This course seeks to introduce students to the major approaches to, debates within, and key topics addressed by the interdisciplinary field of gender studies. Given this interdisciplinary field, we will draw on the resources of diverse academic areas -- including biology, anthropology, history, psychology, and philosophy -- in order to develop more complex and informed ways of understanding, interrogating, and analyzing the multiple ways that sex, gender, sexuality, and embodiment have been constituted, challenged, and reconfigured.

As we pursue this general line of inquiry, we will become familiar with some of the specific terminologies and histories at work in the vernacular of contemporary gender studies; examine some of the ways in which western medical practitioners have made sense of sexual difference, abnormality, and dis/ability; familiarize ourselves with the stakes at work in the political and social inclusion and enfranchisement of sexual minorities and gender-diverse folks; address the ways in which gender, sex, and sexuality are cross-cut and articulated interactively with race, class, and historical and geopolitical location; and become well-versed in multiple theoretical approaches to understanding issues of diversity and embodiment.

In addition to preparing students for upper-level coursework in areas both specifically and tangentially related to gender studies, this is also a course wherein skills in critical thinking and complex communication will be developed. In keeping with these course goals, creativity, mutual respect for and engagement of subjective and cultural differences, and a healthy intellectual curiosity are not just encouraged, but expected.

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