

Proposal to Change the Name of the Major, Minor, and Graduate Degrees Offered by the Women and Gender Studies Department

1 This proposal to change the name of major, minor, and graduate degrees from “Women
2 Studies” to “Women and Gender Studies” is the outcome of a unanimous agreement of the
3 faculty of the Women and Gender Studies Department, and it is consistent both with the recent
4 name change for the Department to “Women and Gender Studies” and the ensuing change of the
5 Department’s course prefix from “WOMS” to “WGS.”
6

7 The Humanities Council carefully considered the proposed degree name changes and
8 unanimously approved all three of them.
9

10 On June 23, 2008, the Department Chair, Nan Alamilla Boyd, consulted with Gil Herdt,
11 the chair of the Department of Sexuality Studies (formally Human Sexuality Studies). Professor
12 Herdt reported that the faculty had no objection to the change from “Women Studies” to
13 “Women and Gender Studies.” (Attachment A).
14
15

16 Historical Perspective

17 Women’s Studies¹ emerged as a field of study in the U.S. academy in the 1970s along
18 with other identity-based disciplines such as Ethnic Studies. It has its roots in the feminist and
19 activist movements of the 1960s. Early on, the field emphasized the material experiences of
20 women’s social, economic, and political exploitation or oppression in the U.S. In the 1980s,
21 writings by U.S. feminists of color and lesbians brought attention to the complexity of the
22 category of women and women’s identity, arguing that the study of women could not be
23 conducted through a single lens that reflected the experiences and perspectives of white, middle-
24 class, and U.S.-born women. In the late 1980s and 1990s, a global analysis emerged that
25 challenged the centrality of U.S. (and UK) perspectives and stressed a transnational analysis. At
26 the same time, scholars in the field began to challenge the concept of identity itself.
27 Poststructuralist and postmodern theories approached identity and experience as socially-
28 constructed narratives, and women’s studies as a field began to investigate the production of
29 gendered subjectivities, such as “woman” and “man,” as part of its curriculum. Shortly
30 thereafter, the rise of transgender studies also challenged definitions of “women” and the
31 parameters via questions of embodiment.² In the 1990s, the field began to expand its focus from
32 looking at women to looking at gender.³ This shift is not a complete one, where the study of

¹ “Women’s Studies,” with the apostrophe, is the more common way of identifying the field, signifying that the discipline *belongs to* women rather than has women as its proper object of study. The Women Studies Department at SFSU is unique in its use of the construction “women studies.” We, as a faculty, appreciate this unique distinction and agree with its grammatical intentions. Nevertheless, because most other departments use the possessive grammatical construction, this document will use the phrase “women’s studies” when referring to the field more generally.

² *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Eds Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle. New York: Routledge, 2006.

33 women is always replaced by the study of gender, but an emphasis on gender suggests that
34 “women” is a contested category of identity, always subject to a multiple determinants, including
35 race, ethnicity, nation, class, sexuality, and ability.
36

37 The expanding definition of the subject of women’s studies has caused a shift in the name
38 of the field as well as its various degrees. A 2007 report commissioned by the National
39 Women’s Studies Association reveals that there are 652 women’s and gender studies programs at
40 community colleges, colleges, and universities in the U.S. that enrolled nearly 89,000 students in
41 2005-06.⁴ The report also notes a trend in many institutions where women’s studies programs
42 and departments have changed their names and degrees to include the study of gender and, less
43 frequently, sexuality and/or feminist studies. A cursory web search reveals an abundance of
44 Women’s Studies Departments that have recently changed their name from “Women’s Studies”
45 to “Women’s and Gender Studies” (or other configurations): Yale University, University of
46 Northern Iowa, Swarthmore College, University of Colorado at Boulder, University of Nebraska
47 at Lincoln, University of Vermont, Bowdoin College, Bryn Mawr College, Washington
48 University at St. Louis, Indiana University at Bloomington, University of Richmond, Beloit
49 University, University of Southern California, Mississippi State University, Syracuse University,
50 Cornell University, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. At each website consulted, departments have
51 published an explanation, outlining the historical trajectory and many of the intellectual concerns
52 outlined above. Many programs, for instance, were hesitant to abandon earlier feminist/activist
53 conceptualizations of the field – and the constituencies that brought them to life – choosing a
54 combined, “women AND gender,” approach to re-naming.
55

56 57 Semantic perspective

58 The Women Studies Department at SFSU remains attached to the field’s foundations (as
59 well as its unique grammatical construction), but we want to signify, in the name of our various
60 degrees, the current nature of the field’s content. For this reason, we propose to change the name
61 of our major, minor and graduate degrees from “women studies” to “women and gender studies.”
62 The content of our courses will not change. They will continue to include identity-based studies
63 of women and men in transnational and multicultural contexts alongside deconstructive
64 approaches to the categories of analysis (gender, race, nation, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and
65 able-bodiedness) that frame our teaching and scholarship.

³ Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Agatha Beins, “Introduction,” *Women Studies for the Future* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2005). See also Leora Auslander, “Do Women’s + Feminist + Men’s + Lesbian and Gay + Queer Studies = Gender Studies?” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 9:3 (2001) 1-29.

⁴ “A National Census of Women’s and Gender Studies Programs in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education,” prepared by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago (December 26, 2007) 4.

66 Public Explanation (for publicity, website, etc):

67

68 **From Women Studies to Women and Gender Studies at SFSU**

69

70 The Women Studies Department at SFSU was founded in 1976 as part of a movement to bring
71 feminism and studies of identity into the university. At that time, most similar programs were
72 called “Women’s Studies.” The apostrophe can imply that the discipline *belongs to* women
73 rather than has women as its object of study. The program at SFSU chose to identify women as
74 our object of study, not as the owners of the field. The Women Studies Department at SFSU is
75 unique in its use of the construction “women studies.”

76

77 Today, who and what constitute “women” is a complex topic. Since the 1970s, woman of color
78 feminism, post-structuralism, transgender studies, and intersectional feminisms have transformed
79 how, why, and who we study as “women.” An added emphasis on “gender” in the name of the
80 department follows curricular, activist, and research changes to the field. “Women and Gender
81 Studies” suggests that “women” is a contested category of identity, always subject to a
82 multiplicity of determinants, including race, ethnicity, nation, class, sexuality, and ability.

83

84 The expansion of our Department and degree names does not signal a shift in our mission. The
85 content of our courses will not change. They will continue to include identity-based studies of
86 women and men in transnational and multicultural contexts alongside deconstructive approaches
87 to the categories of analysis (gender, race, nation, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and able-
88 bodiedness) that frame our teaching and scholarship.

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144 **Curriculum in Women Studies, SFSU**

145 **SFSU - BACHELOR OF ARTS IN WOMEN STUDIES**

146 **The major requires at least 39 units, of which 27 must be at the upper division level. 12**
 147 **units must be completed in the Women and Gender Studies core courses. Of the 27 elective**
 148 **units, 21 units of electives must be women and gender studies courses and 6 units of**
 149 **electives may be taken in other departments upon advisement.**

Core Courses		<i>Units</i>
WGS 200	Introduction to Women and Gender Studies	3
WGS 201	The Politics of Gender, Race, and Nation	3
WGS 690	Senior Seminar	3
WGS 698	Work Study in Feminist Projects	3
Total for core		12
Elective Courses		
Electives in women and gender studies courses (6 units can be taken in other departments on issues, topics, or skills based upon academic interests and goals. Approval by a women and gender studies adviser is mandatory.)		27
Total for major		39

150 **MINOR IN WOMEN STUDIES**

Program		<i>Units</i>
WGS 200	Introduction to Women and Gender Studies	3
WGS 201	The Politics of Gender, Race, and Nation	3
Any WGS 500-level course		3
Electives in women and gender studies		6
Electives outside the department upon advisement		3
Total for minor		18

151 **MASTER OF ARTS IN WOMEN STUDIES**

Core Requirements		<i>Units</i>
WGS 700	Introduction to Graduate Studies	3
WGS 710	Women's Consciousness and Resistance in Cross-cultural Perspectives	3
WGS 712	Queer Theories	3
WGS 713	Issues in Feminist Theory	3
WGS 820	Feminist Research Methods	3
Total for core		15

Units selected from the following on advisement:		3
WGS 750	Issues in Gender, Race, Class, and Sexuality	
WGS 760	Issues in Women's Literature and Culture	
WGS 770	Issues in Women and Public Policy	
Units selected from the following on advisement:		3
WGS 894	Creative Work Project	
WGS 895	Field Study Project	
WGS 898	Master's Thesis	
Related Field Units (upon approval of major adviser)		9
Minimum total		30

152

153 **Women and Gender Studies degrees at other institutions:**

154 **CSU - SONOMA**

155 **Women's and Gender Studies Department**

156 **WGS Major - 44 Units**

157 Core Requirements – 21 units

158 WGS 280 Women's Bodies: Health and Body Image (GE, category E)

159 or WGS 285 Men's Health, Men's Lives (GE, category E)

160 or WGS 350 Gender, Sexuality & Family (GE, category E) 3 units

161 WGS 375 Gender, Race and Class (GE, category D1; Ethnic Studies) 3 units

162 WGS 425 Feminist Research Methods (Fall only) 4 units

163 WGS 475 Contemporary Feminist Theory (Fall only) 4 units

164 WGS 485 Senior Seminar (Spring only) 4 units

165 Electives Any combination of courses on gender, highly 3 units

166 encouraged to be from WGS.

