Gender and women’s studies at Bowdoin is an interdisciplinary program that incorporates into the curriculum recent research on women and gender. The program combines the scholarly traditions of a variety of disciplines to explore the myriad ways in which gender intersects with race, class, sexuality, and nationality—historically and in contemporary life. Courses in gender and women’s studies investigate the experiences of women and men in light of the social construction of gender and its meaning across cultures and historical periods. Gender construction—the making of men/masculinity and women/femininity—is explored as an institutionalized means of structuring inequality and dominance. In addition to developing skills in critical reading, thinking, and writing, students in gender and women’s studies courses often report acquiring the means to name and give voice to life experiences that have previously gone unacknowledged.

The Gender and Women’s Studies Program offers a range of program courses as well as an extensive list of associated courses, offered by other departments and programs, that have a central focus on gender or women. Among the many programs and departments whose courses “count” for gender and women’s studies requirements are history, English, religion, sociology and anthropology, Russian, Romance languages, classics, education, gay and lesbian studies, theater and dance, Africana studies, Asian studies, and cinema studies.

**The Major and Minor**

The major in gender and women’s studies consists of nine courses, including three required core courses: Introduction to Gender and Women’s Studies, Feminist Theory, and a Capstone Seminar. These courses are designed to illuminate the diverse realities of women’s lives and of the workings of gender, while making available some of the main currents of feminist thought.

The six remaining courses for the major may be chosen from the set of gender and women’s studies courses, or from a broad set of courses in other disciplines that have been approved by the Gender and Women’s Studies Program Committee to count toward the major. No more than three of the six elective courses may be from the same department.

The minor consists of Introduction to Gender and Women’s Studies, Feminist Theory, and three additional approved courses. Students may count courses in their major toward the gender and women’s studies minor, but may count only two courses from any given discipline.

**Honors Projects**

During the spring of the junior year, a student who wishes to undertake an honors project must secure the agreement of a faculty member to supervise the independent studies project. The honors project supervisor must have taught gender and women’s studies courses and served on the Gender and Women’s Studies Program Committee. If the student’s chosen supervisor has not fulfilled these requirements, the student may appeal to the committee for permission to go forward with the project. Two semesters of advanced independent study are required for an honors project in gender and women’s studies. No more than two independent studies courses may count toward the major.

**Program Faculty**

The program is administered by the Gender and Women’s Studies Program Committee. Courses are taught by faculty members drawn from across the College.

**Susan C. Faludi,** distinguished lecturer of women’s studies.

**Tess Chakkalakal,** associate professor of Africana studies and English (Wesleyan), M.Phl., M.A., Ph.D. (Yale), teaches the course Black Women, Politics, Music, and the Divine. Her research and teaching interests include African American culture and the construction and performance of raced, gendered, and religious identities.

**Aviva Briefel,** assistant professor of Africana studies, B.A. (Reed), M.A., Ph.D. (Emory), teaches courses in the cultural interpretation of medicine, and the evolution of society’s views of the body.

**Nadia V. Celis,** associate professor of Africana studies and English, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. (California–Riverside), teaches on sexuality in English romantic writing.

**Jennifer Scanlon,** William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of the Humanities in Gender and Women’s Studies and associate dean for faculty, B.S. (SUNY–Oswego), M.A. (Delaware), M.A., Ph.D. (Binghamton), specializes in the study of gender and consumer culture from a historical perspective, with special attention on the historical development of female consumers, women’s magazines, and advertising.

**Affiliated Faculty**

**Frances Gouda,** visiting professor of gender and women’s studies, B.A., M.A. Ph.D. (University of Washington–Seattle). She is director of the program.

**Kristen Ghodsee,** professor of gender and women’s studies.

Gender and Women’s Studies

For more information about Bowdoin, please write or call: Dean of Admissions
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Brunswick, ME 04011-8441
207-725-3100
bowdoin.edu
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Independent Study and Honors Projects

Recent independent study projects in the program include:

- Career-Oriented Women and Conflicts over Motherhood
- From Geisha Girl to Suzie Wong: Exoticization and Cultural Colonization of East Asian Women in US Film Culture
- African American Women in US History
- A Year in the Life of Glamour Magazine

Rachel Ex Connely, Bion R. Cram Professor of Economics, A.B. (Brandeis), A.M., Ph.D. (Michigan), teaches about family- and gender-related economics.

