

Women's and Gender Studies

The Field

Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) offers students an opportunity to gain a new and exciting perspective on existing disciplines. A major project of WGS is to include women and gender as categories of analysis in all traditional scholarly inquiry. Though the conditions and quality of women's lives have differed from those of men in most cultures and periods of history, academic research and class content often fail to consider such differences. The primary objective of WGS is to encourage deeper inquiry into the lives of women and the functions of gender, race, nationality, sexuality, and other identities in social systems.

The MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies

The program draws its faculty from various departments and sections at the Institute including Film and Comparative Media Studies; Writing and Humanistic Studies; Architecture; Music and Theater Arts; Philosophy; Urban Studies and Planning; Management; Literature; Political Science; History; Anthropology; Foreign Languages and Literatures; and Science, Technology, and Society. Some WGS classes include *Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies*, *The Psychology of Race and Gender*, *International Women's Voices*, *Contemporary US Women of Color*, *Women and Global Activism*, *Feminist Political Thought*, *Sexual and Gender Identities*, and *The Science of Race, Sex, and Gender in the US*. The program cosponsors films, lectures, and public discussions with many other departments and programs at the Institute. Four recent highly successful events were film screenings of *Red Moon: Menstruation, Culture & the Politics of Gender* and *Women Without Men*; a McMillan Stewart lecture — *Law, Violence, & Mobilization: Iraqi Women in the "New Iraq"*; and *Exploring the Myths and Facts of Sexual Exploitation*. WGS also recently hosted Women Take the Reel, a film festival celebrating women's history month.

With an independent administrative structure created in 1983, the program has made significant headway in encouraging intellectual exploration of the influences of

gender, race, and class in literature, history, politics, art, and in the social and natural sciences. One student's comment in a class evaluation illustrates the program's success:

More than any of my other subjects, Women's and Gender Studies classes have "expanded my thinking." Gender influences virtually every field from psychology to literature to physics in fascinating and unanticipated ways. Taking WGS classes has taught me to recognize some of these intersections and in doing so has forced me to rethink much of what I had believed about myself and the world around me.

In analyzing the way gender has shaped our thinking about traditional subjects, students acquire both practice and methodology for devising critical perspectives on society and culture.

Undergraduate Program

Major

There are two options for pursuing a major in WGS: the full major or a Major Departure in Humanities (Course 21); and the joint major in Humanities and either Science (Course 21-S) or Engineering (Course 21-E).

Minor

The Minor in WGS consists of 6 subjects arranged into three levels of study. Tier I is the required subject *Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies*. Four Tier II subjects must be chosen from no less than three of the following categories: Literature and the Arts, History, Social Sciences, Science/Engineering/Technology, and Interdisciplinary Women's and Gender Studies. At the Tier III level is a required advanced seminar in *Feminist Political Thought*.

Concentration:

The concentration in WGS consists of at least three courses. Of the three courses, *Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies* is required. The bulk of our students are concentrators.

Opportunities Outside the Classroom

We have several undergraduate research opportunities, including *Life Histories of MIT Women Graduates — An Oral History Project* with Professor Margery Resnick.

The Louis Kampf Writing Prize in Women's and Gender Studies is awarded annually.

The Women's and Gender Studies headquarters maintains a number of different email lists to distribute information about gender throughout the electronic community. We highlight MIT Women's and Gender Studies events as well as those in the larger Boston area on our web page at <http://web.mit.edu/wgs/>.

Graduate Student Opportunities

The MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies is a founding member of the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (GCWS). This enables MIT graduate students to apply and cross-register in its series of team-taught graduate seminars and allows MIT faculty to participate in interdisciplinary faculty workshops. Recent classes have included *Workshop for Dissertation Writers in Women's & Gender Studies*; *Gender, the State and Women's Political Power*; *Feminist Inquiry*; and *Feminism and Islam*.

Contact Information

For more information about the MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies, see our web page at <http://web.mit.edu/wgs/>, call us at (617) 253-8844, visit the MIT Program Headquarters in Room 14E-316, or email us at wgs@mit.edu.

The MIT Course Catalog contains further information on the Institute, including all graduate and undergraduate courses and programs. For details on ordering the course catalogue, please visit the MIT Press Bookstore website at <http://web.mit.edu/bookstore/www/bulletin.html>.

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