



WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

Undergraduate Student Handbook

2023-2024

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I. ABOUT

The Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) offers an interdisciplinary undergraduate major and minor in a challenging and collegial intellectual environment. The program emphasizes the interdisciplinary study of women, gender, and sexuality. Our classes develop students' skills in critical thinking and analysis, communication and research, imagination and creative expression.

The department offers a minor and major in WGSS. There are core courses and elective courses taught by WGSS faculty, and a diverse range of cross-listed courses taught by associated faculty in African-American studies, African studies, anthropology, art history, classics, comparative literature, creative writing, English, film and media, French and Italian, history, human health, Latin American and Caribbean studies, linguistics, Middle Eastern and South Asian studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, Russian and East Asian studies, sociology, and theater and dance. With eight core faculty members and over 60 associated faculty, WGSS is a central part of the academic curriculum of Emory College of Arts and Sciences.

Most courses, including *Introduction to WGSS* (WGS200), are taught in small class settings to encourage the active exchange of ideas between teachers and students. WGS100 (*Gender Trouble*) and WGS205 (*Introduction to Studies in Sexualities*) are taught as lecture courses with small weekly discussion sections.

The [Office of Undergraduate Education \(OUE\)](#) provides important information for helping students. Please consult their guidelines in addition to this handbook.

II. WGSS CONFERENCE GRANTS

WGSS offers a limited amount of travel funding each year to support WGSS undergraduates who wish to present their research at academic conferences. Students may receive funds to support their travel to one conference each academic year. To apply for conference travel support, students should submit an application at least two months before expected date of travel. Students who submit requests to WGSS must simultaneously apply to the [Office of Undergraduate Research Programs](#) (URP) for travel funds. Applications will be reviewed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies with input from the WGSS undergraduate program committee as necessary. Students will be notified via email of the department's decision within two weeks of application submission.

Eligibility

Student must be a WGSS major or minor and must have had their papers accepted for a formal presentation. The student's name and affiliation must be listed on the conference program.

Application Process

The following material must be submitted as part of the application:

- A cover letter that includes the following: a description of the conference's academic relevance; amount of funding requested; other funding sources to which student will apply;
- A one-page abstract of the paper to be presented. It should detail the argument and the methods of inquiry;
- An official description of the conference (e.g., from a conference website);
- A copy of student's official acceptance letter or email from the conference organizers;
- An estimated line-item budget of total expenses (registration fee, airfare, ground transportation, hotel, meals, etc.). Student should consult with the WGSS academic departmental administrator (ADA) about these expenses prior to submission;
- A brief letter of support from a WGSS core or associated faculty, preferably from someone familiar with the research in question. This letter should be submitted directly to the Director of Undergraduate Studies by the recommender.

Travel and Reimbursement Procedures

Conference expenses are paid as reimbursement after the event, so all receipts should be retained. Students will be responsible for communicating with the WGSS ADA before incurring any conference expenses. Within 10 days of returning from the conference, students must submit to the ADA:

- Their receipts and a copy of the conference program page(s) showing their name and participation;
- A one-paragraph email describing and evaluating their conference.

III. WGSS OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD

This award recognizes outstanding performances in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies academics and leadership.

Eligibility and Nominations

These awards are limited to senior WGSS majors and minors. Up to two awards may be given each year. Nominations will be solicited from WGSS faculty and graduate instructors. Criteria for the award are:

- Student's performance in WGSS courses
- GPA in WGSS
- Participation in the Honors Program
- Independent research with WGSS faculty
- Presentations at conferences
- Student's WGSS leadership activities
- Active participation in WGSS events
- WGSS community building activities, and other feminist activism/leadership

Timetable and Selection Process

The selection process takes place annually in early April. The WGSS undergraduate program committee will evaluate the nominations and select the recipients. The awards are announced publicly at the department's end of the year party. Winners receive certificate plaques. The winner's name will also appear in the commencement program. A certificate of Honorary Mention may be awarded to one or more particularly active and engaged undergraduates.

