Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women

Director, Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women
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Director, Gender and Sexuality Studies
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The Pembroke Center supports interdisciplinary research on the ways gender systems—understood as systems of meaning—structure both the concrete and the symbolic organizations of social and cultural life; and the ways gender systems intersect with other systems of difference such as ethnicity, race and class. Faculty associated with the Center are available to advise students, who may concentrate in gender and sexuality studies or who may develop a cluster of gender and sexuality studies courses to enrich a standard concentration. In addition to its curricular interests, the Pembroke Center funds postdoctoral fellows for a year of research in residence at Brown, conducts an annual two-semester research seminar, and sponsors numerous research initiatives.

For additional information please visit the Center’s website at: https://www.brown.edu/research/pembroke-center/

Gender and Sexuality Studies Concentration Requirements

Gender and Sexuality Studies is an interdisciplinary concentration that examines the construction of gender and sexuality in social, cultural, political, economic, or scientific contexts. Each concentrator focuses on a well-defined topic or question and works closely with a concentration advisor to develop a program that investigates this focus area rigorously and supplements it with foundational courses in the relevant disciplines. Typical areas of focus include the acculturation of gender, sexuality and race in American politics or activism, the construction of sexual and gendered identities in educational institutions or in various forms of visual media, a contrast between different cultural understandings of sexual identity, a particular national literature and history. Such topics will frequently bring questions of gender and sexuality together; however students may also organize their concentrations to emphasize questions of visual media, a contrast between different cultural understandings of sexuality and race in American politics or activism, the construction of sexual and gendered identities in educational institutions or in various forms of visual media, a contrast between different cultural understandings of sexual identity, a particular national literature and history. Such topics will frequently bring questions of gender and sexuality together; however students may also organize their concentrations to emphasize questions specifically related to gender or to sexuality. Introductory and methodology courses in the disciplines appropriate to students’ focus will help them understand the principles grounding such practices as historical research, literary interpretation, and sociological analysis.

Requirements:
The concentration requires 10 courses, 12 for honors concentrators. No more than two courses may count for multiple concentrations.
1. GNSS 0120. Introductory course on gender and sexuality across the disciplines
2. Four–course focus on some thematic, theoretical, or historical aspect of gender and sexuality
3. Two introductory or methodology courses in disciplines pertinent to the focus
4. One course in gender history, women's history, or history of sexuality
5. One course in feminist theory or theory of sexuality
6. GNSS 1990. A senior seminar which counts as your capstone course. Senior seminar participants are expected to write a research essay. The senior seminar fulfills the second half of Brown’s writing requirement.

7. Prior to Commencement, all graduating senior concentrators are required to give a short presentation of either their senior essay or thesis project.

Honors
Candidates for honors must apply to the program's director at the beginning of their seventh semester. Honors concentrators fulfill the regular requirements plus completing a two-semester thesis as their capstone project.


Courses

GNSS 0090B. Bodies Out of Bounds.
In this seminar we will examine what happens to bodies - and the world around them - when they refuse to stay within "normal" boundaries. We will focus our readings on literature, essays, and memoir from the past two centuries, and use film and contemporary cultural theory for comparison and context. Readings range from Jeanette Winterson's Written on the Body to fiction by Octavia Butler. Enrollment limited to 19 first-year students.

GNSS 0090C. Reproductive Health: Science and Politics.
Reproductive health issues such as contraception, abortion, sexually transmitted infections and gay and lesbian health are some of the most controversial and politically charged issues in the US today. After an introduction to the interpretation of medical literature we will explore scientific, political, religious and cultural aspects of these important public policy issues. Successful national and international programs will be discussed. Although all views are welcome, it is expected that students will be respectful of other's opinions and will incorporate the best available scientific data into their conclusions. Enrollment limited to 19 first year students. Instructor permission required.

GNSS 0100. Introduction to Feminist Theory.
An historical and cross-cultural introduction to the various strands of feminist theory. The course will cover a range of theoretical frameworks, examine the connections and discomforts between theory and activism, and explore the impact of feminist theories on contemporary thought.

GNSS 0120. Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies.
Explores the interdisciplinary fields of Gender and Sexuality Studies, considering the relation between formations of gender and those of sexuality across a range of historical and disciplinary contexts. Considers how both sexuality and gender are shaped in relation to race and ethnicity, economic inequality, and the postcolonial legacy.

