

**Department of  
Women's, Gender,  
and Sexuality Studies**

**GRADUATE PROGRAM  
HANDBOOK**

**2023-24**



**Stony Brook University**

## PREFACE

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### Important Notes

The Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Graduate Program Handbook serves as a guide to the policies and procedures in the [Graduate Bulletin](#). Any such policies and procedures in this handbook are subsidiary to the Graduate Bulletin. The bulletin is the official document recognized by Stony Brook University. Students are responsible for reviewing, understanding, and abiding by the university's regulations, requirements, and deadlines as described in official publications and calendars.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. Over the coming year, you may be given a copy of any changes in departmental, college, or university policy and procedure as an addendum. At the beginning of each academic year, a revised copy of the Graduate Program Handbook will be reissued as a PDF and distributed to all WGSS faculty and graduate students.

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## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **Fast Facts**

Graduate Degree Programs: PhD, MA, & Graduate Certificate  
First PhD & MA Students Enrolled: Fall 2014  
# of Current PhD Students: 24  
# of Current MA Students: 1  
# of PhDs Granted: 6  
# of MAs Granted: 6

### **WGSS Mission Statement**

The Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) prepares students to become future professionals, scholars, activists, and artists who engage critically with gender and sexuality issues in multicultural and transnational contexts. Our departmental mission is 1) to familiarize students with the histories of feminist thought and social movements, 2) to teach them how to apply feminist, queer, and transgender theories in their writing and research, and 3) to train them in developing interdisciplinary problem-based methods applicable within and beyond scholarly settings.

Our department offers a B.A., M.A., and Ph.D in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies as well as an undergraduate minor and a graduate certificate in the field. At the heart of all of our programs is a profound commitment to the critical study of gender and sexuality as an intellectual project indebted to past and present activist movements and committed to future social change. We believe in the transformative potential of feminist, queer, and trans studies, and we envision our innovative approaches to research, teaching, and mentoring as enacting positive effects in the world around us. Our courses provide students with the conceptual tools needed to analyze and challenge the gender and sexual norms that intersect with racial and ethnic formations, political and economic structures, and dominant standards of health and ability. The major and minor include opportunities for undergraduates to conduct original research, to develop community-engaged projects, and to complete on- and off-campus internships. In doing so, students prepare to launch careers in law, education, healthcare, social work, public policy, and community organizing. The M.A., Ph.D., and graduate certificate programs provide students with advanced training in theories of sex, gender, and sexuality, the history of feminist pedagogy and the formation of women's, gender, and sexuality studies as a field, and the development of boundary-pushing methodologies effective within academia and other non-academic research settings.

The WGSS Department is uniquely equipped to train students in the art of interdisciplinary research. Many of our core faculty hold graduate degrees or certificates in women's, gender, or feminist studies and, along with our over 50 associated faculty, work in and across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and health sciences. The department's areas of specialization include 1) the study of bodies, disability, and the politics of health; 2) the analysis of racialized and

sexualized representations in media, literature, performance, and social sciences; and 3) the critical examination of global economic processes and transnational social movements. As a department committed to collaboration and the process of producing knowledge collectively, we actively forge alliances with a wide range of feminist scholars, programs, and initiatives across campus in the hopes of enhancing gender and sexual diversity at Stony Brook University, in the state of New York, and far beyond.

## Graduate Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the PhD, MA, or graduate certificate in WGSS will be able to:

1. Summarize the historical emergence of the field of WGSS, and situate the field in relation to the changing politics and economics of the contemporary US university
2. Explain canonical, intersectional, and transnational feminist theoretical frameworks, and apply these critical tools to analyze social structures that positively or negatively influence local and global inequalities
3. Critically survey current feminist, queer, and trans scholarship, and identify gaps in the literature and new research opportunities
4. Design an interdisciplinary feminist research project based on an original research question, and develop a relevant methodological approach for finding answers and intervening in scholarly debates
5. Make an original and substantial contribution to interdisciplinary feminist scholarship through their dissertation or thesis as well as through other scholarly, community, and creative activities
6. Practice a multitude of feminist pedagogical strategies for diverse learning styles and outcomes in preparation to teach introductory and advanced courses in the field

## University Structure

**SUNY System.** Stony Brook is a part of the [State University of New York \(SUNY\)](#). The SUNY system spans 64 campuses across New York State, including research universities, academic medical centers, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, colleges of technology, and an online learning network. Key offices and bodies include the [Office of the Chancellor](#), the [Board of Trustees](#), the [University Faculty Senate](#), and the [Student Assembly](#).

