Graduate Student Handbook

2018-19

Department of Gender and Women’s Studies

Master’s Program

Director of Graduate Studies:

Finn Enke
Email: finn.enke@wisc.edu
Office: 3301 Sterling Hall
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About the Department of Gender and Women's Studies

Mission
The mission of the Department of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is to expand our understanding and appreciation of women's lives and experiences both historically and in contemporary societies. We define education and learning in the broadest sense, including coursework, research, and a wide range of educational programs on and off campus.

We expect our efforts to be intellectually stimulating and to touch people's lives in important personal ways. As the Final Report of the University of Wisconsin System Task Force on Women's Studies wrote in 1974, a major objective of Women's Studies is "to raise the aspirations of women, expanding their sense of possible future alternatives and opportunities and their own capabilities. The concurrent purpose is to enable men to widen their spheres of development for they, too, have been limited by narrow traditional concepts of 'women's roles' and 'men's roles.'"

Our History
The Women's Studies Program was founded in 1975 during a period of activism and debate that extended across the University of Wisconsin System. Our Program was established with a unique structure that provided much of its strength. Whereas most other women's studies programs of the time could be described as structures designed to coordinate offerings of faculty from different departments, our program had from the start a degree of autonomy and resources that allowed us greater ability to define our own field, the content of our curriculum, and our own process for governance and decision-making.

Over the years we became a well-respected Program in the University as we grew and strengthened. In 2008, we became a Department, and changed our name from the Women's Studies Program to the Department of Gender and Women's Studies. Having begun with a small set of course offerings, we now have 130 courses on the books at the undergraduate and graduate level some, as well as a full summer program. In 1980 the Women's Studies Certificate was offered for the first time; by 1984 we were offering a Ph.D. minor in Women's Studies. In 1986 we were authorized to enroll our first students as undergraduate majors in Women's Studies, and the Class of 1987 was our first graduating class. The LGBT Studies Certificate was offered for the first time in 2004. In the Fall of 2006, we welcomed our first class of Gender and Women's Studies Master's Degree students.

Today our MA program continues to grow and strengthen these core concerns, while simultaneously building key areas of concentration in LGBTQ studies, disability studies, and sexual health. Our vision, goals and structure of our MA program closely align with the strategic directions from the college and university, The Wisconsin Experience and Essential Learning outcomes. In our courses, students receive sound training and develop into top-notch scholars and thinkers. In the process, they acquire knowledge of theory and method through encounters with the cutting-edge, ground-breaking research. Yet our students also learn through experience. From the moment new students arrive in the fall, they are introduced to important facets of academia: learning to conduct research, exploring best pedagogical practices in classrooms and community settings, and navigating how to apply their expertise to improve their local and global community. In doing so, we invite students into a life of engaged scholarly inquiry in gender and women's studies with a focus on social justice and equity. The Department of Gender and Women's Studies has grown in other ways. Our faculty members are well respected and active members of the scholarly community, with many influential publications to their record.

In 1977 the Center for Research on Gender and Women (originally the Women's Studies Research Center) was founded as the arm of the Department of Gender and Women's Studies devoted to encouraging and coordinating high-quality women's studies research on campus. The Department works to be a responsible member of the larger community, participating in feminist activities with educational implications on the University, local, state, national, and even international levels.
Become Involved
The Department of Gender and Women's Studies members see ourselves not merely as a University department in the traditional sense, but as a community of students of women's studies. We value diversity within our community and reflect many different understandings of women's studies, feminism, and education. Decision-making takes place largely in communities and in Department meetings. All who are committed to women’s studies education are encouraged to become involved. For example, we have many “joint governance” faculty members who do not teach directly for the department, but who are involved in the department, including advising students and partaking in departmental decisions. We have affiliates who serve on an ad hoc basis on committees and on MA thesis committees. We also have friends and alumni that keep us engaged in various ways with the broader university, the Madison community and in national and global conversations. We also have friends and alumni who help to fund our small, but often life-changing endeavors.

