The Gender and Sexuality Studies Program is a dynamic interdisciplinary program that draws on faculty and courses from more than 20 departments and several schools—including Weinberg College, the School of Communication, the Pritzker School of Law, the Feinberg School of Medicine, and the Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music. The program offers a major and a minor for Northwestern undergraduates, as well as a certificate for graduate students. It includes 11 core faculty members with joint appointments as well as affiliated faculty. Faculty teach courses and pursue research in the history and theory of gender, feminism, women's studies, and sexuality studies, including gay, lesbian, and queer studies.

The many approaches, methods, and topics in gender and sexuality studies at Northwestern are united in focusing on gender, sex, and sexuality as key but often underexamined categories in history, scholarly study, and daily life. At the same time, they attend to questions of identity and sexual politics in ways that do not take for granted the particular sex/gender categories of the modern Western world.

A full range of courses is offered, from first-year seminars to graduate courses. They provide information and analysis of culture, society, history, and politics, often from a transnational and international perspective. Each year a number of undergraduate majors choose to write honors theses in gender and sexuality studies.

Programs of Study

- Gender and Sexuality Studies Major (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/gender-sexuality-studies/gender-sexuality-studies-major)

GNDR_ST 101-6 First-Year Seminar (1 Unit)  WCAS First-Year Seminar


GNDR_ST 230-0 Traditions in Feminist Thought (1 Unit)  Introduction to milestone texts in the development of 200 years of British, European, and American feminist thought, with particular attention to emerging arguments and strategies around issues of gender and sexuality. Historical Studies Distro Area

GNDR_ST 231-0 Gender, Sexuality, and Representation (1 Unit)  Representations in art and literature within their historical, social, and political contexts. Theories of spectatorship, resistance, and revision. Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GNDR_ST 232-0 Sexuality & Society (1 Unit)  Examination of the role of sexuality in the cultural, economic, political, and social organization of the United States. Sex work, sex tourism, sexual migration, LGBT social movements, and moral panics. SOCIOL 232-0 and GNDR_ST 232-0 are taught together; may not receive credit for both courses. Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 233-0 Gender, Politics, and Philosophy (1 Unit)  Role of gender difference in the main political-philosophical traditions: social contract, liberalism, republicanism, socialism-Marxism, critical theory. Classics of feminist and political thought (Wollstonecraft, Mill, Taylor, Engels) and contemporary debates. PHIL 221-0 and GNDR_ST 233-0 are taught together; may not receive credit for both courses. Ethics Values Distro Area

GNDR_ST 234-0 Language & Gender (1 Unit)  Exploration of socially significant differences in the language used by/about/to men and women, focusing on the role of language in constructing gender as part of local communities of practice. LING 223-0 and GNDR_ST 234-0 are taught together; may not receive credit for both courses. Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 235-0 Beyond the Binary: Transgender and Race (1 Unit)  Exploration of transgender history, identity, and expression, with a focus on the intersection of gender and race. Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 250-0 Gender Issues in Science and Health (1 Unit)  Aspects of gender in the cultures of science and medicine. Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 321-0 Gender, Sexuality and History (1 Unit)  Historical considerations of gender and/or sexuality. Topics may cover different historical time periods. Content varies by quarter; may be repeated for credit with different topics. Historical Studies Distro Area

GNDR_ST 324-0 US Gay and Lesbian History (1 Unit)  Gender, sexuality, and the rise of modern lesbian and gay identities. Lecture and discussion. HISTORY 324-0 and GNDR_ST 324-0 are taught together; may not receive credit for both courses. Historical Studies Distro Area