Fall
GNSS0120 S01 17205 MWF 1:00-1:50(06) (D. Davis)

Hysteria marks the presence of a traumatic memory that arouses wild bodily symptoms, treated psychologically by putting feeling into words. Often considered a particularly female ailment, hysteria has been read by feminist scholars as a deviant, desirous language of the female body. This course considers the boundaries of pain and pleasure, madness and lucidity, and the personal and the political.
This course investigates films and literature within the context of Latin America since the later-half of the twentieth century, privileging works from the last two decades. It offers an overview of contemporary Latin American film and literature read through the theoretical lens of trans, queer and gender studies. The course focuses on how the films and literary works in question employ sex, gender and sexuality to contest and at times inadvertently reinforce dominant societal power structures. This course offers students an overview of theoretical readings focused on gender and sexuality, as well as the basics of formal film and literary analysis.

**GNSS 1070A. (En)Gendering the Text: Gender & Sexuality in Latin American Literature and Film.**

This course investigates films and literature within the context of Latin America since the later-half of the twentieth century, privileging works from the last two decades. It offers an overview of contemporary Latin American film and literature read through the theoretical lens of trans, queer and gender studies. The course focuses on how the films and literary works in question employ sex, gender and sexuality to contest and at times inadvertently reinforce dominant societal power structures. This course offers students an overview of theoretical readings focused on gender and sexuality, as well as the basics of formal film and literary analysis.

**GNSS 1700. Iranian Women’s Resistance Strategies: Gender, Race, and Sexuality.**

The goal of this course is to explore the formation of both normative and non-normative sexualities within the intertwining of local, national and global social contexts. Using historical and cross-cultural research on gender and sexuality, the course will explore how social forces such as global capitalism, citizenship, nationalism, human rights, securitization, neoliberalism, settler colonialism, tourism, mass media and migration shape and produce desires, sexual identities, sexual labor, sexual practices, bodies and genders.

**GNSS 1520. Latin American Horror.**

Latin American horror film is often overlooked within the world of film studies. This course will delve into the dark and intriguing world of the Latin American horror film genre. We will study Latin American horror cinema considering works across time periods, national contexts, and directors. This course will ask the following questions: How does the genre express individual and national anxieties in the cultural, social, political and economic realms? To what degree does horror film serve as a social barometer that explores, negotiates, and at times relieves social anxieties about difference, identity, sexuality, normativity, repression, technology, the environment, etc.?

**GNSS 1600. Embodying Feminisms/Feminist Embodiments.**

For much of its history, feminism has revolved around and centered on the gendered body, whether in terms of the body contextualized within time, space, and culture; in terms of the mind and body as oppositional forces; in terms of health, reproduction, or representation; or in terms of the body as part of or outside “nature.” This course will examine feminist relationships to the gendered body in terms of various social and historical locations, as well as in relation to disability, queerness, reproduction, and the “natural” and built environment.

**GNSS 1651. Feminist Theory and Critiques of Capitalism.**

Feminist theory has long been a central site of critique of the excesses and inequalities of capitalist modes of production and social relations, whether calling for reform or theorizing a revolution. In this course, we will examine feminist critiques of capitalism, focusing in particular on questions of labor, housework and reproduction, property, and the experiences of sexuality and pleasure. We will attend first to Marxist (and anti-Marxist) feminist theory before turning to feminist critique of capitalism in the contemporary era marked by biopolitics and neoliberal government. Finally, we will consider (feminist) alternatives to capitalism and examine the possibilities for post-capitalist politics.

**GNSS 1700. Iranian Women’s Resistance Strategies: Gender Discrimination and the Law Since 1979.**

After the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, the new government targeted women’s legal rights in the name of Islam. Family Law, Criminal Law, and even Constitutional Law were designed or amended in ways that imposed gender discriminations on Iranian women’s public and private lives. Iranian women from both secular and religious backgrounds have employed diverse strategies to resist these laws. Students will learn about the rules and regulations imposed on Iranian women and also the creative and innovative ways through which they overcome these discriminatory laws. Enrollment limited to 20.

