The Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies, formerly the Gender and Women’s Studies Program, is a comprehensive interdisciplinary program committed to transnational perspectives on gender and sexuality at Oberlin College. Courses are available for minors and majors.

The institute provides support and direction for disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary scholarship in gender, sexuality, and feminist studies for faculty and students. This broad academic approach reflects the way feminists work—across subjects—exploring how gender, race, class, and sexuality are represented in relation to ethnicity, nationality, politics, and other categories of human experience. Collaborations include courses in African American studies, comparative American studies, East Asian studies, English, politics, history, religion, and sociology, among others. The institute draws on faculty across campus with expertise and scholarship in gender, sexuality, and feminist studies.

Curriculum Overview

Students take gateway courses to explore a range of theoretical and methodological approaches within the realm of gender, sexuality and feminist studies. Advanced courses provide deeper understanding of subject material as well as develop students’ skills for critical and analytical reading, writing, and research, and to help them evaluate scholarship as it pertains to gender, sexuality, and feminist issues and perspectives.

Faculty advisors help students to shape a program of study that corresponds with their interests and career goals. Students have the opportunity to complete a research project relating to their majors. Seminars, faculty and guest lectures, conferences, workshops, and modular studies complement classroom instruction. Students have opportunities for fellowships, internships, interdisciplinary projects, and study abroad.

Students who earn a degree in gender, sexuality, or feminist studies often pursue graduate-level education or enter the workforce. Graduates have excelled in such professions as academia, communications, human rights, nonprofit management, public health and medicine, public policy, and social work.

Director:
Renee Romano, GSFS Director, 2010-2011, Assoc. Professor, History

GSFS Advisors (10-11):
Zeinab Abul-Magd, Asst. Prof., History
Ann Cooper Albright, Professor of Theater and Dance
Laura Baudot, Assistant Professor, English
Pamela Brooks, Assoc. Professor, African American Studies
Ana Cara, Professor, Hispanic Studies
Hsiu-Chuang Deppman, Assoc. Professor, Chinese
Suzanne Gay, Professor of East Asian Studies & History
Harry Hirsch, Professor, Politics
Karla Hubbard, Assoc. Professor, Geology
Wendy Hyman, Asst. Prof., English
Margaret Kamitsuka, Chair; Assoc. Professor, Religion
Wendy Kozol, Chair; Professor, Comparative American Studies
Greggor Mattson, Chair; Asst. Professor, Sociology
Gateway Courses

GSFS courses designated as “gateway” are also “electives.”

- **CAST 100 - Introduction to Comparative American Studies**
  The course will introduce students to the complexity of American social and cultural formations, with particular emphases on sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and gender, and to various methodologies of comparative analysis. Instructor: M. Raimondo

- **CLAS 219 - Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome**
  Study of the construction of gender and sexual identities in ancient Greece and Rome. Emphasis will be on primary texts that demonstrate notions of sexual practice and/or identity, such as Aristophanes’ Thesmophoriazousae, Plato's Symposium, Aeschines’ Against Timarchos, and poetry of Sappho, Catullus, Ovid, Martial, Juvenal. We will also read modern critical theorists of sexuality, and will interrogate the usefulness of their arguments for understanding ancient Greece and Rome. Instructor: K. Ormand

- **RHET 104 - Queering the Reel**
  A course for first or second-year students interested in developing their skills in college writing by examining issues of sexual orientation and gender in film. Films addressing representation of sexual identifications, homophobia and heterosexism, and community building will provide topics for reading and writing. Students will explore these topics and their relation to race, class, and historical context through writing both personal and academic essays. Instructor: J. Cooper

- **SOCI 227 - Sociology of Gender**
  This course will offer an introductory survey of the sociology of gender. The central themes of the course will be changes and continuities in gender roles, the social processes that shape gender politics, and the connections between gender, power, and inequality. As we explore these themes, we will study how culture, the economy, and the family have been pivotal sites for the maintenance, reproduction, and change in gender roles in the U.S. Instructor: R. Baldoz

Capstone Courses

GSFS courses designated as “capstone” are also “electives.”