Sara A. Dickey, professor of anthropology, B.A. (Washington), M.A., Ph.D. (California–San Diego), teaches a course on social and political activism and gender inequality in India.

Pamela M. Fletcher, professor of art history, A.B. (Bowdoin), M.A., Ph.D. (Columbia), teaches about gender and sexuality in contemporary art. She is program director of art history.

Guy Mark Foster, associate professor of English, B.A. (Wheaton), M.A., Ph.D. (Brown), teaches twentieth-century American literature, African American literature, lesbian and gay literature, interracial narratives, literary memoirs, queer theory, and psychoanalytic theory.

Celeste Goodridge, professor of English, A.B. (George Washington), A.M. (William and Mary), Ph.D. (Rutgers), specializes in modern and contemporary American poetry and fiction.

David Hecht, assistant professor of history, B.A. (Brandeis), Ph.D. (Yale), teaches courses on modern American history, focusing especially on the Cold War, the relationship between science, politics, and society, prominent trials, and the 1960s. He is director of first-year seminar programs.

Laura Henry, John F. and Dorothy H. Magee Associate Professor of Government and Legal Studies, B.A. (Wellesley), M.A., Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), teaches Western and Eastern European politics, comparative politics, and social movements. She is chair of the Russian department.

Ann L. Kibble, associate professor of English, B.A. (Boston), Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), teaches about women in eighteenth-century novels.

Jennifer Clarke Kosak, associate professor of classics, A.B. (Harvard–Radcliffe), Ph.D. (Michigan), teaches about gender and sexuality in classical antiquity. She is chair of the classics department.

Sarah McMahon, associate professor of history, A.B. (Wellesley), Ph.D. (Brandeis), teaches about the history of women in the United States.

Elizabeth Pritchard, associate professor of religion, A.B. (Boston College), M.T.S., M.A., Ph.D. (Harvard), teaches about women in religion.


Marilyn Reibbaum, Harrison King McCann Professor of English, A.B. (Queens College), M.Litt. (Edinburgh), Ph.D. (Wisconsin–Madison), teaches a course in twentieth-century drama and its relevant sexual politics. She is the program director of gay and lesbian studies.


Vijayanthy Ratnam Selinger, associate professor of Asian studies, B.A. (Jawaharlal Nehru University), M.A. (Harvard), Ph.D. (Cornell), teaches pre-modern and modern Japanese literature, Japanese language, and theoretical approaches to history as narrative. She is the director of the Asian Studies Program.

Jill Suzanne Smith,* associate professor of German, B.A. (Anherst), M.A., Ph.D. (Indiana), teaches gender and sexuality studies; German literature, intellectual history, and culture and German-Jewish studies; and popular fiction, art, and film from the Weimar Republic.


Susan L. Tananbaum, associate professor of history, B.A. (Trinity), M.A., Ph.D. (Brandeis), teaches about the history of women’s health.

Sarah Reitz, associate professor of German, Diplomgermanistik (Leipzig), M.A. (Wisconsin), Ph.D. (Minnesota), specializes in eighteenth-century German literature, culture, and philosophy; Romanticism; manifestations of race; and ethnic and cultural differences in literature and film.

Shuchin Tsai, professor of Asian studies and cinema studies, B.A. (Xian Foreign Language Institute, China), M.A. (Wisconsin), M.A., Ph.D. (Michigan), teaches a course about women and writing in modern China.

Krista Van Vleet, associate professor of anthropology, B.S. (Beloit), M.A., Ph.D. (Michigan), teaches a course on family, gender, and sexuality in Latin America.

Hanetha Vete-Congo, associate professor of Romance languages, B.A., M.A., DEA, Ph.D. (Universite de Antilles et de la Guyane, Martinique), teaches francophone women’s literature from West Africa and the Caribbean, cross-cultural feminist theories, gender and sexuality, and women’s body in literature.

*Member of the Gender and Women’s Studies Program Committee

For more information, go to:
bowdoin.edu/gender-women/

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