

## **Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department Assessment Report**

### **AY 2020-2021**

For the academic year 2020-2021, the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies faculty agreed to assess one of its program learning outcomes by way of one of its upper-level courses. More specifically, program learning outcome #1 was assessed by a WGSS professor utilizing a direct measure of 13 final essay exams (see chart below) submitted by students for the course WGS 325: Feminist Theories, the first upper-level core requirement in the major and in the WILL minor. WGS 325 is a prerequisite for other upper-level core requirements, and may be taken by non-majors/minors who have taken at least one other WGS course.

For reference, program learning outcome #1 reads as follows: *“Demonstrate knowledge of central concepts, terms, distinctions, questions, arguments, and theories in the discipline of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.”*

The chart below lists the most prominent “concepts, terms, distinctions, questions, arguments, and theories” in each of the students’ final papers. Students were free to choose the approach for their papers, within the scope of a course on intersectional and transnational approaches to feminist and queer theory. The number of concepts they chose did not matter per se, but papers that showed the student’s capacity to apply a theory in depth, synthesize or interlink two or more concepts, critique the limitations of a theoretical framework, and extend the implications of a theory were rated higher.

A conventional letter grade scale of A-F was used for the 13 final exam essays (i.e., final papers). The grades were based on the following criteria:

\*B (85%): 1500 word minimum. Coverage of two assigned sources and one optional source from the list. Takes a position, supports that position; well-developed thesis fully supported; sources used effectively to support thesis; independent thinking and active engagement with topic; project shows purpose, direction, strategy; ideas well thought out, reasonably interpreted, well demonstrated from sources, supported by examples.

\*Additional points (above 85%): Additional sources, including primary materials, well integrated into argument. Ideas flexibly developed and fully supported. Avoids unsupported generalizations. Effective focus reaching toward new perspectives. Ideas and sources linked. Detailed understanding of sources. Richly developed central idea.

\*In addition, correctness and clarity in writing style and overall organization (including introduction, conclusion, and transitions) were evaluated.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Concepts, terms, distinctions, questions, arguments, theories (a partial gleaning)</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Paper 1	Sexuality; patriarchy; policing of bodies; gender performativity; postmodernism; binary construction of gender; agency; theory as praxis	B
Paper 2	Queer theory; transnational queer theory; hegemony; trans studies; intersectionality; representation; heteronormativity; social norms; disciplining bodies; panopticon; queer animals; borderlands theory; envisioning new futures	B
Paper 3	Privilege; praxis; cisgender; knowledge production; intersectionality; equity	A-
Paper 4	Privilege; racism; allyship; advocacy; mestiza consciousness; Black feminism	B
Paper 5	Male domination; gendered double standards; gender norms; disciplined bodies; ableism; heteronormativity; choice; intersectionality; queer theory	B-

Paper 6	Borderlands theory; intersectionality; race	A
Paper 7	Ecofeminism; ecowomanism; feminist science studies; transnationality; borderlands theory; indigenous feminisms; patriarchy; epistemology; binary thinking	A
Paper 8	Trans theory; queer theory; intersectionality; transnationality; intersectionality; praxis; visions of possible futures; social, legal, medical contexts; social action	A
Paper 9	Trans studies; trans phobia; queer theory; allyship; activism	B+
Paper 10	Intersectionality; knowledge production; discrimination; diversity	B
Paper 11	Social construction of gender; sexuality; transnationalism; norms; social power; white supremacy; diaspora; policing the body; white gaze; whiteness	A
Paper 12	LGBTQ studies; homophobia; intersectionality; queer theory; gender performativity; patriarchy; masculinity; misogyny	B+
Paper 13	Embodiment; intersectionality; gender performance; queer theory; trans theory; feminist fat studies; gender binary; LGBTQ+ studies; representation; activism	A-

**Results/Reflection:**

In terms of assessing learning outcome #1, the data showed that almost all of the students had a good grasp of a variety of key concepts, terms, questions, arguments, and theories in the discipline, as they were covered both in WGS 325 and in the students' previous course work. With some differences in sophistication among the students, overall they were able to provide competent explanations of one or more theoretical concepts, apply them to issues and situations, analyze issues and concepts, synthesize two or more theoretical frameworks, and create their own theoretical frameworks for social action consistent with key concepts in the course.

The field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is loosely organized, in many ways, around a broad range and ever-expanding constellation of concepts, terms, theories, and the like. As such, and gleaned from our assessment this year, the WGSS Department may in the future build in assessments of LO #1 across our curriculum, from the gateway introductory course through to the senior seminar. Such assessments could provide important opportunities for ensuring that the WGSS curriculum is creating pathways from one year to the next for students to deepen and apply with varying degrees of sophistication their demonstrated knowledge of central concepts, terms, distinctions, questions, arguments, and theories in the discipline of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.