

The WGSS Senior Project – (WGSS 620)

(for students graduating during the 2020-2021 academic year)

Section 1: Overview

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, a successful senior project in this field may take many forms. The project must focus upon issues pertaining to women, gender, feminist, and/or LGBTQ+ communities and draw on feminist and queer theories and methodologies broadly. The WGSS Senior Project will demonstrate the diverse skills students have developed in the WGSS core courses and the student's selected electives across disciplines. In particular, it should reflect the training provided for crafting the senior project proposal in the junior seminar, as well as the analytical and theoretical skills developed in WGSS 100 and 300. The project should serve as an undergraduate research apprenticeship, which will provide an opportunity for students to experience how to go about feminist and/or queer inquiry under the direction of the WGSS faculty.

Goals for the WGSS Senior Project

WGSS students should:

- discover an issue, question, or theoretical problem that they can substantively investigate, and complete in one semester;
- gain a broad understanding of issues pertaining to women, gender, and/or sexuality as they impact the area of inquiry;
- employ relevant feminist and queer theories and methodologies as research tools;
- discover and study relevant primary and secondary sources of feminist, and/or gender, and/or queer theories and criticisms relevant to the project; and
- converse about their discoveries and the overall process coherently and effectively in the oral examination.

Guidelines for Research and Writing the WGSS 620 Senior Project

Though the senior project is customarily a research paper informed by theory, it may also be a research project that incorporates specific data generated by surveys, laboratory work, or field work and/or incorporate creative endeavors. The discipline[s] upon which the student focuses will determine the choice of format and reference system for the project as a whole, and this should be developed in close consultation with the student's Senior Project Advisor.

Section 2: Composing a Senior Project Board and Registering for the Senior Project (WGSS 620)

If a student is a double major, please turn to the guidelines in Section 6.

If a student is majoring exclusively in WGSS:

- The Senior Project is a one-semester research project completed during the semester the student is enrolled in WGSS 620 (4-credit course).

- WGSS 620 may be taken fall or spring semester in the student's senior year, and the student will register for 620 with their Project Advisor, who must be a member of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Steering Committee.
- The Senior Project board will consist of the Project Advisor and a second reader, who should be a current member of the WGSS Steering Committee or a faculty member affiliated with the program.
- As the student begins to formulate the Senior Project proposal, she/he/they should consult with the Project Advisor about theory, methods, and sources specific to the project.

Section 3: The Senior Project Form

All majors (whether a student is a single or double major) must propose a topic for their senior project using the [Senior Project form](#), which is available on the WGSS webpage. Submission of this form is due by 4:00pm the day before spring break, Friday March 13 2020.

Students will be assigned their advisor for the senior project by the WGSS Steering Committee based on faculty research interests and availability. The WGSS Chair will inform students of this assignment by the first week in April.

Section 4: Guidelines for the Senior Project Proposal

A student who is a double major should consult with the other department. Please see Section 6 for more details.

The proposal for the Senior Project should be drafted in consultation with the WGSS Senior Project Advisor. Students may choose to submit their final paper from WGSS 580 to serve as the project proposal.

Due dates for the proposal:

The proposal is due two weeks prior to the last day of classes of the prior semester.

The final proposal will include:

1. The title of the project (See 2a. below)
2. An overview of the topic and/or a research plan. (In the humanities and social sciences, this overview should be approximately three to four pages in length. The research plan for the natural sciences may be shorter);
 - a. Name the project succinctly and clearly. This is descriptive and your goal is to make it clear to someone who has never taken a WGSS course. This means that you cannot rely on your readers understanding what you think of as "basic concepts." Name them precisely.
 - b. Discuss why this is important in/for WGSS. This does not imply that you are doing "groundbreaking" work, but you have to make connections to why Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies as a field will care about the work you are doing.
 - c. Explain the theoretical lens and methodologies that you think will be vital for the completion of your project and why. Theories and methods overlap, so you are not looking for just one, and you should anticipate that this will shift and change as you do your work.

Draw on WGSS 300 and 580, but also look toward the work completed in other courses to assist.

- d. Briefly map out what you think your first, second, and third steps will be, and set up a calendar, working backwards from the submission deadline. Consider what you will complete in two week or four week intervals once you've discussed your project with your first reader(s).
 - e. Senior projects are not just the compilations of 3-4 discrete papers; they require students to make a central argument that guides your project and pulls the various ideas within chapters together. At this moment, what do you think you would like your readers to walk away knowing? This is a tentative thesis statement, and, it should and will change as you do your research.
3. Preliminary annotated bibliography;
 - a. The number of annotations to be included will be determined in consultation with the Project Advisor. The bibliography should consist of annotations of scholarly sources you consider key to your topic.
 - b. Interdisciplinary projects require that you investigate your subject from multiple perspectives. This bibliography should represent a diversity of sources, from a diversity of fields that will play a role in your research and writing.
 4. Indication that student will comply with the Institutional Review Board, if necessary, and;
 5. Indication of paper format and reference system to be used.

Section 5: Timeline and Determination of Grade in WGSS 620

The bound copy of the Senior Project due dates:

If a student is enrolled in WGSS 620 in Fall 2020, the project is due two weeks prior to the last day of classes by 4:00pm. (November 24, 2020)

If a student is enrolled in WGSS 620 in Spring 2021, the project is due two weeks prior to the last day of classes by 4:00pm. (Spring 2019 is April 19, 2021)

- The student is responsible for supplying a bound copy of the completed Senior Project to each member of the Senior Project Board.
- The student must schedule a date for the oral defense of the project in consultation with the Board.
- The grade for the Senior Project will be collaboratively determined by the members of the Board.
- The Project Advisor will be responsible for reporting the grade to the Registrar, informing the WGSS Director of the grade, and for collecting an original copy of the project to be held in the Director's office.

Section 6: Guidelines for Joint Senior Projects in WGSS

Many WGSS students are double majors who present a single project to fulfill the requirements of both WGSS and another department.

- The exact conditions by which a student completes a joint Senior Project must be approved by WGSS and the other department.
- At least one chapter of the joint Senior Project must make significant use of feminist methodologies or theories.

Step 1: Complete the Senior Project form (see Section 3)

Please note: For joint projects, the WGSS Program requires a single senior project advisor, who must be a current member of the WGSS Steering Committee. Some departments/programs may require more than one reader for joint projects. Thus, the joint Senior Project Board may consist of two or three faculty members representing the major Departments/Programs.

Step 2: If the other department requires a year-long senior project, the student will follow the guidelines for the proposal, proposal due dates, writing guidelines, and final due dates of that department.

Please note: writing the proposal may require extended discussions and negotiations between the two departments. This process may need to begin as early as the first semester of the junior year in order to comply with both WGSS and other departments' Senior Project requirements.

Step 3: If the other department requires one, the student will be encouraged to enroll in their departmental pre-Senior Project seminars, *even if* WGSS is listed as the first major in the double major.

Step 4: Registering for the Senior Project as a Double Major: Registering for a joint senior project depends on two factors: 1) Whether the student is registering for a one- or two-semester project in the other major, and 2) Which of the two majors is listed first.

- If WGSS is the first major, register for DOUBL 620 WGSS/Other Department.
- If the other Department is the first major register for DOUBL 620 Other Department/WGSS 620.
- Here is the link to the Registrar's website: <https://sites.allegheny.edu/registrar/registration/senior-project-registration/>

Step 5: The WGSS Faculty members on the Senior Project Board will be responsible for reporting the Senior Project grade to the Registrar and to the Director of WGSS for reference purposes, and will acquire a copy of the Senior Project to be kept in the office of the Director of WGSS.