

Senate Bill No. 0708-13

**UNIVERSITY SENATE  
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

Introduced by: Undergraduate Academic Council

Date: February 11, 2008

**MINOR IN LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER STUDIES**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the attached proposal to create a Minor in “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies” be approved by the University Senate effective for the Fall 2008 term.
2. That this proposed Minor be forwarded to George M. Philip, Interim President, for approval.

**MINOR IN LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND QUEER STUDIES**

**A New Minor Within Women’s Studies (18 credits)**

**Rationale:**

The Women’s Studies program recognizes the need to bring those voices on the margins of academia to the center. The social dominance of heterosexuality and strict gender roles perpetuate oppression, stigmatization, marginalization, and violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals and communities. Accordingly, we find it important to develop an area of study focused on the experiences, politics, and theories of LGBTQ people. Since the emergence of the ONE Institute in 1956, academic

institutions have incorporated LGBTQ studies curricula and eventually certificates and degrees into their respective programs, most often under the direction of Women's Studies. Currently, there are over 23 universities offering a major or minor in LGBTQ studies at a wide variety of institutions including Smith College, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Minnesota, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Michigan, the University of Delaware, the City University of New York, and SUNY, Purchase (see Appendix 1 for full listing). In addition, eighteen other universities offer certificates in this field. This evidence shows an increasing commitment by U.S. institutions to the academic study of gender and sexuality.

The magnitude of LGBTQ Studies programs nationwide reflects a local demand for an equivalent area of study at the University at Albany. Over the last several years, there has been a growing interest in LGBTQ Studies by students, staff, and faculty. Currently, the Women's Studies and Sociology departments annually enroll 400-500 students in the following core LGBTQ Studies courses alone: Introduction to Feminisms, Introduction to Gay and Lesbian Studies, and Sociology of Sexualities. Furthermore, graduate students and faculty from several departments including Women's Studies and Sociology are actively involved in teaching and developing LGBTQ themed courses. A group of faculty and students have convened over the course of the last several months to create this proposed new LGBTQ Studies minor.

LGBTQ Studies employs an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the social, historical and cultural complexities of its subject matter. Classes in the field cover a wide range of topics all of which can be assessed through a variety of disciplinary lenses, including anthropology, English, history, political science, and sociology, to name just a few. Most importantly, LGBTQ Studies carries a strong base in feminist theory and conceptualization, which has already been incorporated into Women's Studies curricula. A number of courses that cover LGBTQ subject matter exist in or are cross-listed with the Women's Studies Department and, nationally, the most common academic location for LGBTQ majors or minors is within Women's Studies. At the same time, it is significant to note that the unique demands and contributions of LGBTQ Studies do not compete with or overlap the requirements of the current major or minor in Women's Studies here at the University at Albany. The topics and perspectives are mutually exclusive yet intellectually congruent. Therefore, we propose to create and incorporate an LGBTQ minor as an additional minor within the Department of Women's Studies.

**Reasons to include "Queer" in the minor's name:**

Queer Studies is now the most progressive term in this field. The term incorporates a broad spectrum of sexual identities, including gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, but also transgender and other identities as well. In essence, scholars have reclaimed the word, once used disparagingly, to represent a new progressive approach.

Currently "Queer" is the accepted terminology in academia that acts as an umbrella term to encompass all sexual and gender identities that are marginalized, not just lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender ones. While in the past, queer was used as a derogatory term, over the past few decades, it has been reclaimed as a source of pride and resistance. One can see just how universal and common the terminology is simply by doing a title search on Minerva for "Queer," showing over 200 items, including an edited work by Albany Sociologist Steven Seidman entitled *Queer Theory/Sociology*. If

we just left the title as LGBT, it implies that the only identities that will be studied are those of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people, which is not the case.

The other important aspect of having "Queer" in the title is that the concept of "Queer" is the lens or perspective that we use to understand the position of gender and sexual minorities. "Queer" encourages us to ask questions about the social construction of identity, focusing our attention on relations of power and privilege. It also helps us to examine how sexuality, sex, and gender are interconnected systems of oppression that are mutually reinforcing. Finally, the "Queer" perspective asks us to question the very notion of "norm" itself, in regards to all identities.