**Stony Brook University.** [Stony Brook](#) is one of the four research university centers in the SUNY System. President Maurie McInnis presides over our campus, but is limited by the policies and budget decisions made by SUNY Central Administration. The Executive Vice President for Health Sciences Harold Paz oversees the Health Sciences Center on what is often

referred to as “East Campus,” and the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Carl Lejuez oversees our side known as “West Campus.” The [University Senate](#), which represents staff, faculty, and students, serves in an advisory capacity to the President and the Provost in most matters.

**College of Arts & Sciences.** The WGSS Department is located within the [College of Arts and Sciences \(CAS\)](#), which is headed by Interim Dean Axel Drees. Generally speaking, the CAS Dean’s Office determines how resources are allocated across the college, oversees our undergraduate curriculum, and must approve our requests to hire new faculty. The [Arts and Sciences Senate](#) plays an advisory role in the governance of CAS.

**Graduate School.** Under the direction of the Provost, the administration of the [Graduate School](#) rests with Dean Celia Marshikk and the administrative staff of the Graduate School in conjunction with the [Graduate Council](#). The Graduate School oversees the WGSS PhD, MA, and graduate certificate programs, and we are subject to the policies and procedures outlined in the [Graduate Bulletin](#) (which is updated each semester).

## **Department Structure**

**WGSS Department Chair.** Liz Montegary is currently the chair of the WGSS Department. She was elected by the WGSS Core Faculty to serve as chair from Fall 2022 to Spring 2025. At the departmental level, her primary tasks are to oversee the WGSS Department’s staff, faculty, and students and to ensure excellence in our unit’s contributions to research, teaching, and service.

**WGSS Executive Committee.** Liz Montegary oversees the WGSS undergraduate and graduate programs in consultation with the Graduate Program Director (Ritch Calvin) and the Undergraduate Program Director (Nancy Hiemstra). This Executive Committee handles, among other things, course scheduling, teaching assignments, and curriculum reviews. Ritch and Nancy have been appointed to serve in their positions from Fall 2022 to Spring 2025.

**WGSS Graduate Studies Committee.** As the Graduate Program Director, Ritch Calvin oversees the WGSS Graduate Studies Committee. The Graduate Studies Committee administers the WGSS PhD, MA, and Advanced Graduate Certificate programs. As outlined below, the WGSS Graduate Studies Committee creates, reviews, and adapts program policies, considers requests for exceptions to degree requirements, and, in some cases (as outlined below), handles internal fellowship nominations.

**WGSS Core Faculty.** The WGSS Core Faculty consists of Mary Jo Bona, Ritch Calvin, Lisa Diedrich, Victoria Hesford, Nancy Hiemstra, Jenean McGee, Cristina Silva, and Liz Montegary. Graduate admissions decisions, PhD and MA student annual reviews, and, in some cases (as outlined below), internal fellowship nominations are decided collectively by the Core Faculty.

**WGSS Graduate Student Representative.** Each year, current WGSS graduate students elect someone to serve as the WGSS Graduate Student Representative. This student attends WGSS



Department Meetings and serves as the primary liaison between faculty and graduate students. The Graduate Student Representative also participates in the annual graduate admissions process.

**WGSS Associated Faculty.** The WGSS Department has approximately 50 Associated Faculty from more than a dozen departments across campus. Although associated faculty do not hold any departmental decision-making power, they are considered WGSS graduate faculty and can be counted as “internal” to WGSS for the purposes of assembling Exam and Dissertation Committees (as explained in detail below).

## PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

### At-A-Glance

Graduate Coursework: 48 total credits (16 total classes)

*Core Courses: 12 credits (4 classes)*

*WGSS 600-level Electives: 9 credits (3 classes)*

*Additional Electives: 27 credits (9 classes)*

Teaching Experience

Foreign Language Requirement

Comprehensive Exam

Prospectus Review

Dissertation Defense

### Graduate Coursework

In addition to the minimum requirements of the Graduate School, WGSS PhD students are required to complete 48 credits of graduate coursework. At Stony Brook, this is the equivalent of 16 classes. You must take four core classes (12 credits) and twelve elective classes (36 credits).

#### *Core Courses*

**WST 600:** Feminist Interdisciplinary Histories and Methods (offered every Spring)

**WST 601:** Feminist Theories (offered every Fall)

**WST 698:** Practicing WGSS/Teaching Practicum (offered every Spring)

**WST 680:** Interdisciplinary Research Design (offered every Fall)

All students seeking the PhD must take the required courses listed above when they are offered.

During your first year, you are encouraged to take WST 601 in the Fall and WST 600 and WST 698 in the Spring. In addition to providing you with a strong foundation for the rest of your coursework, this approach also creates in-class opportunities for you to build community with your cohort.

In the Fall of your third year, you should enroll in WST 680. This research design course is designed to provide you with support as you write the prospectus for your dissertation and start applying for grants and fellowships.

These courses cannot be replaced by Independent Study or Directed Reading credits, except in the most unusual circumstances and by petition to the Graduate Program Director. This petition

would need to be signed by the instructor overseeing the Independent Study or Directed Reading and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.

In some cases, students may be permitted to apply transfer credits to cover these Core Course requirements. The Graduate Studies Committee must approve requests to accept comparable courses taken previously.

### *Elective Coursework*

You are also required to take twelve elective graduate courses. Three of those courses must be 600-level WGSS courses. You have a great deal of flexibility in terms of the remaining nine elective courses.

### WGSS 600-level Electives

**WST 610.** During most semesters, the WGSS department offers at least one section of WST 610: Advanced Topics in WGSS. Different instructors teach the course each year, so every iteration covers a new topic. We strongly encourage students to fulfill their WGSS Electives requirement by taking WST 610 several times.

**WST 600 or 601.** Alternatively, you may wish to fulfill one of your 600-level WGSS Elective requirements by taking WST 600 or 601 again. Each year, a different instructor teaches the Feminist Interdisciplinary Histories and Methods and Feminist Theories seminars, which means the content varies greatly by year. As such, WST 600 and 601 can serve as valuable electives for students.

**WGSS-Approved 600-level Electives.** In some cases, students can count a 600-level gender- or sexuality-themed class offered by another department toward their WGSS elective requirement. Students should contact the Graduate Program Director before enrolling in the course to seek approval. The Graduate Studies Committee will review any requests to substitute non-WST classes for the WGSS 600-level elective requirement.

### Additional Electives

To fulfill the remaining Additional Electives requirement, you must take nine other 500- or 600-level graduate courses. You are welcome to take these classes in any department at Stony Brook or through the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium. If you completed graduate coursework before enrolling in the PhD program, you may be able to apply transfer credits to fulfill these elective requirements.

Any courses you take toward a Graduate Certificate will automatically count toward the Additional Electives requirement. This includes Independent Studies or Directed Readings completed in another department for a Graduate Certificate.

There are limits on how many WGSS Independent Studies (WST 599) and WGSS Directed Readings (WST 690) can count toward the Additional Electives requirement.

**WST 599.** Students who enter the PhD program at G3 status (i.e. having earned less than 24 graduate credits previously) can enroll in an Independent Study in the Fall and/or Spring of their first year. You are permitted to count up to two Independent Studies (for a total of 6 credits) toward your Additional Electives requirement. If a G4 PhD student wishes to complete a creative independent project under the direction of a faculty supervisor, then they can petition to enroll in 3 credits of WST 599.

**WST 690.** All PhD students are permitted to count one Directed Reading (WST 690) (for a total of 3 credits) toward the Additional Electives requirement. You should enroll in a Directed Reading only after you have completed most of your coursework and are preparing for your Comprehensive Exam. You are allowed to complete more than one Directed Reading as you are preparing for your exam (with different members of your Exam Committee), but only one can count as credits toward your Graduate Coursework requirements.