- **CAST 400 - Research Seminar: Expanding the Archive**
  How do American Studies scholars use archives? Is this changing in the 21st century? Do new archives like the Internet require different methodological approaches? This seminar explores the distinctiveness of interdisciplinary research in Comparative American Studies as well as the range of traditional and contemporary sources of evidence available to scholars. In this class, students will work through the various steps of evidence gathering, analysis, and writing a research paper. Instructor: W. Kozol

- **GSFS 300 - Maternal Health and Black Women**
  Black women of childbearing age around the globe have worse maternal health
indicators and outcomes than their non-Black counterparts. These indicators stem from life-long poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and limited life opportunities. This course examines the complex interplay of socio-historical factors and lived experiences affecting Black women’s health during reproductive years and assesses public health efforts geared toward improving their maternal health. Instructor: P. Kibera

- **HIST 456 - The Politics of Gender in Medieval and Early Modern Europe**
  This colloquium has a two aims: to examine how medieval and early modern Europeans constructed and performed conceptual binaries such as male/female and mind/body, and also to consider the ways in which gender studies have transformed the doing of history. To this end we will analyze historians, work on the topics of sexuality, spirituality, the family, political authority, economic production and scientific enquiry for the period ranging from 1000 to 1700. Instructor: E. Wurtzel

**Elective Courses**

- **AAST 225 - Women in Caribbean History**
  This course studies the economic, social, cultural and political activities of women in the Caribbean from the era of Pre-conquest to the dawn of political independence in the various colonies. It will therefore begin with an examination of the lives of indigenous Caribbean women and continue with an analysis of the historical setting and factors which affected the behavior of women of African, European, Chinese and Indian descent. Instructor: G. Gill

- **AAST 213 - Long Walk to Freedom**
  This course provides students with a political and social history of South Africa’s struggle for true democracy. Beginning with the National Party’s launching of apartheid in 1948, the course also includes a discussion of the pre-1948 development of white supremacy, national liberation and new structures of governance, the 1996 National Constitution, and newer social and economic challenges to South African progress. A variety of sources, including cultural, will complement Leonard Thompson’s historical text. Instructor: P. Brooks

- **ANTH 306 - Literacies in Social Context**
  This class argues that literacies must be understood in the socio-cultural and historical contexts in which they are used, as we examine the ways in which they are linked to social relationships, technologies, talk, and actions. In particular, we will address questions of authority and dominance, through an exploration of the role of literacy, nationalism, and education in class stratification and the formation of gender, racial, and ethnic identities. We will also consider the significance of emerging and alternative literacies. Instructor: E. Hoffman-Dilloway

- **ARBC 250 - Religion, Gender, and Cultural Identity in the Modern Arab World**
  This course studies the connection between religion and cultural identities in modern Arab societies, with special attention paid to gender issues. We will examine 19th- and 20th-century Arab Muslim and Christian intellectuals’ views on: the decline of the Arab Muslim “golden age,” postcolonial national identities, and reviving the Arabic language. Also considered, the status of women and reconciliation of religious texts and modern values, and the correlation between globalization and Muslim religious resurgence. Taught in English. No prior knowledge of Arabic required. Instructor: M. Thomas

- **CAST 272 - Disease, Democracy, and Difference**
  From yellow fever to H1N1 flu, disease has been central to the construction of the nation, revealing important differences in race, class, gender, and sexuality. This interdisciplinary course investigates the politics of health and illness in the United States.
through several historical and contemporary case studies. We pay particular attention to the contestations and collaborations between policy makers, health professionals, and community activists seeking to define and promote wellness. Instructor: M. Raimondo

- **CAST 201 - Latinas/os in Comparative Perspective**
  This course analyzes the varied experiences of Latinas/os in the United States. Using ethnography, literature, film, and history, this course will explore questions of immigration/transnationalism; culture and political economy; racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual identities among Latinas/os; the struggle for place in American cities; as well as the intersections of gender, work and family. Instructor: G. Perez

- **CAST 311 - Militarization of American Daily Life**
  How have war and war preparation shaped daily life in the United States? What have been the repercussions of militarization beyond United States geopolitical boundaries? This course takes a broad view of ‘American’ daily life to consider how war, war preparation, and the underlying assumption that war is a natural fact of life shape the experiences of people throughout the Americas, as well as the globalizing reach of American military power throughout the 20th century. Instructor: G. Perez

- **CAST 316 - Equal Rights to Human Rights: Feminist Perspectives on Social Justice**
  This course will study feminist activism from the passage of the 19th Amendment to the present. We will analyze mainstream and radical American feminist theories as well as challenges to the rights paradigm from Third World and indigenous feminists. The primary methodology will be in-depth intersectional discourse analyses of feminist theories but we will also examine the social and political impact of these theories on activist movements. Instructor: W. Kozol