Thus, "Queer" is not only important to incorporate all identities within the title of the minor, but also to provide a conceptual focus for study. It provides a point of reference for which material should be considered when incorporating courses from a variety of disciplines.

Other institutions that have adopted the term Queer in similar programs:

- Humboldt State University: Minor in "Multicultural Queer Studies",
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln: Minor in "LGBTQ and Sexuality Studies"
- University of Michigan: Minor in "LGBTQ and Sexuality Studies"
- Wesleyan: Concentration in "Queer Studies", American Studies
- Denison University: Concentration in "Queer Studies"
- Smith College: Concentration in "Queer Studies", Study of Women and Gender.

**Departmental Affiliation: Additional Minor within Women's Studies.** There would be two minors within Women's Studies: Women's Studies and LBGTQ Studies. This is similar to the Globalization Studies in the Americas minor and the Latin American and Caribbean Studies minor, both housed in LACS. At least initially, the LGBT Studies Program Director will be the Chair of the Women's Studies Department.

**Additional Courses for LGBTQ Minor:** The Director of this minor may approve additional courses in other departments or schools at Albany, upon review of the course description and syllabus. We expect that as the minor grows in visibility and popularity, additional courses will be incorporated into the list of electives below. Students who transfer in course work in this area, and who want to take this minor should meet with the program director so they can plan appropriate course work for the minor. [Note: Several of the courses listed here have recently submitted updated descriptions for the course catalog, via new Course Actions Forms, to better indicate their LGBTQ content. These revised descriptions are used herein.]

#### **Catalog Description:**

*LGBTQ Studies:* A minimum of 18 graduation credits, which must include Wss 101, Wss 202, and Soc/Wss 362; plus 9 credits from the "Electives" list, of which 6 credits should be at the 300-level or higher including Wss 240, Wss/Soc 250Z/W, Wss/Soc 262, Wss/Pos 333, Wss/Pos 346, Wss/Eng 362, Wss/Ant 381/381Z,

Wss 401/401Z, Wss/His 413, Wss/Eng 416, Wss 497, and (with approval of Minor Director) Wss 397 or Wss 492.

**Overview:**

Each student shall take 18 credits that frame the students' understanding of the social construction of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-gendered, and Queer individuals and their changing role in society. Courses for the minor must directly address and/or fully incorporate LGBTQ issues. At least 9 of the 18 credits must be at the 300-level or above.

**Required Courses – 9 credits****AWSS 101 Introduction to Feminisms (3)**

The origins and development of feminist thought, with emphasis on the political, social, and economic conditions of contemporary women's lives in the United States and abroad. Emphasis on student exploration of issues that confront women and men across the range of their differences in race, class, and sexual orientation, and that produce multiple orientations to feminism. Based on a pedagogy of peer learning; co-facilitated by undergraduate members of the Women's Studies Teaching Internship working under the supervision of Women's Studies faculty and graduate students from related departments. A Wss 101Z is the writing intensive version of A Wss 101; only one may be taken for credit. [DP]

***\*Spring Semester (Peer Teaching Collective and Instructors supervised by Maia Boswell-Penc), 7-9 Sections every Spring semester, 35-50 Students each section\****

**AWSS 202 Introduction to Lesbian and Gay Studies (3)**

Topics may include the history of lesbian and gay culture(s) in the U.S., lesbian and gay civil rights movements, questions of sexual identity formation in historical and cultural contexts, lesbian and gay literature, and how these communities have responded to societal issues such as racism, classism, sexism, healthcare crises, and anti-gay violence. A Wss 202Z is the writing intensive version of A Wss 202; only one may be taken for credit. [DP]

***\*Once a year (Vivien Ng, Nora Yates), 50 Students\****

**A SOC 362/A WSS 362 Sociology of Sexualities (3)**

This course reviews the core of the sociology of sexuality from a socio-historical perspective. Among the topics to be discussed are the theoretical approaches to sexuality, the making of sexual identities, the relationship between sexuality and social institutions, and sexual politics and ethics. Specific examples include hip-hop sexualities, gay marriage, sexual tourism, transgender identities, and heterosexual intimacy. Prerequisite(s): A Soc 115 or 115Z.

