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Ph.D. Program

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## Ph.D. Program

The interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in Women's and Gender Studies provides advanced and systematic course work investigating gender in society and culture in historical and contemporary contexts from multi-cultural and multi-racial perspectives. The graduate course offerings are designed to explore the intricate connections between feminist theory and practice, to illuminate the centrality of the intersection of gender identities with other socially and culturally produced identities, and to investigate women's issues and gender issues in a global context. The program includes 18 hours of core courses and 21 hours of course work within the three areas of concentration, in addition to the successful completion of qualifying and comprehensive examinations, and a doctoral dissertation. Core courses include Feminist Genealogies, Contemporary Feminist Theories, Feminist Methodologies, Feminist Knowledge Production, and two proseminars from the areas of concentration.

See below for more information on:

- [Ph. D. Requirements: an Overview](#)
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### Ph.D. Requirements: an Overview

Consult the current Student Handbook for detailed requirements

#### 72 Credits total

- 39 Course Credits (13 courses)
- Remaining credits may include transfer credits, dissertation research credits, additional course credits

#### Proficiency in a second language

- Students without second language proficiency are recommended to begin acquisition as soon as possible.

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## Qualifying Examinations: Written and Oral

### Dissertation Proposal and Defense

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### Required Courses

#### Core Courses:

- 988:582 Feminist Genealogies (*Fall*)
- 988:583 Contemporary Feminist Theories (*Spring*)
- 988:602 Feminist Methodologies (*Spring 2007*)
- 988:603 Feminist Knowledge Production (*Spring 2008*)

#### Proseminars—two of the following:

- 988:510 Technologies and Poetics of Gender and Sexuality (*Spring 2008*)
- 988:520 Agency, Subjectivity and Social Change (*Fall*)
- 988:530 Gendered Borders/Changing Boundaries (*Spring 2007*)

#### Required prior to teaching in WGS:

- 988:587 Feminist Pedagogies (*Fall 2007*)

*Remaining courses selected in consultation with advisor to form an area of concentration. Transfer credits may be accepted toward meeting the required 39 course credits.*

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### Areas of Concentration

Feminist scholars at Rutgers have identified three innovative areas of focus to shape the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Women's and Gender Studies. These areas are designed to stimulate original scholarship addressing new research questions and fostering the growth of feminist inquiry and practice. Each area of concentration is introduced through a proseminar that presents key questions, theories, methodologies, and empirical case studies.

#### Agency, Subjectivity, and Social Change

This concentration investigates women's mobilizations to transform social and political institutions, which also transform women activists themselves. Examining global feminist movements in the past as well as in the contemporary world, this concentration seeks to explicate how women's activism and agency continue to challenge dominant discourses on agency, subjectivity, culture, politics, authority, religion, and society.

#### Cognate Courses:

- Women's Movements in Comparative Perspective
- Third World Feminism: Critique or New Paradigm
- Literary Criticism and Social Critique: Feminist Theory, Science, and Epistemology
- Gender and Public Policy
- Urban Poverty, Theory, and Policy
- Proseminar in Women and Politics

Gender and the Self  
Gender and Mass Politics  
Sociological Perspectives on Feminist Theory  
Colloquium in History of Women  
Colloquium in African American History  
Comparative Labor Movements  
Contemporary Fiction  
Fiction and Narrative Theory: Life Narratives  
Psychological Approaches to Literature: Self, Psychopathology and the Modern Age

### **Technologies and Poetics of Gender and Sexuality**

This concentration investigates the hierarchical production of cultural differences. Technologies of gender and sexuality refer to the manifold practices through which categories of difference are produced and deployed to structure relationships and institutions in particular social and historical contexts. The poetics of gender and sexuality involve the creative and symbolic work of the imagination that reifies and naturalizes difference as a central factor of human relationships and cultural meaning.

#### ***Cognate Courses:***

Sociology of Gender  
Race, Class, Gender  
Anthropology of Gender  
Conceptualizing Gender  
Recent Advances in Gender Scholarship  
Sexuality in Cross-Cultural Perspective  
Economic Anthropology: Culture and Capitalism  
Black History and the Fictive Imagination  
Literature and Politics: Textuality, Embodiment, Community  
Women and Work  
Women Writers of Modernism  
The Sixties and Postmodernism  
Theater of the 20th Century  
Literature and Social Commentary  
Problems in 20th Century Art: Constructions of the Female Body  
Topics in Comparative Literature: Genre and Gender  
Topics in Comparative Literature: The Body in Literature  
Literature and Social Order: Literature and Class

### **Gendered Borders/Changing Boundaries**

Feminist scholarship has sought to challenge and de-center many traditional boundaries by cultivating voices “from the margin” and exploring dimensions of women’s experiences that defy these boundaries. This concentration examines how feminist scholarship can illuminate phenomena such as fluctuating national borders, shifting contours of sovereignty, displacement, immigration, and diaspora, uncertain global economies, hybrid identities, and changing sexualities.