167 **Disciplinary Concentration – 15 units**

168 Students must specialize in one discipline (defined as any recognized major or minor in the

169 University) by completing 15 units of course work in that area as follows:

170 1. A course on gender (3-4 units). Examples include: Sociology of Gender, Women Writers,

171 Gender and Archeology or Women in U.S. History.

172 2. An introductory (3-4 units) course in the discipline (may be lower or upper division).

173 3. Additional upper division units (8-10 units) in the disciplinary area chosen in

174 consultation with a WGS advisor.

175 Skills Application in Education or Human Services – 8 units

176 WGS 390 Gender, Work and Organization (Spring only) 4 units
177 WGS 395/499 CIP/Internships 4 units

178 Internships must be completed in an appropriate organization selected in consultation
179 with a WGS advisor.

180

181 **Women's & Gender Studies Department**

182 **WGS Minor – 16 Units**

183 Core Courses – 10 units

184 WGS 280 Women's Bodies: Health and Body Image OR (GE Category E)

185 WGS 285 Men's Health, Men's Lives 3 units OR (GE Category E)

186 WGS 350 Gender, Sexuality and Family (GE Category E)

187 WGS 375 Gender, Race and Class 3 units (GE Category D1, Ethnic Studies)

188 WGS 475 Contemporary Feminist Thought 4 units

189 Supporting Courses – 6 units

190 Minors in Women's and Gender Studies must complete at least two courses from at least two of
191 the following five categories for a total of 6 units. These courses are selected in consultation with
192 a WGS advisor.

193 Note: Courses on women and gender offered in other departments can fulfill these requirements.

194 1. Women and Gender in American Society

195 2. Women and Gender in the Humanities

196 3. Biological and Psychological Perspective on Women or Gender

197 4. Women or Gender in International and Cross-Cultural Perspective

198 5. Special Topics on Women or Gender

199

200 **CSU NORTHRIDGE**

201 Requirements for the B.A. Degree

202 The major in Gender & Women's Studies is a 45 unit major. It consists of *required* lower
203 division and upper division courses, plus upper division electives and a concentration.

204

205 **Required Courses - Lower Division (3 Units)**

206 Students are required to take EITHER GWS 200 or GWS 210 to fulfill lower division
207 requirements

208 *GWS200 - Introduction to Women's Studies (3)*

209 **OR**

210 *GWS210 - Women, Work, and the Family (3)*

211 **Upper Division Requirements (15 Units)**

- 212 *GWS300 - Women as Agents of Change (3)*
- 213 *GWS 301 - Feminist Theories*
- 214 *GWS 302 - Feminist Methods*
- 215 *GWS 305 - Women's Studies Community Service*
- 216 *GWS 400 - Women's Studies Senior Seminar*
- 217

218 **Upper Division Electives (15 Units)**

219 15 units of electives must be taken from the list below. Up to 12 units of Electives can be
220 Experimental and Selected Topics courses, as long as the suffix is different. 3 units may be taken
221 outside the department in consultation with a Women's Studies advisor.

222 Additional courses require the consent of the Department Chair or Department Advisor. Students
223 may, with the approval of the Women's Studies chair, receive credit for up to 3 units of
224 independent study, which may be counted as an elective in the major.

225

Course #	Course Name	Credit
GWS 320	Women and Urban Life	3
GWS 340	Women, Gender, and Global Development	3
GWS 350	Gender, Race, Class, and Sexuality	3
GWS 360	Feminist Ethics	3
GWS 370	Women and Violence	3
GWS 380	Sexual and Reproductive Health	3
GWS 396A-Z	Experimental Topics in Women's Studies	3
GWS 410	Sex, Lies & Media	3
GWS 420	Women and Gender in Islamic Societies	3
GWS 430	Global Sexualities	3
GWS 495A-Z	Selected Topics in Women's Studies	3

226

227 **Concentration**

228 All Students must also complete a 12 unit concentration from the list of seven possible
229 concentration areas below. They may also design a concentration in consultation with the Chair
230 of Women's Studies.