***\*Once a year, rotates Fall/Spring, sometimes Summer (Steve Seidman or Instructors), 130 Students\****

**Elective Courses – 9 credits (Must include 6 credits at 300 level or higher)**

Substitutions for classes may be allowed upon petition to the Director of the Program.

(See Appendix 2 for syllabi)

**AWSS 240 (LCS/AAS240) Classism, Racism, and Sexism: Issues (3)**

Analyzes the connections between and among classism, racism, sexism, and heterosexism and homophobia, their mutually reinforcing nature, and the tensions arising from their interrelations. Particular attention will be given to the ideological and personal aspects of these phenomena, as well as to their institutional guises in

American society. A Wss 240Z is the writing intensive version of A Wss 240; only one of A Wss/Aas/Lcs 240/240Z may be taken for credit. [240 = DP][240Z = DP WI]

***\*Every semester (Maia Boswell-Penc, Vivien Ng, Janell Hobson), 45-90 Students***

### **ASOC 250Z/W Sociology of Families (3)**

This course provides a broad overview of the sociology of families, starting with the variety of ways we define and study families. Topics include the history of families in the U.S.; how families are formed and how members perform economic roles and care for each other; how issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality influence family relationships and the connections between families and the larger society; how family members are affected when marriages or relationships end; family violence; and aging and kin. A Soc 250Z is the writing intensive version of A Soc 250 and A Soc 250W is the writing intensive AND oral discourse version of A Soc 205; only one of A Soc 250, A Soc 250Z, and A Soc 250W may be taken for credit. Prerequisite(s): A Soc 115 or 115Z. [Z=WI; W=WI/OD]

***\* Every Semester and Summer, 2 sections (Glenna Spitze or Instructors), 120-150 students per semester***

### **AWSS 262/ASOC 262 Sociology of Gender (3)**

This course examines how gender is socially constructed in contemporary U.S. society. The course examines how gender orders our everyday lives—our sense of self, our friendships, romances, conversations, clothing, body image, entertainment, work, sexuality, and parenthood. Students will learn how conceptions about gender create and enforce a system of gender difference and inequality. This course will examine the lives, experiences and representations of heterosexual and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) persons. The course will reveal the “common sense” world of gender that surrounds us by exposing the workings of institutions such as the family, the classroom, the workplace, and the media. Throughout the course we will emphasize the ways in which people experience gender opportunities and constraints differently according to their race, gender, class and sexuality. Only one of A Soc 262 and A Wss 262 may be taken for credit. Prerequisite(s): A Soc 115 or 115Z; or permission of instructor. [DP, SS]

***\* Every Semester and Summer, 2-3 sections (Kecia Johnson or Instructors), 150-280 students per semester***

### **AWSS 333/RPOS 333 Women and the Law (3)**

This course surveys the relationship between women and the law, looking at the way that women have been defined as legal subjects over time and through intersections of gender, sexual orientation, race, and class. The course focuses on the United States, but may also include discussion of women’s status in international law and cross-national comparisons of legal policies. Only one of A Wss 333 & R Pos 333 may be taken for credit. Prerequisite(s): R Pos 101 and junior or senior class standing, or permission of instructor.

***\*At least once a year (Julie Novkov)***

### **AWSS 346/RPOS 346 Law, Civil Rights and Sexual Orientation (3)**

The course will examine relevant court cases as well as local, state and federal laws that define the boundaries for legal recognition of sexual orientation and personal sexuality in the 20th Century. The course includes examination of the recent court cases in Hawaii, Alaska, New York, and Vermont as well consideration of the current case in Massachusetts. We will examine the legal assumptions behind current and historical cases defining personal sexuality and sexual orientation. As well, we will consider the social and political impetus in each era that drove the courts and legislatures to make such decisions. This course highlights an interesting area of law and politics that is the modern equivalent of the original civil rights cases from the turn of the

20th century involving race. As such, this topical issue is sure to be increasingly an important aspect of state and federal court decisions and legislative battles. This is a good course for students interested in the law and the development of legal and political ideas over time.