Description of M.A. Program

The Master’s Degree in Gender and Women’s Studies provides advanced feminist training in gender analysis for students with a variety of academic backgrounds and career plans. Incorporating local, cross-cultural and transnational emphases, the curriculum encourages students and faculty from the humanities, arts, social sciences and natural sciences to develop innovative ways of expanding knowledge about gender in global, local, and historical contexts. As the name “Gender and Women’s Studies” indicates, the M.A. retains the emphasis on women’s lives and situations that has historically informed the field of women’s studies, while also emphasizing the incisive import of gender as a category of analysis transforming knowledge about, for example, masculinity and men’s lives, transgendered lives, as well as other complex topics. The degree engages the wide-ranging and multidisciplinary perspectives associated with gender studies and women’s studies: queer studies, transgender studies, sexuality studies, race and ethnicity studies, disability studies, area and global studies, cultural studies, postcolonial and transnational studies.

Our M.A. curriculum draws from the strengths of current course offerings in the program, as well as from methodologies and course offerings in other fields and departments. Among the domains of inquiry explored within the curriculum are:

- race, ethnicity, transnationalism and migration
- bodies, genders, health, and sexualities
- disability studies
- work, family, education
- social movements, the state, and civil society
- individual, collective, and communal identities
- communications, technology, and culture industries
- politics of representation, media, and cultural practices
- labor, and political economy
- international relations, and governmental processes
- community and conflict

Some courses investigate these topics at the global level while others focus on the local, regional or national levels. The curriculum insures an overarching transnational and cross-cultural framework. Courses use interdisciplinary methodologies and/or disciplinary approaches.

Students are involved from the outset in devising their own course of study in consultation with an interim advisor, as they enter the program. Ultimately, they work closely with their thesis advisor, selected to correspond to their individual research project. The emphasis overall will be on flexibility within the overarching transnational and cross-cultural framework.
Current departmental faculty members provide expertise in the social sciences, humanities, arts, and biological/health fields. Depending on their specific goals for the M.A. degree, students may wish to organize their courses along disciplinary lines (the arts, biology and health, culture, economics, history, law, literature, policy, politics, among others) or along emergent thematic lines of feminist inquiry (sexuality, theory, transnational and postcolonial studies, dis/ability studies, among others).

The degree program is designed to be a two-year full-time sequence; however, the program is also flexible enough to allow part-time students to pursue the M.A. All students are expected to maintain satisfactory progress in the graduate program in accordance with the regulations of the Graduate School and our departmental policies.

Each student will complete 30 credits of course work plus a thesis project or comprehensive exam. Of the 30 credits, at least 15 must be in designated courses in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies. The remaining 15 credits may also be departmental courses or may be chosen (entirely or in part) from graduate-level courses in other departments and programs in the University. All courses should be selected in consultation with the DGS and/or the advisor, who must approve the selection.

**Requirements and Expectations for the MA Degree**

**Advising**

When students first begin the MA program they are assigned an interim advisor to whom they may go to for guidance in the MA program. They may also consult with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) in choosing classes and as they review and complete MA requirements. MA students should choose a permanent advisor as soon as they identify an appropriate faculty member who will agree to advise them through completion of their MA. The permanent adviser, picked from the ranks of the governance faculty of the department of Gender and Women’s Studies, will help the student choose classes and will serve either as the thesis advisor or one of the two examination supervisors. Students should select as advisors faculty whose expertise complements their research interests. (Students may select a thesis advisor from among the Gender and Women’s Studies affiliate faculty instead of the governance faculty. In this case, the student will need an additional advisor, a co-advisor, from the governance faculty.) Students must select their advisor by at least the first week of the second year of the program.

*On or before the first week of the second year of the program, MA students should submit the MA Advisor Form to the DGS.*

**Degree Requirements**

30 graduate level credits, 15 of which must be in courses in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies

- 880: Proseminar: Graduate Study in Gender and Women’s Studies
- 900: Research in Gender and Women’s Studies
- Graduate level feminist theory course
- Thesis Project or Exam

In addition to the above requirements, it is highly recommended that MA students take a **methodology course** related to their specific thesis or exam interests (e.g. discourse analysis, historiography, ethnography, statistics, survey methods, etc.), preferably in their second semester of the program. Students and advisors may wish to consult the list of suggested methods courses on our website (under graduate programs, curriculum).

*By the second week of the fourth semester, MA students should submit a checklist to the DGS showing how they have completed the degree requirements and listing their thesis or exam committee members.*
Course Load
Students in the MA program are expected to carry 6 credits per semester. They may carry up to 12 although we do not encourage more than 9. Students who would like to carry fewer than 6 credits must apply in writing to the DGS for a waiver of this requirement.

