



Department of Gender and Women's Studies Undergraduate Learning Outcomes

The Department of Gender and Women's Studies at UW-Madison endorses University of Wisconsin-Madison essential learning outcomes (<http://www.learning.wisc.edu/welo2010.pdf>). Drawing on the University's essential learning outcomes, we have developed specific learning outcomes for our undergraduate majors.

The following outcomes are cultivated through the structure of our major requirements. Foundational concepts such as gender and intersectionality are introduced in our introductory courses, and reinforced throughout the major requirements. Students expand their knowledge by fulfilling major requirements that encourage exploration of diverse research approaches (humanities, social science and health) and issue areas within the interdisciplinary field of gender and women's studies (including race/ethnicity, disability and embodiment, sexuality and global processes). A required feminist theory course ensures that students can apply feminist theory. Individual courses offer students opportunities to develop a variety of intellectual and practical skills that are building blocks to career advancement, such as problem-solving, research, critical thinking, and effective oral and written communication and collaboration. The social justice focus of the major prepares students especially well in the areas of personal and social responsibility. Our internship and capstone courses, generally taken in a student's final year, are designed to foster advanced, integrative learning that prepares students for the workforce. The research track option of the major offers students a foundation for future graduate studies.

Knowledge *focused* by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

- *Gender*. Understand the concept of gender as an identity and an institution along its multiple dimensions (cultural, social, political, economic) and how gender informs power relations.
- *Intersectionality*. Recognize how gender intersects with other axes of inequality, such as race, class, disability status, sexuality, gender expression, nationality, geography and age. Identify the difference between intersectional and universalist understandings of gender.
- *Feminist theory*. Apply feminist theoretical approaches, both national and international.
- *Class*. Recognize the role of economic inequalities in creating material and cultural differences in the US and other national contexts and their gendered implications.
- *Race/Ethnicity*. Understand the role of race/ethnicity as a tool of creating, identifying, materializing, and solidifying human difference and its relationship to gender.
- *Global Processes*. Appreciate historical, political, cultural and socio-economic influences on gender relations in global context. Understand global dimensions of gender inequality, including hierarchies among women within and across nations. Identify gendered dynamics of globalization in historical or contemporary contexts.

- *Sexuality*. Understand that sexuality is not a natural or self-evident attribute or category and that sexuality assumes a variety of culturally specific and contested meanings.
- *Disability & Embodiment*. Understand the creation and evolution of different categories of embodiment and the experience of living through and as bodies.
- *Health and Science*. Identify that health is both a physiological and a socio-cultural experience, and recognize ways in which gender and other axes of social inequality influence health. Develop critical tools to place the medical field, scientific research, and public health and policy organizations into social contexts, and recognize how these institutions both can reflect and perpetuate dominant ideologies. Learn about feminist approaches to—and histories of—science, medicine, and health activism.
- *Contemporary and Historical Issues*. Gain familiarity with a variety of issue areas in which gender is important, both historically and today, in national and transnational spheres. These include but are not limited to: health, the body, science, politics, citizenship, feminism, activism, labor, history, media, language, literature and the arts.

Intellectual and Practical Skills *practiced extensively*, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.

- *Problem solving*. Identify important historical and contemporary issues relating to gender and women's studies, evaluate responses to them, and adapt the knowledge gained through this process to everyday situations.
- *Research and inquiry*. Identify a problem related to gender and women's studies. Produce or locate resources and learn to build a research agenda. Read broadly in order to develop well-focused projects, using primary and secondary sources. Delineate key points in scholarly articles and respond to them. Use different modes of research, including empirical methods, scholarly literature, and theoretical and artistic engagement. Develop advanced library skills tailored to specific research projects, including facility with electronic databases, bibliographic reference materials, archival documents, and image and sound repositories. Evaluate resources for their reliability.
- *Interdisciplinarity*. Engage in interdisciplinary inquiry and research and understand the strengths and limits of interdisciplinarity.
- *Critical thinking*. Be able to perform critical thinking along four dimensions: critical analysis, in which one can identify and evaluate arguments, rhetorical styles, synthesize ideas, and develop well-substantiated, coherent, and concise arguments; logical reasoning, in which one can identify and follow a logical sequence or argument through to its end and recognize faulty reasoning or premature closure; abstract thinking, in which one can generalize for a specific purpose and/or in a way that clarifies and heightens understanding of major issues at stake, or identifies the essential or most relevant elements of a concept, event, object, text, etc; argumentation, in which one can marshal appropriate and relevant evidence in order to develop a clear claim or stance using specific rhetorical approaches.
- *Writing*. Express ideas effectively in written form, develop sufficient evidence for arguments, and tailor arguments to audience and context.

- *Oral Communication.* Express ideas effectively in verbal form, tailoring arguments and presentation styles to audience and context.
- *Collaboration.* Work collectively, take initiative, offer and receive constructive criticism, exchange ideas and creatively work together toward a common endeavor.
- *Creativity.* Bring together a variety of texts, ideas, theoretical, political, empirical, aesthetic and rhetorical approaches in order to respond imaginatively to a social, political or intellectual issue.
- *Career skills.* Create the building blocks for a career after graduation with all of the above skills.

Personal and Social Responsibility *anchored* through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.

- *Critical self-awareness.* Demonstrate self-reflexivity about one's ideas and social and political positions.
- *Critical social awareness.* Engage critically with social institutions that influence our personal and social lives, such as media, politics, the healthcare system, the economy and education.
- *Ethics.* Apply ethical frameworks, informed by the study of gender, feminism and social justice movements, to address unequal treatment or advantage in a variety of contexts.
- *Engaged Practices.* Link theory with practice. Recognize and advocate for social change at the local, national or transnational level.

Integrative learning, *demonstrated* through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems.

- *Advanced accomplishment.* Demonstrate synthesis of skills acquired and performed in advanced coursework.
- *Application beyond the Gender & Women's Studies classroom.* Apply key Gender and Women's Studies concepts to one's life, activist projects, and to non-Gender and Women's Studies academic coursework.

* In developing these Learning Outcomes our department took inventory of the stated learning outcomes of many Gender and Women's Studies departments and programs in the US. We would like to acknowledge significant inspiration provided by the University of California-Berkeley Department of Gender and Women's Studies.*