

# Women's and Gender Studies, Cert. (GR)

---

## Program Description

The graduate certificate in Women's and Gender Studies offers graduate students the benefits of gaining an interdisciplinary concentration in gender, while earning a masters or PhD within a discipline. The Women's and Gender Studies Certificate aims to enhance critical thinking and methodological skills while facilitating analysis of gender, sex, sexuality, and intersectionality and their roles in culture, society, and the arts. Pursuing the WGST Certificate supports the development of innovative research that combines recent scholarship in gender studies with the student's major area of study.

## Outcomes

**Communicate effectively:** Students will write clearly on their ideas about women, gender, sexuality, and/or intersectionality.

**Depth of knowledge:** Students will synthesize literature regarding women, gender, and/or sexuality as evidenced by their ability to write about these topics.

**Critical Thinking:** Students will coherently state an argument involving topics related to women, gender, sexuality, and/or intersectionality and analyze data in articulation of the argument in a clear and logical way.

## Measure – WGST paper

**Data Collection:** Upon completion of the 12 hours of the Graduate Certificate, students are asked to submit a paper of their choice, chosen to demonstrate their proficiency with the concepts and methods for the study of gender and sexuality.

**Methodology or data analysis strategy:** Student-selected papers are uploaded to a Google form the student fills out on completion of the certificate coursework. Because this is a multi-disciplinary certificate, it makes the most sense for our assessment to focus on the student's work on gender and sexuality within their own primary discipline. The assessment committee (3 WGST faculty) read the papers and score them according to the rubric. They meet to resolve any questions about the assessment of the papers, individually or as a whole. [See rubric under *Supporting Documentation*]

## Target

Minimum acceptable performance is "competent" for each PLO. Target is that at least 90% of student papers will be rated as competent or better.

## **Finding: Met**

Six students finished the Graduate Certificate either in the 2020-2021 or the 2021-2022 year (we did not have enough papers in 2020-2021 to do a meaningful assessment, so we are covering two years in this cycle).

*Communicate effectively:* All six papers met or passed the bar of "competent"; in fact, 4 of the 6 were scored "proficient" in effective communication.

*Depth of knowledge:* All six papers met or passed the bar of "competent"; in fact, 5 of the 6 were scored "proficient" in depth of knowledge.

*Critical thinking:* All six papers met or passed the bar of "competent"; in fact, 5 of the 6 were scored "proficient" in critical thinking.

## **Use of Results**

Although our assessment indicates that our students are fulfilling the learning outcomes we expect, the WGST faculty also believes that, as an interdisciplinary program, we and our students can benefit from discussions about feminist methods. To this end, we are going to focus on the "depth of knowledge" PLO next year, and to focus, more specifically on the importance of feminist methods for work in students' home disciplines. We did notice that fewer of the students who met our objectives nevertheless scored "competent" vs. "proficient" on depth of knowledge, which we understand primarily as methodological (given the interdisciplinary nature of the certificate and the fact that we don't share content across the disciplines).

We plan to hold this roundtable early in Spring 2023. The presenters will be from Sociology, English, Communications, and Psychology. We believe that, as a faculty, we can learn from each other in such a way as to improve on how we discuss feminist methods in courses taken by students from other disciplines. For example, a faculty member from English can learn about feminist methods in Sociology so that she can better mentor graduate students from Sociology who take her English courses.

We plan to start this year, 2022-23, by having faculty from different disciplines participate in a roundtable on feminist methods, to which all WGST faculty affiliates will be invited, as long with all our certificate students.

## **Status Update on a Previous Action**

In the 2018-19 cycle, the WGST faculty decided to change the requirements of the certificate and to no longer require that humanities students take one social science class and that social science students take one humanities class. This decision was a result of our assessment, which showed that students were struggling with critical thinking in a discipline other than their own because they did not have the foundational courses/knowledge in that discipline. For example, a student in English might struggle with the modes of critical thinking required in a Sociology course because that student did not have the benefit of methods courses or other foundational courses in Sociology. The same might be true of a Sociology student taking an English course.

Our goal was to see if critical thinking improved if students were allowed to stay within their own discipline, or an adjacent one. To this end, we started asking students to submit a paper of their choice for assessment, once they have completed the 12 hours of the certificate. This would allow student

learning outcomes to be measured in a more fruitful way, so that student learning could be evaluated within that student's own discipline. This makes the most sense since the Graduate Certificate in WGST is meant to enrich the student's work in her own discipline.

The results of our assessment in 2021-22 indicate that this was a smart move, as all students met (and most exceeded) the target of "competency" in critical thinking based on the paper they submitted (which was scored by a committee of three WGST faculty members).

## Supporting Documentation

<b>Women's and Gender Studies Graduate Certificate – Paper Rubric</b>			
<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Competent</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Depth of knowledge</b> <i>Students will analyze and synthesize literature regarding women, gender, sexuality, and/or intersectionality</i>	Identifies issues about women, gender, sexuality, and/or intersectionality with only limited reference to women's and gender studies theories, methods, and praxis.	Explains relevance of at least one theory, method, or practice from women's and gender studies to the theme of the paper.	Develops multiple theories, methods, or praxis from women's and gender studies.
<b>Communicate effectively</b> <i>Students will write effectively about their ideas about women, gender, sexuality, and/or intersectionality.</i>	Accomplishes only one or two of the following: (a) provides clear thesis, (b) uses evidence to support points well, (c) analyzes evidence, (d) structures arguments and evidence to support the thesis well.	Accomplishes three of the following: (a) provides clear thesis, (b) uses evidence to support points well, (c) analyzes evidence, (d) structures arguments and evidence to support the thesis well.	Accomplishes all of the following: (a) provides clear thesis, (b) uses evidence to support points well, (c) analyzes evidence, (d) structures arguments and evidence to support the thesis well.
<b>Critical Thinking</b> <i>Students will coherently state an argument involving topics related to women, gender, sexuality, and/or intersectionality and analyze data in articulation of the argument in a clear and logical way.</i>	Accomplishes one or two of the following: (a) coherently-stated argument; (b) argument articulated with analysis of evidence; (c) argument is fully developed; (d) clear, logical organization	Accomplishes three of the following: (a) coherently-stated argument; (b) argument articulated with analysis of evidence; (c) argument is fully developed; (d) clear, logical organization	Accomplishes four of the following: (a) coherently-stated argument; (b) argument articulated with analysis of evidence; (c) argument is fully developed; (d) clear, logical organization