UNDERGRADUATE SUBJECTS

WGS.101 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H; CI-H

Drawing on multiple disciplines—such as literature, history, economics, psychology, philosophy, political science, anthropology, media studies and the arts—to examine cultural assumptions about sex, gender, and sexuality. Integrates analysis of current events through student presentations, aiming to increase awareness of contemporary and historical experiences of women, and of the ways sex and gender interact with race, class, nationality, and other social identities. Students are introduced to recent scholarship on gender and its implications for traditional disciplines.

A. Walsh

WGS.109 Women and Global Activism in Media and Politics
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H; CI-H

An interdisciplinary subject that examines questions of feminism, international women’s issues, and globalization through the study of novels, films, critical essays, painting and music. Considers how women redefine the notions of community and nation, how development affects their lives, and how access to the internet and to the production industry impacts women’s lives. Primary topics of interest include transformations of traditional values, social change, gender role distribution, identity formation, migration flows, globalization and development, popular culture, urban life, cyber-culture, activism, and human rights. Limited to 25 when Writing Tutor is assigned to the class. Otherwise, limited to 18.

A. Sur

WGS.110 Sexual and Gender Identities
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 HASS-H

Introduces scholarly debates about sexual identities, gender identities and expressions, and sexual orientation and its representation in various media. Topics may include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) sexual identities as well as their histories in Western and non-Western cultures; queer theory and theories of identity; the origins of social movements for equality; issues of race and diversity within LGBT communities; questions of visibility and media representation; and the politics of sexual orientation in contemporary American institutions. Materials include secondary readings in history, philosophy and cultural theory as well as novels and plays, films and television programs, community studies, oral histories, and legal cases.

K. Surkan

WGS.111J Gender and Media Studies
(Same subject as CMS.619J)
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 HASS-H

Examines representations of race, gender, and sexual identity in the media. Considers issues of authorship, spectatorship, and the ways in which various media (film, television, print journalism, advertising) enable, facilitate, and challenge these social constructions in society. Studies the impact of new media and digital media through analysis of gendered and racialized language and embodiment online in blogs and vlogs, avatars, and in the construction of cyber identities. Provides introduction to feminist approaches to media studies by drawing from work in feminist film theory, cultural studies, gender and politics, and cyberfeminism.

K. Surkan

WGS.115 Gender and Technology
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H

Considers a wide range of issues related to the contemporary and historical use of technology, the development of new technologies, and the cultural representation of technology, including the role women have played in the development of technology and the effect of technological change on the roles of women and ideas of gender. Discusses the social implications of technology and its understanding and deployment in different cultural contexts. Investigates the relationships between technology and identity categories, such as gender, race, class, and sexuality. Examines how technology offers possibilities for new social relations and how to evaluate them.

K. Surkan

WGS.125J Games and Culture (New)
(Same subject as 21W.768J, CMS.616J)
(Subject meets with CMS.868)
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 HASS-S

See description under subject CMS.616J.

T. L. Taylor

WGS.140J Race and Identity in American Literature
(Same subject as 21L.504J)
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit

See description under subject 21L.504J.

S. Alexandre

WGS.141J International Women’s Voices
(Same subject as 21F.022J, 21L.048J)
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject 21L.048J.

M. Resnick

WGS.142 Narrative and Identity: Writing and Film by Contemporary Women of Color
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H

Explores the diverse voices and experiences reflected in writing and film by and about women of color. Examines the roles that culture, community, and kinship play in the development of the writer’s individual voice, and compares the similarities and differences of the writer experience across texts and genres. Discussion and assignments, including an independent research presentation, consider the social and
political contexts that inform each work, with an emphasis on gender, race, and economic status. Includes works by a variety of novelists, poets, and filmmakers.

**Staff**

**WGS.150 Gender, Power, Leadership, and the Workplace (New)**

Prereq: None
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-S

Provides an analytic framework to understand the roles that gender, race, and class play in defining and determining access to leadership and power in the United States, especially in the context of the workplace. Explores women and men in leadership positions within the corporate, political and non-profit sectors, focusing on women of color and immigrant women. Looks at specific policies, such as affirmative action, parental leave, child care, and working-time, and the role they play or could play in achieving parity. Students further investigate ways in which these policies address gender, racial, and class inequities, and develop their ability to think critically about mechanisms for change. Limited to 25.

*M. Fried*

**WGS.161J Gender and the Law in US History**

(Same subject as 21H.320J)

Prereq: None
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Fall)
3-0-9 HASS-H

See description under subject 21H.320J.

*C. Capozzola*

**WGS.170J Identity and Difference**

(Same subject as 21A.101J)

Prereq: None
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-S; CI-H

See description under subject 21A.101J.

*J. Jackson*

**WGS.172J Rethinking the Family, Sex, and Gender**

(Same subject as 21A.111J)

Prereq: None
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Fall)
3-0-9 HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.111J.

