



RICE HUMANITIES

Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality

COURSE SCHEDULE SPRING 2026

SWGS UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

The information on this handout is current as of Wednesday, October 22, 2025.

When in doubt, consider the General Announcements as authoritative.

Updated versions of this list will be posted at cswgs.rice.edu/courses.

SWGS 100 **Introduction to Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality**
Instructor: Vic Overdorf
TTh 10:50am-12:05pm

An introduction to the interdisciplinary study of these themes: 1) genders and sexualities as these intersect with race, class, migration status and other differences that shape our lives; 2) the social, political, and legal situations of women and LGBTQ+ people globally and in the United States; and 3) the production of gender and sexual identities and desires (e.g. queer, two-spirit, trans, nonbinary, asexual as well as normative). We will also touch on efforts to theorize gender, sexuality, race, class, and other differences and become acquainted with the concept of engaged research. This course is required for the SWGS major and the SWGS minor.

Distribution Group I; Analyzing Diversity.

CORE

RELI 115 **Black Gods of the Caribbean**
Instructor: Eziaku Nwokocho
M 4pm-6:29pm

In Caribbean religions, practitioners may seek to be possessed by the spirit. This course uses a diverse range of texts to examine the process of interacting with the divine. We will explore the vibrant spiritual energy that sustains communal connections during ceremonies and the transnational imaginations that animate Caribbean religious practices. Special attention will be given to Santería, Candomblé, Vodou, Myal, Palo Monte, and Revival Zion in the Americas.

Distribution Group I.

ELECTIVE; CRITICAL RACE

SWGS	200	Theorizing Sexuality and Gender Instructor: Carly Thomsen MW 4:00pm-5:15pm	This class builds on SWGS 100 to take a closer look at how sexualities and genders come to be known. Students will become familiar with queer, trans, and feminist theory and will see that key issues and debates appear in both scholarship and political activism globally and in the United States. The course addresses intersectional frameworks for understanding race, class, and other social relations; normative sexualities and genders; and non-normative and marginalized sexualities and genders (e.g. queer, two-spirit, trans, nonbinary, asexual and more). Theorizing is an activity but also a writing genre. We explore classic and current works in that genre. Finally, we examine the interaction between theory and research practice, via the concept of engaged research, showing that theoretical debates inform more accurate and just research practices. SWGS 100 is recommended but not required. Distribution Group I; Analyzing Diversity. CORE
CLAS	207	Love Life in Classical Antiquity Instructor: Ted Somerville TTh 10:50am-12:05pm	Love, sex, marriage and eroticism were important aspects of ancient Greek and Roman culture as they are of our own, though they were sometimes conceived of very differently. In this course we will consider the evidence for various aspects of sexual relationships in poetry, art, inscriptions, philosophy, and more. ELECTIVE
SWGS	238	Sex and Surveillance Instructor: Vic Overdorf Th 2:30pm-5:00pm	This course will examine interdisciplinary approaches to the study of surveillance as it intersects with gender, sexuality, race, disability, citizenship, and more. We will explore the stakes of visibility, hypervisibility, and invisibility, particularly as related to exercises of state power. The course will provide a forum to discuss issues like digital surveillance, sousveillance, espionage, reproductive surveillance, policing, panopticism, wartime technologies, and more through the lens of feminist and queer studies, black studies, and other interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks. Ultimately, the course will examine the stakes of sexed, gendered, and racialized surveillance projects by exploring histories, theories, and visions of futurity that are oriented towards liberation. ELECTIVE; CRITICAL RACE
MDIA ENGL	242 242	Sex and Media: Representation, Obscenity, and Scandals Instructor: Michael Dango W 4:00pm-6:30pm	This course considers the history, aesthetics, and politics of sex in media, including film, television, the Internet, and social media. Topics include the regulation and representation of sex in Hollywood cinema, the spread of celebrity scandals, the history and law of Internet pornography, and the mediation of sex on smartphone hookup apps. Distribution Group I. ELECTIVE
FWIS	256	Gossip Instructor: Caroline Fache MWF 9:00am-9:50am	This course explores gossip as a powerful cultural force across literature, film, television, and media. From romantic intrigue to viral scandals, we examine how gossip intersects with gender, power, and truth across different global contexts. Special attention is given to the role of social media in shaping contemporary rumor and reputation. ELECTIVE

