WOMEN’S STUDIES, B.S.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description
This interdisciplinary major is designed to develop a broad understanding of the study of women and women’s perspectives in all areas of academic scholarship. The focus is on feminist analyses of women’s lives, of women’s social, cultural, and scientific contributions, and of the structure of sex/gender systems. The interdisciplinary and inclusive nature of the field is reflected in a curricular structure that includes courses cross-listed with a wide variety of departments, courses that deal with aspects of women’s lives throughout history, and courses that recognize the diversities of culture, race, religion, ethnicity, age, disability, and sexual orientation.

Students may choose either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science Program. The B.A. degree in Women’s Studies is a traditional Women’s Studies degree. The B.S. degree is intended for students with strong interest in quantitative skills, women’s health and sexuality, and/or women and science, or who wish to pursue a multiple major program with other B.S. degree programs.

What is Women's Studies?
Women’s Studies explores the intersection of identity, social power, and privilege. Concerned with how societies “construct” inequality and social bias, Women’s Studies analyzes every aspect of our lives through a critical lens, without filtering out impacts of socio-political inequalities, and lived experiences of women and their families. With cross-listed courses in Anthropology, Communications, Government, History, Psychology, Sociology, Women’s Health and more fields, students can approach Women’s Studies from almost any direction. Alongside the U.S. history of women and feminist movement, “transnational” feminism offers a wider comparative study of: constructions of gender across cultures; the legal and political standing of women and marginalized populations; the nature and impacts of gender-based violence, mass migration, militarization, climate change, food insecurity and other contemporary challenges on the physical, social and political wellbeing of women around the globe.

You Might Like This Program If...
- You want to translate your curiosities, experiences, passions and interests into actionable and meaningful work.
- You seek out inclusive environments, with persons of different backgrounds, cultures, and races to understand their points of view.
- You are passionate about gender equity, human rights, and social justice.
- You want to explore how gender and sexuality play a role in culture, the arts, literature, health, politics, the sciences, law, and education.
- You see yourself as a change agent in this world!

Entrance to Major
In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and

2. have at least third-semester classification (https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/)

Degree Requirements
For the Bachelor of Science degree in Women’s Studies, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>21-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for the Major</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3-12 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 3-6 credits of GQ courses, 0-3 credits of GH courses, and 0-3 credits of GS courses.

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Requirements for the Major
A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 301</td>
<td>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 492W</td>
<td>Contemporary Feminist Analysis: The Capstone Senior Seminar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 100</td>
<td>Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 106</td>
<td>Representing Women and Gender in Literature, Art and Popular Cultures</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 400N</td>
<td>Debates in Contemporary Feminism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or WMNST 401</td>
<td>Doing Feminism: Theory and Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select 3 credits from the following:</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WMNST 494</td>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 495</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WMNST 496</td>
<td>Independent Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select 27 credits (at least 9 credits at the 400 level) in Women's Studies from the program-approved lists, including:</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 83N</td>
<td>First-Year Seminar in Women's Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WMNST 102</td>
<td>Women of the African Diaspora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 104</td>
<td>Women and the American Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Select 15 credits total from the following groups with at least 3 credits from each group:

**Supporting Courses and Related Areas**

**Select a grade of C or better**

1. **Credits from each group:**
   - WMNST 106N: Representing Women and Gender in Literature, Art, and Popular Cultures
   - WMNST 117: Women in United States History
   - WMNST 137: Gender, Sexuality, and Religion
   - WMNST 194: Women Writers
   - WMNST 407W: Women and Theatre
   - WMNST 438: Seminar in Feminist Philosophy
   - WMNST 462: Reading Black, Reading Feminist
   - WMNST 466: Lesbian and Gay History
   - WMNST 490: Women Writers and Their Worlds

2. **9 credits of natural or social sciences courses from the following:**
   - WMNST 100: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
   - WMNST 103: Racism and Sexism
   - WMNST 110: Sociology of Gender
   - WMNST 116: Gender, Diversity, and Employment
   - WMNST 136: Race, Gender, and Employment
   - WMNST 202N: Women, Gender, and Feminisms in Africa
   - WMNST 205: Gender, Diversity and the Media
   - WMNST 412: Education and the Status of Women
   - WMNST 426Y: Women and the Criminal Justice System
   - WMNST 420: Sexual and Domestic Violence
   - WMNST 424: Women and Sport
   - WMNST 428: Gender and Politics
   - WMNST 452: Women and the Criminal Justice System
   - WMNST 455: Topics in Gender and Communication
   - WMNST 456: Gender, Occupations, and Professions
   - WMNST 458: Critical Feminist Issues in Reproduction
   - WMNST 471: The Psychology of Gender
   - WMNST 476W: Anthropology of Gender

