

The Women's Studies Senior Project – (WS 620)

For students graduating during the 2013-2014 academic year

Section 1: Overview

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of Women's Studies, a successful senior project in this field may take many forms. The project must focus upon issues pertaining to women, feminist theory and methodology, or upon the varied ways in which women, gender, and sexualities are represented. The Women's Studies Senior Project will draw upon the diverse skills Women's Studies students have developed in WS 100, 200, the junior seminar, 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 WS 100 and 200. The project should serve as an undergraduate research apprenticeship, which will provide an opportunity for students to experience the rigors of feminist inquiry under the direction of the Women's Studies faculty.

Goals for the Women's Studies Senior Project

Women Studies 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 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 WS 620 Senior Project

Though the Women's Studies senior project is customarily a research paper informed by feminist theory, it may also be a research project that incorporates specific data generated by surveys, laboratory work, or field work. 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 (WS 620)

If a student is a double major, please turn to the guidelines on page 3.

If a student is majoring exclusively in Women's Studies:

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

- The Senior Project board will consist of the Project Advisor, and a second reader, a current member of the Women's Studies Steering Committee or a faculty member affiliated with the program. It is the student's responsibility to ask these two faculty members if they will serve on her/his board.
- As the student begins to formulate the Senior Project proposal, s/he should consult with the Project Advisor about theory, methods, and sources specific to her/his project.

Section 3: The Senior Project Proposal Form

All majors (whether a student is a single or double major) must complete the Senior Project Proposal form (page 5 of this document). It is an administrative tool that must be turned in to the Director of Women's Studies (Professor Deborah Dickey) by 4:00pm on the day before spring break, **Friday, March 15, 2013** if you will graduate during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Section 4: Guidelines for the Senior Project Proposal

If a student is a double major, and not following the guidelines for Women's Studies, you must 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 Women's Studies Senior Project Advisor.

Due dates for the proposal:

If the student will enroll in WS 620 in fall 2013, the proposal is due two weeks prior to the last day of classes, **April 16, 2013**.

If the student will enroll in WS 620 in spring 2014, the proposal is due two weeks prior to the last day of classes, **November 26, 2013**.

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 Women's Studies 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 Women's Studies. This does not imply that you are doing "groundbreaking" work, but you have to make connections to why Women's 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 WS 200 and 580, but also look toward the work you've done 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 the compilations of 3-4 discrete papers; they require you to make a central argument that guides your project and pulls the various 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 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.

After the proposal is submitted, and during that same semester, the student is responsible for scheduling a meeting with her/his Senior Project Board before she/he begins researching/writing.

Section 5: Timeline and Determination of Grade in WS 620

The bound copy of the Senior Project due dates:

If a student is enrolled in WS 620 in fall 2013, the project is due two weeks prior to the last day of classes, **November 26, 2013** at 4:00pm.

If a student is enrolled in WS 620 in spring 2014, the project is due two weeks prior to the last day of classes, **April 15, 2014** at 4:00pm.

- 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 Women's Studies Director of the grade, and for collecting an original copy of the project to be held in the Director of Women's Studies office.

Section 6: Guidelines for Joint Senior Projects in Women's Studies

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

- The exact conditions by which a student completes a joint Senior Project must be **COMPLETELY ACCEPTABLE** to and **APPROVED** by **BOTH** departments.

- At least one chapter of the joint Senior Project must make significant use of feminist methodologies or theories.

Step 1: Complete the Senior Project Proposal form (page 5 of this document). It is an administrative tool that must be turned in to the Director of Women's Studies (Professor Deborah Dickey) by 4:00pm on **Friday, March 15, 2013** if you will graduate during the 2013-14 academic year.

Please note: For joint projects, the Women's Studies Program requires a single senior project advisor, who must be a current member of the Women's Studies 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 Women's Studies 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* Women's Studies 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 the student is writing a one-semester project, and Women's Studies is the first major, s/he should register for DOUBLE WS 620/Other Department 620.
- If the student is writing a one-semester project, and the Other Department is the first major, s/he should register for DOUBLE Other Department 620/WS 620.
- If the student is writing a two-semester project, and Women's Studies is the first major, s/he should register for DOUBLE WS 620/Other Department 610 for the second semester of the project.
- If the student is writing a two-semester project, and the Other Department is the first major, s/he should register for DOUBLE Other Department 610/WS 620 for the second semester of the project.

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

**Women's Studies Senior Project Proposal Form
For 2013-2014 Senior Projects**

Instructions

After one copy of this form has been completed and signed by your Senior Project Advisors, return it to the Women's Studies Program Director, Professor Deborah Dickey (Carnegie 206), who will make copies for your academic advisor, your project advisors, and for the program files. Women's Studies Senior Project Advisors should be current faculty members of the Women's Studies Steering Committee: Professors Bailey, Caballero, Dickey, Hellwarth, Riess, Shaw, Treckel, Werner, Wesoky, Yochim. All Women's Studies majors must complete this form, **with the proper signatures, prior to your registering for classes for fall semester, whether you are beginning your Senior Project in the fall, or in the spring.** The completed form is due by 4:00pm on **Friday, March 15, 2013.**

Today's Date: _____

I will work on my Senior Project during the following semester(s):

Fall 2013 Spring 2014 2-Semesters (For Double Majors requiring 2-semester projects)
Semester 1 date [Fall/Spring & Year]: _____
Semester 2 date [Fall/Spring & Year]: _____

Other department (Double Majors only): _____

Your Name: _____

Date of anticipated graduation _____

Women's Studies Senior Project Advisor (please print): _____

Women's Studies Senior Project Advisor's Signature: _____

**Women's Studies Second Reader OR Co-Advisor [for Double Majors]
(Please print):** _____

Women's Studies Second Reader OR Co-Advisor [for Double Majors]
Signature: _____

Brief (one or two sentence) description of the project:

Women's Studies Program Director (please print): _____

Women's Studies Program Director's Signature: _____