MDHM	275 002	Narratives of Reproduction Instructor: Matilda Hemming TTh 9:25am-1:40am	This class will explore the politics of human reproduction through the lens of literature and film. We will consider how authors and filmmakers such as Harriet Jacobs, Toni Morrison, and Eliza Hittman reveal the ways in which racism, classism, and sexism shape people's experiences of reproductive healthcare. We will ask, what can fictional and nonfictional stories teach us about the lived experience of reproduction for marginalized people? And how do such narratives expand our understanding of current debates and legislative issues? ELECTIVE
FWIS	289	Fembots: Women and AI Instructor: Laura Richardson TTh 2:30pm-3:45pm	In this course, we'll explore how film and literature imagine the relationship between "femaleness" and artificial intelligence. From Siri and Alexa to Her's Scarlett Johansson, we'll consider why AI so often sounds female and what this reveals about gender expectations shaping—and shaped by—the artificial. ELECTIVE
LING	303	Language, Gender & Sexuality Instructor: Bryce McCleary TTh 1:00pm-2:15pm	This course examines the theoretical, cultural, and social grounding of gender and sexuality in language production and perception. We use analytical tools from linguistics, cognitive science, cultural anthropology, psychology and biology. Emphasis is placed on the historical role of gender and sexuality in such research, and the debates that result as perspectives shift. Distribution Group II. ELECTIVE
HART	307	Women in Ancient Art Instructor: Sophie Crawford-Brown F 2:00pm-4:30pm	This course traces representations of women in ancient art, with case studies drawn from across the globe. We will analyze and compare images of women as goddesses, rulers, priestesses, sex objects, and slaves, and will ask what it means to have power (or not) over one's own image. Careful consideration will be given to historical and cultural contexts, including mythological and religious traditions, intercultural connections, and changing artistic standards and practices. Distribution Group I. ELECTIVE
MDHM AAAS	315 317	Race, Medicine, and Mass Incarceration in the United States Instructor: Chin Jou TTh 2:30pm-3:45pm	There are some two million people locked up in local jails, state prisons, and federal prisons across the United States. Toward the beginning of this multi-disciplinary course, we will examine the historical development of this mass incarceration, as well as racial inequities in America's criminal justice system. We will then explore some of the medical issues in historical and contemporary U.S. carceral settings, including: medical experimentation on prisoner populations, mental health and suicide, substance abuse, HIV and sexual health, pregnancy and labor conditions, foodborne illnesses, chronic disease, temperature-related medical emergencies, and aging in prisons. Please be advised that some readings for this seminar will refer to instances of violence, sexual assault, and medical trauma. ELECTIVE; CRITICAL RACE

ENST 318 **Life Aquatic: Water Cultures and Blue Humanities**

Instructor: Rebecca Potts

TTh 4:00pm-5:15pm

Material and Metaphor. Destruction, Purification, Gestation. Hydrogen Hydroxide. Formless Chaos, Lifegiving Force. With what words, methods, and infrastructures do humans attempt to describe and contain water? How do the physical properties, geographies, and movements of water shape the (non)human social and sublime? In thinking together with scholars of gender fluidity, the Black Atlantic, chaotic feminine, flooding cities, cathartic oceans, (anti)colonial territory, plastic islands, and liquid capital, this course will provide students with a solid grounding in the shifting tides of the Blue Humanities—sometimes called “critical ocean studies.” While seawater flows throughout the texts and topics of the semester, the course is equally interested in those waters that trickle outside the boundaries of the bodies named Ocean. This course wades between the porous and co-constitutive borders of human bodies, bodies of water, and the body politic.