IV. DEGREE APPLICATIONS

Graduating seniors must obtain the department's certification stating they have completed all requirements for their major or minor. Please contact the [undergraduate program coordinator](#) for signatures. Visit the [OUE website](#) for more information regarding degree applications.

V. DIRECTED READINGS / INDEPENDENT STUDIES

Students wishing to take a directed readings course must find a faculty member who agrees to supervise the reading. The student must submit to the Director of Undergraduate Studies a directed readings course form signed by a core or associated faculty member prior to enrolling. Forms can be found on the [WGSS website](#). For questions, contact the [undergraduate program coordinator](#).

VI. GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS (GER)

GERs are changing in 2022-2023. This handbook will be updated when new information is available. Currently, GER tags for WGSS courses include:

- Humanities, Arts, Performance (HAP): these courses focus on individuals and/or groups in society to demonstrate how the social sciences use theory and methods to expand our understanding of social phenomena. These courses are designed to engage the student in reflection on aesthetic, ethical, and social values through the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of written texts and artistic forms
- History, Society, Cultures (HSC): these courses exemplify the use of historical methods, offer perspectives on the history of the United States, and relate the U.S. to the rest of the world; or these courses cover a significant western history and culture other than the U.S.; or these courses focus on nonwestern cultures or comparative and international studies
- Science, Nature, Technology (SNT): these courses demonstrate fundamental principles and techniques of scientific inquiry as a means of understanding the natural world and human life. This category includes both courses focusing on scientific findings and concepts, and courses focusing on scientific methodology

VII. [HONOR CODE](#)

Emory College of Arts and Sciences is a community of students and scholars that is steadfast in its commitment to academic integrity. All members of this community are bound by a shared duty to uphold the highest level of academic honesty. While the college is committed to establishing and maintaining an honor code that protects us from all forms of academic misconduct, this community of integrity cannot thrive unless we embody, in all academic pursuits, the core principles of honesty and fairness. Emory's mission—to create and apply knowledge in the service of humanity—can only be fulfilled when we, as its members, value the great responsibility with which we have been entrusted and conduct our lives according to the dictates of the highest integrity. All students who apply to and are accepted by Emory College, as a condition of acceptance, agree to abide by the provisions of the honor code so long as they remain students at Emory College. By their continued attendance at Emory College, students reaffirm their pledge to adhere to the provisions of the [honor code](#).

VIII. [WGSS HONORS PROGRAM](#)

WGSS offers eligible juniors the opportunity to participate in the [WGSS Honors Program](#). If approved, students will take a graduate seminar in WGSS or a related field, write an Honors thesis, and defend that thesis in an oral examination. Successful Honors candidates are awarded their degree with Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors.

[A. Honors Application Requirements](#)

Interested students with a 3.7 cumulative GPA should submit [applications](#) by March 1st of their junior year. Students are not required to have a fully developed proposal or a thesis advisor but must submit a writing sample (preferably a research paper) and a one-paragraph description of their proposed topic. Students without a 3.7 GPA may still apply to the WGSS Honors Program, but must obtain a faculty sponsor who has agreed to serve as their Honors advisor. Students should list WGSS faculty with whom they have had a class.

[B. Faculty Evaluations](#)

Once the student has submitted an application, the Director of Undergraduate Studies will solicit evaluations from at least two WGSS instructors (i.e., core faculty, associate faculty, graduate instructors) with whom the student has taken a class. These brief evaluations will assess whether the student is ready for independent research and participation in graduate level coursework. In the unlikely event that the student has taken no courses with WGSS instructors, then the student must obtain a faculty sponsor in order to apply to and be considered for the WGSS Honors Program.

[C. Honors Program Acceptance](#)

The WGSS undergraduate program committee will evaluate the quality of the application and decide whether to accept a student into the WGSS Honors Program.

The Director of Undergraduate Studies will inform the applicant in writing of the outcome of those deliberations. Accepted students without the required 3.7 GPA will be admitted provisionally and must successfully petition the college honors committee for a waiver of this requirement.

