contact Professor Anita Kurimay, Professor of History and Interim Program Director, for any questions about this – or anything else). Contact info. akurimay@brynmawr.edu.

Concentration and Minor Requirements

Only six courses are required for the concentration:

1. An introductory course (including equivalent offerings at Swarthmore College or the University of Pennsylvania). There will also be a new introductory course offered by G&SS (GNST 108) you can take to fulfill this requirement.

2. The junior seminar: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Gender & Sexuality Studies (taught alternate years at Bryn Mawr and Haverford).

3. Four additional approved courses from at least two different departments, two of which are normally at the 300 level. (Units of Independent Study [403] may be used to fulfill this requirement).

4. Of the six courses, no fewer than two and no more than three will also form part of the student’s major.

Requirements for the minor are identical to those for the concentration, with the stipulation that no Gender and Sexuality courses will overlap with courses taken to fulfill requirements in your major.

Neither a senior seminar nor a senior thesis is required to declare the concentration or minor; however, with the permission of their major department, a student may choose to count their senior thesis toward the concentration if it has significant content in Gender and Sexuality Studies.

Students wishing to construct an independent major in Gender and Sexuality should make a proposal to the Committee on Independent Majors.

We hope to see you soon!
Fall 2020

Bryn Mawr College

100 Level Courses

**Anthropology 102: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology**
TBD, TTh 9:55-11:15am
An introduction to the methods and theories of cultural anthropology in order to understand and explain cultural similarities and differences among contemporary societies.

**History 102: Introduction to African Civilizations**
Professor Kalala Ngamulume, MW 1:10-2:30pm
The course is designed to introduce students to the history of African and African Diaspora societies, cultures, and political economies. We will discuss the origins, state formation, external contacts, and the structural transformations and continuities of African societies and cultures in the context of the slave trade, colonial rule, capitalist exploitation, urbanization, and westernization, as well as contemporary struggles over authority, autonomy, identity and access to resources. Case studies will be drawn from across the continent.

**Sociology 102: Society, Culture, and Individual**
Professor Amanda Cox, MW TTh 2:25-3:45pm
Analysis of the basic sociological methods, perspectives, and concepts used in the study of society, with emphasis on culture, social structure, personality, their component parts, and their interrelationship in both traditional and industrial societies. The sources of social tension, order, and change are addressed through study of socialization and personality development, inequality, power, and modernization.

200 Level Courses

**CSTS 230: Food/Drink in the Ancient World**
TBA, MW 1:10-2:30pm
This course explores practices of eating and drinking in the ancient Mediterranean world both from a socio-cultural and environmental perspective. Since we are not only what we eat, but also where, when, why, with whom, and how we eat, we will examine the wider implications of patterns of food production, preparation, consumption, availability, and taboos, considering issues like gender, health, financial situation, geographical variability, and political status. Anthropological, archaeological, literary, and art historical approaches will be used to analyze the evidence and shed light on the role of food and drink in ancient culture and society. In addition, we will discuss how this affects our contemporary customs and practices and how our identity is still shaped by what we eat.

**English 254: Female Subjects**
Professor Bethany Schneider, MW 10:10-11:30am
This course explores the subject, subjection, and subjectivity of women and female sexualities in U.S. literatures between the signing of the Constitution and the ratification of the 19th Amendment. While the representation of women in fiction grew and the number of female authors soared, the culture found itself at pains to define the appropriate moments for female speech and silence, action and passivity. We will engage a variety of pre-suffrage literatures that place women at the nexus of national narratives of slavery and freedom, foreignness and domesticity, wealth and power, masculinity and citizenship, and sex and race “purity.”

**Greek 201: Plato and Thucydides**
Professor Radcliffe Edmonds, MWF 12:10-1:00pm
This course is designed to introduce the student to two of the greatest prose authors of ancient Greece, the philosopher, Plato, and the historian, Thucydides. These two writers set the terms in the disciplines of philosophy and history for millennia, and philosophers and historians today continue to grapple with their ideas and influence. The brilliant and controversial statesman Alcibiades provides a link between the two texts in this course (Plato’s Symposium and Thucydides’ History of the Peloponnesian War), and we examine the ways in which both authors handle the figure of Alcibiades as a point of entry into the comparison of the varying styles and modes of thought of these two great writers.
History 248: Movies and America – The Past Lives Forever
Professor Sharon Ullman, TTh 9:45-11:15am, screening T 7:10-10:00pm
Movies are one of the most important means by which Americans come to know—or think they know—their own history. We look to old movies to tell us about a world we never knew but think we can access through film. And Hollywood often reaches into the past to tell a good story. How can we understand the impact of our love affair with movies on our understanding of what happened in this country? In this course we will examine the complex cultural relationship between film and American historical self-fashioning.