***\*At least once a year (Scott Barclay)***

### **AWSS 362/AENG 362 Critical Approaches to Gender and Sexuality in Literature (3)**

Examination of the role of Anglophone literary texts from any period(s) in the construction of gender and sexuality, with an emphasis on study of interpretive strategies provided by various critical discourses. Topics to be discussed may include, among others: aesthetic movements; historical problems; cultural texts; political questions.

***\*Approximately every other year, rotates Fall/Spring (Eric Keenaghan or Instructors)***

### **AWSS 381(Z)/ AANT 381(Z) Anthropology of Gender (3)**

The history of and current trends in anthropological theories of gender. Specific issues are raised in the form of questions, including: On what bases is gender identity constructed? What factors affect the relative status of men and women in different cultures? How many genders are there? What constitutes "femininity" and "masculinity" cross-culturally? Theoretical issues in the literature are linked to policy debates throughout the world, such as those over gay families, female genital cutting, abortion, and the use of new reproductive technologies.

A Ant 381Z and A Wss 381Z are writing intensive versions of A Ant 381 and A Wss 381; only one of the four courses may be taken for credit.

Prerequisite(s): one course in anthropology or sociology.

***\*At least once a year (Gail Landsman)***

### **AWSS 397 Independent Study (1-4)**

**---Included if topic relevant; requires approval of LGBT minor Director.**

Study by a student in an area of special interest not treated in courses currently offered. Work performed under the direction of a professor chosen by the student with a topics approved by the Department Chair.

Prerequisite: Permission of the Women's Studies Department Chair.

### **AWSS401(Z)/ AWSS 501 Sex/uality, Race, and Class in Science, Health and Technology (3)**

This seminar will investigate the rich and problematic relationship between the sciences and issues of sex/gender, sexuality, race, class, and ableness, including cultural biases in science and health. Drawing on the new scholarship about women in the sciences in this country, we will investigate the changing status and activities of women over the past two centuries and the consequences for the sciences and technology. Within an historical context, the course will emphasize the impact of antiracist feminism on the sciences and health in the past three decades. Key analytical questions include: How is scientific knowledge made, believed, and used? What forces control its production and use? What constitutes evidence in science—for scientists and for citizens, and how is that decided? What role do "western" science and technology play in globalization and its impact on people's lives within the U.S. and throughout the world? What forces are working to transform science to increase social, political, and economic justice? What theoretical and practical insights accrue from intersectional feminist analyses (working with the intersections of sex/gender, racial/ethnic heritage, class, ableness, and global status) of science and health? What is the potential for feminist science studies to

transform the sciences and health? Examples of specific topics that may be addressed are biological determinism, environmental pollution, and breast cancer science and politics.

***\*Every other year (Bonnie Spanier)***

### **AWSS 413/AHIS 413 Sexual Politics in Chinese History (3)**

Course examines sexual politics in the Chinese historical/cultural context. Issues discussed and analyzed include: constructions of gender and sexuality (including homosexuality); “policing” of family and kinship structures; ideological indoctrination through education and other means; rape laws; sex crimes; and forms of dissent or protest. Readings include literature in translation. Prerequisites: Junior or senior standing.

***\*Approximately every other year (Vivien Ng)***

### **AWSS416/ AENG416 Topics in Gender, Sexuality, Race, or Class (3)**

Focused examination of topics in the study of gender, sexuality, race and/or class, as they are positioned and defined in literary or other texts from any period(s) or geographic region(s). Individual semesters may focus on, among other areas: a particular historical period, genre, or theme; theories of gender, sexuality, race, and/or class as related to literary or other forms of representation; a particular cultural problem. May be repeated once for credit when content varies. Prerequisite(s): senior class standing, at least one literature course, and permission of instructor.

