

WGS 499: Senior Thesis, Fall 2014

SPECIFIC INFO ON ADVISOR AND INDIVIDUAL MEETING TIMES GOES HERE

Group WGS thesis writers meetings, Tuesdays 4:15-5:15pm, Eaton 211

Course Description

The Senior Thesis course is the culmination of your undergraduate study in Women's and Gender Studies, not only because you will graduate at the end of this year, but because you will call in this project upon everything you have learned about framing questions, posing responses, arguing their theoretical validity, and expressing them persuasively and elegantly. You will enter into scholarly and activist discourses, composing an essay with greater length and complexity than others you have written thus far in your career. You will also be the expert in the room on your topic. You will become keen readers for your peers and will meet with them frequently throughout this semester. You may also wish to make appointments with other faculty who know your primary texts better than your thesis advisor might. In fact, we encourage you to consult broadly in this way.

Thesis Guidelines, Policies, and Information

Your thesis writing process includes cultivation of the following: 4-5 page prospectus, an annotated bibliography, thesis draft revised at least 2 times, final thesis of 20-30 pages.

You must present your project EITHER at SSRD in the spring semester or to a group of faculty and peers at the annual Lewis and Clark Gender Studies Symposium (also in spring semester). A third option might be to present your work at another conference altogether. Please discuss this option with your advisor.

If you are planning to work with Human Subjects as part of your research, you must complete an IRB proposal in the semester before your thesis credit.

Your thesis committee will be comprised of 2 members, an advisor and secondary reader. The advisor is responsible for supporting you in all capacities throughout the project, while the secondary reader is responsible for reviewing and offering feedback only on your prospectus, first full draft, and final paper. Your secondary reader likely will deliver comments and suggestions to your advisor, and your advisor will then discuss those suggestions with you.

You must complete a Senior Reflection Essay in order to receive a thesis grade. See the assignment at the end of this syllabus and on the WGS website.

In addition to the above, theses will be evaluated by these additional criteria:

1. Thesis has a well-defined and compelling WGS issue or question.
2. Thesis presents and develops a clear and coherent argument.
3. Thesis successfully applies feminist and/or gender theory to a social, political or cultural issue.

4. Thesis incorporates intersectional analysis where appropriate.
5. Thesis integrates knowledge, perspectives, and/or methods from multiple academic disciplines.

Also, as a Writing Centered class, we also expect that your thesis will do the following:

1. The thesis will demonstrate engagement in the imaginative process by asking an inventive question and offering an original claim; extending and complementing current critical conversation in genuine and creative ways; and offering insights that provoke real interest and curiosity in readers.
2. The thesis will demonstrate your ability to engage with varied critical perspectives; to recognize and respond to scholarly critical conversation about primary texts; and to contextualize that conversation
3. The thesis will demonstrate critical acumen and reasoned argumentation by identifying significant and relevant evidence that advances the paper's claims and arguments; anticipating and responding to likely challenges and alternative argumentative approaches; using theoretical material and relevant data shrewdly and with deliberation.
4. The thesis will demonstrate your ability to write clear prose that establishes an appropriate scholarly voice, tone, and authority; paragraphs effectively; varies sentence structure and length appropriately; and observes conventions of standard American edited prose in grammar, punctuation, usage, mechanics.

Successful course participation will demonstrate your ability to conceive of and sustain a long-term research project and practice writing as an extended process that entails brainstorming, research, outlining, and revision through dialogue, drafting, redrafting, and editing.

Disability Statement

Willamette University is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities. The Disability and Learning Services Office strives to facilitate reasonable accommodations for those students with a qualifying disability or temporary medical condition and to provide academic assistance on an individual basis to any undergraduate or graduate student who requests it. Any student who requires these accommodations should contact the Disability and Learning Services Office directly at 503-370-6471.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

Students of Willamette University are members of a community that values excellence and integrity in every aspect of life. As such, we expect all community members to live up to the highest standards of personal, ethical, and moral conduct. Students are expected not to engage in any type of academic or intellectually dishonest practice and encouraged to display honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all they do. Plagiarism and cheating are especially offensive to the integrity of the courses in which they occur and against the College community as a whole. These acts involve intellectual dishonesty, deception, and fraud, which inhibit the

honest exchange of ideas. Plagiarism and cheating may, therefore, be grounds for failure in the course and/or dismissal from the College. Please see the Willamette Plagiarism and Cheating Policy at <http://www.willamette.edu/cla/dean/policies/plagiarism.html>

Preparedness

Always come to meetings prepared for that day. Your success in this course will depend not only on the quality of your final thesis but also on your contribution to our meetings.

Attendance

Attendance is crucial. Because this course relies upon collaborative discussion, more than three unexcused absences will lower your participation grade by one full letter unless appropriate justification is given **before** the missed class session/meeting.

Writing Center

Senior theses are big projects with several stages. **Students who bring in a 20+ page paper for a one-hour appointment the day before it's due won't be able to get much help.**

Instead:

- **Schedule appointments early on**—like when preparing the thesis proposal—with someone in the Writing Center who has some experience in your field. Think of this as a kind of get-acquainted appointment during which you'll explain your project and look at a short piece of writing.
- If that consultant seems a good fit to you, schedule a series of appointments later in the semester. (If not, try another consultant.) **Try to stick with one consultant** so that you don't waste valuable time explaining your project over and over.
- **Schedule appointments regularly for before and after you submit stages/drafts of the work.** This will allow you to shape up your work before submitting it to your professor and peers and it will allow you to work specifically on areas pointed out by your professor and peers.
- If you are working on a paper that has clearly marked sections (intro, theory, lit review, findings, analysis/discussion, etc.), **make separate appointments to review one section at a time.**
- You and your consultant may decide that **you'll sometimes want to schedule two-hour appointments.**

We expect you to attend and document **at least 4 trips to** the Writing Center before semester's end. **Please email your thesis advisor shortly AFTER your appt and briefly explain with whom you conferenced, what you discussed, and goals for future writing on your thesis (e.g., the next step).** Again, you should make a minimum of 4 appointments, the first of which should be completed by September 15.