**GNSS 1710. Sex and the Law: Strange Bedfellows.**

This class will examine legal debates about sexual activity and sexual speech generated by alternate, incompatible views of the source and function of laws and the role of the legal system in enforcing moral codes. We will look at works that see the law as given by God, later natural law traditions intended to enforce a common morality, and texts that see law as a human construct. Not open to first year students.
GNSS 1711. Speech and Silence, Trust and Fear: A Feminist Philosophical Inquiry into Sex Equality
This seminar examines problems that arise in marriage from the failures of couples to speak to each other, and when they do, from their failures to speak openly, honestly, and from a position of social equality. We examine from a metaphysical and moral perspective the agency in men and women as it is reflected in what couples say and think. We look at whether marriages fail when women consciously choose or unconsciously fall into oppressive, subordinate postures and examine whether men take advantage of these postures. Class materials will be primarily novels and films, supplemented with philosophical, sociological, and legal essays.

GNSS 1712. Issues for Feminism in Ethics.
This seminar will examine some of the issues that seem to change the focus of the ethical when considered against a background of feminist values. The class will not attempt to examine all possible issues which should be addressed by the values of feminism, but will look at some which are relevant today and/or in which going forward feminist values appear to be at risk. We will examine issues in Consensual and Nonconsensual Sex; Honor Killing; Erotic Speech, Art and Pornography; Birth Control and Abortion; the Ethics of Care vs. Duty; Freedom and Risk in marriage and long-term committed partnerships.

GNSS 1720. Technologies of and the Body: Mediated Visions.
The relationship between body and machinery, technology and biology is often thought in terms of the mechanical doll, the animated robot and other hybrid figures. Science fiction films for example offer double visions of the gendered body: women are masters/slaves of the technology and still symbolic bodies of biological surviving of the human species. We will explore mediated visions in films and other media of different kinds spanning a bridge between SciFi-films and performance art. We will also study theoretical texts (Donna Haraway et al.) on the problem of the merging of technology and body.

GNSS 1721. Cinema's Bodies.
The course explores the cinematic construction of bodies – female, male, animal, and other. Cinematic bodies do not stand alone as they are framed, cut, exposed, veiled, enlarged, distorted, and gendered. The body is screened and composed into an image of beauty, of death, of sex, of work. Cinematic devices like the close-up, camera angle, light are transform bodies into the body of the film and its specific style. This leads to the question of the spectator’s body as a screen for the filmic body and to theoretical explorations of the embodied visions cinema entails and stimulates.

GNSS 1810. Independent Study and Research.
Independent reading and research for upper-level students under the direction of a faculty member. Please check Banner for the correct section number and CRN to use when registering for this course.

GNSS 1820. Independent Study and Research.
Independent reading and research for upper-level students under the direction of a faculty member. Please check Banner for the correct section number and CRN to use when registering for this course.

GNSS 1960C. Gender, Sexuality, and Science.
Examines how American and European science has naturalized differences in the human body and gendered the natural world from the seventeenth through the twenty-first centuries. Will consider historical changes in the scientific study of sex, gender, race, and sexuality, as well as the participation of men and women in scientific work. First-year students require an instructor override to register.

GNSS 1960D. Feminist Theory/Feminist Activism.
Some complain that feminist theory is “too academic”, that it has no ties to social justice or activism. On the other hand, there are those in the academy who accuse gender/women’s studies of not being sufficiently academic, of not being intellectually rigorous. With those two stereotypes in mind, we will read a variety of feminist theorists, some generally thought of as “academic”, and some generally seen as “activist”. Can academic theory be useful to political and social activists? Can activism inform academic theorizing? Prerequisite: one theory course, one gender and sexuality studies course, or permission of instructor.

GNSS 1960E. Advanced Feminist Theory.
Feminism and Poststructuralism are two major theoretical approaches to the understanding of society, politics, and culture. What do they have in common? Where do they part company? We’ll examine their views on agency, the subject, language, and materiality; and their engagements in the “cultural wars.” Readings include Butler, Deleuze, Derrida, Irigaray, Kristeva.

GNSS 1960K. Gender and the Modernist Self.
Are women more modern than men? In the early decades of the twentieth century it may have seemed so, for in these years the figure of woman came to stand as emblematic for modernity itself. In this course, we will read the literature of the turn-of-the-century (including Ibsen's A Doll's House, Grant Allen's The Typewriter Girl, Freud's Dora, Woolf's A Room of One's Own and To the Lighthouse) alongside the sociology, psychology, and philosophy from the same period to see how exaggerated portraits of hyper-modern women came to seem descriptive of a new, twentieth-century version of selfhood. Enrollment limited to 20.