***\*Approximately every other year (Eric Keenaghan)***

### **AWSS 497 Topics in LGBTQ Studies (3)**

Considers topics or issues in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer studies selected on the basis of faculty and student interest. May be repeated with different content. Consult fall and spring schedule of classes for the specific topics and prerequisites. (New course)

***\*Approximately every other year (Various faculty)***

### **AWSS 492 Internship in Women’s Studies (3)**

**--Included if placement is relevant; requires approval of LGBT minor Director.**

The internship in Women’s Studies has two components. (1) Work experience in placement related to student’s interests in career development and social justices. Interns are expected to spend eight hours per week at their placements. Each student works closely with a feminist mentor who provides guidance on projects as well as an analysis of the structure and function of the organization and its role in social change. (2) Academic seminar where students meet together weekly to apply feminist theory, praxis, and analysis to their placement. Assignments include preparing a resume, analyzing current issues of workplace and economic justice, career development, assessing skills for and barriers to career development, and planning for graduate or professional school. The Internship is a requirement for the WS major but is open to any responsible junior or senior who has taken a course in Women’s Studies. Permission of Internship Director is required; placements must be arranged during advanced registration. Internships are open only to qualified juniors and seniors who have an overall grade point average of 2.5 or higher. S/U graded [OD]



**Appendix 1****Institutions that Offer LGBT/Queer Studies Majors and Minors**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Department</b>
<i>Majors:</i>			
San Francisco City College	Gay and Lesbian Studies	Major	Gay and
Lesbian Studies			
U. Chicago	Lesbian and Gay Studies	Project	Center for
Gender Studies			
City University of New York	Gay and Lesbian Studies	Center/Program	
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Hobart and William Smith Colleges	LGB Studies	Major	LGB
Studies			
Sarah Lawrence College	LGBT Studies	(No Majors/Seminar-	
Conference System)			
<i>Minors:</i>			
San Francisco State	Gay and Lesbian Studies	Minor	Human
Sexuality Studies			
Stanford	LGB Studies	Minor	Feminist Studies
UC Berkeley	LGBT Studies	Minor	Gender and
Women's Studies			
UCLA	LGBT Studies	Minor	
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UC Riverside	LGBT Studies	Minor	
Interdisciplinary Studies			
Towson	LGBT Studies	Minor	Interdisciplinary
Studies			
SUNY Purchase	Lesbian and Gay Studies	Minor	Interdisciplinary
Studies			
Allegheny	Gay and Lesbian Studies	Minor	
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Western Washington University	LGBT Studies	Minor	American
Cultural Studies			

Bowdoin College Studies	Gay and Lesbian Studies	Minor	Gay and Lesbian
Humboldt State University Studies	Multicultural Queer Studies	Minor	Women's
University of Minnesota	GLBT Studies	Minor	Feminist Studies
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill	Sexuality Studies	Minor	
----- University of North Texas -----	Study of Sexualities	Minor	
University of Delaware	Sexualities and Gender Minor		Women's Studies
Hofstra Liberal Arts	LGBT Studies	Minor	College of
University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Gender Studies	LGBTQ and Sexuality Stud	Minor	Women's
University of Michigan	LGBTQ and Sexuality Stud	Minor	Women's Studies

*Certificates or Concentrations:*

Arizona State University: Studies	LGBT Studies	Certificate	Women's
University of Arizona Women's Studies	LGBT Studies	Concentration	
Wesleyan Studies	Queer Studies	Concentration	American
University of Iowa Yale	History of Sexuality Lesbian and Gay Studies	Certificate Concentration	History
Wmns/Gender/Sexuality Studies Denison University	Queer Studies	Concentration	
----- Duke University	Study of Sexualities	Certificate	
----- University of Wisconsin-Madison Studies	LGBT Studies	Certificate	Women's
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Lesbian and Gay Studies	Certificate	
----- University of Maryland - College Park	LGBT Studies	Certificate	
----- University of Colorado at Boulder	LGBT Studies	Minor/Certificate	
----- Florida Atlantic University Studies	Sexualities and Gender	Certificate	Comparative
Smith College of Women and Gender	Queer Studies	Concentration	Study
Barnard-Columbia Studies	Gender and Sexualities	Concentration	Women's
University of Cincinnati Brown	Sexuality Studies Sexuality and Society	Track/Concentration Concentration	Women's Studies
Interdisciplinary Studies York University	Sexuality Studies	Minor/Certificate	Women's Studies
School for International Training (VT) Location - Amsterdam, N	Sex, Gender and Identity	Study Abroad	