

The Women's & Gender Studies major offers in-depth opportunities to study gender and its intersections with other aspects of identity within your field of interest. The major provides up-to-date knowledge about women and gender in comparative, transnational, historical, and global perspectives and equips you with the knowledge, theories, and methods relevant to a variety of careers and professions.

With a focus on the position of women in culture and society, this major emphasizes the intersections of gender with other social identities such as race, social class, religion, ethnicity, nationality, age, and sexual orientation. The major provides a complex, nuanced, and deep understanding of women's experiences and the structural and cultural dynamics of how gender operates in our world.

Women's & Gender Studies majors learn about:

- the relationships among sex, gender roles, and power
- gender and sexual identities
- gender and its intersections with race, class, ethnicity, nationality, and religion
- gender, community, activism, and political power
- gender as a category of analysis in the academy and beyond
- the condition of women throughout history and in a variety of cultural contexts in the United States and across the globe

Julia Grant, Assoc. Dean in James Madison College, teaching her class, "Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, & Gay Studies"



Female students take notes for a textile class—1930s
Courtesy of University Archives & Historical Collections

For further information about the WGS Major, please contact the GenCen Advisor:
www.gencen.msu.edu/advising
gencenad@msu.edu

Center for Gender in Global Context
206 International Center
427 N Shaw Ln
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824-1035

Phone: (517) 353-5040
Fax: (517) 432-4845
Email: gencen@msu.edu
www.gencen.msu.edu

College of Arts & Letters



Center for Gender
in Global Context
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Women's & Gender Studies Major



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

“Students who are interested in gender equality at any level of society would greatly benefit from this major. Any student who wishes to be an educator, politician, sociologist, lawyer, or activist, as well as any who are interested in the humanities or social sciences, would find this major incredibly helpful.”



Rae Mieskowski

“The Women's & Gender Studies major complements my degree program in Comparative Cultures & Politics. While traveling to many countries throughout the Middle East and Asia as a member of the military, I became very interested in the lives of women in those countries. I saw not only the ways in which women are different, but also the many ways we share a common bond. I want to explore the common struggles faced by women all over the world.”



Andrea Norton

“I want to learn all I can about gender identity and how I can help people like me understand who they are and what they're feeling ... Majoring in Women's & Gender Studies and focusing on Sexuality and Conflict, I will be able to learn new ways to gain rights for people who do not identify as cisgender.”



Katherine Miller

Why Women’s and Gender Studies?

The Women’s & Gender Studies major at MSU is offered through the College of Arts & Letters and administered by the Center for Gender in Global Context (in International Studies & Programs). Our faculty is drawn from disciplines across campus—including Anthropology; Criminal Justice; Economics; English; History; Human Development & Family Studies; James Madison; Law; LGBT Resource Center; Linguistics & Languages; Lyman Briggs; Psychology; Political Science; Research Consortium on Gender-Based Violence (RCGBV); Religious Studies; Social Work; Sociology; and Writing, Rhetoric, & American Cultures (WRAC)—to offer a diverse set of critical approaches and perspectives.

The Women’s & Gender Studies major offers comparative, interdisciplinary, and trans-historical academic training. Students are equipped with the knowledge, theories, and methods relevant to a variety of careers and professions. Program graduates can find positions in a wide variety of fields, particularly if they are double or joint majors. Students have the option to enroll in WGS as a primary, secondary, or dual-degree program.

Students who wish to pursue the WGS Major must contact the GenCen Advisor to arrange an appropriate course of study. Due to the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of our programs, it is a requirement to meet at least once a year with the advisor to stay up-to-date on course/ other opportunities.



Women’s and Gender Studies Requirements

Core Courses

- **WS 201 Introduction to Women’s & Gender Studies** Foundational knowledge, theories, methods in women’s and gender studies and of women’s experience historically and across the globe
- **WS 202 Introduction to Contemporary Feminisms and Gender Theories** Theories of feminism and gender from a variety of intellectual, political, cultural, religious, sexual, racial, ethnic, national, and global perspectives
- **WS 203 Introduction to Methods for Women’s & Gender Studies Research** Interdisciplinary research methods for global women’s and gender studies
- **WS 492 Women’s & Gender Studies Senior Seminar** Guided advanced research and writing in a special topic in global gender and women’s studies
- **WS 493 Internship** Application of course work in Women’s and Gender Studies through work experience related to women’s and gender concerns; experience in legislative, community, or educational settings in the U.S. and overseas

Global Perspectives (minimum of 6 credits)

A minimum of 6 credits that explore gender in global perspectives are required. These courses emphasize global, transnational, and intersectional perspectives on gender. Students learn about gender in comparative perspective across various global regions and nationalities. Courses used to fulfill this requirement may not be used to fulfill requirements for the interdisciplinary content Thematic Area required for the major.

Thematic Areas (Choose one—minimum of 12 credits)

- A minimum of 12 credits in courses from one of the four interdisciplinary Thematic Areas listed below are required. Courses used to fulfill this requirement may not be used to fulfill any other major requirements.
- **Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and History**—Study the interrelation of gender and race over time through courses in anthropology, literature, history, geography, political science, sociology, and women’s studies.
 - **Sexuality and Conflict/Violence**—Explore the power dynamics of gender and sexuality in conflict situations through courses in criminal justice, communications, family and child ecology, geography, history, science, political science, psychology, sociology, and women’s studies.
 - **Gender and the Arts and Humanities**—Focus on gender within the arts and humanities field by taking courses in literature, language, media studies, history, political science, philosophy, religion, writing, and women’s studies.
 - **Gender Applied: Health, Urban, and Public Policy**—Learn how to apply theory and action in relation to public policy, health, and geography through courses in anthropology, criminal justice, literature, economics, environment, political science, epidemiology and public health, family and child ecology, psychology, sociology, urban planning, and women’s studies.

Internships (2 to 4 required credits)

The required internship is a practical way to expand your resumé in the direction of your chosen career before graduation. Students have the potential to choose paid or unpaid internship opportunities with a broad variety of organizations including academic research units or community, legislative, and other professional nonprofit organizations at local, national, and international levels. The GenCen internship coordinator provides close professional mentoring to students from the beginning of the application process through the end of the internship experience.

Study Abroad Opportunities

Students have the opportunity to complete up to 40% of the major’s program requirements through study abroad by taking our “Environment and NGOs: Internships in Malawi” program and either of our other two programs, “Gender, Sex, & Feminism in the UK” or “Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Sexual Politics in Amsterdam,” with courses available under multiple thematic areas. Contact the GenCen Advisor as early as possible to learn about scholarship or other financial assistance/funding opportunities to help subsidize costs.

University Requirements

Integrative Studies & Writing	Credits
Tier I Writing: WRA 110 to 150	4
Tier II Writing: * Must be WS 492 *	4
IAH (two courses: one below and one above 211)	8
ISS (one 200-level course, followed by one 300-level course)	8
ISB/ISP and laboratory (one physical sciences course; one biological sciences course; 2 laboratory credits)	8

Students with a test score below “19” on the proctored mathematics placement test also need at least one math course credit beyond MTH 103.

You must complete the above courses with minimum overall and major GPA of 2.0, and with at least 120 total credits.

College of Arts and Letters Requirements

- Language
- second-year proficiency in a language other than English is required
- Cognates/Minor
- Two cognates are required, with at least one from outside the College of Arts & Letters. Each cognate must be a “cohesive body of knowledge” of at least 12 credits.
 - Students who complete an additional major, second degree, or minor in another field may substitute that program for both cognates.



Students dining in Morrill Hall— 1930s
Courtesy of University Archives & Historical Collections