

Women's Studies

Coordinator: Mimi Hedges M.F.A.

Women's Studies at Stephens is an interdisciplinary program drawing upon the expertise of faculty and student-life professionals across the campus and focusing on the construction of knowledge about women, both in the United States and in the rest of the world. In Women's Studies classes students and faculty work together to illuminate women's distinct experiences, perspectives, and concerns, as well as to explore the liberatory strategies women have employed and continue to employ throughout the world. More than 50 faculty members, representing all areas of academic life, have taught in the program since its beginning in the early 1970s when Stephens College first demonstrated national leadership in the field.

The Women's Studies Program offers a minor. But Women's Studies is also an excellent choice for students who wish to combine study in the discipline with another discipline in a student-initiated major. As well as completing the liberal arts requirements and the courses listed below for the Women's Studies minor, the student works with her advisor to plan a course of study that combines additional Women's Studies courses and a sequence of courses from one or more of the academic disciplines complementary to women's studies.

Requirements for a Minor in Women's Studies

A minor in women's studies requires the completion of 15 semester hours, including at least six hours at or above the 300 level, as listed below.

Required Course

WST 210: Introduction to Women's Studies (3 hrs.)

Plus 12 hours of WST courses; six hours of which must be at or above the 300 level.

Choose from the following courses:

WST/LGS 110: Women, Law and Justice (3 hrs.)
WST/PSY 301: Psychology of Gender (3 hrs.)
WST/ENG 308: Women Writers (3 hrs.)
WST 310: Gender Across Cultures (3 hrs.)
WST/ARH 355: Women in Art (3 hrs.)
WST/NSC 365: Women, Science and Society (3 hrs.)
WST 464/IME 464: Women and The Media (3 hrs.)

Courses in the Liberal Arts may be taken for elective credit in the minor. Courses will be identified in the course schedule as meeting WST elective credit.

Courses offered in 2010-2011 include:

LBA 153: Women in Music (3 hrs.)*
LBA 224: Women's Detective Fiction (3 hrs.)*

*Note: course cannot count toward **both** the LBA and WST minor requirements

The following will offered only as needed:

WST 280: Topics in Women's Studies (1-3 hrs.)
WST 311: Development of Feminist Thought (3 hrs.)
WST 312: Contemporary Feminist Thought (3 hrs.)
WST 380: Topics in Women's Studies (1-3 hrs.)

Women's Studies and the Liberal Studies Major

In the residential program, the Women's Studies minor is available as an option to include in the Liberal Studies major. In addition, the program co-sponsors a concentration in English and Women's Studies which is also available for the Liberal Studies major. See the Liberal Studies section of the catalog for complete information about the major.

Women's Studies Courses

WST 110: Women, Law and Justice

(3 hrs.)

(Open to all students; cross-listed as LGS 110)

Criminal and civil law, feminist legal theory and jurisprudence, legal reasoning, current issues in the courts, torts and case briefs figure in this introductory course. Legal and allied professionals serve as guest speakers. Students write weekly reaction papers.

WST 210: Introduction to Women's Studies

(3 hrs.)

(Open to all students)

This course introduces the major areas and methods of inquiry in the academic discipline of Women's Studies.

Contemporary issues that impact women's lives are examined in the contexts of work, education, the family, health systems, economics, government, and politics. The status of women in many cultures is explored historically and comparatively with emphasis on historical precedents of Women's Studies and international women's rights movements of the 20th century.

WST 280: Women's Studies Topics

(1-3 hrs.)

(Prerequisite: dependent upon topic)

Study of specific topics that relate to women's issues and women's experience. Past topics have included: "Addicted Women: Substance Abuse" and "Compulsive Behaviors."

WST 308: Women Writers

(3 hrs.)

(Prerequisites: ENG 102, 206 or LBA 108, 208 and one three-hour 200-level ENG or WST course, or permission of the instructor; cross-listed as ENG 308)

This course analyzes women's literatures in English of various cultures and periods considering the history of critical attention given to them. In addition to standard genres of poetry, fiction and drama, this course includes reading in nontraditional genres: essays, diaries and letters, and performance art.

WST 310: Gender Across Cultures

(3 hrs.)

(Prerequisite: WST 210 and junior or senior standing or permission of the instructor)

Biography, autobiography, literature and social science texts provide cross-cultural perspectives on the lives of girls and women in the 20th century. The focus of the course is on social, economic, legal and ideological aspects of women's position in selected developing societies compared with industrialized societies. Students explore ways in which attitudes about women have influenced women's material and cultural contributions to their respective societies. Both differences and connections will be shown to exist among women separated by cultural, racial and national boundaries.

WST 311: Development of Feminist Thought

(3 hrs.)

(Prerequisite: WST 210 or permission of instructor)

The evolution of feminist theory in its cultural and historical contexts, examined through early writings of women's movements. Emphasis is on the writing of American, English and European women of the 19th and 20th centuries and the impact of their thought and action on American women and American society.

WST 312: Contemporary Feminist Thought

(3 hrs.)

(Prerequisite: WST 210 or permission of instructor)

Examination of theories of the post-World War II wave of international women's movements, including the works of North and South American, African, British, Australian and French writers. Diversity of feminist perspectives is considered as the student develops a theoretical base of her own.

WST 355: Women in Art

(3 hrs.)

(Prerequisite: ARH 101 or permission of instructor; cross-listed as ARH 355)

This course explores the contributions women have made to painting, sculpture and architecture from the Renaissance to the present time,

WST 365: Women, Science and Society

(3 hrs.)

(Prerequisite: junior or senior standing or permission of instructor; cross-listed as NSC 365)

This course will broaden the student's understanding of the far-reaching impact that feminist analysis has had on all fields of knowledge, including the field of science. Contemporary women in science are changing the way people think about science and practice it. Students in the course will benefit from exposure to cross-cultural analysis of science and some of the ways that people from various cultures understand the human relationship to the world.

WST 380: Topics in Women's Studies

(1-3 hrs.)

(Prerequisite: dependent upon topic)

A study of specific topics that relate to women's issues and women's experience. Topics include: "Images of Women in Film," "Reproductive Rights and Freedom," "Re-Vision: Female Perspectives on the European Encounter with the Americas," "Women's Health Across the Lifespan."

WST 464: Women and Media

(3 hrs.) (Offered spring semester only)

(Prerequisite: IME 101 or WST 210 and senior standing; cross-listed as IME 464)

In this course students examine women's images and power in the mass communication industry today and also study remarkable women pioneers in 20th-century media. This is a capstone course for majors in mass communication and is also appropriate for seniors in the Women's Studies minor.

Independent Study

Independent studies (special studies, tutorials, readings, projects) may be proposed by students who wish to investigate a subject not otherwise available. Information about independent study may be obtained in the department offices or in the Office of the Registrar.