

Georgia State University

Assessment Data by Section

2014-2015 Women's Studies MA

As of: 3/18/2016 01:48 PM EST

Mission / Purpose

The Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies prepares students for doctoral work in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies or in a related discipline and enhances careers relating to women's, gender, or sexuality issues. As the interdisciplinary practice of feminist scholarship, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies interrogates and envisions alternatives to social structures, institutions, ideologies, relationships, and perceptions of gender in traditional academic disciplines.

Goals

G 1: Interdisciplinarity

WGSS MA graduates will be interdisciplinary scholars; this means that they will be conversant in feminist epistemologies (i.e., they will understand and be able to articulate a critique of masculinist forms of knowledge, and to critique the power dynamics inherent to the production of knowledge). They will also be able to ask broad questions that transverse traditional disciplines.

G 2: Knowledgeable in the field of WGSS

WGSS MA graduates will be conversant in the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (i.e., they will understand, and be able to synthesize, a range of feminist and/or womanist theories and frameworks.)

G 3: Successful scholars/practitioners

WGSS MA graduates will be academically prepared to be scholars and practitioners in fields and/or career placements relevant to the core concerns of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

SLO 1: Research Questions (G: 1) (M: 1)

Students will formulate new research questions, providing innovative approaches to existing feminist and/or womanist research.

SLO 2: Overall Critical Thinking through Writing (G: 2, 3) (M: 1, 2, 3)

Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills through innovative, well-organized arguments that are publication-ready. This means that students will structure their papers and thesis proposals in a clear and coherent fashion and that students will demonstrate proficiency in overall writing and grammar skills, including syntax, punctuation, and citation.

SLO 3: Theoretical Frameworks (G: 2) (M: 1, 2)

Students will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of key feminist and/or womanist theoretical perspectives and apply them in their own work.

SLO 4: Feminist Epistemology (G: 1, 2) (M: 2)

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of feminist epistemologies (i.e., they will understand and be able to articulate a critique of masculinist forms of knowledge, and to critique the power dynamics inherent to the production of knowledge).

SLO 5: Placements (G: 3) (M: 4)

Students will get accepted to PhD programs (either in WGSS or a field related to their research) or they will achieve placement in a desired career path. This will serve as an indirect measure of whether they are academically prepared to successfully enter the field.

Measures, Targets, and Findings

M 1: Thesis (O: 1, 2, 3)

Students will complete a thesis project that demonstrates interdisciplinary thought as well as mastery of some of the key theoretical frameworks of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Theses are either research-based, action research projects (i.e., interning with a community organization and working to supplement and/or transform it positively), or creative writing

projects. All require a section (literature review or documented essay) that explains the significance to the field of WGSS.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

Target for O1: Research Questions

Our target is for all of our students to receive at least a score of 3 (on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest).

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Met

Our students received a 3.6 average, with scores ranging from a 3 to a 4.

Target for O2: Overall Critical Thinking through Writing

Our target is for all of our students to receive at least a score of 3 (on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest).

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Met

Our students received an average of 3.65 with one student receiving a 5 and two students receiving a 3.0, one student receiving a 3.5 and one receiving a 4.

Target for O3: Theoretical Frameworks

Our target is for all of our students to receive at least a score of 3 (on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest).

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Met

Our students received an average of 3.6 with students receiving scores of: 4.5, 2, 5, 3.25, 3.25.

M 2: Comprehensive exams (O: 2, 3, 4)

Students are required to take comprehensive exams after completing the four core academic courses in the MA program. The comprehensive exams consist of two questions; one measures their ability to synthesize major feminist theories and methodologies and the other measures their ability to apply feminist theories to globalization.

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

Target for O2: Overall Critical Thinking through Writing

Our target is for all of our students to receive at least a score of 3 (on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest).

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Met

Our students received a score of 3.9, with scores ranging from a 2 to 5.

Target for O3: Theoretical Frameworks

Our target is for all of our students to receive at least a score of 3 (on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest).

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Met

Our students received a score of 3.8 on average, with scores ranging from a 2.8 to a 4.8.

Target for O4: Feminist Epistemology

Our target is for all of our students to receive at least a score of 3 (on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest).

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Met

our students received an average score of 3.8 with scores ranging from 2.3 to 5.

M 3: Annual Evaluations/Student CVs (O: 2)

Students are required to turn in CVs for the annual evaluation process. From these data, we will collect information about how many conferences students are attending in order to present their own research, how many publications they have succeeded in getting accepted and/or published.

Source of Evidence: Student course evaluations on learning gains made

Target for O2: Overall Critical Thinking through Writing

At least half of our students will attend one conference and at least 7% will have a publication accepted.

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Partially Met

Our students delivered 6 conference papers in 2014-2015. For the overall student body (15), this averages to .4 conference papers per student. The actual number of students presenting at conferences was 5. One student had 2

articles submitted for publication and one had 2, which means 13% of our students submitted an article for publication

M 4: Exit Interviews (O: 5)

Student placement will be measured and evaluated based on their exit interviews, at which time they usually know what their future plans are.

Source of Evidence: Exit interviews with grads/program completers

Target for O5: Placements

At least 80% of our MA graduates will go on to a PhD program or be placed in a job relevant to their professional goals.

Findings 2014-2015 - Target: Partially Met

Out of 5 graduating MA students, 2 have entered PhD programs, one is pursuing a professional field related to WGSS and the remaining 2 are pursuing other career goals.

Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

2. Analysis of Assessment Findings: Where appropriate, discuss the significance of the findings in light of (1) the desired results, (2) findings from previous years, (3) recent changes in the educational program or the assessment process, etc. What did you learn from the assessment? In particular: (1) What strengths and weaknesses do the findings reveal about the program and/or the assessment process? (2) What impact have recent program changes had on student learning (indicate those program changes that resulted from previous assessment findings)? (3) What impact have recent changes in the assessment process had on the quality of the findings?

This cycle we had a smaller number of students presenting at conferences. One of the relevant factors is the last cycle we organized a conference which provided students opportunities to present their work. Future conferences, even on a small scale, would be useful to initiate our MA students into the process of preparing conference presentations. In our proseminar, students are required to write a conference abstract and submit to relevant conferences. Greater emphasis will be placed on encouraging students to submit abstracts. Overall, students are performing adequately on comprehensive exams and thesis projects, with a few students on the bottom or top end of the spectrum. Student publishing is difficult to achieve given the time limitation of a 2 year MA program, although students have found some online sites that provide publishing opportunities. We assign all students a mentor upon arrival to our program, and provide each student an annual written evaluation. Students are required to select an advisor at the end of their second semester. Our advising and proseminar have been successful in graduating our students within a 2 year time frame. We successfully graduated all 6 of the 2013 cohort.

3. Sharing and Discussion of Assessment Findings (optional in 2014-15): Describe how assessment findings are shared and discussed among program faculty and other stakeholders. In particular, make clear the process that is used to analyze assessment findings and to use them to make improvements in the educational program and/or the assessment process.

We discuss assessment finding in core faculty meetings.

4. Use of Assessment Findings for Program Improvement: Describe any changes in (1) the educational program and/or (2) the assessment process that are planned or being implemented in response to this year's assessment findings. Be as specific as possible with regard to the nature and timing of the changes to be made as well as their linkages to the assessment findings. Also, briefly summarize the status of previous years' action plans.

Our formalized annual evaluation of students has been successful in tracking student progress. The proseminar is also quite successful in preparing students to defend their thesis proposal in the first semester of their second year. We continue to be committed to our goal of moving students through the program within a two year time frame.