D. Honors Course Requirements

Students must register for WGS495 (Honors Research) both semesters of their senior year (WGS495A in the fall semester and WGS495B in the spring semester). In addition, the student must register, with the permission of the instructor, for a WGSS graduate course during the Honors year.

E. Honors Thesis Committee Requirements

- Committees must consist of at least three core members. Core committee members must be regular Emory University faculty members from any school or unit. One member must be from the student's honors major and at least one member must be from Emory College. You may have additional committee members, including faculty from other universities, beyond the required three core members. Only core members vote on level of honors. Your advisor counts as one of the three core members.
- Regular faculty titles typically include professor, associate professor, assistant professor, professor of pedagogy, senior lecturer, lecturer, but might also include titles such as Instructor or Research Associate.
- Adjunct, visiting, emeritus, and post-doctoral fellows must petition to the Honors Committee to be permitted to serve on committees.
- Members of the staff are not eligible to serve on committees.

This committee will guide the student's independent research on a topic of the student's choosing. In Spring of their junior year, the student should meet with their advisor to discuss a plan for reading and research over the summer. This reading/research is preliminary and is to be undertaken independently by the student. The advisor does not provide supervision/advice over the summer period unless both advisor and student are enrolled in one of the Undergraduate Research Programs. The department recommends that the full committee meet together once in the fall, while the student is still collecting data and/or fine-tuning their methodology.

The committee will judge the quality of the completed Honors thesis and the student's defense of the thesis in an oral examination in the spring semester of the student's senior year.

F. Human Subjects Research and IRB Applications

Students whose research projects involve human subjects must obtain IRB approval for their project before beginning their research. The IRB application must be submitted by the student's faculty advisor by October 15th of the student's senior year and must be submitted two months prior to the start date for the students' research to ensure adequate time for IRB processing.

G. Honors Thesis Guidelines and Requirements

i. Content and Scope

The thesis should display interdisciplinary scholarship on gender, sexualities, and/or women, and should engage some of the themes, texts, principles, approaches, and methods found in the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Examples of prior WGSS Honors theses can be found in the online [Emory Theses and Dissertations \(ETD\) Repository](#).

ii. Defense

Students must submit their completed thesis to their thesis committee at least three weeks in advance of the oral defense date. The student is responsible to organizing the time and the location of the oral defense.

The defense is 90 minutes long and is attended by the student and the full committee. Typically, no other people are in attendance. The defense begins with a 5-10 presentation by the student of the project (its argument, method, and outcomes). The committee will ask questions of the candidate for up to an hour. The candidate will then be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates on the level of Honors to be awarded to the thesis. The student is notified of the level of Honors on their return to the room.

Successful honors candidates are awarded the degree at one of the following levels:

- *Honors (cum laude)* represents satisfactory completion of the program together with an overall average of 3.5
- *High Honors (magna cum laude)* represents completion of the program with outstanding performance together with an overall average of 3.5. The thesis shall be of a quality sufficient for oral presentation to scholars in the candidate's field or of a comparable standard appropriate to the discipline
- *Highest Honors (summa cum laude)* represents completion of the program with exceptional performance together with an overall average of 3.5. The thesis shall be of a quality sufficient for submission for publication or of a comparable standard appropriate to the discipline

Fourrageres signifying Honors are presented to qualifying graduating seniors to be worn at Commencement.

iii. Satisfactory Progress

Student must make satisfactory progress each semester as judged by their thesis advisor. Student must also maintain a 3.5 overall GPA to remain in the Honors program.

iv. Thesis Advising and Meeting Schedule

The advisor and student should meet in the first couple of weeks of each semester to discuss the following:

- The student's coursework requirements;
- A schedule of advising meetings for that semester;

- A schedule of deadlines for thesis research and writing in that semester.

It is also recommended that the student meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies once at the beginning of the fall semester and once at the beginning of the spring semester. The department recommends that the advisor and student meet at least once a month. Meeting every two weeks, or even weekly, may be advisable at certain periods when research/writing requires intensive supervision.

