

History Major Field

WOMEN, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Description of the Field

The three analytical categories of women, gender and sexuality represent distinct trajectories in this field of History. Yet all have been informed by advancements made in feminist studies, poststructuralism and queer theory, and all three remain in conversation with one another regarding the social, political and discursive construction of the human body and sexual difference. This field aims to historicize the categories of “woman” and “man” alongside categories of sexual orientation and the variable forms of feminine, masculine, and gender non-conforming peoples that have existed throughout the pre-modern and modern periods. From the Americas to Asia, Africa, and Europe, this field applies a cross-cultural comparative approach to understand historical and geographical differences in the understandings of what constitutes sex, sexuality and gender. Thus, students studying this field will learn to recognize how perceived sex differences have appeared over time as seemingly natural and fundamental. They will learn to explain the persistent inequality between men and women and the repression of sexual diversity. In doing so, they will question how the idea of an alleged “natural relationship” between male and female and heterosexual sexual relations have structured and legitimized hierarchical relationships of power between men and women, the Global North and South, and between empire and periphery.

Courses

HIST 208 – U.S. Women’s History
HIST 232 – Modern European Women’s History
HIST 236 – Modern Germany: Gender, Race, and Class
HIST 272 – Global History of HIV/AIDS
HIST 2xx – LGBTQ Survey of Early Modern U.S.
HIST 341 – African Women in Film and Fiction
HIST 352 – Family and State in East Asia
HIST 370 – Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East
HIST 371 – Colonial Body Politics
HIST 373 – Women of the Atlantic World
HIST 3xx – The History of Sexuality
HIST 3xx – Gender & Sexuality in Latinx America
HIST 3xx – Sex and Family in Post-War Europe
HIST 407 – Manhood/Masculinity in U.S. History

Planned New Courses

HIST 1xx – Introduction to Women’s, Gender and Sexuality History