

# Women's and Gender Studies

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*Master of Arts*

## For More Information

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The mission of the Center for Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies (CWGS) at The University of Texas at Austin is to promote research, teaching, and learning that centers the categories of gender and sexuality, recognizing that experiences of gender and sexuality are also inextricable from race, nationality, caste, disability, and socio-economic class. Through rigorous intersectional and feminist scholarship, decolonial and feminist teaching, and creative and public-facing programming, we seek to articulate, analyze, and critique relationships among gender, sexuality, power, knowledge, oppression, and liberation. We seek to be an international resource for research, teaching, and learning, cultivating intellectual spaces where students, faculty, and community can produce and proliferate knowledge about gender and sexuality that will create a more equitable and just world.

Our areas of expertise include: feminist theory; intersectional feminisms; LGBTQ+ studies; disability studies; the history, culture and socio-political processes of genders and sexualities; and the transnational politics of gender and sexuality (including transnational Black and indigenous feminisms, feminisms of the global South, and gender and migration). We are committed in all aspects of our work to anti-racist and queer feminisms.

Within CWGS, the LGBTQ Studies Program contributes to campus-wide resources for an LGBTQ-friendly and gender-inclusive campus. Central to our mission is the affirmation of queer and trans students, faculty, and staff including people of color, undocumented people, Indigenous peoples, disabled people, and people with multiple marginalized identities – as well as a commitment to engaging with queer and trans scholarship, including critical race scholarship, disability studies, Indigenous studies, and other interconnected critical frameworks.

## Facilities for Graduate Work

The Center for Women's and Gender Studies, which administers the master's degree program in women's and gender studies, is a campus-wide interdisciplinary program with almost three hundred affiliated faculty members from almost all colleges and schools. The center hosts a major lecture series or scholarly conference each year and its annual Emerging Scholarship in Women's and Gender Studies Conference in which graduate and undergraduate students present their work.

The University offers several unique resources for interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research in women's and gender studies. Students and faculty have the support and collaboration of a dedicated Women's and Gender Studies/LGBTQ Studies Librarian at the University Libraries. The Harry Ransom Center includes celebrated rare book and manuscript collections in American and modern literature, including

letters by Radclyffe Hall and the papers of Una Troubridge; papers of twentieth-century authors including Anne Sexton and Julia Alvarez; papers, including diaries and recipes, reflecting women's daily life; artwork, including Frida Kahlo's Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird (1940), as well as the photographs of Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron; and more, as reflected on the HRC's Women's Studies area guide. The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection is one of the world's great collections of materials in Latin American, Mexican American, and Latino studies. Archival collections at the Benson include the materials of queer Chicana feminist author Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Texan author of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*; letters of Nobel-prize winning Chilean author and diplomat Gabriela Mistral; materials of internationally-renowned Austin musician Tish Hinojosa; and the papers of the National Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization. The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History holds the largest collection of extant historical manuscripts dealing with Texas, including the Black Texas Women Archive of materials and oral histories gathered by Austin-based historian Ruthe Winegarten; the papers of Frances (Sissy) Tarlton Farenthold, Texas-based international advocate for human rights who visited Greenham Commons and was nominated to be the Democratic candidate for the US vice presidency; the Lesbian Issues Collection of journals (1975-1991) and two letters by Rita Mae Brown; and the papers of various Austin and Texas feminist and women's organizations including the Center for Women's and Gender Studies and the Austin Chapter of the National Organization for Women. Various locations in the University Libraries house microfilm sets of archival collections of advocates and organizations, including those of feminist organizing in Brazil, diaries of regional groups of women in the nineteenth century, Eleanor Roosevelt, Margaret Sanger, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The University Libraries developed the Black Queer Studies Collection, a virtual collection that makes visible the libraries' substantial holdings in black diasporic queer materials. The [Women's and Gender/LGBTQ Studies Librarian](#) provides additional information about women's studies holdings.

Convenient to the University are other research facilities, including the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, the Texas State Library and Archives, and the Austin History Center. The Austin History Center houses archives of local advocates and organizations, including the Texas Statewide Queer People of Color Organization, and has research guides for materials on women's resources, African American sources, Asian American sources, Mexican American sources, and more.

## Areas of Study

Women's and gender studies comprises research or creative work that raises new questions, formulates theories, or carries out empirical investigations that further understanding of science, social science, history, the humanities and arts, education, public and social policy, and paradigms of knowledge in applied and professional fields in such a way that women and gender systems are brought to the center of scholarship. Students pursue disciplinary and interdisciplinary research or creative work that prepares them for research or professional careers in which knowledge about women, gender, and sexuality is crucial. Students who complete the program graduate with a greater understanding of the field of women's and gender studies; an understanding of and commitment to resisting interlocking oppressions; critical knowledge of women's human rights; and scholarly connections to the center's faculty. The master's degree in women's and gender studies is excellent preparation for further training in public policy, social work, health care, education, the arts, technology, and business. It also prepares graduates to pursue doctoral work in a traditional discipline or in women's and gender studies at another institution.

The Center for Women's & Gender Studies offers the Master of Arts degree, two [dual degree](#) master's programs, and a graduate [portfolio](#) program.

## Graduate Studies Committee

The following faculty members served on the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) in the spring 2023 semester.

The GSC Committee list was not available at publication time; please check directly with the department for an up-to-date list.

## Admission Requirements

An admission committee composed of Graduate Studies Committee members evaluates all applications. The committee seeks to admit a small, dynamic group of students who will make a difference in the community, both in and outside of academia. The limited size of the incoming cohort allows the program to provide each student with personal attention and fosters a sense of community among students and faculty members.

The Admissions Committee looks for candidates with an understanding of women's and gender studies as a field, commitment to antiracist feminist practice, a strong academic background, and a clear sense of the topics or areas they wish to pursue during the two-year master's degree. The Center for Women's and Gender Studies depends on students to be activists and leaders in the community. The Admissions Committee also looks for students who will not only attend class but also attend workshops and conferences, form organizations, volunteer, and participate in extracurricular activities.

A complete list of required application materials is published by the [Center for Women's and Gender Studies](#).

## Graduate Portfolio Program

The women's and gender studies graduate portfolio program is open to all graduate students at The University of Texas at Austin. It offers graduate students from all disciplines an opportunity to incorporate women's and gender studies into their degree programs. Students may enter the program at any point in their graduate work, but it is recommended that they do so as soon as they decide to pursue the portfolio.

The program builds upon the Center's rich and broad-based expertise across disciplines and colleges/schools. Portfolio students develop a specialization unique to their own program of work through women's and gender studies courses, scholarly papers, and presentations.

Once all portfolio requirements are completed and the student's graduate degree is awarded, their official University transcript will indicate completion of the graduate portfolio in women's and gender studies.

In addition, interested students may receive an in-house certificate for the "WGS Portfolio Program with LGBTQ/Sexualities Track" by taking courses identified as having LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) studies content. This list of courses is known as the "Pink Book," and is published on the Women's and Gender Studies website.

Requirements and application information are available [online](#).

## Graduate Seminar Courses

The Center for Women's and Gender Studies offers an interdisciplinary program that focuses on understanding women's experiences from a variety of perspectives and on the role gender plays in shaping society. The program's large and diverse faculty draws on the scholarship of more than 270 distinguished faculty members from twenty-nine

departments and 14 colleges and schools. Women's and Gender Studies 393, *Seminar: Topics in Women's and Gender Studies*, provides access to cutting-edge scholarship from multiple perspectives by offering topics from nearly every graduate discipline. The program's faculty affiliates offer as many as thirty different seminar classes every semester.