*H. Paxson*

**WGS.175J Reproductive Politics and Technologies**

(Same subject as 21A.304J)

Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.304J.

*H. Paxson*

**WGS.190J Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies**


Prereq: None
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-A, HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject 24.912J.

*Staff*

**WGS.220 Women and Gender in the Middle East and North Africa**

Prereq: None
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H

Provides an overview of key issues and themes in the study of women and gender relations in the Middle East and North Africa. Includes readings from a variety of disciplines, e.g., history, anthropology, sociology, literature, religious studies, and media studies. Addresses themes such as the relationship between the concepts of nation and gender; women’s citizenship; Middle Eastern women’s activism and the involvement of their Western “sisters” to this movement; gendered interpretations of the Qur’an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad; and the three H’s of Orientalism (hijab, hareem, and hamam).

*L. Ekmekcioglu*

**WGS.225J The Science of Race, Sex, and Gender**

(Same subject as 21A.103J, STS.046J)

Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H

Examines the role of science and medicine in the origins and evolution of the concepts of race, sex, and gender from the 17th century to the present. Focus on how biological, anthropological, and medical concepts intersect with social, cultural, and political ideas about racial, sexual, and gender difference in the US and globally. Approach is historical and comparative across disciplines emphasizing the different modes of explanation and use of evidence in each field.

*A. Sur, S. Helmreich*

**WGS.226J Science, Caste and Gender in India**

(Same subject as STS.023J)

Prereq: None
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-H

Examines the influence of social and cultural determinants (colonialism, nationalism, caste, class, and gender) on modern science and technology in British colonial and postcolonial India. Discusses the relationship of scientific progress to colonial expansions and nationalist aspirations. Explores the nature of scientific institutions within a social, cultural, and political contexts, and how science and technology have impacted Indian society.

*A. Sur*

**WGS.228J Psychology of Gender and Race**

(Same subject as 9.75J)

Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 HASS-S

See description under subject 9.75J.

*C. Kapungu*
WGS.231J Writing about Race  
(Same subject as 21W.742J)  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 HASS-H; CI-H  
See description under subject 21W.742J.  
K. Ragusa

WGS.233J New Culture of Gender: Queer France  
(Same subject as 21F.325J)  
Prereq: One intermediate subject in French  
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered  
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 HASS-H  
Can be repeated for credit  
See description under subject 21F.325J.  
B. Perreau

WGS.234J The Invention of French Theory: A History of Transatlantic Intellectual Life since 1945  
(Same subject as 21F.068J)  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered  
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Fall)  
3-0-9 HASS-H  
See description under subject 21F.068J.  
B. Perreau

WGS.235J Classics of Chinese Literature in Translation  
(Same subject as 21F.044J, 21L.044J)  
(Same subject meets with 21F.195)  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
Not offered regularly; consult department  
3-0-9 HASS-H  
See description under subject 21F.044J.  
E. Teng

WGS.236J Introduction to East Asian Cultures: From Zen to K-Pop  
(Same subject as 21F.030J)  
(Same subject meets with 21F.193)  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2014–2015: U (Spring)  
Acad Year 2015–2016: Not offered  
3-0-9 HASS-H  
See description under subject 21F.030J.  
E. Teng

WGS.240JJane Austen  
(Same subject as 21L.473J)  
Prereq: One subject in Literature  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 HASS-H  
See description under subject 21L.473J.  
R. Perry

WGS.270J Violence, Human Rights, and Justice  
(Same subject as 21A.442J)  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 HASS-S  
See description under subject 21A.442J.  
E. C. James

WGS.271J Dilemmas in Biomedical Ethics: Playing God or Doing Good?  
(Same subject as 21A.302J)  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered  
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Fall)  
3-0-9 HASS-S  
See description under subject 21A.302J.  
E. C. James

WGS.272J Slavery and Human Trafficking in the 21st Century  
(Same subject as 21A.445J)  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered  
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 HASS-S  
See description under subject 21A.445J.  
M. Buyandelger

WGS.274J Images of Asian Women: Dragon Ladies and Lotus Blossoms  
(Same subject as 21A.141J, 21F.048J)  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered  
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 HASS-S  
See description under subject 21A.141J.  
M. Buyandelger

WGS.276J Cultures of Computing  
(Same subject as 21A.504J, STS.086J)  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered  
Acad Year 2015–2016: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 HASS-S  
See description under subject 21A.504J.  
S. Helmreich

WGS.301J Feminist Thought  
(Same subject as 17.007J, 24.237J)  
(Same subject meets with 17.006)  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 HASS-H  
Analyzes theories of gender and politics, especially ideologies of gender and their construction; definitions of public and private spheres; gender issues in citizenship, the development of the welfare state, experiences of war and revolution, class formation, and the politics of sexuality. Graduate students are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.  
S. Haslanger

