

## **Women's Studies Concentration in Health, Science, and Technology**

### **I. Program Mission**

Feminist scholarship is based on the premises that gender is a significant category in the social organization of power, and that gender interacts significantly with other categories of difference such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, social class, citizenship, and nationality in the distribution of power and social benefits and harms. Through an understanding of the impact of gender across other categories of difference on the distribution of power and social benefits and harms, feminist scholarship provides insights for achieving a more just world and helping the disadvantaged.

### **II. Rationale**

In the modern world, science and technology are sources of power. Biomedical applications of science and technology promise power over the processes of life and death. Those who control the power of science are at an advantage in reaping economic benefits and social prestige. In contemporary culture claims validated by science have a status above all other claims, including scientifically validated claims about the basis of gender, sexuality and the impacts of biotechnology. Thus it is important to apply the theories and methods of feminist scholarship to the areas of science and its biomedical applications.

The Women's Studies Concentration on Gender, Science, and Health studies the impact of gender on the distribution of the power, prestige, and benefits of science and its applications to health and the human body. The concentration builds on other program strengths in multicultural and transnational studies. Courses in the concentration develop student research skills and enhance knowledge of feminist theories and methods in these areas, and include studies of feminist approaches to scientific inquiry, feminist bioethics, and feminist approaches to health, health care, health policy, health disparities, medicalization of the body and gender.

As an interdisciplinary program, the CSH concentration also emphasizes an historical perspective that addresses the history of women as healers and health providers as well as grassroots reclaiming of the female body and healing. The intersectional and interdisciplinary approach to science, the gendered dynamics in the fields of health and science are examined over time with particular attention to the changing gender division of labor and the coporatization of health care and science.

Courses in feminist science studies focus on the scientist as a situated knower in contrast to an idealized image of the perfectly rational, objective scientist. Feminist approaches examine the impact of gender and other contextual factors of the knower on the production, properties, and acceptance of scientific knowledge, and investigate a plurality of approaches to scientific inquiry.

Courses on feminist bioethics critique traditional bioethical frameworks in terms of their adequacy in recognizing and addressing ethical issues arising out of individual differences in persons. Feminist approaches to bioethics look at the impacts of new biomedical advances and the just distribution of their benefits through the lenses of gender and associated categories of sexuality, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and nationality. Other courses in the concentration may examine the scientific construction of categories of gender, sexuality, reproduction, disease, disability, and health, as well as the interaction between gender and consequences of medical interventions.

The twenty-first century promises to yield unprecedented advances and changes in science, biomedical research and health care, and with them the possibility of unprecedented inequalities in the distribution of power and social goods. The field of medicine and science has also been influenced by financial structures which in the last 35 years have lessened the autonomy and earning potential of the physician-which has shifted power-some have argued lessening the profession and therefore allowing more women, minorities, Foreign medical graduates (FMGs) within its ranks. The contradictions in these trends are among those to be addressed by faculty and students in this new concentration.

Collaborations will be furthered with programs and schools in Public Health, Nursing, Engineering, and Medicine to enrich the research and training available through the Concentration. Through research and education, the Women's Studies Concentration in Gender, Science and Health prepares the next generation of scientists, health care workers, policy makers, and citizens to understand and critically assess the impact of new technologies and changes in health and science on gender as it intersects with race, class, sexuality, and nation.

### **III. Areas of interest include:**

- **Feminist Approaches to Science Studies in Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives**
  - History of Science and Technology
  - Philosophy of Science and Theories of Knowledge -
  - Social Science Studies of Science
    - Gender and STEM Professions (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)
    - Gender and Science and Technology Policy
    - Women as healers and scientists
- **Feminist Approaches to Bioethics and Medical Ethics in Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives**
  - Human Reproduction
  - Environmental Ethics
  - Genetics/Genomics, Stem Cell Research, and the Life Sciences
  - Medical and Clinical Ethics
  - Pharmaceutical and Biotechnological Applications
  - Women and Health Care Policy and Practice
  - Sexualities and Gender Diversities

- **Health, Health Policy, and the Science of Sex and Gender in Global and Cross-Cultural Perspectives**
- Natural scientific analysis and construction of sex and gender differences
  - Social scientific analysis and construction of sex and gender differences
  - Gender and the construction of disease and disability
  - Gender differences in diseases and responses to medical interventions
  - Gender, social context, and health policy
  - Gender and human reproduction
  - Gender expression, sexual difference, and transgender policy
- Gender and Health Disparities

**IV. Affiliated Faculty:**

<b>Name/e-mail</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Areas of Interest</b>
Barnes-Farrell, Janet <a href="mailto:Janet.barnes-farrell@uconn.edu">Janet.barnes-farrell@uconn.edu</a>	Psychology	
Crawford, Mary <a href="mailto:Mary.crawford@uconn.edu">Mary.crawford@uconn.edu</a>	Psychology	
Desai, Manisha <a href="mailto:Manisha.desai@uconn.edu">Manisha.desai@uconn.edu</a>	Director, Women's Studies	
Hiskes, Anne <a href="mailto:Anne.hiskes@uconn.edu">Anne.hiskes@uconn.edu</a>	Philosophy, (Office of Stem Cell Research and Ethics).	Philosophy of Science and Gender; Feminist Bioethics
Kelly, Kristin <a href="mailto:Kristin.kelly@uconn.edu">Kristin.kelly@uconn.edu</a>	Political Science	
Magley, Vicki <a href="mailto:Vicki.magley@uconn.edu">Vicki.magley@uconn.edu</a>	Psychology	
Naples, Nancy <a href="mailto:Nancy.naples@uconn.edu">Nancy.naples@uconn.edu</a>	Sociology	Sexual citizenship, and reproductive rights.
Parekh, Serena <a href="mailto:Serena.parekh@uconn.edu">Serena.parekh@uconn.edu</a>	Philosophy	
Marysol Ascencio <a href="mailto:Marysol.Ascencio@uconn.edu">Marysol.Ascencio@uconn.edu</a>	Family Studies & Puerto Rican and Latin@ Studies	Public health, health disparities, human sexualities, and reproduction.
Ratcliff, Kay <a href="mailto:Katherine.Ratcliff@uconn.edu">Katherine.Ratcliff@uconn.edu</a>	Sociology	Women's health
Erickson, Pamela <a href="mailto:Pamela.Erickson@uconn.edu">Pamela.Erickson@uconn.edu</a>	Anthropology	Cross-cultural practices, traditional medicine, adolescents and reproduction, HIV/AIDs
Sylvia Schafer <a href="mailto:Sylvia.schafer@uconn.edu">Sylvia.schafer@uconn.edu</a>	History	

**V. Courses**

Women and Health (WS 2453/Soci)

Sociology of Sexualities (SOCI 3621/W)

Latinos: Sexuality and Gender (HDFS 3268)

Issues in Human Sexuality (HDFS 3277)

Sexualities, Activism, and Globalization (WS 2xxx)

Gender and Science (WS 2xxx)

Psychology of Women (WS3102/Psych 3102)

Women and Body Art (WS 3251)

Ethnicities, Sexualities, Modernisms (WS 3209/Arth 3040)