Independent Study
Independent-study (or directed-study) credits that may count for the M.A. are generally limited to thesis credits (although these are not required). Special circumstances or requests for additional independent/directed-study credits must be approved in advance by the DGS and the advisor. Students will be allowed to take independent/directed-study credits that do not count toward the degree, if they wish.

Thesis Project and Exam

Option A: The Thesis Project
Each student’s M.A. thesis project is approved by a committee composed of the major advisor (drawn from the governance faculty of the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies) and two other faculty members. Although individual projects may focus on more particular locations and/or problems in gender and women’s studies, all thesis projects will engage transnational and cross-cultural questions and demonstrate understanding of interdisciplinary approaches to gender analysis. Students must develop a proposal for their project in close consultation with their thesis advisor. The thesis itself may take a variety of formats in keeping with the student’s particular interests and expertise, i.e. the thesis might consist of a portfolio of art work, a documentary film, a research paper or other written document. Students will defend the thesis in an oral examination.

Option B: The Exam
The culminating M.A. exam in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies has two fields, a Feminist Approaches field that asks students to demonstrate a general understanding of the field of gender and women’s studies and an Interdisciplinary Substantive field that requires a more in depth and nuanced understanding of a particular area of study.

Each field will be based on a reading list of roughly 25 books, 75 articles, or their equivalent, constructed in collaboration with a field supervisor who will also serve as one of the two examiners. (Students are encouraged to enroll in an independent study with one or both of their supervisors.) After the student has worked through the lists and no later than a month before the end of the semester the student plans to graduate, each examiner will give the student a question to be answered in no more than 10 double-spaced pages. The student will have two weeks to write their answers. In no fewer than 5 days and no more than 9 days after submitting their answers to both examiners, the student will take an oral exam based on their written answers.

It is expected that one of the examiners will be the student’s advisor, selected from Gender and Women’s Studies joint governance or affiliate faculty. The second examiner should also be a governance or affiliate member of Gender and Women’s Studies, but exceptions may be considered. One of the two examiners must be a governance member of the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies.

Although the content of these exams is specific to Gender and Women’s Studies, they seek to foster skills necessary to academic life more generally. In particular, successful students will learn to: a) integrate and synthesize the ideas represented in their reading list; b) accurately summarize and represent theories and ideas from their reading list; c) critically compare and contrast different perspectives; and d) identify debates and analyze their arguments.

Feminist Approaches
This field will be built on and extend the readings and topics the students encountered in GWS 880 and GWS 900. The field is designed to develop four complementary but distinctive competencies. Students taking this exam should be able to:
1) describe and analyze the changing terrain of gender and women’s studies, paying particular attention to the complexities that create intellectual and political challenges in the field;
2) demonstrate an understanding of some key theoretical or conceptual tools that are staples of feminist approaches to scholarship;
3) recognize and analyze how scholars situated within and without women’s studies departments (and their various iterations) mark their work as feminist or otherwise consistent with the intellectual and activist goals of women’s studies;
4) demonstrate knowledge of feminism in a global perspective.

Interdisciplinary Substantive Exam in Gender and Women’s Studies
This field will allow the student to develop some expertise in a substantive topic in gender and women’s studies. Possible topics are endless, but can include areas like “women, work and family”, “women and social movements”, “sexuality and gender”, “gender and global migration”, “women of color in the U. S.”, and “masculinity and bodies.” (These are not suggestions for fields, they are meant to provide examples of the range of acceptable topics.) The field is designed to develop four complementary but distinctive competencies. Students taking this exam should be able to:

1) articulate knowledge of the principal arguments and theoretical advances related to this topic;
2) demonstrate an appreciation for the opportunities and limits of disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary approaches to the topic;
3) examine how a focus on women or gender does (or does not) link to scholarship surrounding this topic;
4) locate the topic in a global context.

Examples of Recent Theses and Exam Topics:
“The Librarian and the Educator: Gender and Genre in Progressive Era Children’s Literature”
“A History of Advice to Pregnant Women”
“An Impossible Bond? A Case Study of Feminist Entrepreneurship within Western Capitalist Society”
“Making Feminism Real: Space, Place, and Local Manifestations of the Women’s Liberation Movement in 1970s Madison, Wisconsin”
“Beyond the Adoption Triad: The Gender Dimensions of International Adoption in Relation to Global Social and Reproductive Justice.”
“Documenting Herstories: Chicana Activism in the 1960’s in the Midwest”
“Passing Lines of Flight: Disidentification and Rhizomatic Transgender Subjectivity”

Substantive exams have covered topics such as:

“Feminism and Care Theory”
“Gender, Labor and Globalization”
“Feminist Pedagogy”

Theses are available for perusal in the Graduate Student Reading Room.

