

CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES  
Women's and Gender Studies (Major)  
Division of Multidisciplinary Studies

**OBJECTIVES**

**The objectives of the faculty in Women's and Gender Studies are to:**

1. encourage in students a shift in perspective by which they will understand and appreciate feminist perspectives
2. create a learning atmosphere in which students become active participants in the classroom community, responsible for their own learning and the learning of other students
3. provide students the guidance to engage in meaningful inquiry regarding women and gender in the humanities, social sciences, and/or sciences
4. help students become aware of the complexities of gender as they relate to race, ethnicity, religion, class, and sexuality, among other influences
5. enable students to understand and apply feminist theories and criticism to a variety of phenomena, including the production of knowledge both inside and outside the academy
6. expand on the knowledge gained in the Women's and Gender Studies Program through experiences in non-academic contexts (workplace, community service)

**OUTCOMES**

**Upon graduation, MDS majors in Women's and Gender Studies should demonstrate the ability to:**

**1. Take responsibility for their learning by designing and managing individualized, multidisciplinary curricula that form a foundation for lifelong learning. Specifically, students should be able to demonstrate that:**

- a. they can identify a concentration derived from two or more disciplines and define questions to focus their inquiry into that concentration
- b. they can identify learning goals for their individualized concentration and outline a set of courses that informs their inquiry

**2. Identify and formulate a multidisciplinary research question. Specifically, students should be able to demonstrate that:**

- a. they can take an interest or problem not contained by a single discipline and mold it into a research question that will allow them to explore that interest or problem
- b. they can explicate and synthesize several perspectives on an issue
- c. they can define connections among apparently disparate ideas and events and can make informed, defensible judgments about those ideas and events across disciplinary boundaries
- d. they can apply a systemic understanding of processes, analyzing the interrelationship of parts to the whole

**3. Understand the ways of knowing characteristic of a multidisciplinary approach to knowledge. Specifically, students should be able to demonstrate that:**

- a. they can define the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical ways of knowing that characterize different disciplines
- b. they can describe the limitations of ways of knowing within the disciplines and begin to think in ways that transcend disciplines, challenging the assumptions that remain unquestioned in the disciplines

**4. Develop and apply research skills needed for multidisciplinary projects. Specifically, students should be able to demonstrate that:**

- a. they can choose and apply appropriate research methodologies from more than one discipline to address the research question and generate new questions
- b. they can integrate research findings from more than one discipline to form and support a sound argument.
- c. they can satisfactorily complete a project that integrates what they have learned in their courses in response to a research question

**5. Understand and appreciate feminist perspectives. Specifically, students should be able to demonstrate that:**

- a. they can identify from a feminist perspective the complexities of gender as they relate to race, ethnicity, religion, class, and sexuality, among other influences
- b. they are aware of and sensitive to feminist issues and how those issues affect their own lives and the lives of others

**6. Understand issues of women and gender within a larger historical and activist framework. Specifically, students should be able to demonstrate that:**

- a. they are aware of the historical contexts of women's movements in the U.S. by showing that they can describe the major themes, events, and figures in those histories and their own connection to those histories
- b. they can use the historical perspective gained from studying women's movements to understanding contemporary issues
- c. they can describe the role of activism within the history of women's movements and, during their tenure at the university, engage in an activist role of their own

**7. Examine women and gender from the perspective of feminist theories and criticism. Specifically, students should be able to demonstrate that:**

- a. they are aware of feminist critiques as critical tools and can bring those critiques to bear on various issues, enabling students to question assumptions, claims to authority, and knowledge production and diffusion
- b. they can identify and describe a variety of feminist theories
- c. they can apply the analytical tools of feminist theories to areas of inquiry that are of interest to them
- d. they understand the reflexive relationship between feminist theories and feminist practices

## SOURCES OF DATA FOR ASSESSING OUTCOMES

*Outcome #1: The ability of majors to take responsibility for their learning by designing and managing individualized, multidisciplinary curricula that form a foundation for lifelong learning*  
Portfolio of student work\*: applications for MDS degree

*Outcomes #2: The ability of majors to identify and formulate a multidisciplinary research question*

Portfolio of student work: papers from MDS 498 (20) in which students describe a set of multidisciplinary questions and potential sources for answering those questions

*Outcome #3: The ability of majors to understand the ways of knowing characteristic of a multidisciplinary approach to knowledge*