3. **6 credits that focus on women’s health and sexuality or women in science and technology from the following:**
   - WMNST 100: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
   - WMNST 103: Racism and Sexism
   - WMNST 110: Sociology of Gender
   - WMNST 116: Gender, Diversity, and Employment
   - WMNST 205: Gender, Diversity and the Media
   - WMNST 420: Sexual and Domestic Violence
   - WMNST 424: Women and Sport
   - WMNST 428: Gender and Politics
   - WMNST 452: Women and the Criminal Justice System
   - WMNST 455: Topics in Gender and Communication
   - WMNST 456: Gender, Occupations, and Professions
   - WMNST 458: Critical Feminist Issues in Reproduction
   - WMNST 471: The Psychology of Gender
   - WMNST 476W: Anthropology of Gender

4. **15 credits that focus on women of color in the United States from the following:**
   - WMNST 476W: Anthropology of Gender
   - WMNST 100: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
   - WMNST 103: Racism and Sexism
   - WMNST 110: Sociology of Gender
   - WMNST 116: Gender, Diversity, and Employment
   - WMNST 205: Gender, Diversity and the Media
   - WMNST 476W: Anthropology of Gender

5. **3 credits that focus on non-Western women from the following:**
   - WMNST 476W: Anthropology of Gender
   - WMNST 100: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
   - WMNST 103: Racism and Sexism
   - WMNST 110: Sociology of Gender
   - WMNST 116: Gender, Diversity, and Employment
   - WMNST 205: Gender, Diversity and the Media

6. **6 credits that focus on women's health and sexuality or women in science and technology from the following:**
   - WMNST 476W: Anthropology of Gender
   - WMNST 100: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
   - WMNST 103: Racism and Sexism
   - WMNST 110: Sociology of Gender
   - WMNST 116: Gender, Diversity, and Employment
   - WMNST 205: Gender, Diversity and the Media

7. **9 credits of natural or social sciences courses from the following:**
   - WMNST 490: Women Writers and Their Worlds
   - WMNST 420: Sexual and Domestic Violence
   - WMNST 424: Women and Sport
   - WMNST 428: Gender and Politics
   - WMNST 452: Women and the Criminal Justice System
   - WMNST 455: Topics in Gender and Communication
   - WMNST 456: Gender, Occupations, and Professions
   - WMNST 458: Critical Feminist Issues in Reproduction
   - WMNST 471: The Psychology of Gender
   - WMNST 476W: Anthropology of Gender

8. **15 credits that focus on women of color in the United States from the following:**
   - WMNST 476W: Anthropology of Gender
   - WMNST 100: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
   - WMNST 103: Racism and Sexism
   - WMNST 110: Sociology of Gender
   - WMNST 116: Gender, Diversity, and Employment
   - WMNST 205: Gender, Diversity and the Media

**Quantification (GQ) and Research Methods**
- Values, Ethics, and Scientific Inquiry
- Social and behavioral sciences, health sciences, or natural sciences

1. The same course may be used to fulfill more than one requirement within Additional Courses.

**General Education**

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

**Foundations (grade of C or better is required)**

- Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.
  - Quantification (GQ): 6 credits
  - Writing and Speaking (GWS): 9 credits

**Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)**

- Arts (GA): 3 credits
- Health and Wellness (GHW): 3 credits
- Humanities (GH): 3 credits
- Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS): 3 credits
- Natural Sciences (GN): 3 credits

**Integrative Studies**

- Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain): 6 credits

**Exploration**

- GN, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses. This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student’s degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

**University Degree Requirements**

**First Year Engagement**

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.
Program Learning Objectives

- Career-Related Skills:
  - Describe professional options;
  - Identify personally relevant career options to implement their gender knowledge, critical and communication skills, and feminist values in a variety of settings;
  - Develop a résumé centering around skills relevant to a business-oriented position and to placement in a graduate program.

- Communication Skills:
  - Communicate effectively (in writing and/or orally) the results of a project or internship;
  - Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of major feminist theories;
  - Translate feminist theory and concepts into everyday language.

