**Senior Experience: Reflecting on the WGS major**

As you near graduation, you are likely thinking about what you have accomplished, what knowledge and practices are now part of how you approach the world, what new issues you have only just begun to consider. The WGS Program would like you to capture and formulate those thoughts in a personal reflection essay. Please take this opportunity to consider your undergraduate experience, especially in WGS, for yourself and for the faculty.

As a starting point, please reflect on two representations of our intentions for WGS majors, the WGS “mission statement” (copied below) and the WGS major (available in the catalog or on the WGS website). How are these congruent with your own goals (or not)? How have these been enacted in your experience in the program (or not)? What kinds of experiences—intellectual and otherwise—were missing as you worked towards these goals? What has been valuable in your experience that happened outside the apparent reach of either the mission or the major requirements?

We are NOT looking for detailed comments about specific courses or professors. While those are useful in faculty growth and development, this essay provides an opportunity for reflection about YOURSELF and your experience of the WGS major. Indeed, the appropriate place for those kinds of specifically evaluative comments is on the SAIs (Student Assessment of Instruction).

Beyond the guiding questions posed above, please also discuss the ways that you have engaged the community on behalf of gender equity. We know that your WGS classes don’t exist in silos nor are they hermetically sealed from other classes or your co-curricular life as activists and athletes and musicians and baristas and a host of other Willamette-centered roles.

Your essay need not be long—aim for something like 1200-2000 words.

Please email this reflection essay to the WGS chair (wgs-chair@willamette.edu) by either Dec 1st (for December graduates) or May 1 (for May graduates). You must submit a reflection in order to receive a thesis grade.

**WGS Program “Mission Statement”**

Feminist scholarship, which arose in the late twentieth century in response to the historically masculine bias of the academy, explores the important but often hidden ways that gender and gender inequality have shaped, and been shaped by, our cultural, social, and personal worlds. In recent years, scholars in the field have increasingly recognized that gender and gender inequality cannot be understood in abstraction from other axes of social identity and power, especially those of race, class, sexual orientation, and nation. Thus, the program in Women's and Gender Studies offers students the opportunity to examine, from both disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, gender's intersections with other dimensions of social power and identity. In addition to addressing these intersections, courses may focus on developments within feminist thought, on applications of feminist scholarship to a particular field of study, or on selected topics concerning gender and gender inequality. All Women's and Gender Studies classes encourage students to think systematically and critically about gender and to confront the challenges of moving toward a more equitable world.