Graduate Student Research Awards
The Department of Gender and Women’s Studies has a small fund to support GWS MA student research or travel to present papers at academic conferences. Typically, we will have two rounds of applications for these funds, one in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. The maximum award is $250.

Current GWS MA students in good standing are eligible to apply for this funding for two purposes: 1) Research expenses related to the MA thesis, for example for equipment or travel; 2) Travel to present a paper at an
academic conference, such as the NWSA. This funding is to be used either in the summer between the first and second years of the program, or during the student’s second year.

**Satisfactory Progress**

To remain in good standing in the MA program, certain deadlines must be met in a timely fashion.

1) We expect a student to file their advisor form the first week of classes of their second year of study;

2) We require a student to have a thesis or exam committee arranged by the first week of their fourth semester;

3) We require that students defend their thesis or complete their exams by the end of their fourth semester; formal requests for an extension of the time for the thesis or exam will be considered, but not guaranteed. Failure to meet any of these requirements may result in a student being asked to leave the program. Per Graduate School guidelines, students with university funding must maintain satisfactory progress to remain eligible for funding.
Gender and Women’s Studies Advisor Form

Due First Week of Classes, Second Year, First Semester

Name of Student:

Name of Advisor:

Signature of Advisor:

Approved:

(Director of Graduate Studies)       (Date)
Fourth Semester Checklist, Gender and Women’s Studies MA Students

Due to DGS, second week of fourth semester
(Note this is Two Pages)

Student's Name:

Advisor's Name:
(Must be Faculty or Joint Governance, Department of Gender and Women’s Studies)

Advisor's Signature:

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<th>COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: (30 CREDITS TOTAL)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Course No. &amp; Title</td>
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Additional courses used to meet the 30 credit total:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Sem.</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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How did you fulfill the theory requirement?

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<tr>
<th>Course No. &amp; Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Sem.</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Did you take GWS 900?

Did you take GWS 880?

**THESIS TRACK:**

Members of Thesis Committee (two in addition to advisor):

M.A. Thesis Title:

**EXAMINATION TRACK:**

Titles of Fields (with advisors names)
Gender and Women’s Studies Graduate Courses

The Department of Gender and Women’s Studies offers a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate courses in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Many of them are cross-listed with other programs and departments.

The following is a list of our permanent exclusively graduate-level courses. Graduate students may also take courses numbered 300-699 which are undergraduate/graduate courses. When taking an undergraduate/graduate course the student must ask the instructor for permission to take the course for graduate credit and ask the instructor for graduate-level enrichment in the course.

For a full listing of all undergraduate and graduate courses offered in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies, please visit the UW Course Guide on the UW home page.

720 Special Topics in Women & Society (3 credits Soc St; G) Exploration and research into selected topics in GWS. Subject will differ from semester to semester.

732 Psychology of Women (3 credits Soc St; G) (Also Psychology) This course covers research and theory in psychology of women. Topics include non-sexist research methods, psychological gender differences, theories of moral development, women of color, mental health and feminist therapy, rape, sexual harassment, and public policy issues.

735 Health Promotion & Disease Prevention for Women Across the Lifespan (3 credits Soc St; G) (Also Nursing) Identification of health concerns for women, recognizing differences among age socio-economic, and ethnic groups; synthesis of bio-physiological, psycho-social, and cultural influences of such health concerns; analysis and proposal of interventions to promote overall health and to prevent problems among women.

737 Feminist Theory and Criticism (3 credits Hum; G) (Also English) Feminist theory, with an emphasis on literary and cultural theory and criticism in English.

760 Sex/Gender Related Issues in Curriculum and Instruction (3 credits Soc St; G) (Also Curriculum & Instruction) A poststructural feminist analysis of educational discourse and practice; examines selected sex/gender issues in curriculum and instruction; explores some implications for classroom teaching of the complex interrelationships between sex/gender, race, social class, sexuality, and ability/disability.

