The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences offers students the opportunity to construct an individualized major in Women’s, Gender and/or Sexuality Studies (B.A. or B.S.). This option allows a student with a well-defined interest in Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies to design a major with the advice of a faculty sponsor. The contract major is recommended for students who are interested in examining historical and contemporary roles, perceptions, and contributions of women and/or LGBT people, and in exploring other gender-related issues. The major is particularly appropriate for students preparing for graduate school in Women’s, Gender and/or Sexuality Studies or planning advanced study or careers in such disciplines as communications, education, health, humanities, and human services.

Faculty members from a wide variety of departments participate in the core and special topics courses of the major.

**Admission:**

If you are interested in declaring this interdisciplinary major, you should contact us early in your college career for information and advisement. Members of our faculty will provide assistance in preparing an application for admission to the program, which must be filed with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (application forms can be obtained from the Advising Office of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences). Completed proposals must be approved by the College’s Contract Major Committee.

**Requirements:**

A student must select a faculty sponsor from the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality faculty and formulate a major program of study in consultation with this sponsor. The program must be logically structured around a meaningful and interesting theme or topic, and must utilize existing courses. Examples of topics or themes include Gender and Social Justice, Women’s Health, LGBT Activism, and Gender and Social Policy Issues. Sample proposals are available in the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality (Reavis 103).

The student who wishes to propose a contract major must:

- have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50.
- have at least sophomore standing.
- justify the course of study and define the goal to be achieved.
- design a multidisciplinary program that may be accommodated within existing university resources and facilities. (The program may include internships, independent study, or special projects on or off campus, but no more than 12 semester hours of course work for these kinds of activities will be permitted in the contract.)
- include in the program at least 50 semester hours of credit in courses basic to the area of study. These semester hours may not be used to fulfill general education requirements,
  - must include at least 15 semester hours of course work offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences,
  - must include at least 30 semester hours of course work at the 300-400 level, and
  - must not include more than 24 semester hours from offerings of a single department.
- complete either the university foreign language requirement for the B.A. degree or the college requirement for the B.S. degree.

Students may enroll in a variety of internships combining their professional interests with their preparation in Women’s, Gender and/or Sexuality Studies. Past interns have worked with the Cook County victims’
assistance program, domestic violence shelters, NIU's Gender & Sexuality Resource Center, a high school
girl's leadership project, and other organizations and activities.

Independent study and topics courses in a variety of departments may meet the major requirements, with
the approval of the director of the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality, when substantial
treatment of women's, gender and/or sexuality studies is included in the course.

Coursework (50 hours):

Required for Women's and Gender Studies (9 hours)

WGST 101, Women, Sex, and Gender Today (3)

WGST 201*, Gender and Justice in Global Perspectives (3) OR WGST 202*, Women and Cultural Expression
(3)

WOMS 432*, Feminist Theory (3)

Required for Gender and Sexuality Studies (9 hours)

LGBT 350, LGBT Studies (3)

WGST 101, Women, Sex, and Gender Today (3)

WGST 430, Queer Theory (3)

Recommended Courses for Women’s, Gender and/or Sexuality Studies Contract
Majors include but are not limited to:

LGBT 400, Transgender Studies (3)
WGST 332*, Growing Up Female (3)
WGST 390*, Internship in Women’s Studies (3)
WGST 430*, Special Topics in Women’s Studies (3)
WGST 434, Women, Men and Language (3)
WGST 436, Current Debates Seminar: Women and Gender (3)
WGST 439*, Independent Study in Women’s Studies (3)
ANTH 361, Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Women (3)
ANTH 468, Anthropology of Gender (3)
ARTH 485D, Topics in Art History: Images of Women (3)
BIOS 493*, Topics in Biology (1-3)
COMS 410, Communication and Gender (3)
ENGL 381*, American Ethnic Literature (3) OR *ENGL 399H, Topics in American Literature, Honors (3)

OR ENGL 400*, Literary Topics (3)
OR ENGL 499H*, Topics in English Literature, Honors (3)

ENGL 382, Women Writers: The Tradition in English (3)
ENGL 383, Gay and Lesbian Literature (3)
FCNS 406, Global Food and Nutrition Issues (3)
FCNS 464, Social Psychology of Dress and Appearance (3)
FLFR 445, French Women Writers (3)
FLSP 445, Latin American Women Writers (3)
FLST 481*, Special Topics in Literature (1*)
HIST 322, Women in Modern Europe (3)
HIST 346, Women in Asian History (3)
HIST 353, Women in African History (3)
HIST 360, Race, Class, and Gender in American History (3)
HIST 369, Women in United States History (3)
HIST 402, Gender and Sexuality in History (3)
HIST 413, Family, Sexuality, and Society since 1400 (3)
HIST 473, Topics in Women's History (3)
IDSP 402, The Africana Woman (3)
LGBT 350, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies (3)
MGMT 498, Equal Opportunity and Employment (3)
NURS 380, Nursing Care of Women (3)
PHHE 306, Human Sexuality (3)
PHIL 365, Feminism and Philosophy (3)
POLS 373, Women and Politics (3)
PSYC 424, Adolescent Development (3)
SOCI 450, Social Inequality (3)
SOCI 354, Families and Social Change (3)
SOCI 357, The Sociology of Gender (3)
SOCI 358, Racial and Ethnic Minority Families (3)

Additional courses may be selected from departmental offerings if they are relevant to the proposed major focus.

*May meet the major requirements, with the approval of the director of the Center for the Study of Women, Gender & Sexuality, when substantial treatment of Women's, Gender and/or Sexuality Studies is included in the course.

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i PRQ: WGST 101, 201 or 202 or consent of the program.
ii PRQ: sophomore standing; WGST 101, 201, 202, SOCI 357, or ANTH 361, OR consent of the program.
iii Work as an intern in activities related to Women's Studies. Reading and paper preparation under the supervision of a faculty member in the university. May be repeated once. S/U grading. PRQ: Consent of program director; junior or senior standing.
iv PRQ: junior or senior standing or by permission of the program director.
v PRQ: 9 hours in the major, including WGST 101 and WGST 201 or 202.