WGS.400 WGS Undergraduate Independent Study  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
U (Fall, Spring)  
Units arranged  
Can be repeated for credit  
Individual supervised work for undergraduate students who wish to study topics not covered in the regular Women’s and Gender Studies curriculum. Before registering for this subject, students must plan a course of study with a member of the WGS faculty and secure the Director’s approval. Normal maximum credit is 6 units, but exceptional 9-unit projects occasionally approved.  
Staff

WGS.UR Undergraduate Research in Women’s and Gender Studies  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)  
Units arranged \[P/D/F\]  
Can be repeated for credit

WGS.URG Undergraduate Research in Women’s and Gender Studies  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)  
Units arranged  
Can be repeated for credit

Undergraduate research opportunities in the Women’s and Gender Studies Program.  
Staff
WGS.510 Special Subject in Women’s and Gender Studies
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9
Can be repeated for credit with permission of instructor
Covers topics not included in regular curriculum; taught in seminar format.
Staff

SUBJECTS OFFERED BY OTHER PROGRAMS
Each of the following may be taken for credit as a Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS) subject when its content meets WGS criteria. The full description of each subject appears with its designated course listing. For more information, contact the program office, 14E-316, 617-253-8844, wgs@mit.edu.

21L.430 Popular Culture and Narrative
21L.460 Medieval Literature
21L.512 American Authors
21L.701 Literary Interpretation
21L.702 Studies in Fiction
21L.704 Studies in Poetry
21L.705 Major Authors
21L.707 Problems in Cultural Interpretation
21L.715 Media in Cultural Context
21W.745 Advanced Essay Workshop

GRADUATE SUBJECTS
WGS.600 Workshop for Dissertation Writers in Women’s and Gender Studies
Prereq: Must apply to the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies
G (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9
Can be repeated for credit
Addresses the main challenges faced by dissertation writers: isolation, writing schedules, and cogent arguments. Opportunity for members to exchange ideas and experiences, learn general principles of academic argument, and receive feedback. Open to graduate students in all phases of dissertation writing. Meets bi-weekly, spans Fall and Spring terms. Limited to 10.
Consult Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies

WGS.605 WGS Graduate Independent Study
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit
Individual supervised work for graduate students who wish to study topics not covered in the regular Women’s and Gender Studies offerings. Before registering for this subject, students must plan a course of study with a member of the Women’s and Gender Studies faculty and secure the Director’s approval. Normal maximum is 6 units; exceptional 9-unit projects occasionally approved.
Staff

WGS.610 Seminar in Feminist Issues
Prereq: Must apply to the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies
G (Fall)
3-0-9
Can be repeated for credit
Syllabi vary depending on instructors. Limited to 10.
Information: Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies

WGS.615 Feminist Inquiry: Strategies for Effective Scholarship
Prereq: Must apply to the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies
G (Spring)
3-0-9
Can be repeated for credit
Investigates theories and practices of feminist inquiry across a range of disciplines. Feminist research involves rethinking disciplinary assumptions and methodologies, developing new understandings of what counts as knowledge, seeking alternative ways of understanding the origins of problems/issues, formulating new ways of asking questions and redefining the relationship between subjects and objects of study. Focus on methodology, i.e., the theory and analysis of how research should proceed. Special attention to epistemological issues—pre-suppositions about the nature of knowledge. What makes research distinctively feminist lies in the complex connections between epistemologies, methodologies and research methods. Explore how these connections are formed in the traditional disciplines and raise questions about why they are inadequate and/or problematic for feminist inquiry and what, specifically, are the feminist critiques of these intersections.
Information: Graduate Program in Women’s Studies

WGS.640 Studies in Women’s Life Narratives
Prereq: Must apply to the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies
G (Fall)
3-0-9 H-LEVEL Grad Credit
Can be repeated for credit
Close examination of women’s life narratives. Topics vary from term to term. Limited to 10.
Information: Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies

WGS.645 Issues of Representation: Feminist Theory
Prereq: Application to the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies
G (Fall)
3-0-9 H-LEVEL Grad Credit
Can be repeated for credit
Syllabi vary depending on instructors.
Consult Graduate Program in Women’s Studies

WGS.680 The Economic History of Work and the Family
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9
Explores the changing map of the public and the private in pre-industrial and modern societies and examines how that map affected men’s and women’s production and consumption of goods and leisure. The reproductive strategies of women, either in conjunction with or in opposition to their families, is another major theme. Subject asks how an ideal of the “domestic” arose in the early modern west, and to what extent did it limit the economic position of women; and how has that idea been challenged, and with what success in the post-industrial period. Focuses on western Europe since the Middle Ages and on the United States, but also examines how these issues have played themselves out in non-Western cultures. Graduate students are expected to pursue the subject in greater depth through reading and individual research.
A. McCants

WGS.700 Interdisciplinary Area Studies in Feminist Theories
Prereq: Must apply to the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies
Acad Year 2014–2015: Not offered
Acad Year 2015–2016: G (Spring)
3-0-9
Can be repeated for credit
Syllabi vary depending on instructors.
Information: Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies