Department of Women and Gender Studies

Master of Arts Handbook

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The History of WGS

Women and Gender Studies examines the importance of gender and feminism in relation to issues such as race, class, sexuality, labor, colonialism, multiculturalism and globalization. Understanding gender as co-constituted with race, class, sexuality, and nation, the department deploys an interdisciplinary and transnational methodology to build feminist archives, conversations, and tools for social justice.

Although SFSU has offered classes relating to women's studies since 1971, it wasn't until 1976 that the Department of Women and Gender Studies was founded, becoming one of the first such departments in the United States. Forged out of transformative activism and scholarship, the department uses interdisciplinary approaches and foregrounds transnational and intersectional relationships among gender, race, sexuality, nation, labor, technologies, and globalization. Our students engage in challenging academics, work closely with professors, and lead community initiatives.

The goals of the department include the development of conceptual, analytic and critical thinking skills in relation to gender and feminism in a transnational framework; the ability to integrate academic studies in women and gender studies into personal and professional goals; the development of skills to formulate and implement theoretically-informed political, cultural, and community action; the ability to analyze gender from an interdisciplinary perspective, using a range of methodological tools; an historical understanding of gender in relation to structural inequality, social movements, migration flows, and labor struggles; and the ability to critically examine representation, politics, and cultural production through a feminist lens.
Women & Gender Studies Department Faculty and Contact Information

**Fall 2019**

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*The Women and Gender Studies Department Office is open Monday through Thursday, 9:00am – 5:00pm and Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm.*
Admission to the Master of Arts Program

In order to be admitted to the program, students must meet all general University requirements. They must also complete an academic program (major or minor) in Women and Gender Studies at an accredited institution prior to matriculation. Certificate programs or concentrations may also suffice. Please contact the WGS Graduate Coordinator if you have questions. Before beginning the process, please go to the Division of Graduate Studies webpage.

San Francisco State University uses an online application via CAL STATE APPLY (https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/).

Application Instructions

Following review by the SF State University Graduate Division, the Women and Gender Studies Department graduate admissions committee reviews your application for program specific eligibility.

Supporting Information section:
• Under “Statement of Purpose” please note “document attached.”

Program Materials section:
• “Academic Statement of Purpose” (750 words)
• “Personal Statement” (250 words)
• Unofficial transcripts
• CV/Resume (optional)

Letters of Recommendation:
• Two (2) letters from individuals with direct knowledge of your scholarly abilities

Women and Gender Studies evaluates each application for the candidate's demonstration of academic excellence in Women and Gender Studies-related coursework, their clarity of graduate study plans and goals (academic/professional/community), and the applicant's academic preparedness with regard to the SF State University Women and Gender Studies department's faculty areas of expertise.
DOCUMENTS

Instructions for each document type are noted below. Documents are required unless noted as optional. Letters of recommendation should be sent to the academic department directly by the writers.

CV/Resume (Highly Recommended)

Personal Statement: This short statement (no more than 250 words) should outline your preparation and motivation for seeking a graduate degree in Women and Gender Studies. This statement might include your rationale for pursuing the M.A. degree; the relation of the M.A. degree in Women and Gender Studies to your prior academic work; information about participation in community, volunteer, and/or professional activities; and other relevant information.

Statement of Purpose: Women and Gender Studies applicants are required to submit an academic statement (no more than 750-words) outlining your intentions and goals for graduate study in WGS. Specifically, you should outline your planned area of academic focus within women and gender studies, including how this prospective focus relates to your past academic and/or community or professional work, and its relation to your future scholarly and/or career objectives. A well-written statement of purpose exhibits familiarity with key ideas in the field of intersectional gender studies, demonstrates academic preparation for graduate school, and articulates academic goals that can be supported by the methodological and intellectual interests and expertise of the department's faculty.

Unofficial Transcripts: The Division of Graduate Studies requires you to upload copies of transcripts from every college or university attended, including study abroad coursework, community college coursework even if transfer credit appears on your degree transcript. Upload all transcripts to the documents section of this application. The Division of Graduate Studies may request official transcripts from you at any time during the application process in order to complete our review. If selected for admission, you must submit official transcripts to the Division of Graduate Studies in order to secure your admission offer.

English Language Score Report (For students applying from international institutions): You may upload unofficial English language proficiency score report. Students whose native language is not English and whose preparatory education was principally in a language other than English must submit an English language proficiency score report.

Letters of Recommendation: Women Gender Studies applicants are required to solicit two (2) letters of recommendation from individuals with direct knowledge
of the applicant's scholarly preparation. These letters should speak to the applicant's academic readiness for graduate-level studies and are usually from professors who have knowledge of the applicant's academic performance and interest in Women Gender Studies. Letter writer email addresses should be from professional or academic organizations (ex. @sfsu.edu, @CA.gov or @ibm.com), not personal email addresses. Once you have saved an electronic recommendation, an email request will automatically be sent to the recommender on your behalf. Please advise your recommender to look for this email in their inbox, as well as their spam or junk-mail folder, as emails do occasionally get filtered out. (2 required – 3 total allowed)
Suggested Timeline for Completion of M.A. (30 total units)

Fall -- First Year

• WGS 700: Introduction to Graduate Study
• WGS 720: Feminist Pedagogies (strongly recommended if serving as graduate assistant)
• Elective (approved by department graduate adviser)

Spring -- First Year

• WGS 712: Queer Theories
• WGS 713: Intellectual Genealogies
• Elective (approved by department graduate adviser)
• By end of spring semester, begin conceptualizing thesis project and meet with faculty adviser.

Fall -- Second Year

• WGS 710: Feminist Social Movements (may also be taken in Fall of first year)
• WGS 820: Feminist Research Methods
• WGS 798: Feminist Internship: Gender and the Nonprofit Industrial Complex (recommended)
• Early October: Select first and second thesis readers, file Advancement to Candidacy (ATC), Culminating Experience Form, Human and/or Animal Subjects Protocol Form (if applicable) and other related forms

Spring --Second Year

• Mid-February: Culminating Experience (WGS 894, 895, 896/896EXM, 898)
• Elective
• Elective
• File Application for Award of Degree/Graduation
• April 1: Submit a complete draft of thesis to committee
• Mid-May: Thesis due to University
• Semester End: Complete Exit Survey
• Graduation!!!
Graduation Forms and Guidelines

The following enclosed information is a sample of the various forms and guidelines obtained from the Graduate Division Website.

Please be sure to go to the website and verify which forms are applicable to you as well as what deadlines may apply. Your faculty advisor is available to assist you with timeframes and deadlines.

Please note: An Application for Graduate Degree form must be filed early in the semester in which you are graduating (usually by September for fall graduation and by February for spring graduation). This form is available online through the Graduate Division Office, Administration Building, Room 252 (http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/current-form.htm).

Exams (WGS 896EXM), Creative Work Projects (WGS 894) and Field Study (WGS 895) require a Report of Completion Form (also online through the Graduate Division office, ADM 252).

All forms related to your application to candidacy, intent to graduate, change of title/committee, and so on are available at: http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/current-form.htm

Careers with a Master of Arts in Women and Gender Studies

The M.A. in Women and Gender Studies provides a base of knowledge for students wishing to pursue doctoral work on women, gender and feminism in the humanities, social sciences, and interdisciplinary fields such as Cultural Studies, American Studies, Global Studies and Ethnic Studies. The program also provides a foundation for future graduate work in professional degree programs such as Education, Social Work, Law, Public Administration and Public Health. The M.A. enhances students’ abilities to participate professionally in a range of organizations and businesses in the public and private sector, particularly those addressing issues concerning gender, race, citizenship, equity and justice.

- Advocacy
- Activism
- Counseling
- Community Work
- Consultancy
- Editing
• Health Care
• Nongovernmental Organization Administration
• Publishing
• Political Organizing
• Research
• Social Work
• Teaching
• Writing

Policy and Procedures for MA Transfer Units

General guidelines:

* Transferring units must be graduate level, Women and Gender Studies or related units.

* Transferring units may not be counted toward requirements for admission.

* Up to 3 units can be transferred.

* Necessary paperwork to request transfer must be filed before the end of the student’s 3rd semester at SFSU.

* Students must consult transfer possibility with Graduate Coordinator prior to submitting formal request.

Students are required to submit:

1. Course syllabus
2. Final paper assignment turned in for the course
3. Written statement of 500 words justifying why the particular course should be accepted as transfer units (How does the course fit into the WGS Master’s Program curriculum? How does the course fit into the student’s individual program of study? How is the course different from and similar to existing elective graduate courses offered by the department?)
Level Two Written English Proficiency (WGS)

WGS graduate students satisfy the SFSU Level Two Writing Requirement with successful completion of the Culminating Experience, which can take the form of a thesis, field study or creative project (WGS 898, 897, 896). All projects include a written component that situates the research question in relevant fields of study and demonstrates expertise and engagement with feminist literatures.

The research involved in any Culminating Experience project requires extensive reading, synthesis of multiple bodies of literature, and the construction of a sustained argument relevant to the field of Women and Gender Studies. Culminating Experience projects may also include a creative component or field study notes/transcript.

In presenting drafts of their written work to their committees, and in receiving feedback, which they use to revise their drafts, students gain facility with the peer-review process.

In presenting arguments in written form students execute advanced writing skills.

Faculty committee members evaluate Culminating Experience projects based on validity and soundness of argument, demonstration of breadth and depth of knowledge, facility in navigating relevant Women and Gender Studies literatures, and precision and clarity of writing. Level Two writing requirements are thus fulfilled through the written portions of the Culminating Experience project.

Criteria for Evaluating Level Two Writing Skills:

Writing Skills:

- Adequate: The author’s facility in language use, range of diction, and syntactic variety contributes to the paper’s enhanced readability. The author uses correct grammar, sentence structure, and spelling throughout document.
- Deficient: The author makes errors in grammar, sentence structure and/or spelling that impede in conveyance of claims.
Thesis:

- Adequate: The thesis presents an original analysis as well as synthesis of multiple fields of study/bodies of literature. The thesis claim is presented and demonstrated constantly through original analysis as well as through appropriate reference to existing literatures. Thesis provides both analysis of primary sources and synthesis of secondary sources. The thesis has a scope that can be defended in a 50-70 page paper.
- Deficient: One or more of the following: the thesis is under-developed, incoherent, or fails to engage in multiple bodies of relevant literatures; the thesis is either too narrow or too broad in scope to be defended in a 50-70 page paper.

Creative Project and Field Study:

- Adequate: The written portions of the creative work or field study demonstrate synthesis of multiple fields of study/bodies of literature as well as expertise of relevant literatures in Women and Gender Studies. Written portions of 20-30 pages use critical lenses and analytical tools supported by feminist literatures in situating creative project or field study.
- Deficient: One or more of the following in the 20-30 page written portion of the creative project or field study: the project is under-developed, incoherent, or fails to demonstrate critical engagement with feminist and other relevant bodies of literature.

Exam:

- Students who enroll in WGS 896 for their Culminating Experience will prepare 2 reading lists, and take 2 written exams in the final year of their MA program.
- Each reading list will consist of 10-15 texts.
- Each exam will be taken over 72 hours, and will be open book/open note.
- The essay question for Exam 1 will be provided by the WGS faculty; students will draft 3-4 essay questions for Exam 2, and their first reader will select and refine one question.
- Each essay exam should be 2500-3000 words in length (roughly 9-10 double spaced pages).
Financing your WGS MA degree

Financing a master’s degree can be challenging. And while SFSU’s in-state tuition is quite low compared to other universities, the cost of living in the San Francisco Bay Area is one of the highest in the United States.

Most WGS graduate students who complete the program in two years work part-time while they are enrolled as full-time students. Other students who maintain a full-time job usually complete their MA degree in three years. Many students take out student loans and apply for a range of scholarships.

WGS does not offer “admissions packages” with funding outlined at the onset of your degree. Each student has unique financial and personal circumstances. Instead, each semester the department offers GA teaching positions as well as various scholarships. We try to make your MA as affordable as possible, and support individual paths towards the degree.

For important information about current fees and tuitions, go to:
http://bursar.sfsu.edu/content/fall-2018-important-fee-information

For the most updated information about financial aid, housing and tuition, you can also contact the SFSU Graduate Division and the Office of Financial Aid:
http://grad.sfsu.edu
http://financialaid.sfsu.edu

Teaching and Research Assistantships provided for WGS graduate students

The WGS department has between 5-8 graduate student teaching assistant positions each semester (they are called GA - graduate assistant, not teaching assistant, at SFSU). In August and January, the chair of the WGS department calls for applications for GA positions. WGS graduate students have priority for these positions. The GA positions carry a monthly stipend: $460.60/month for eight hours work per week for five months (total $2,303) (based on spring 2018 rates).

WGS students have also often been GAs for other departments such as Ethnic Studies, Sexuality Studies, Humanities, Journalism, etc. if other departments have needs for GAs with gender studies expertise.
Graduate Assistant Guidelines for Department of Women and Gender Studies

The Department of Women and Gender Studies has paid Graduate Assistant (GA) positions to assist in WGS 150, WGS 160, and WGS 200. The instructor of WGS 150/160/200 is the GA’s curricular supervisor. The department chair is the GA’s employment supervisor. Should they have questions or concerns about their positions, GAs should first approach their curricular supervisor and then their employment supervisor.

1. It is helpful and typical for the instructor and GA to meet before the semester begins to review expectations, syllabus, and answer questions about the course.
2. GAs are employed to work 8 hours per week. While students work at different rates, and the rhythm of the semester will mean there will be variable amounts of work each week, the breakdown of this work per week generally includes tasks such as: attending and taking notes during class lectures and, as relevant, assisting in coordinating in-class student group work or facilitating class once a semester; holding office hours (1 hr/wk); completing class readings; attendance and record-keeping; grading homework; miscellaneous tasks such as consulting with the curricular supervisor, photocopying, or setting up AV. Additional tasks and activities as negotiated between the GA and instructor are optional rather than required. Please be in good communication with the instructor about what is expected.
3. GAs will be evaluated by their curricular supervisor at the mid-semester and then at the end of term. WGS GA evaluation forms will be distributed to instructors by the 6th week of the semester. Instructors should review these evaluations with the GA, and then turn the evaluations in to the employment supervisor (department chair) no later than the 8th week of the semester and then prior to the end of exam week.
4. GAs who are MA students in the Women and Gender Studies Department are advised to concurrently enroll in WGS 720 (Feminist Pedagogies) for 3 units of academic credit. GAs who are MA students in other departments are encouraged but not expected to enroll in WGS 720. As part of the curricular assignments for WGS 720 and with the prior consent of the instructor, GAs may lead a class session and/or give a guest lecture once during the semester (they may also opt for an alternate assignment). This is a learning/mentoring opportunity and it is expected that the GA will work collaboratively with the instructor to gain appropriate guidance and feedback. GAs who are not enrolled in WGS 720 are not expected to give a guest lecture but are welcome to voluntarily do so as part of their own professional development.
5. GAs who would like to get experience evaluating undergraduate work may read or comment on student assignments, but the instructor of record is responsible for final grades. GAs will receive mentoring and guidance by their curricular supervisor prior in terms of evaluation guidelines.

6. GAs cannot teach without the instructor present but they may facilitate independent study sessions for course midterms or final exams provided they are held during regularly scheduled course or office hours.

7. GAs are expected to hold one office hour weekly in HUM 316. Office hours are posted in the WGS Department Office. GAs should notify the WGS office manager of any changes to their office hours.