805 Gender Issues in International Education Policy (3 credits Soc St; G) (Also Educational Policy Studies) This course examines a series of topics frequently targeted in international educational policy: the interrelationship of schooling, family formation, fertility and migration; the interrelationship of gender and education in the international political economy; and the place of schooling and gender in the creation of trans-national elites.

820 Women & Mental Health (2 credits Soc St; G) (Also Social Work) Theory and literature; new models of mental health; new approaches to social work practice with women clients.

858 Women & Social Work Practice (2-3 credits Soc St; G) (Also Social Work) Examination of the literature, research, and theory concerning the effects of sex-role stereotyping from psychological, economic, and social perspective.

880 Proseminar: Graduate Study in Gender and Women’s Studies (3 Credits Hu/Soc St; G) This course introduces new graduate students to the breadth of scholarship in Gender and Women’s Studies. It also develops particular skills (critical reading, critical writing and basic research) important to graduate level scholarship.
900 Research Methods in Women's Studies (3 credits Hu/Soc St; G)  Overview of research in Women's Studies. Emphasizes theoretical and methodological issues, the development of women's studies as a field, the relationship of women's studies to traditional fields, and the nature of interdisciplinary work.

903 Seminar in Gender Analysis (3 credits Soc St; G) (Also Sociology) An examination of the leading theoretical perspectives on gender relations at micro, meso and macro levels of analysis and applications of these perspectives to specific empirical issues.

904 Sociological Perspectives on Gender (3 credits Soc St; G) (Also Sociology) Advanced topics in the analysis of gender relations in society. (Topics vary by semester)

920 Anthropology of Gender (3 credits Soc St; G) (Also Anthropology) The theoretical and ethnographic approaches to the anthropology of gender, focusing on current works. Topics include sexual inequality, research methods, gender and history, gender and ethnographic writing, cultural constructions of masculinity, sexuality and gender studies and anthropological theory.

938 History of Sexuality (3 credits Hum; G) (Also History) Using sexuality as a category of historical analysis, examines historiographical, methodological, and theoretical contributions to understanding all aspects of the past.

950 Seminar: Topics in Gender and Women’s Studies (3 credits) Research seminar on specific topics in gender and women's studies.

990 Research & Thesis (1-6 credits; G)

999 Independent Research (1-3 credits; G) Independent research in GWS for highly qualified and motivated graduate students.

Graduate Student Funding Opportunities

GWS Teaching Assistantships
The Department of Gender and Women’s Studies employs teaching assistants for its large lecture courses. This opportunity offers both classroom experience and background in the interdisciplinary aspects of the field of gender and women’s studies. Graduate students enrolled at UW-Madison may apply for these positions. Advanced Gender and Women's Studies MA students are encouraged to apply. Position openings are posted on the department home page the semester prior to the position start date.

GWS Graders
The Department of Gender and Women's Studies employs graders for some of its medium-size lecture courses. Graders are generally hired early in the semester. In hiring graders, priority is given to Gender and Women's Studies MA students if an appropriate person can be found.

Campus Job Listings
Graduate students may also look for positions elsewhere on campus. A centralized listing of campus jobs is available on the Student Jobcenter Website, http://jobcenter.wisc.edu

MA Travel and Research Awards
The department has a very small amount of funds to support MA student research and travel to academic conferences. A notice will be emailed to all MA students with instructions on how to apply for these funds.
Center for Research on Gender and Women

The Center for Research on Gender & Women was established in 1977 as part of the Women's Studies Program. The Center promotes scholarly interactions between women's studies researchers on campus, as well as linkages with women's studies programs and scholars nationally and internationally.

The Center for Research on Gender & Women:

- Organizes campus events including lectures, colloquia, workshops and conferences featuring campus, national and international speakers.
- Sponsors externally-funded research projects.
- Facilitates networking of women's studies scholars across campus through our database of women's studies scholars at University of Wisconsin-Madison and a weekly email bulletin, which announces events, news, grant and award competitions in women's studies, jobs in women's studies, and much more.
- Supports graduate women students through the Graduate Women Mentoring Forum and other initiatives to help build professional skills and foster cross-campus dialogue.
- Assists campus research circles like the “Women's International Policy Agenda and Gender Activism Research Circle” (2010-13) and the 2011-12 Sawyer Seminar “Globalization and the New Politics of Women’s Rights.”
- Sponsors an Honorary Fellows Program of visiting scholars.
- Administers competitions like the Hyde Dissertation Award for graduate students working on women/gender related topics; and the in-house Feminist Scholars Fellowship to provide tenured UW faculty working in women and gender studies a full-time research appointment for one semester.
- Provides grant information, grant-writing support and administers grants.
- Assists visiting scholars working on women’s studies issues.