Italian 217: Gendered Violence in Italy
Professor Roberta Ricci, MW 1:10-4:00pm
How many women are killed in Italy? How many women suffer abuse at the hands of their partner? Data shows one in seven in Italy have suffered gendered abuse. In many regions, victims have nowhere to turn for shelter. This course will examine domestic and sexual assault in intimate relationships from a feminist analysis. Historical, theoretical, and sociological perspectives on gender violence will be critically analyzed through criminology research, literature, and theory. Course context will focus on dominance and control as a co-factor of gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic class, age, sexuality, nationality, and other variables. Therefore, the course will highlight the differential impact of gender violence on women of color, lesbians, older women, adolescent girls, immigrants and marginalized and disenfranchised women. Domestic and sexual violence in contemporary Italy will also be reviewed and analyzed in the context of international contexts. This course will be taught in Italian.

Philosophy 221: Ethics
Professor Justin Fugo, MW 2:40-4:00pm
An introduction to ethics by way of an examination of moral theories and a discussion of important ancient, modern, and contemporary texts which established theories such as virtue ethics, deontology, utilitarianism, relativism, emotivism, care ethics. This course considers questions concerning freedom, responsibility, and obligation. How should we live our lives and interact with others? How should we think about ethics in a global context? Is ethics independent of culture? A variety of practical issues such as reproductive rights, euthanasia, animal rights and the environment will be considered.

Russian 238 Topics in the History of Cinema – Silent Film in US and Soviet Russia 1895-1945
Professor Tim Harte, TTh 12:55-2:15pm
no description available at this time

Sociology 235: Mexican-American Communities
Professor Veronica Montes, TTh 12:55-2:15pm
For its unique history, the number of migrants, and the two countries' proximity, Mexican migration to the United States represents an exceptional case in world migration. There is no other example of migration with more than 100 years of history. The copious presence of migrants concentrated in a host country, such as we have in the case of the 11.7 million Mexican migrants residing in the United States, along with another 15 million Mexican descendants, is unparalleled. The 1,933-mile-long border shared by the two countries makes it one of the longest boundary lines in the world and, unfortunately, also one of the most dangerous frontiers in the world today. We will examine the different economic, political, social and cultural forces that have shaped this centenarian migration influx and undertake a macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of analysis. At the macro-level of political economy, we will investigate the economic interdependency that has developed between Mexico and the U.S. over different economic development periods of these countries, particularly, the role the Mexican labor force has played to boosting and sustaining both the Mexican and the American economies. At the meso-level, we will examine different institutions both in Mexico and the U.S. that have determined the ways in which millions of Mexican migrate to this country. Last, but certainly not least, we will explore the impacts that both the macro- and meso-processes have had on the micro-level by considering the imperatives, aspirations, and dreams that have prompted millions of people to leave their homes and communities behind in search of better opportunities. This major life decision of migration brings with it a series of social transformations in family and community networks, this will look into the cultural impacts in both the sending and receiving migrant communities. In sum, we will come to understand how these three levels of analysis work together.

Sociology 262: Public Opinion
Professor Nathan Wright, MW 2:40-4:00pm
This course explores public opinion: what it is, how it is measured, how it is shaped, and how it changes over time.
Specific attention is given to the role of elites, the mass media, and religion in shaping public opinion. Examples include racial/ethnic civil rights, abortion, gay/lesbian/transgendered sexuality, and inequalities.

**Sociology 276: Making Sense of Race**  
Professor Piper Sledge, TTh 12:55-2:15pm  
What is the meaning of race in contemporary US and global society? How are these meanings (re)produced, resisted, and refused? What meanings might we desire or imagine as alternatives? In this course, we will approach these questions through an array of sources while tracking our own thinking about and experiences of raced-ness. Course material will survey sociological notions of the social construction of race, empirical studies of lived experiences of race, and creative fiction and non-fiction material intended to catalyze thinking about alternative possibilities.

### 300 Level Courses

**Anthropology 312: Anthropology of Reproduction**  
Professor Melissa Pashigian, M 12:10-2:00pm  
An examination of social and cultural constructions of reproduction, and how power and politics in everyday life shapes reproductive behavior and its meaning in Western and non-Western cultures. The influence of competing interests within households, communities, states, and institutions on reproduction is considered.