231

- 232 *I. Philosophy & Religion (12 Units)*
- 233 *II. Race & Ethnicity (12 Units)*
- 234 *III. Communication & Media (12 Units)*
- 235 *IV. Law & Public Policy (12 Units)*
- 236 *V. Social Work & Welfare (12 Units)*
- 237 *VI. Criminology (12 Units)*

238 VII. Literature (12 Units)

239

240 **Total Number of Units.....45**

241

242

243 **UC Berkeley - Major Program**

244 **Prerequisites:** To declare the Gender & Women's Studies major, students must have completed

245 GWS 10 and GWS 20 and have a minimum GPA of 2.0.

246 **Upper Division Requirements:** The requirements for a Gender & Women's Studies major

247 consist of a minimum of eight upper division courses on gender and women's issues (30-32

248 units) distributed as follows:

249 • Core courses (20 units):

250 ○ 101, Doing Feminist Research

251 ○ 102, Transnational Feminisms

252 ○ 103, Identities Across Difference

253 ○ 104, Feminist Theory

254 ○ 195, Senior Seminar

255 • Electives (10-12 units):

256 ○ Three electives, at least one in the Department of Gender & Women's
257 Studies

258 ○ The other two electives may be fulfilled by classes offered by other
259 departments that are listed in "*Courses on Gender and Women*," published
260 each semester by the Department of Gender & Women's Studies.

261 **Honors Program:** Students must have a 3.3 for honors, a 3.5 for high honors, and a 3.7 for

262 highest honors. In all cases, the senior thesis must be deemed excellent.

263

264 **Minor Program**

Students in the College of Letters and Science may complete one or more minors of their choice, normally in a field both academically and administratively distinct from their major. To be admitted to the minor in Gender & Women's Studies, students must complete GWS 10. Minors in Gender & Women's Studies must complete five upper division courses as follows: any three of the core courses (GWS 101, 102, 103, 104) plus two electives in Gender & Women's Studies. A minimum GPA of 2.0 is required for the minor program.

265 **Attachment A: Copy of Consult Email Exchange with Gil Herdt of Sexuality Studies**

266

267 **On Jun 23, 2008, at 11:57 AM, Nan Alamilla Boyd wrote:**

268 Hi Gil,

269

270 How are you? Did you have a successful search? The candidates seemed quite strong.

271

272 As for me, I've survived the first year and am now just beginning to recover.

273

274 In any case, I wanted to let you know that the faculty unanimously decided at our January retreat
275 to change our name from Women Studies to "Women and Gender Studies." This does not

276 change our mission, goals, or course offering, just brings the department up to date with the field.

277 I'm just getting the paperwork started now, but wanted to give you a heads-up and let you know

278 that I'd be happy to meet to discuss any concerns you might have. We're changing the name of

279 the department, major, minor, and grad degree.

280 warmly,

281

282 Nan

283

284

285 **From:** Gil Herdt <[gherd@sfsu.edu](mailto:gherdt@sfsu.edu)>

286 **Date:** June 26, 2008 1:30:38 PM PDT

287 **To:** Nan Alamilla Boyd <alamilla@sfsu.edu>

288 **Subject:** Re: hi

289

290 Hi Nan--things are going well after a terribly hectic year. It was the end of my 10th year and I
291 am happy to be stepping down as Chair

292 of the Department; Rita Melendez will take over. I will step up to being Executive Director of
293 our newly reorganized centers.

294

295 Thanks for the advise about your department name change. I am surprised in a way, knowing
296 how hard fought the name was in the old days, but the combinatory name is more current. I
297 doubt if we will have any concerns, though I have asked the faculty about it. We changed our
298 name to Department of Sexuality Studies for the same reason.

299

300 I hope that all is well. Warmly, Gil

301

302 **From:** "Gilbert Herdt" <[gherd@sfsu.edu](mailto:gherdt@sfsu.edu)>

303 **Date:** July 2, 2008 8:13:01 PM PDT

304 **To:** "Nan Alamilla Boyd" <alamilla@sfsu.edu>, "Rita Melendez" <rmelende@sfsu.edu>

305 **Subject:** Re: hi

306

307 Hi Nan--I have checked with faculty and we are all happy with the change in your Department
308 name.

309

310 Good luck with it and Happy 4th.

311

312 Gil