#### ***Cognate Courses:***

Anthropology of Industrial Society: Transnationalism  
Gender and Comparative Politics  
American Literary Women: Black Literature and Migration

Postcolonial Literature and Theory  
Postcolonial Writers, Postmodern Conditions  
20th Century Black Women Writers: Imagining the Diaspora  
Japanese Literature/Queer Theory  
US Latino/a Theater and Performance: From Rural and Urban Roots to Queer and Feminist Border Mappings  
Women in African Diaspora  
Black Diaspora

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### [Core Course Descriptions for the Ph.D. Program](#)

#### **988:510 Technologies and Poetics of Gender and Sexuality**

This course will focus on the technologies and poetics through which sexuality and gender are constructed, examining the ways in which cross-culturally and historically the gendered and sexed body has been socially and culturally produced. Focuses particularly on how the construction of gender for men and women has been embedded in conceptions of cultures mapped through categories including race, class, ethnicity, age and sexuality.

#### **988:520 Agency, Subjectivity and Social Change**

This course investigates women's mobilizations to transform social and political institutions, which also transform women activists themselves. Examining global feminist movements in the past as well as in the contemporary world, this course seeks to explicate how women's activism and agency continue to challenge dominant discourses on agency, subjectivity, culture, politics, authority, religion, and society.

#### **988:530 Gendered Borders/Changing Boundaries**

Explores the gendered dimensions of boundary-making and feminist challenges to boundaries in various countries and regions world wide. This course will consider the ways in which particular economies of pleasure, work, violence and nation-building rely on the maintenance of borders and the deployment of boundaries, and in which ways feminist scholarship serves to topple over and/or recreate those borders.

#### **988:582 Feminist Genealogies**

As a methodology, genealogy seeks to trace concepts back not to their origins (a task which presupposes continuity), but to points at which contradictions and contestations erupted in a manner productive of later discursive formations. This course examines key modern theories whose contradictions provoked feminist thought and elicited feminist critiques (for example, Hegelian, Liberal, Marxist, Existentialist and others). Both primary and secondary texts will be examined from perspectives of the first wave of the 19th century feminism and second and third wave twentieth century feminism.

#### **988:583 Contemporary Feminist Theories**

This course will examine how recent feminist theories have critiqued a variety of traditional boundaries such as theoretical categories of identity, global hierarchies of power, and disciplinary boundaries. The original contributions of feminist theories to conceptual thinking will be explored around key concepts such as agency, identity, difference, location, intersectionality, transnationalism and nationalism, representation, resistance, power and sexuality.

#### **988:602 Feminist Methodologies**

This course focuses on both the advantages and disadvantages of different philosophical, methodological, theoretical, and disciplinary traditions for contributing to our knowledge of central issues in women's and gender studies. The goal is to provide students with the critical tools to utilize and interrogate existing methodologies and to adapt them to the enterprise of feminist research. What counts as authoritative knowledge? What defines good research and bad research? What is the role of the social in the constitution of knowledge? What constitutes

research as feminist?

### **988:603 Feminist Knowledge Production**

This course is an introduction to many of the methods used in feminist interdisciplinary research. The course looks at how to formulate a research question, collect data, interpret and analyze evidence, and report research results. The course will be a forum to apply knowledge of methods and methodologies to students' own research and research-activist interests.

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### **Examinations and Dissertation**

Ph.D. Students in Women's and Gender Studies must complete Written and Oral Qualifying Examinations within 12 months of the completion of course work (minimum 39 credit hours) and prior to admission to candidacy status. Qualifying exams include a written component and an oral component to demonstrate mastery of the field of Women's and Gender Studies, expertise in a specific area of interest, and preparation for independent research in the dissertation. Written examinations may be taken in the first week of September or the first week of March of each academic year. Oral examinations are scheduled on an individual basis no more than 3 months later. Students are expected to submit and defend a Dissertation Proposal within 7 months of passing the Qualifying Exams.

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