Portfolio of student work: summaries and critiques of assigned readings from MDS 498 (20)

*Outcome #4: The ability of majors to develop and apply research skills needed for multidisciplinary projects*

Portfolio of student work: research projects (such as in MDS 498 [30]) in which students explore a research question and write and/or present a report on their research

*Outcome #5: The ability to understand and appreciate feminist perspectives*

*#5a: to demonstrate that they can identify from a feminist perspective the complexities of gender as they relate to race, ethnicity, religion, class, and sexuality, among other influences*  
special questions on student evaluations in WGS 200

portfolio of student written responses to an issue given at the beginning and then at the end of WGS 200

*#5b: to demonstrate that they are aware of and sensitive to feminist issues and how those issues affect their own lives and the lives of others*

special questions on student evaluations in WGS 200  
questions in senior exit interview

*Outcome #6: The ability to understand issues of women and gender within a larger historical and activist framework*

*#6a: to demonstrate that they are aware of the historical contexts of women's movements in the U.S. by showing that they can describe the major themes, events, and figures in those histories and their own connection to those histories*  
annual review of syllabi from WGS 200

*#6b: to demonstrate that they can use the historical perspective gained from studying women's movements to understanding contemporary issues*

biennial discussion of student abilities at WGS retreats

*#6c: to demonstrate that they can describe the role of activism within the history of women's movements and, during their tenure at the university, engage in an activist role of their own*

portfolio of final questions in WGS 200 and 492  
questions in senior exit interview  
portfolio of internship reports (when applicable)

*Outcome #7: The ability to examine women and gender from the perspective of feminist theories and criticism*

*#7a: to demonstrate that they are aware of feminist critiques as critical tools and can bring those critiques to bear on various issues, enabling students to question assumptions, claims to authority, and knowledge production and diffusion*  
portfolio of research papers from WGS 492

*#7b: to demonstrate that they can identify and describe a variety of feminist theories*  
portfolio of assignments from 400-level courses in which students are asked to describe a variety of feminist theories

*#7c: to demonstrate that they can apply the analytical tools of feminist theories to areas of inquiry that are of interest to them*  
portfolio of research papers from WGS 492  
questions on senior exit interview

*#7d: to demonstrate that they understand the reflexive relationship between feminist theories and feminist practices*  
questions on senior exit interview

\*The portfolio in this case is what is called a best-case or snapshot portfolio, a random sample of students' work representing what is considered the best-case data for assessing a particular outcome. The student work is to be collected and used by a small assessment committee as a way of judging the program's effectiveness in enabling majors to attain the stated outcome.

#### **ASSESSMENT DATA**

- Portfolio of student work: applications for MDS degree (*collected annually*)
- Portfolio of student work: papers from MDS 498 (20) in which students describe a set of multidisciplinary questions and potential sources for answering those questions (*collected biennially*)
- Portfolio of student work: summaries and critiques of assigned readings from MDS 498 (20) (*collected biennially*)
- Portfolio of student work: research projects (such as in MDS 498 [30]) in which students explore a research question and write and/or present a report on their research (*collected biennially*)
- special questions on student evaluations in WGS 200 (*collected annually*)
- portfolio of student work: written responses to an issue given at the beginning and then at the end of WGS 200 (*collected annually*)
- questions in senior exit interview (*collected annually*)
- review of syllabi from WGS 200 (*collected annually*)
- discussion of student abilities at WGS retreats (*collected biennially*)
- portfolio of student work: final questions in WGS 200 and 492 (*collected biennially*)
- portfolio of student work: internship reports (when applicable) (*collected annually*)
- portfolio of student work: research papers from WGS 492 (*collected biennially*)
- portfolio of student work: assignments from 400-level courses in which students are asked to describe a variety of feminist theories (*collected biennially*)

#### **ASSESSMENT CYCLES**

2001/2002: Develop program objectives, outcomes, and assessment plan; initiate assessment of outcomes

Fall 2002: Gather assessment data and complete assessment of outcomes  
Spring 2002: Reports of assessment submitted to WGS Committee; WGS Committee recommends curricular changes based on assessment to faculty for discussion and approval  
August 2002: Program review report completed and submitted to Committee for Undergraduate Program Review

*Subsequent Seven-Year Program Review Cycles for University*

2002-2005: Second review cycle with report  
2005-2008: Third review cycle with report  
August 2009: Reports of both assessment cycles submitted to Committee for Undergraduate Program Review

Etc.