8. GAs are subject to SFSU sexual harassment policy and are required to familiarize themselves with and comply with all university and state reporting laws as well as CSU and SFSU policies regarding sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. (http://titleix.sfsu.edu/)

Some key provisions:

- Duty to Report. Except as provided …, any Employee who knows or has reason to know of allegations or acts that violate this policy shall promptly inform the DHR Administrator or Title IX Coordinator. These Employees are required to disclose all information, including the names of the Parties, even where the person has requested that his/her name remain confidential. The DHR Administrator or Title IX Coordinator will determine whether confidentiality is appropriate given the circumstances of each such incident.

- Prohibited Conduct. The CSU prohibits (partial list):
  - “Discrimination, including Harassment, because of any Protected Status: i.e., Age, Disability, Gender, Genetic Information, Gender Identity or Expression, Nationality, Marital Status, Race or Ethnicity, Religion, Sexual Orientation, and Veteran or Military Status…”
  - “Employees from entering into a consensual relationship with any Student or Employee over whom s/he exercises direct or otherwise significant academic, administrative, supervisory, evaluative, counseling, or extracurricular authority.”

- GAs must complete an Employee/Student Information Privacy Training (www.sfsu.edu/online/esip.htm). It is expected that GAs will be familiar with and comply with all privacy protocols, including those set by their
curricular supervisor. Please email a screenshot of your completion of the training to me at dcohler@sfsu.edu

- The terms and conditions of GA appointments are covered by a collective bargaining agreement between the California State University and the United Auto Workers, Unit 11.

Scholarships

Women and Gender Studies Graduate Scholarships

Marjorie H. Stern Scholarship - $500

The Marjorie H. Stern Scholarship supports women’s rights and social justice by helping Women and Gender Studies (WGS) students in immediate financial need to remain in school. Two scholarships will be awarded each year to students who demonstrate a commitment to social justice and articulate how the scholarship would help them to continue their education. One applicant will be selected from our juniors and seniors, the other from WGS M.A. students.

Eligibility: Must be a WGS M.A. student and have a GPA above 3.0.

Submission materials: Students submit an unofficial copy of their transcript, the name and e-mail address of a WGS professor who has agreed to act as a reference, a short statement about their commitment to social justice, and a short statement explaining financial need. Please see Academic Works for more details.

WGS Emergency Fund Scholarship

The purpose of the WGS Student Emergency Fund Scholarship is to support students in need of “emergency” funding. An emergency is broadly defined to include those categories not covered as part of the regular cost of attendance (i.e. NOT “tuition fees, books and supplies, meals, housing, transportation, and personal expenses” per Financial Aid). During the 2016-2017 academic year, 14 scholarships were awarded.

The award is open to all graduate and undergraduate students majoring or minoring in WGS. Preference is given to graduate students and undergraduate majors, and there is no GPA requirement. The scholarship is open to all students, regardless of citizenship status.
Contact the Department Chair for more information. If your application is awarded, a copy of a bill tied to your emergency may be required.

**SFSU Scholarships and Grants**

WGS graduate students are also often very successful in applying for other SFSU scholarships and grants: these follow the same calendar and are usually $500-$1,000 awards.

Some SFSU scholarships that WGS students have won in the past include the following:

- CSU Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program
- Judith Anne Ott Scholarship
- Evans, Hsu, Kauffman Scholarship
- Edward B. Kaufmann College of Liberal & Creative Arts Scholarship

For more information about SFSU scholarship, please go to: [https://sfsu.academicworks.com](https://sfsu.academicworks.com) Scholarships can be searched for by name or by keywords (such as “gender” or other words that relate to your own identity, history, research interests, etc.)

**Other Scholarships and Grants**

WGS MA students have been successful in applying to a range of non-SFSU funds as well. Here are some suggestions.

- 110 College and Graduate School Scholarships for Women of Color

This is a great resource, compiled in 2017 that includes information for graduate and undergraduate scholarships.