- **EAST 206 - Topics in Chinese Literature: Sex and the Country**
  This course examines a striking paradox in modern Chinese literature: the love-hate relationship with the rural sector. Oftentimes, the “countryside” is a place to be both exalted as a model for national moral purity and excoriated for its conservative backwardness. Studying a wide selection of short stories, novels, and films, we will pay special attention to the ways love and passion are used to negotiate the larger political and cultural issues of modern China. Taught in English. Instructor: H. Deppman

- **ENGL 290 - Shakespearean Comedy**
  A study of many of Shakespeare’s comedies, from the cross-dressed and festive to the darkly ironic. Themes include love, sex, gender, friendship, marriage, family, magic, transformation, transgression, ingenuity, cruelty, forgiveness, coming of age, and a good dose of wit. Probable plays: Comedy of Errors, Midsummer Night’s Dream, Merchant of Venice, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, All’s Well That Ends Well, Pericles, The Winter’s Tale. British, Pre-1700. Instructor: H. Deppman

- **HIST 455 - In the Name of Allah: Islam and Politics**
  This historiography course examines different approaches to Islam and politics. It considers how Orientalist and current literature view the relation between religion and state in early Islamic history. It then considers analyses of Islamic reform movements under European colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Finally, it looks closely at research on Jihadi Islam in the 21st century, notably groups such as Hamas, Hizzbollah, and al-Qaeda. Instructor: Z. Abul-Magd

- **RELG 108 - Introduction to Religion: Women and the Western Traditions**
  An introduction to Judaism, Christianity and Islam that focuses on women’s experiences and gender roles. This course will examine representations of women in sacred texts; primary sources by and about women from various historical periods, and contemporary feminist voices within each religious tradition. Topics to be investigated include: rabbinic
teachings on biblical women, the role of women in early Christian heretical movements, discourses of the veil in Islam. Instructor: M. Kamitsuka

- **POLT 111 - Narrative and Political Conflict in the Middle East and North Africa**
  This class explores the role of narrative in political conflict in the Middle East from a variety of vantage points. The class covers Algeria, Sudan, Somalia, Arab-Israeli conflict, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition to government documents, academic materials, policy reports, and journalistic accounts, the course examines novels, comics, poetry, music and film. Students are encouraged to examine divergent accounts and the impact media has in representation and narrative. Instructor: M. Milligan

- **POLT 206 - Politics of Sexual Minority Communities**
  This course examines the history and politics of LGBT communities in the United States during the twentieth century. No background in the subject is required, though a general knowledge of American history and politics during this period is helpful. Topics include the relative freedom of urban LGBT communities before and during World War II, the repression of the 1950s, the Stonewall Rebellion and its aftermath, the politics of AIDS, and the place of LGBT issues in the African-American community. Class participation is essential and is a component of each student’s grade. Instructor: H. Hirsch

- **SOCI 215 - Sociology of Immigration and Race: Asian American Experience**
  This course examines the sociological approach to immigration and race relations, through a focus on Asian Americans. Immigration and race are topics that both overlap and contradict one another. The course stresses the light that studying Asian Americans sheds on other groups and for the country as a whole, including immigration, identity, religion, family, gender, race relations, and other topics. We will read from a variety of disciplines, with stress on sociology. Instructor: P. Dhingra

- **SOCI 314 - Unequal Educations**
  This course focuses on education as a social institution and the inequalities structured within it. Using theory and empirical evidence, education in the United States will be examined from pre-school through post-secondary levels. The intersections of education and other institutions, (e.g. political, economic and familial) are analyzed and include discussions of race/ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality. Further, the role of education in social reproduction and social control will be examined. Instructor: D. John

- **SOCI 338 - Prostitution and Social Control: Governing Loose Women**
  Prostitution is a site of easy truths and inevitable conflict because of cultural ambiguities about sexuality, gender, ethnicity and citizenship. We probe these intersecting meanings by reviewing the wide range of empirical meanings attributed to prostitution and the ways modern forces have transformed them, especially the state. Taking cues from Michel Foucault, we analyze why recent legal solutions cannot fulfill expectations and discuss how the social control of prostitution might actually cause it. Instructor: G. Mattson

- **SOCI 450 - Beyond Us vs. Them: How We Manage Contradictory Categories**
  We frame people as divided into competing groups (e.g. poor vs. rich, immigrant vs. American). But this is too simplistic, for we frequently inhabit contradictory categories (e.g. mothers in high-status careers, mixed races, gay Christians). This course advances current theories of group hierarchies and individual agency by examining how people manage conflicting statuses. We incorporate multiple disciplines, not only sociology. Students will research whichever groups interest them for a final project. Instructor: P. Dhingra