States kill: law enforcement officers kill to protect innocent victims and the military kills to protect the nation. This seminar explores the constitutive relation between law and violence. Since the rise of modern statehood, sovereignty depends on the ability of a state to hold monopoly over the legitimate use of violence and thus enforce its order. But without law, bare violence is incapable of establishing order, in the absence of order there is no sovereignty. Without violence law has no enforcement power, in the absence of a coercive obligation, there is no law. Enrollment limited to 20. First year students require instructor permission.

Scientific inquiry is often considered an endeavor pursued using one’s sense of vision: researchers peer into microscopes and telescopes and stare at graphs, diagrams, and computer screens. But on what other senses do scientists rely? Do they also gather evidence using senses of smell, taste, hearing, and touch? This course combines readings in the history, philosophy, and anthropology of science with primary sources to address questions such as: why non-visual senses historically have been devalued in the sciences, what a sensuous approach to scientific practice might be, and how attention to sensory epistemologies could contribute to feminist science studies. Enrollment limited to 20. First year students require instructor permission.

GNSS 1960N. Theories and Politics of Sexual Consent.
What is sexual consent good for? Does the language of sexual consent facilitate useful ethical interrogation? Or does it neutralize any worthwhile inquiry into power inequalities? This course interrogates sexual consent through surveying political theory texts, legal and feminist legal scholarship, studies in sex and gender, court cases, and literature. We query how and to what effect the idea of consent organizes sexual politics and politicizes sex. We first consider consent in legal and political discourse; we next turn to modern theories and doctrines of sexual consent; we then explore case studies. The last weeks focus on youth. Enrollment limited to 20. Instructor permission required.

GNSS 1960O. Desiring the Nation: Gender and Nationalism in South Asia.
Examines the development and afterlives of nationalisms in South Asia to consider the attachments that tie citizens and subjects to the nation and to one another. What are the political, personal, and ideological commitments that allow or prevent individuals from belonging to the nation? Beginning with early 20th century anticolonialism, this seminar explores the constitutive relation between law and violence. Since the rise of modern statehood, sovereignty depends on the ability of a state to hold monopoly over the legitimate use of violence and thus enforce its order. But without law, bare violence is incapable of establishing order, in the absence of order there is no law. Enrollment limited to 20. First year students require instructor permission.
GNSS 1960P. Post-Colonial Technoscience and the Body.
This seminar examines the intersections of race, gender, culture, and sexuality with science and technology in colonial and post-colonial contexts. How is the body a site of contestation for power enacted through medical, scientific, or technological interventions? What are the social and historical dimensions of such encounters between the global North and South? Drawing on colonial-era primary sources and accounts by science studies scholars, post-colonial theorists, historians, and anthropologists, we analyze how the uneven flow of technoscientific experts, practices, objects, and knowledge reconfigures and transforms bodies, selves, and societies. The course’s geographic focus is sub-Saharan Africa. Enrollment limited to 20.

GNSS 1960Q. On Love and Intimacy.
Love and Intimacy are terms that have a lot of cultural cache. In this course, we will analyze the ways in which intimacy has been embedded within certain discourses of privacy, rights, and individuality. In addition to the couple form, we will examine friendship, celibacy, therapy and relationships people form with pets and with objects to flesh out intimacy’s multiplicities to see how these forces impact these affective tides. This course will bring together history, critical theory, and film to think through various expressions of intimacy and what it means to relate to the other. Enrollment limited to 20.

Through screenings and transdisciplinary readings, this film-philosophy seminar explores concepts of time, affect, death and subjectivity. We will examine the cinema’s capacity to convey events and experiences of twentieth and twentieth-first century history. Philosopher Gilles Deleuze echoes Shakespeare: “The time is out of joint.” What can this mean for cinema, thought and life? What is a ‘time-image’ and can filmic images of time reveal or heal past wounds, those scars that haunt all time to come? How does an image conceal or expose time? How do such images respond to intimate experiences, and even shape politics, history and cultural memory? Enrollment limited to 20.

GNSS 1960S. Media and Modern Childhood.
Will explore a range of key themes in children’s media and material culture since the nineteenth century. Through readings, screenings, and the close analysis of media objects themselves (including books, toys, film, television, and digital media), the class will investigate a variety of constructions of and attitudes toward children as they are visible in these cultural forms. Will explore several methodological approaches to studying children’s media, and will observe how particular values, economic and political interests, and assumptions about childhood are encouraged, discouraged, and variously position children as consumers, active agents, citizens and cultural participants. Enrollment limited to 20.

