



DOROTHY F. SCHMIDT COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

Women Gender and Sexuality Studies (WGSS)

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Exam: Overview

The Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies MA degree program offers a non-thesis option also referred to as the comprehensive exam track. This option is particularly useful for students who are seeking a broad education in the field and who will demonstrate their areas of expertise by completing a comprehensive exam.

Students are given two weeks to complete the exam and are asked to answer 2 of 4 questions provided by the two committee members. These committee members will grade the responses as High Pass, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. In cases where committee members do not agree, a third faculty member chosen in consultation with the WGSS Director will provide another vote.

Satisfactory answers will be: thorough, explicitly answering all parts of the question and using the requested number and type of sources; well organized, with a coherent thesis and sustained argument; knowledgeable, with a synthesis of the material from course work and reading lists; and original (that is, answers may not include long excerpts of other people's work or the student's own work written for courses or other purposes). Minimum of 2500 words for each answer.

Unsatisfactory performance on any essay will result in failure of that portion of the exam. In the case of a marginal grade the student may be asked to orally defend the answer or rewrite sections of it. Students who do not receive an overall passing grade must rewrite the entire exam during the subsequent semester.

Exam: Timeline

Semester 3

Select a Chair for the exam committee as well as a second committee member. One of these two faculty must be a Core faculty member unless the Director approves an alternative arrangement. The student will work with the committee to create 2 lists, with each list including a minimum of 20 items (books, articles, media). While based on coursework, the lists should include some materials that the student has not already studied in coursework.

- 1.) General List: selections from across all of their coursework, with an emphasis on the core courses
- 2.) Targeted List: a list focusing on a particular area of interest, created in consultation with the faculty member with that specialty

By Week 14 of the semester, the student must submit the lists to the Director, using the Exam List form (available from the Center office and/or the Director). Both committee members must sign to indicate

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their approval of the lists.

Semester 4

Register for a 3-credit DIS for the Comprehensive Exam.

Students should register for a DIS in the semester they plan on completing the comprehensive exam. This DIS will count toward the total 30 credits required for the degree. The instructor for the DIS should be the same as the Chair for the comprehensive exams.