- Content Knowledge:
  - Define/explain major concepts underlying women’s and gender studies;
  - Describe the basic history of Women’s Studies (the “three waves” and beyond);
  - Define feminist concepts and theories;
  - Describe the interdisciplinary nature of the fields of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies;
  - Demonstrate awareness of feminist history and movement outside of the United States, i.e., global or transnational feminism;
  - Summarize the history and fundamental contributions of black feminism in relation to mainstream feminism.

- Diversity and Ethical Considerations:
  - Name the principles for a feminist classroom (confidentiality, respect of all, disagreeing through reason, not emotion, etc.) and practice them;
  - Integrate knowledge of cultural diversity in the context of human rights frameworks;
  - Apply basic principles of ethics to real-life situations, such as bystander action, or intervening in other forms of prejudice and hate.

- Research Skills:
  - Differentiate schools of feminist thought, and how research methods vary from one to the other (e.g. feminist literary analysis vs. psychological experimentation and protocols);
  - Integrate research from various academic fields into one’s own research and writing;
  - Gain first-hand experience with faculty research (as a research assistant) and/or with working as an intern with a faculty member (as a teaching assistant) or with a diversity-oriented organization (as an intern).

- Thinking Skills:
  - Use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and (if relevant) quantitative and qualitative research to analyze real-life issues related to gender and sexuality, and/or textual analysis (depending on the student’s secondary disciplinary focus);
  - Synthesize theoretical concepts;
  - Formulate activist activities based on theoretical principles;
  - Formulate and defend one’s own scholarly opinion regarding feminism based on reading, interpreting, and synthesizing the literature;
  - Relate classroom and course knowledge to current events, feminist concepts and theories to research and to real life.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university’s academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee’s unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/)

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising
814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program.
**Suggested Academic Plan**

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2024-25 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

**Women's Studies, B.A. at University Park Campus and Commonwealth Campuses**

The course series listed below provides only one of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an Academic Requirements or What If report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Series</th>
<th>Spring Credits</th>
<th>Fall Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WMNST 100, 106N, or 83S‡</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMNST Course (Work with Adviser)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Course (GQ)‡</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Course (GA) (FYS)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Supporting or Related Courses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WMNST 301</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMNST Course (Work with Adviser)</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Course (GH) (US)</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education Course (GN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Supporting or Related Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Credits 120</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**University Requirements and General Education Notes:**

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GWH, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

**Advising Notes:**

- This document is only for planning purposes. Most students are "off the plan" after one semester. At the campuses, students may sub WMNST 301 with any WMNST course if not available.
- Students need at least 24 credits in WMNST courses completed at UP due to competency requirements. Campus advisers may make work UP advisers if they have questions about their current students.
- Two general education courses (GQ, GN, GA, GH, GS) must be integrative studies courses - Inte-Domain or Linked.
- 12 credits of Major Supporting and Related Courses could fulfill general education requirements as well, which would mean a student needs more electives than what are listed here.

**Career Paths**

Employers today value effective communication, analytical thinking, and teamwork. With its emphasis on how gender, sexuality, race and
other forms of diversity impact the experiences of every individual, the Women's Studies curriculum trains its majors to recognize the impacts of bias and unequal social power in the social, cultural and political arenas. Graduates enter their post-graduate world sensitive to diverse perspectives that can either facilitate or impede team building, problem solving, and negotiation. Women's Studies graduates—no matter where their career paths lead—are committed to the kind of institutional and social change that values all voices, and supports social justice.

**Careers**

Women's Studies graduates from Penn State work in a wide variety of professions and industries. You will find us in the legal profession (one alumna runs her own legal firm, serving lower-income clients and gender-based discrimination cases). Others work in communications, marketing and advertising, business, banking and human resources. Activist students find their way into non-profits, advocacy groups, government, human development, journalism and communications. Women's health is a dynamic field—medical care, nursing and research positions are out there, as well as health administration. Teaching attracts many of our graduates.

**Opportunities for Graduate Studies**

The scholarly field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies prepares students to study some of the most complex challenges in a world where gender, race, class, sexuality, and power are always intertwined. As an interdisciplinary field, WGSS spans the arts and sciences, the humanities, and policy fields and provides applicable training for students seeking to continue their studies. Our scholars gain experience as researchers and teachers with the innovative tools to prepare them as leaders across the public, private, and educational sectors.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (https://wgss.la.psu.edu/graduate/)

**Professional Resources**

- National Women's Studies Association (https://www.nwsa.org/)
- National Organization for Women (https://now.org/)

**Contact**

**University Park**

DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

133 Willard Building

University Park, PA 16802

814-863-4025

jle1@psu.edu

https://wgss.la.psu.edu