

Women's Studies Program

MINOR IN  
**WOMEN'S STUDIES**

**OVERVIEW**

The Women's Studies program at Lewis University is designed to promote an understanding and appreciation of women in contemporary society, as well as gender-related issues. The Women's Studies program encourages students to develop skills for addressing the conditions leading to social injustices in their own personal lives and in the workplace, and in society.

As an interdisciplinary endeavor, Women's Studies integrates knowledge across traditional academic boundaries. It examines the effects of gender on cultural, political, and personal experience, transforming intellectual inquiry by utilizing diverse women's experiences as the roots of that inquiry. Both men and women are encouraged to participate in the Women's Studies program.

**OBJECTIVES**

Cultural assumptions about gender (in addition to other factors such as race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, and economic status) influence the development of both personal identity and public roles. The Women's Studies minor provides a structure in which issues of gender and their interaction with other elements of identity important to both women's and men's lives can be studied in a concentrated and comprehensive fashion, illuminating and enhancing a student's major course of study. This intellectual structure addresses gender-related issues through coursework in literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, other humanities disciplines, and athletics. Each student's program of study is developed with the advice and consent of the program director.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

The Women's Studies program provides:

- Further development of critical thinking skills through interdisciplinary coursework;
- An additional perspective to any educational discipline: students can incorporate an emphasis on Women's Studies into any program of study at Lewis or take elective courses that interest them;
- Extracurricular events related to women's and gender issues;
- Workshops of relevance and importance to women as well as men who care about the women in their lives.

According to *Women's Studies Graduates: The First Generation* by Barbara F. Luebke and Mary Ellen Reilly (1995), a degree and/or coursework prepares students for careers in a wide range of fields including education, business, health and human services, law and government, as well as environmental and nonprofit sectors. Furthermore, graduates also commonly identified the following personal and educational outcomes from a Women's Studies degree:

- Being empowered
- Developing self-confidence
- Learning to think critically
- Understanding differences
- Discovering the intersections among racism, ethnicity, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression.

### ALUMNI

Recent Lewis graduate and women's studies minor Sarah Gura is the program coordinator for Groundwork, a domestic violence program through the Guardian Angel Home, a shelter for physically and sexually abused women.

Courses in Women's Studies enabled Gura to expand her intellectual scope of women's experiences and their impact on society, and also helped her to better "approach the societal macro-level issues that women face" in her job duties. She often refers to women's studies literature while training her staff members, counselors or interns.

"Feminism is not sexism," she says of the generalization women's studies faces, but rather "the ideology that provides equality between the sexes."

"Women make up more than 50 percent of the population," she adds. "Women's issues are societal issues, and acknowledging women's experiences and their contributions is acknowledging humanity."

### CONTACT

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### MINOR/WOMEN'S STUDIES

Minor Credit Hours: 18

Courses and workshops which fulfill the requirements of the minor are listed together in each semester's course schedule under Women's Studies or at [www.lewisu.edu/academics/womenstudies/courses.htm](http://www.lewisu.edu/academics/womenstudies/courses.htm).

#### I. Core Courses (6)

- 20-108 Introduction to Women's Studies (3)  
(*Ethnic and Cultural Studies-Sociology discipline*)
- 20-388 Women's Studies Capstone Seminar (3)  
(*Ethnic and Cultural Studies-Sociology discipline*)

#### II. Foundational Courses (Choose two) (6)

- 09-338 American Women's History (3)  
(*History discipline*)
- 18-364 Feminist Political Thought (3)  
(*Political Science discipline*)
- 26-240 Psychology of Women (3)  
(*Psychology discipline*)
- 20-370 Sociology of Gender (3)  
(*Sociology discipline*)

#### III. Choose two electives (6)

- It is required that at least one of the electives be from English, History, Philosophy OR Theology.
- It is *strongly recommended* that at least one elective focus substantially on non-Western, Third World or minority United States women.
- The two electives should be taken from different disciplines.
- Students may use three, one-credit workshops to replace *one*, three-credit elective course. Workshops are offered periodically throughout the semester.
- Minors must have completed the Introduction to Women's Studies course, as well as the four other courses in the minor *before* (although two courses may be taken *concurrently with*) the Women's Studies Capstone Seminar.