GNSS 1960T. Commodity Fetishism: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives.
This course will provide an introduction to critical theory focusing on Marx’s mature analysis of capitalism as a social formation founded on the fetishism of commodities. Our examination of this analysis will serve as a point of departure for a wider discussion of the relationship between Marxist and other methodologies and modes of critique, including feminist theory, deconstruction and psychoanalysis. In addition, we will consider the contemporary relevance and implications of Marx’s conception of commodity fetishism from different disciplinary perspectives, including anthropology, aesthetics, postcolonial criticism and the philosophy of law. Enrollment limited to 20.

Focuses on cinematic production and media culture in mainland China since the late 1970s. How was cinema reinvented beyond the conventions of socialist realism? How did cinema transform itself as a result of its intersections with other forms of media, such as television, cassette and video tape, video games and the internet? What does this mediascape tell us about the society of post-Mao China? How do we not only “see,” but also “listen to” post-Mao culture? Examines films ranging from 1980s experimental and entertainment films to more recent documentaries, as well as gaming and internet culture-inspired video art. Enrollment limited to 20.

GNSS 1960V. The Communist Experience in Eastern Europe: Genres of Interpretation.
Almost twenty-five years after the disintegration of the communist regimes across Eastern Europe, the question of how to remember the communist experience is highly contested. This interdisciplinary course highlights the complexities of the collective memory of communism, which fluctuates between attempts to come to terms with communist crimes and tendencies to idealize state socialism. Focusing on a range of issues—such as nostalgia, consumer culture, sexuality, gender, violence, the legacy of repression, and attempts at transitional justice—we will explore the nature of communist and post-communist realities by discussing scholarly studies and weekly screenings of full-length feature and documentary films. Enrollment limited to 20.

GNSS 1960W. Fiction/Addiction.
In eighteenth-century Britain, the rise of global mercantilist capitalism coincided with the novel’s consolidation as a cultural form. Each in its own way poses questions about habit and volition: do we control what we consume, or does what we consume control us? This course explores aspects of narrative form and character representation in the early English novel with relation to the cultural history of addiction. To anchor our approach to 18th-century fiction (Defoe, Haywood, Lennox, Burney, Edgeworth), we will investigate discussions of appetite, reason, motivation, and compulsion in philosophy and critical theory (Plato, Locke, Johnson, Foucault, Derrida, Sedgwick, Gallagher).

This course introduces undergraduate students to the central themes and debates in the vibrant history of color from antiquity through the present. While we focus on color in modern and contemporary visual art, design, and media, we begin with the premise that color—like the feminine—has long been subordinated and marginalized as the “Other” within Western culture. We will challenge this assumption using an interdisciplinary approach rooted in feminism, art, visual studies, film theory, fashion, and education. Through descriptive writing, responses to critical texts, and subjective encounters with color in art and culture, students learn the fundamental paradoxes and properties of color.

This course interrogates how psychoanalysis understands the relation between the sexuated body, femininity, knowledge, and desire. We will read texts at the intersection of literature and film, feminist studies, continental philosophy, and postcolonial studies to consider the specific challenges that feminism poses for psychoanalysis, particularly an international feminism that is attentive to class, race, and history. Readings will include texts by Freud, Lacan, Beauvoir, Irigaray, Gallop, Rose, Cornell, Spivak, and Djebar. Films could include: “A Dangerous Method” (Dir. John Kerr), “Her” (Dir. Spike Jonze), and “Fire” (Dir. Deepa Mehta).

How does feminist art help us think through the matter of abstraction? How does feminism’s emphasis on the social constructiveness of needs, desires, bodies, and subjectivities affect - and resist - the terms of not only formal abstraction but also economic and political abstraction? This course considers the influence of feminist theories and practices in the arts, especially their impact upon debates about abstraction versus representation, formalism versus realism. We begin with feminist art in the 1960’s, and proceed to the recent resurgence of abstraction in contemporary art alongside analyses of an ever more abstracted world of capital.