Research Assistance

You are **responsible for scheduling a one-hour meeting with the Humanities or Social Science librarians, Doreen Simonsen or Joni Roberts**, who will help you think through your research strategy and make sure that you know how to use the library's resources at thesis level. **You are also responsible for meeting with your advisor independently at least 5 times**

throughout the semester; you should, of course, feel free to meet with that individual more frequently should you desire.

Writer's Notebook

You are responsible for keeping a detailed record of your ideas, questions, and thoughts about your paper. The notebook should also contain: 1) notes on conferences with me or other faculty; 2) clear abstracts and usable notes/quotes from your research reading; 3) precise, accurate source information to be used/included in your annotated bibliography.

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph. **The purpose of the annotation is to summarize the argument, assess and evaluate that argument, and reflect on its utility. Be sure to consider how your source is in conversation with ideas we have discussed in class and how it supports, changes, or complicates the texts you have already read. An annotated bibliographic entry should offer an appropriate citation of the source via MLA (or another appropriate scholarly) format.** In addition to submitting partial annotated bibliography installments early in the term, at semester's end, you will be responsible for compiling your annotations into a printed, supplementary bibliography that informs your thesis (at least 10-15 sources cited).

For more on how to annotate scholarly sources see the following websites:

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>

Grading Policies

Assignment Punctuality

All assignments must be turned in to the instructor **in person (note syllabus directions) on the date they are due.** Email submissions will **NOT** be accepted unless sanctioned by advisors, though please do post your work to the WGS Senior Thesis WISE site to more easily facilitate peer review and class conversation about your project and its development. Likewise, late assignments will **NOT** be accepted unless otherwise discussed. If you are going to miss class, your work is due **beforehand**, and you must notify advisors of your absence or it will go unexcused.

Grading System

Completed Thesis: 50%

Participation, including conference presentation: 10%

4-5 page prospectus: 10%

Annotated bibliography (partial and complete): 10%

10-15 page draft: 10%

First full draft: 10%

“My Life and Work in WGS” reflection essay: must be submitted by the last day of Fall finals to receive a course grade

Course Schedule, major assignment due dates

(NOTE: schedule subject to minor change; establish individual meeting dates with your advisor)

September 16	draft prospectus for peer review (consult secondary reader) (you should have been to the WC at least once by now!)
September 23	4-5 page final project prospectus to advisor
September 30	annotated bibliography part 1 to advisor (5 sources)
October 14	annotated bibliography part 2 to advisor (5 new sources)
October 21	10-15 page draft to advisor and for peer review (Intro/Lit review/Methods)
November 25	Full thesis draft to advisor and for peer review (20pp)
December 12	Final thesis due to advisor, including bib and all appendices/components “My Life and Work in WGS” essay due (via email)

“My Life and Work in WGS” essay assignment:

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, and what new issues you have only just begun to consider. The WGS Program would like you to capture and formulate thoughts your about undergraduate experience in a personal reflection essay.

As a starting point, please reflect on two representations of our intentions for WGS majors, the WGS “mission statement” and the description of the major (copied on the back of this sheet). 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.

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 co-chairs (ahobgood@willamette.edu and aguilarj@willamette.edu) by December 12. You must submit a reflection in order to receive a thesis grade.

WGS Thesis Writer Group Meetings: TUESDAYS 4:15-5:15pm, Eaton 211

- 9/2/14 Introductions. Why does feminist research matter? How do I ask a strong research question? What is a prospectus? (Prof. TBD)
YOU SHOULD HAVE ALREADY MET WITH ADVISOR
- 9/9/14 Introducing good research habits and practices (more on writing a prospectus and annotated bibliography) (Prof. Hobgood)
MEET WITH SECOND READER ASAP
- 9/16/14 Establishing good peer review habits. Peer conversation about prospectuses and the next research step (Prof. Bishop)
DUE: draft project prospectus for peer review
- 9/23/14 Focusing your research question and finding useful sources (Prof. Koomen)
DUE: 4-5 page final project prospectus
- 9/30/14 Literature reviews and incorporating theory (Prof. Goldberg Edelson)
DUE: annotated bibliography, part 1 (5 sources)
- 10/7/14 Framing your project, writing your first draft: step-by-step (Prof. TBD)
- 10/14/14 Analyzing and responding to texts and images (Prof. TBD)
DUE: annotated bibliography, part 2 (5 new sources)
- 10/21/14 Peer review of drafts (Prof. Craig)
DUE: 10-15 page draft
- 10/28/14 Creating conference presentations; asking and answering good questions (Prof. TBD)
- 11/4/14 Panic debrief session: concerns? and no worries! you still have another month or so (Prof. TBD)
- 11/11/14 Distinguishing Your Critical Voice. Thinking about audience (Prof. Aguilar)
- 11/18/14 Writing Intros and Conclusions (Prof. TBD)
- 11/25/14 Self-assessment and peer review with colleagues (during Tgiving week)
DUE: full thesis draft (20pp)
- 12/2/14 Draft debrief, turn-in concerns, and peer review of revisions (Prof. TBD)
- DUE 12/12** **final thesis, including all appendices and components**
DUE 12/12 **“My Life and Work in WGS” essay due (via email to WGS co-chairs)**