GNDR_ST 327-0 Language and Sexuality (1 Unit)  The use of language to construct sexual identity, focusing on the language of and about gay men and lesbians. Topics include heteronormativity, identity labels and categories, gender versus sexuality, and cross-cultural sexual diversity. Prerequisite: a course in linguistics or consent of instructor. Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 331-0 Sociology of Gender and Sexuality (1 Unit)  Gender and issues of social reproduction and social change, with an emphasis on sexuality and reproduction. Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 332-0 Gender, Sexuality, and Health (1 Unit)  Health-related topics concerning gender and/or sexuality. Topics include reproductive health, sexual health, HIV/AIDS, women's health movements, trans* health and activism and disability studies. Content varies by quarter; may be repeated for credit with different topics. Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 340-0 Gender, Sexuality, and the Law (1 Unit)  Examination of the changing role of law in governing gender and sexual relations in America. Legal definitions of gender and sexuality in the household, the marketplace, and the state. GNDR_ST 340-0 and LEGAL_ST 340-0 are taught together; may not receive credit for both courses. Historical Studies Distro Area Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/#schoolrequirementstext) Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 341-0 Transnational Perspectives on Gender and Sexuality (1 Unit)  Studies of gender and sexuality in relation to globalization or non-US/non-Western cultures. Content varies by quarter; may be repeated for credit with different topics. Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area
GNDR_ST 350-3 Research Seminar in Gender & Sexuality Studies (1 Unit)  Students research and complete a research paper or project on a topic of choice. Course number indicates distribution area in which a seminar counts. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.  Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 350-4 Research Seminar in Gender & Sexuality Studies (1 Unit)  Students research and complete a research paper or project on a topic of choice. Course number indicates distribution area in which a seminar counts. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.  Historical Studies Distro Area

GNDR_ST 350-6 Research Seminar in Gender & Sexuality Studies (1 Unit)  Students research and complete a research paper or project on a topic of choice. Course number indicates distribution area in which a seminar counts. May be repeated for credit with change of topic.  Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GNDR_ST 351-0 Gender, Sexuality, and Public Policy (1 Unit)  Studies of legal systems and public policy. Specific topics may include domestic violence and abortion legislation. Content varies by quarter; may be repeated for credit with different topics.  Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 352-0 Gender, Sexuality, and Political Theory (1 Unit)  Studies in political theory relating to gender and sexuality. Content varies by quarter; may be repeated for credit with different topics.  Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 353-0 Gender and Citizenship (1 Unit)  Examinations of conventional conceptions of political participation and counter-public spheres informed by feminist activism and feminist and gender theory.  Social Behavioral Sciences Distro Area

GNDR_ST 354-0 Gender, Sexuality, and Literature (1 Unit)  Studies in gender and/or sexuality in the context of theater and drama in or across historical periods. Content varies by quarter; may be repeated for credit with different topics.  Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GNDR_ST 355-0 Gender and Film (1 Unit)  Primary emphasis on representations of gender and sexuality in film and film theory. Content varies by quarter; may be repeated for credit with different topics.  Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GNDR_ST 356-0 Gender, Sexuality, and Digital Technologies (1 Unit)  Theories concerning gender and sexuality in digital representations, particularly Internet related. Content varies by quarter.  Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GNDR_ST 375-0 Internship in Gender and Sexuality Studies (1 Unit)  Field research and practical work experience in activist organizations; biweekly meeting with the instructor and other interns for discussion of internship experiences and common readings. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

GNDR_ST 380-0 Black Feminist Theory (1 Unit)  Survey of black feminist theories. Content may vary by quarter. Fulfills the major's theory requirement.

GNDR_ST 381-0 Queer Theory (1 Unit)  Survey of queer theories and methodologies. Fulfills the major's theory requirement. Content varies by quarter.  Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GNDR_ST 382-0 Race, Gender, and Sexuality (1 Unit)  Literature and/or theory concerned primarily with the intersections of race and/or ethnicity and gender and sexuality. Content varies by quarter; may be repeated for credit with different topics.  Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GNDR_ST 390-0 Topics in Gender and Sexuality Studies (1 Unit)  Topics vary. For example: masculinity; gender, race, and reproduction; gender, law, and public policy; Asian American women's history; women artists and their publics. May be repeated for credit with different topics.  Literature Fine Arts Distro Area

GNDR_ST 396-0 Senior Capstone Seminar (1 Unit)  Introduction to research methods in the interdisciplinary study of gender and sexuality.

GNDR_ST 397-0 Feminist Theory (1 Unit)  Survey of gender and feminist theory. Content may vary by quarter. Fulfills the major's theory requirement.

GNDR_ST 398-0 Senior Research Seminar (1 Unit)  Students work with an adviser and begin research on a senior thesis project, meeting on a reduced schedule over two quarters. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

GNDR_ST 399-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)  Individual tutorials or research projects. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.