GNSS 1961B. Queer Discipleship.
“Queer theory” names both a set of reading practices and a series of reflections on the dangers, and the possibilities, of being taught. This course will pair fictions of discipleship with recent queer accounts of why we read and what we read for. As we encounter a range of leaders and followers, fans and teen idols, bad teachers and impressive students, we will attend to the place of queer discipleship in the discipline of queer theory. Students will gain familiarity with this discipline’s history and methods, as well as a critical vocabulary for the analysis of modern cultural forms.
GNSS 1961C. Radical Italian Feminisms and the Contemporary Politics of Refusal.
This course will assess 1970’s and 80’s radical Italian feminism as a blueprint for a new kind of networked and bodily-oriented form of political resistance. Often overlooked in favor of the French and American feminist traditions, the Italian militant tradition, a development within the workers’ movement, has recently come to be recognized as a repository of innovative tactical and theoretical responses to various forms and imprints of contemporary domination. It has clear resonances within revolutionary contestation and the politics of refusal today. Thus, the course seeks to assess the implications of radical Italian feminist movements for contemporary resistance.

States claim to benefit the people they represent. But the relationship between the state and the people is not always a happy one, nor devoid of conflict and violence. In this course, we will examine the conditions of state power and forms of resistance to it. We will explore these questions through a wide range of literature from Sophocles’ Antigone to Martin Luther King’s Letter from Birmingham Jail. Different examples of resistance around the world will be considered including anticolonial resistance, hunger strikes, conscientious objection, the civil rights movement in the US, and on women’s agency in shaping these movements.

GNSS 1961E. Feminist Freedoms.
Because feminism understands itself to be fundamentally concerned with increasing liberty, specifically of women, this course will focus on the theme of freedom. We will consider 1) what it means to be a free political actor, 2) whether freedom is the highest political good, 3) whether, and how, freedom is compatible with other values, and 4) how different forms of government and political structures contribute to, or detract from, attempts to increase freedom. We will read contemporary works from a range of genres that ask what it means to exist on the ‘margins’ of politics, where freedom seems most tenuous.

American literary regionalism ushered in new stylistic forms focused on characters, dialect, customs, topography, and other features particular to specific regions. This “local color writing” emerged, in part, as a response to the rapid growth and changing face of an industrializing nation. This course positions itself at the center of this tense moment in America’s history, reading works that pursue both diverse regional and ethnic interests. In particular, we will primarily read women authors and critics to focus on how gender and sexuality intersect with race as it relates to the question nation (re)building.

GNSS 1961G. Framing Gender in Middle Eastern Cinema.
This course examines how gender is framed in Middle Eastern cinema. Through weekly readings in film theory and culture, in-class discussion, and written and oral assignments, students will learn not only how to analyze cinema but also about gender in the modern and contemporary Middle East more generally. Most weeks students will also attend the screening of a film dealing in some way with gender in the Middle East. We will watch films from or about: Iran, Afghanistan, Egypt, Tunisia, Palestine, Israel, Iraq, Lebanon, and Canada.

Did you know that Robinson Crusoe was critical for the drafting of the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”? Or that autobiography has been a literary genre crucial for the articulation and propagation of both human and civil rights? Through a study of the relationship between human rights and literature, this course will explore forms of writing that enable the legal protocols, proceedings, and predicaments that make up human rights discourse. We will pair key human rights documents with literary and cinematic works that inspire and question the universal ideals of the law.

GNSS 1961I. Global America: Gender, Empire, and Internationalism Since 1890.
This course explores the cultural history of America’s relationship to the world across the twentieth century with particular attention to ideas about gender and sexuality. We will locate U.S. culture and politics within an international dynamic, exposing the interrelatedness of domestic and foreign affairs. While exploring specific geopolitical events like the Spanish-American War, World War I and II, and the Global Cold War, this course emphasizes the political importance of culture and ideology rather than offering a formal overview of U.S. foreign policy. This course analyzes the processes through which Americans come to think and feel particular ways about the world.

How does what makes us laugh position us, either as audience or collaborator? What do comedy and performance have to show us about identity formation in relation to race, class, and gender? How might laughter—as release, as physical expression, as indicator of one’s interior life, or as protest—help us understand aesthetic, thematic, rhetorical, and political aspects of African American literature? This course centers on the development of African American literature throughout the twentieth century—including the role of Black literature in society; the intersections of race, class, and gender; slavery’s afterlives; the historical novel; and the role of humor in community formation.

