Why Women’s and Gender Studies at Brandeis?

An education in women’s and gender studies offers students the opportunity to build global knowledge in fields across the creative arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. Men and women who take courses in women’s and gender studies gain valuable skills in research and analysis, critical thinking, writing and public speaking, creative problem solving, and team building. Our program draws an enthusiastic and diverse group of students who seek intellectual challenges and who are committed to social justice.

Curriculum Overview

The interdisciplinary field of women’s and gender studies explores the broad range of intellectual questions surrounding the roles of women and men in society, culture, and history. Students in the program have the opportunity to study theories of sex; gender and sexuality; the international diversity of women’s experiences and gendered social structures, present and past; movements for equality and rights in the United States and around the globe; and the intersections of gender with race, class, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, and age, within and across cultures. This curriculum brings students into contact with exciting developments in research on women and gender and explores ways to apply knowledge to the challenges of social justice and the struggle for human rights in our own communities and around the world.

What will your curriculum look like?

The major requires nine courses—three core courses and six electives chosen from an extensive list of over 80 courses. The core courses are as follows:

- WMGS 5a: Women and Gender in Culture and Society
- WMGS 105b: Feminist Theories in Historical and Cross-Cultural Perspective
- WMGS 198a: Research Seminar

At least one of the six elective courses must have a historical focus and at least one must focus centrally on cultural difference. Majors must also write a senior paper or may elect to write an honors thesis.

The minor requires successful completion of WMGS 5a and four elective courses in women’s and gender studies.

How do you become a WGS major or minor?

As early as possible in their academic careers, students interested in women’s and gender studies should take WMGS 5a, the required introduction to the field. In order to declare a major or minor,
each student should meet with the women’s and gender studies undergraduate advising head, who will help him or her select a faculty member adviser well suited to the student’s academic interests. The adviser will help to plan a course of study tailored to the student’s intellectual and professional interests while meeting the core and elective requirements for the degree.

**Hands-On Learning Experience**

Students are strongly encouraged to undertake an internship in women’s and gender studies as one of their electives. Visit our Web site for internship opportunities.

**Areas of Special Interest**

Students in our program are eligible for special awards and receive priority for paid summer internships, research grants, and credit-bearing teaching assistantships.

**Career and Education Opportunities**

The curriculum in women’s and gender studies prepares students for a wide range of careers. Alumni of our program apply their skills and knowledge to academic and professional pursuits in medicine, law, education, government, social service, public policy, religion, counseling, international relations, journalism, publishing, business, and the arts.

**Faculty**

Following is a list of faculty members and their areas of specialization:

- **Susan Lanser, chair**
  Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British and French studies, women writers
- **Joyce Antler**
  Women’s history, social history
- **Bernadette Brooten**
  Christian studies
- **Claudia Castaneda**
  Gender, race, and science
- **Dian Fox**
  Early modern Spanish drama, poetry, and prose
- **ChaeRan Freeze**
  East European Jewish history
- **Karen Hansen, MA adviser, sociology**
  Feminist theory, sociology of the family
- **Anita Hill**
  Social policy, law, and women’s studies
- **Jane Kamensky, MA adviser, American history**
  Colonial America, American social and cultural history
- **Nadia Kim**
  Gender, race, and class; international migration
- **Sarah Lamb, director of graduate studies; MA adviser, anthropology**
  Social-cultural theory, gender studies, anthropology of aging, medical anthropology
- **James Mandrell**
  Modern and contemporary Spanish and comparative literature, film, and culture
- **Ángela Pérez-Mejia**
  Colonial Latin American literature, Latin American film and cultural studies
- **Shulamit Reinharz**
  History of women in sociology, qualitative and feminist methodology, group dynamics
- **Ellen Schattschneider**
  Religion, war and memory, anthropology of the body, commodification, East Asia, Japan
- **Harleen Singh**
  South Asian studies, comparative literature, postcolonial theory and studies
- **Marion Smiley**
  Moral, social, and political philosophy
- **Faith Smith, undergraduate advising head**
  Literature and popular culture of the Caribbean