- The Markowski-Leach Scholarship for LGBTQ students attending San Francisco State University, Stanford, UC Berkeley, or UC San Francisco

[http://mlscholarships.org](http://mlscholarships.org)

- Fullbright Fellowship programs
For students who are not US residents, from specific regions or countries, to study in the United States. A program of the United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

https://www.cies.org/programs

- American Association of University Women

This organization offers a range of scholarships and fellowships

https://www.aauw.org/tag/scholarships-and-awards/

Other SFSU graduate student funding

Conference travel

The College of Liberal and Creative Arts offers graduate students $400-$600 to attend a professional conference related to their areas of study. These funds are allotted each Fall on a first come, first served basis for students presenting work at qualifying conferences.

Is there SFSU campus housing for graduate students?

YES. There is on-campus graduate housing. The university also facilitates roommate referrals and housing information for graduate students. For this information, see the Graduate Division’s Housing Information page:

http://grad.sfsu.edu/content/housing

What other on-campus jobs are available?

WGS students have often worked as cross-campus tutors at both the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) and the Campus Academic Resource Program (CARP).

https://lac.sfsu.edu/lacjobs

https://carp.sfsu.edu/content/job-opportunities

WGS students have also worked in student services, as program coordinators for student groups such as the Queer and Trans Resource Center, and elsewhere on campus.
http://asi.sfsu.edu/hr/
http://careerservices.sfsu.edu/findajoboncampus

OTHER RESOURCES

LOCAL IMMIGRATION/RESOURCE OFFICES:
SFILEN - San Francisco Immigration Legal and Education Network

Members:

African Advocacy Network (AAN)
938 Valencia St. San Francisco
415.503.1032
http://www.aansf.org/

Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)
522 Valencia St. San Francisco
415.861.7444
http://www.arabborganizing.org/

Asian Law Caucus (ALC)
55 Columbus Ave. San Francisco
415.896.1701
http://www.advancingjustice-alc.org/

Asian Pacific Islander and Legal Outreach
1121 Mission St. San Francisco
415.567.6255
http://www.apilegaloutreach.org/

Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)
(OAKLAND CA)
415.663.2254
http://blackalliance.org/

Causa Justa/ Just Cause
2301 Mission St. San Francisco
415.487.9022
http://cjjc.org/

Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)
3101 Mission St. San Francisco
415.642.4400
http://carecensf.org/
Chinese for Affirmative Action
17 Walter U Lum pl. San Francisco
415.274.6750
http://www.caasf.org/

Dolores Street Community Services
938 Valencia St. San Francisco
415.282.6209
http://www.dscs.org/

Filipino Community Center (FCC)
4681 Mission St. San Francisco
415.333.6267
http://filipinocc.org/

La Raza Centro Legal
474 Valencia St. San Francisco
415.575.3500
http://www.lrcl.org/

Mujeres Unidas Y Activas (MUA)
3543 18th St. San Francisco
415.621.8140
http://mujeresunidas.net/

People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER!)
474 Valencia St. San Francisco
415.431.4210
http://www.podersf.org/

IMMIGRATION/CITIZENSHIP

1. NQAPIA website (mostly for Asian queers but broadly applicable)
   http://www.nqapia.org/wpp/thank-goodness-for-these-precautions-before-trump-takes-office/


4. upcoming legal workshop: Name and Gender ID Change Drop-In Clinic, 10 December
   https://www.facebook.com/events/calendar?adjusted_ts=1481356800&open_popup_on_init=1> at 11:00–19:00 Liberating Ourselves
   Locally<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Liberating-Ourselves-Locally/242628339190822>
   234 23rd Ave., Oakland, California 94601

5. Immigrant Legal Resource Center Community Resources: https://www.ilrc.org/know-your-rights-and-what-immigrant-families-should-do-now

It’s important for everyone to know their rights if approached by an immigration (ICE) agent as well as how families can best prepare for something happening. This resource provides practical tips for things immigrant families can do now to prepare as well as information on rights everyone has in the United States, regardless of immigration status.
TRANSGENDER RESOURCES

On changing gender markers on IDs, passports, birth-certificates and other legal documents: http://www.transequality.org/documents/