GNSS 1961K. Art Against Empire: Aesthetics of the “New Man” circa 1968.
This course charts dissident aesthetic practices and theories that emerged along multiple transnational axes in the “long 1960s” under the banner of anti-imperialism. Organized from a global perspective, this class considers the contributions and collaborations of radical and militant artists, filmmakers, and thinkers in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Our primary concern will be to analyze the masculinist dynamics of these movements. Above all, we will examine the deeply entrenched conceptions of gender and sexuality that frequently determined who could be seen on the front lines of these struggles, whether on the ground or in the field of representations.

GNSS 1961L. Postcolonial Horror: Political Specters in Non-Western Literature and Film.
This course explores the genre of “postcolonial horror” in contemporary non-Western literature. How are world writers and filmmakers utilizing elements of horror—including shock, supernaturalism, gore, and psychological realism—to derange viewers’ relationships to everyday life? Can horror capture controversial themes like war, genocide, and human rights crimes without exploiting violence? Or does horror merely objectify human suffering to reproduce sexist, racist, homophobic, and xenophobic stereotypes? We will take a transnational, decolonial feminist approach to supernatural motifs, including ghosts, zombies, aliens, witches, vampires, demons, and psychopaths, in films and fiction from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and South Asia.

GNSS 1961M. Humanity or Nah? Blackness, Gender, Resistance, and Memory in Monuments, Maps, and Archives.
This course explores the liberatory archaeologies of racialized, gendered, and sexual memory(-ies) articulated by Xicannx, Latinx, Native American, and Africana scholars, artists, activists, and cultural workers that resist regimes of antiblackness, colonialism, and white supremacy. Students will engage scholarly and artistic works that exemplify how Blackness rejects, while simultaneously marking in many ways, the limits and logic of gender and sexuality, exposing the colonial underpinnings of “Man” and modern ideas of “human.” This course focuses on monuments, maps, and archives as three distinct sites where antiblackness, colonialism, and white supremacy are both sanctioned and defied in the public sphere.
This course investigates the interrelation between pedagogy, sexuality, and violence. It seeks to investigate the classroom as a site of violent interaction and a potentially sexualized space. Appraising the erotic dimension of the production and transmission of knowledge, the course will critically trace a discourse of the utmost actuality and relevance: from campus rape culture, via the prominent question of consent, through current debates around Title IX, the connection between learning and sex marks a highly problematic dimension of our academic environments deserving of scholarly attentiveness and critical scrutiny.

GNSS 1961O. Masquerade as Critique.
Critique is most often figured as an act that reveals a reality that was previously hidden, as though one were pulling back a curtain or lifting a veil. But, as the critic Craig Owens points out, “in a culture in which visibility is always on the side of the male, invisibility on the side of the female…are not the activities of unveiling, stripping, laying bare…unmistakably male prerogatives”? This seminar develops an alternate genealogy of critique informed by feminist and queer of color perspectives. It eschews the modernist drive toward transparency, instead examining masquerade, mimicry, code-switching, duplicity, fugitivity, passing, and appropriation.

This course critically engages with the meaning and making of African Diaspora literature by examining a range of novels, poetry, and memoirs, as well as theoretical texts. Part of the work of this course will be to examine the genre of Afro-diasporic literature. What does it mean to belong to a diaspora? How do writers from across the diaspora communicate with one another? What unexpected models of sociality and community does this literature produce? How do writers engage with one another across national boundaries? Our discussions will delve into themes of opacity, entanglement, identity, race, gender, and sexuality.

Independent research under the direction of a faculty member, leading to a thesis. Required of honors candidates. Open to seniors only. Instructor permission required.

Independent research under the direction of a faculty member, leading to a thesis. Required of honors candidates. Open to seniors only. Instructor permission required.

GNSS 1990. Senior Seminar.
A research seminar focusing on the research and writing of the participants. Required of senior concentrators; open to other advanced students by permission.

Gender and Sexuality Studies is by its very nature transdisciplinary. Can we speak of a single methodology that ties GNSS together? How might scholars work on gender and/or sexuality while respecting disciplinary boundaries and training? We will start with the premise that studies in gender and sexuality are tied together by critique that questions foundational assumptions and takes account of its own position within a given field of knowledge. By studying canonical theoretical texts alongside disciplinary studies characterized by a feminist and/or queer focus, we will investigate how critique operates and how standards of evidence are marshaled in particular disciplines.

GNSS 2010D. The Power and Mystery of Expertise.

GNSS 2010E. Pembroke Research Seminar: The Question of Consent.
No description available. Instructor's permission required.
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Helvética was used instead of Arial.
The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.