ELECTIVE

MDHM 320 **Nursing and Narrative**

Instructor: Matilda Hemming

MW 11:00am-12:15pm

This interdisciplinary humanities course examines cultural and historical stories about one of the most important professions in healthcare: nursing. With a focus on the US, we will study major nodes in the history of modern nursing, asking questions such as what are the dominant stories about nursing's meaning and what do they get right or wrong? How have nurses themselves used storytelling to articulate their professional identity? And how does nursing's ethic of care intersect with the medical humanities? We will answer these questions by examining a range of historical, literary, and media narratives of nursing from the mid-19th century to the present, exploring topics such as the complicated legacy of Florence Nightingale, the rise of professional and public health nursing, the changing gendered, racial, and class politics of nursing, nursing and radical health activism, and nurses' unique role in engaging with patient narratives. Class sessions will involve a mixture of in-class discussion of topic-based course readings and trips to local archives. We will also welcome regular guest speakers to talk about current issues in nursing today. This multidisciplinary course will culminate in a final group project gathering the oral histories of nurses currently working at the Texas Medical Center. The final third of the semester will be spent learning about the methods, ethics, and narrative possibilities of oral history as well as conducting interviews in small groups. No prior experience working on an oral history project required.

ELECTIVE

ANTH 321 **Social Life of DNA**

Instructor: Victoria Massie

W 1:00pm-3:30pm

This upper level seminar examines the increasing significance of genetics as a central component of our social, economic, and political life. As the potential applications of DNA to our social life increasingly appear endless, this course asks how is genetic information reshaping our understanding of the value of life itself? In addition to identifying markers, scientific knowledge production around genetic information is reconstituting key ideas of risk, care, capital that impact our ideas of disability, race, kinship, citizenship, nationalism, and justice. In this class, our aim is to ask a) what is historically and materially distinct about genetic information as a metaphor for social processes, b) how is the value of life itself being reproduced and transformed for whom, and c) what are potential consequences we face by relating to one another through the geneticization of social life?

ELECTIVE

SOCI	334	Sociology of the Family	This course will teach students the important influences and consequences of American family life. We will consider issues such as sex and sexualities, marriage and cohabitation, divorce, family structure, same-sex marriage, domestic violence, and household labor. We will also examine the role of social institutions and social inequality in shaping family norms and constraints on family behaviors.
SWGS	325	Instructor: Christina Diaz TTh 2:30pm-3:45pm	Distribution Group II; Analyzing Diversity. ELECTIVE
SOCI	351	Reproductive Health and Society	This course examines the social dimensions of reproductive health, with a focus on the cultural, political, and economic forces that impact people's reproductive lives. It analyzes how reproductive health policies, discourses, and experiences shape and are shaped by inequalities in society. Topics explored in this course include population control, abortion, contraception, pregnancy, birth, reproductive technologies, and reproductive aging, among others.
		Instructor: Miranda Waggoner MWF 10:00am-10:50am	Distribution Group II. ELECTIVE
FREN	370	Women in Tales of the Fantastic	This course will explore those stories "behind the story" of the 19th century—that strange and often misunderstood genre, the "fantastic tale." Reading such writers as Gautier, Balzac, and Maupassant, we will discuss this genre's anxieties about madness and machines, misbehaving objects, and especially about women and their bodies. Taught in French.
		Instructor: Linsey Sainte-Claire TTh 9:25am-10:40am	Distribution Group I. ELECTIVE
ENGL	378	Politics of Reproduction: Sex, Abortion, and	Cultural ideas about reproduction shape how we experience and understand gender and sexuality and ideas about gender and sexuality influence how we view reproduction. As such, we cannot challenge dominant ideas about gender and sexuality without critical conversations about reproductive issues. Because requirements for being considered a "good" woman are so closely connected to what it means to be a "good" mother, any analysis of gender requires critical engagement with ideas about reproduction—even for those of us who plan to avoid parenthood or do not have heterosexual sex. This class focuses on the politics of reproduction in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and the social and political relations that shape reproductive issues today. We will assess the ways that different women experience reproduction differently, considering throughout how the construction of gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, and geography inform understandings and experiences of reproduction. Throughout the course, we will take on the paradoxes, horrors, complexities, and joys of reproduction.
MDHM	378	Motherhood	ELECTIVE
		Instructor: Carly Thomsen MW 2:00pm-3:15pm	
ANTH	381	Medical Anthropology	Cultural, ecological, and biological perspectives on human health and disease throughout the world.
		Instructor: Victoria Massie TTh 10:50am-12:05pm	Distribution Group II. ELECTIVE