**Anthropology 329: India – Belonging and Exclusion**  
Professor Amanda Weidman, W 1:10-3:30pm  
Since India’s economic liberalization in the early 1990s, the globalizing dynamics of cultural and economic liberalization have been accompanied by renewed articulations of who belongs in the “New India” and who doesn’t. In this context, caste, class, religious community, language, and gender have become crucial sites for claiming citizenship, articulating distinctions among people, and constructing senses of what and who can inhabit the public sphere. Using materials from different regions of India, our focus will be on how fine-grained ethnographic study can be a tool to examine the broader dynamics of belonging and exclusion and its political and social effects.

**English 333: Lesbian Immortal**  
Professor Kate Thomas, MW 10:10-11:30am  
Lesbian literature has repeatedly figured itself in alliance with tropes of immortality and eternity. Using recent queer theory on temporality, and 19th and 20th century primary texts, we will explore topics such as: fame and noteriety; feminism and mythology; epistemes, erotics and sexual seasonality; the death drive and the uncanny; fin de siecle manias for mummies and seances.

**English 336: Topics in Film – Cinematic Voice**  
Professor Sara Bryant, MW 11:40am-1:00pm  
no description at this time

**English 354: Virginia Woolf**  
Professor Michael Tratner, TTh 2:25-3:45pm  
Virginia Woolf has been interpreted as a feminist, a modernist, a crazy person, a resident of Bloomsbury, a victim of child abuse, a snob, a socialist, and a creation of literary and popular history. We will try out all these approaches and examine the features of our contemporary world that influence the way Woolf, her work, and her era are perceived. We will also attempt to theorize about why we favor certain interpretations over others.

**History 325: Topics in Social History – History of Sexuality**  
Professor Sharon Ullman, M 12:10-2:00pm  
This a topics course that explores various themes in American social history. Course content varies. Course may be repeated.; Current topic description: This course addresses the social history of sexual practices, social and governmental regulation of sex, and the changing cultural meaning of sex in the U.S. from the 16th century to present. Topics include the intersection of race, sexuality, and settler colonialism, transgender history, the history of reproductive rights, sexuality as commodity, and the social power present in the relationship between sexuality and disease.
History 337: Topics in African History – History of Global Health in Africa
Professor Kalala Ngalmulume, T 7:10-10:00pm
The course will focus on the issues of public health history, social and cultural history of disease as well as the issues of the history of medicine. We will examine the histories of global initiatives to control disease in Africa from an interdisciplinary perspective (history, and social and biomedical sciences), using case studies from across the continent. These initiatives involve the relationship between states, NGOs, universities, pharmaceutical companies, and other nonstate actors. We will explore various themes, such as the indigenous theories of disease and therapies; disease, imperialism and medicine; the emerging diseases, medical education, women in medicine, and differential access to health care. We will also explore the questions regarding the sources of African history and their quality.

Italian 312: Black, Queer, Jewish Italy
Professor Alessandro Giammei, T 1:10-4:00pm
This seminar approaches the two most studied phases of Italian history, the Renaissance and the 20th century, by placing what we call ‘otherness’ at the center of the picture rather than at its supposed margins. The main aim is to challenge traditional accounts of Italian culture, and to look at pivotal events and phenomena (the rise of Humanism, the rise of fascism, courtly culture, the two World Wars, 16th century art, futurism) from the point of view of black, queer, and Jewish protagonists, authors, and fictional characters. Our theoretical bedrock will be offered by modern and contemporary thinkers such as Fred Moten, Antonio Gramsci, Edie Segdwick, and Hannah Arendt. Our primary sources will come from cultural epicenters of Renaissance, Baroque, and late Modern Italy, such as Leo X papal court, fascist Ferrara, 17th century Venice, and colonial Libya. In class, we will adopt a trans-historical, intersectional, and interdisciplinary perspective inspired by Fred Moten’s work, which will serve as the poetic common ground for our investigations. Themes and issues will be analyzed at the crossing of the two historical phases and of the three topics in exam, and the material will include historical and theoretical analyses, narrative texts, poems, films, and visual art. The course is taught in English.

Sociology 322: Thinking with Trans
Professor Piper Sledge, T 1:10-4:00pm
In 2017, philosopher Rebecca Tuvel published an article in the journal Hypatia outlining an argument for the existence of transracialism. This article came on the tail end of a great deal of controversy about the outing of NAACP leader, Rachel Dolezal; a woman born to white parents who identifies as black. In this course we will examine the social construction of race and gender as well as critique the biological assumptions that underpin both social structures. We will explore the theoretical power and pitfalls of the terms “transgender” and “transracial” - the similarities, differences, and tensions inherent in questioning taken for granted social structures that are fundamental to social organization and personal identity. We will explore the theoretical context of the terms “transracial” and “transgender,” the various arguments for and against identity categories, and the lived experiences of individuals and groups who regularly transgress the boundaries of race and gender.