All GWS MA students are subscribed to the weekly CRGW E-Bulletin. You may also check the GWS and CRGW websites for upcoming events.
**Budgeted and Joint Governance Faculty** (may serve as MA advisors)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Name</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Araceli Alonso</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aalonso@wisc.edu">aalonso@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td>(608) 263-5459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Barcelos</td>
<td><a href="mailto:barcelos@wisc.edu">barcelos@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill Casid</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jhcasid@wisc.edu">jhcasid@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td>608-265-0136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finn Enke (DGS)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:finn.enke@wisc.edu">finn.enke@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td>608-263-2334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myra Marx Ferree</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mferree@ssc.wisc.edu">mferree@ssc.wisc.edu</a></td>
<td>608-263-5204</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan S. Friedman</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ssfriedm@wisc.edu">ssfriedm@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td>608-263-3240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Garlough</td>
<td><a href="mailto:clgarlough@wisc.edu">clgarlough@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td>608-262-8760</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jenny Higgins</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jahiggins@wisc.edu">jahiggins@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td>608-890-4622</td>
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<tr>
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<td><a href="mailto:jhouch@wisc.edu">jhouch@wisc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Janet Hyde</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jshyde@wisc.edu">jshyde@wisc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pernille Ipsen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pipsen@wisc.edu">pipsen@wisc.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:lepowsky@wisc.edu">lepowsky@wisc.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:knlindsay@wisc.edu">knlindsay@wisc.edu</a></td>
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**Faculty Affiliates** (may co-advise and serve on MA committees)

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<th>Faculty Name</th>
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<td>Lara Gerassi</td>
<td>Christina Greene</td>
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<td>Jenell Johnson</td>
<td>Susan Johnson</td>
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<td>Helen Kinsella</td>
<td>Sonja Klocke</td>
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<td>Diane Lauver</td>
<td>Lori Kido Lopez</td>
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<td>Laura McClure</td>
<td>Katherine McMahon</td>
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<td>Kathryn Moeller</td>
<td>Melanie Murchison</td>
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<td>Lynn Nyhart</td>
<td>Christa Olson</td>
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Asifa Quraishi-Landes  Mary Lou Roberts  Kathryn Sanchez
Gay Seidman  Amy Stambach  Katrina Daly Thompson
Leann Tigges  Jennifer Tischler  Lynet Uttal
Ethelene Whitmire  Rachelle Winkle-Wagner  Lydia Zepeda

Department Email Lists

gws_faculty@lists.wisc.edu (budgeted and joint governance faculty)
gws_affiliates@lists.wisc.edu (affiliate faculty)
gws_lecturers_tas@lists.wisc.edu (lecturers and TAs)
gws_mastudents@lists.wisc.edu (MA students)
gws_phd_gradcertif@lists.wisc.edu (students pursuing a GWS PhD minor or Graduate Certificate)

Community Resources

On Campus
College of Letters & Science:  http://www.ls.wisc.edu/
Campus Women’s Center:  http://campuswomenscenter.rso.wisc.edu/
Dean of Students Office:  http://students.wisc.edu/
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Campus Center (LGBTCC):  http://lgbt.wisc.edu/
SAFE Ride/SAFE Walk:  608-262-5000
University Health Services:  http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/index.jsp
University Police and Security:  608-262-4524
Women’s Studies Consortium (UW System):  http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/womens/links.htm
Women’s Studies Librarian:  http://womenst.library.wisc.edu/

Off Campus
A Room of One's Own:  608-257-7888 (a feminist book store)
Apple Island:  608-258-9777
Briarpatch:  crisis line:  608-251-1126 (teen issues)
Chimera:  255-0076 (assertiveness/self-defense)
Domestic Abuse Intervention Services  crisis line 24hrs:  608-251-4445
Lavender  voice mail only:  608-255-7447 (violence in lesbian relationships)
Madison Police Department:  608-266-4945
Rape Crisis Center  (24 hrs):  608-251-7273
Women’s Transit Authority:  608-256-7233 (free rides for women at night)