SWGS	385	Sexual Debates in the U.S.: Social and Cultural Contexts of Supreme Court Decisions Instructor: Brian Riedel TTh 10:50am-12:05pm	How do sex acts and sexualities enter public conversations over time? This course surveys a variety of sexual debates in the United States with a focus on the social and cultural contexts and the legacies of those debates. Topics vary, but examples include miscegenation, obscenity, abortion and sodomy. ELECTIVE
HIST	391	Queer History Instructor: Luis Campos MW 4:00pm-5:15pm	This course examines the history of queer sexualities from the pre-modern era to the present, analyzing ancient and medieval same-sex relations, Enlightenment appeals for queer liberation, 19th century sexology and the creation of the "homosexual," and modern gay and lesbian liberation movements. Distribution Group I. ELECTIVE
SOCI	407	Gender Seminar Instructor: Miranda Waggoner W 1:00pm-3:30pm	An overview of the construction and reproduction of gender as a social category. Course will compare various conceptualizations of gender and discuss structural-, interactional-, and individual-level processes that reproduce gender inequality. Will also explore interactions of gender with other axes of social difference, such as sexuality, race/ethnicity and social class. ELECTIVE
SWGS	496	Engaged Research Practicum Instructor: Anzi Dong, Brian Riedel Course credit for research time	An applied research complement to the Seminar consisting of six hours/week participating in a research-based project at a local public service agency that addresses the needs of women or is focused on gender and/or sexuality related work. Planning for the practicum takes place during the previous fall semester in consultation with the SWGS Director. Practicum projects are presented to a public audience. Permission of the instructor and some background in the study of women, gender or sexuality required. CORE
SWGS	497	Engaged Research Seminar Instructor: Anzi Dong, Brian Riedel M 2:00pm-4:00pm	Taken in conjunction with SWGS 496, the Seminar develops students' research skills and situates the practicum project within a range of perspectives on feminist theory and practice, grassroots organizing, and policy-making around issues of women, gender, and sexuality (for example: domestic violence, gender and the prison industry, reproductive freedom, or the feminization of AIDS.) CORE

SWGS GRADUATE COURSES

SWGS	501	Feminist Debates Instructor: Susan Lurie T 2:30pm-5:00pm	This course identifies and traces three streams of thought by debates about major issues in women's studies. While the content of these streams will vary, the course will always be attentive to the historical and theoretical context of the debates in question and to the intersection of these debates with others. Topics might include: public and private spheres; the relation between the local and the global links between gender and sexuality; the problem of identity; the relation between activist and academic feminism. CORE
HIST	514	Gender, Science and Technology Instructor: Elizabeth Petrick M 2:00pm-4:29pm	What is the relationship between gender, the production of knowledge, and the tools people create? Science and technology are sometimes believed to be objective and neutral, yet they are as embedded with biases and subjectivities as any human endeavor. In this course we will explore the relationship between gender, science, and technology across time and space, examining different kinds of science and technologies at within different historical contexts. Our goal is to understand how this relationship has been studied by historians, across different sub-fields, and what we might be able to conclude about it in terms of the effects gender has on science and technology, and vice versa. ELECTIVE
ANTH	521	Social Life of DNA Instructor: Victoria Massie W 1:00pm-3:30pm	This upper level seminar examines the increasing significance of genetics as a central component of our social, economic, and political life. As the potential applications of DNA to our social life increasingly appear endless, this course asks how is genetic information reshaping our understanding of the value of life itself? In addition to identifying markers, scientific knowledge production around genetic information is reconstituting key ideas of risk, care, capital that impact our ideas of disability, race, kinship, citizenship, nationalism, and justice. In this class, our aim is to ask a) what is historically and materially distinct about genetic information as a metaphor for social processes, b) how is the value of life itself being reproduced and transformed for whom, and c) what are potential consequences we face by relating to one another through the geneticization of social life? ELECTIVE
ENGL	541	Victorian Studies Instructor: Helena Michie W 2:00pm-4:500pm	A variable topics course. Please consult the English department website for additional information. Recent topics have included "Material Constructions, or What Things Have to Do With Us", and "On or About 1860". ELECTIVE
SOCI	607	Gender Seminar Instructor: Miranda Waggoner W 1:00pm-3:30pm	An overview of the construction and reproduction of gender as a social category. Course will compare various conceptualizations of gender and discuss structural-, interactional-, and individual-level processes that reproduce gender inequality. Will also explore interactions of gender with other axes of social difference, such as sexuality, race/ethnicity and social class. ELECTIVE