H. Important Honors Deadlines

These WGSS dates change slightly from year to year depending on the day of the week. The OUE deadlines also change annually. Please check with the OUE for current deadlines.

WGSS deadlines and events:

- March 1st (Junior year): applications to WGSS Honors Program due
- May 1 (Junior year): Accepted students will be required to identify their thesis advisor (core or associated WGSS faculty) by May 1 and submit a two-page project proposal to the Director of Undergraduate Studies by May 1 detailing their argument or question and planned methods of inquiry. If the student does not find an advisor by this deadline, they will not be eligible to participate in the Honors Program.

OUE Honors Program deadlines:

- November (Senior year): Honors thesis committee form due
- Beginning of April (Senior year): oral defense schedule form due
- Mid - April (Senior year): deadline for oral defense of thesis

IX. MAJOR AND MINOR CHECKLISTS

PDF versions of the major and minor checklists are posted on the [WGSS website](#). For questions, please contact the [Undergraduate Program Coordinator](#).

X. SENIOR SEMINAR AND RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

The Senior Seminar is only for seniors who are WGSS majors. Each year, students in the WGSS senior seminar present their research work to the department. The symposium takes place at the end of the fall semester.

XI. STUDY ABROAD

Students taking courses abroad may seek WGSS credit if the course meets or exceeds the standards for a cross-listed WGSS course. The course should be taught by a credentialed instructor with an advanced degree (instructor does not have to be in WGSS). The course must devote at least one-half of its time to a discussion of women and/or gender and/or sexuality. Credit will be approved at the discretion of the WGSS

Director of Undergraduate Studies. Applications are filed through the [Study Aboard Program](#).

XII. TRANSIENT STUDY

Students taking courses at another institution in the U.S. may seek WGSS credit if the course meets or exceeds the standards for a cross-listed WGSS course. The course should be taught by a credentialed instructor with an advanced degree (instructor does not have to be in WGSS). The course must devote at least one-half of its time to a discussion of women and/or gender and/or sexuality. Credit will be approved at the discretion of the WGSS Director of Undergraduate Studies. Applications are filed through the [Transient Study Program](#).

XIII. WITHDRAWALS

To [cancel registration or withdraw from the college](#) at any time other than the close of a semester, a student must secure written permission from a dean in the College's Office for Undergraduate Education.

XIV. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The Undergraduate Program Coordinator will send an email in September of each year to WGSS students inviting one junior and one senior to self-nominate to join the undergraduate program committee. Students should submit their self-nomination and a one-page resume to the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. The Director of Undergraduate Studies in consultation with the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and the faculty members of the undergraduate program committee will choose two student representatives. Undergraduate program committee meets several times during the semester. Student members serve to represent undergraduate concerns and bring them to the attention of the committee.

XV. WGSS GRADUATE SEMINARS

The Department of WGSS strongly recommends that undergraduates only enroll in a WGSS graduate seminar if they are accepted into the Honors Program (in WGSS or in another department/program). Decisions about admission into the class reside with the WGSS Director of Undergraduate Studies in consultation with the faculty instructor.

XVI. GRADE APPEALS

Students who wish to dispute a grade in a course or on a particular assignment should first discuss the issue with the instructor of record. Students may want to submit their

request in writing directly to the course instructor. Students should submit re-grade requests within 14 days of receiving the graded assignment or course grade.

If a student wishes to appeal the instructor's decision on a re-grade request, the student can submit an appeal in writing to the WGSS Director of Undergraduate Studies. The re-grade appeal must be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Studies within 14 days of receiving the instructor's response. The appeal should outline the reasons for the re-grade request. The Director of Undergraduate Studies will review the re-grade request and issue a ruling within four weeks of receiving the request. In cases where the re-grade request concerns a course that the Director of Undergraduate Studies is directly involved in teaching, the re-grade appeal should be submitted to the WGSS Department Chair.

The re-grade decision of the department is final and cannot be appealed to the OUE.