*Note: WGSS Self-Directed Readings (WST 696) do not count toward the Additional Electives requirement. You should enroll in a Self-Directed Reading only after you have completed most (if not all) of your coursework and are preparing for your exams.*

### *Helpful Hints*

- Take classes with instructors you think you might want to work with more formally. Seminars are a great way to get to know potential mentors and to begin establishing a mentoring relationship.
- Think about how you will position yourself as a WGSS scholar: which inter/disciplines will you be in conversation with? Take courses in the relevant departments and with faculty with expertise in these areas.
- Enroll in courses that will provide you with training in the methodologies you plan to use in your doctoral research. Look for courses that will provide you with a foundation in the histories and theories you will need to know to execute your project. The topics don't need to align perfectly with your research interests; it's more about the broader frameworks you'll be exploring.
- Use writing assignments for your seminars as an opportunity to start writing toward your imagined dissertation project or to develop conference papers, journal articles, or grant proposals.
- Embrace seminars as opportunities to practice your reading, writing, analytic thinking, critical debate, public speaking, and peer-review skills.

- Start building a network of supportive colleagues. Connect with your cohort and with other WGSS PhD, MA, and certificate students. Get to know potential collaborators and writing partners from across the university.

### *Transfer Credits*

Students who hold an MA in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies or a master's degree from a related discipline can request their transcripts be evaluated by the Graduate Program Director in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee. You may be able to apply up to 18 credits of previous graduate coursework toward your PhD at Stony Brook University. In most cases, those credits will count toward the Additional Electives requirement, but there may be some instances where transfer credits can be applied to cover Core Course or WGSS 600-level Elective requirements.

### *Inter-University Doctoral Consortium*

The Inter-University Doctoral Consortium (IUDC) offers eligible Stony Brook PhD students in the arts and sciences the opportunity to take graduate courses not offered at their home institution at distinguished universities throughout the greater New York area (including Columbia, CUNY, Fordham, New School, NYU, Princeton, Rutgers, and Teacher's College of Columbia).

To be eligible, WGSS PhD students must have completed one academic year of full-time study at Stony Brook and be in good academic standing. WGSS MA students are ineligible. You cannot take more than 3 IUDC courses per academic year and cannot take more than 2 IUDC courses in a single semester.

For WGSS PhD students, IUDC courses would count toward your Additional Electives requirement. Only in the most unusual circumstances would students be permitted to petition the Graduate Studies Committee to count IUDC courses toward Core Courses requirement or WGSS 600-level Elective requirement.

You are strongly encouraged to discuss your IUDC plans with the Graduate Program Director and/or your Primary Advisor as soon as possible. We want to make sure that you're staying on track with your coursework requirements, but we may also have suggestions for navigating the bureaucratic procedures. The Graduate Program Coordinator will also be a valuable resource on this front.

The registration process requires signatures from the WGSS Department (Department Chair, Graduate Program Director, or your Primary Advisor), the Stony Brook IUDC Coordinator, the instructor of the IUDC course you're planning to take, and the Host School's Dean or IUDC Coordinator. As such, planning ahead is crucial. For more information on IUDC and the registration process, please visit the Graduate School's [Inter-University Doctoral Consortium](#) website.

## **Teaching Experience**

Teaching is a vital component of graduate education. This is especially true within the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. As such, our graduate program emphasizes the importance of becoming familiar with feminist pedagogical approaches and gaining formal WGSS teaching experience.

All PhD students are required to take WST 698: Practicing WGSS/Teaching Practicum and to acquire a one-semester minimum of formal teaching experience (even if they are unsupported or on a fellowship not requiring teaching duties). We firmly believe that one of the best ways of learning to teach is by doing – by gaining experience in instructional design, classroom management, and assessment techniques.

Students who are assigned online Teaching Assistantships are required to complete the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)'s two-part Online Teaching Certificate course. This course is free, completed online, and offered multiple times throughout the calendar year (summers included).

Teaching Assistantships are the primary means through which WGSS PhD students access funding at Stony Brook, so we are very aware of the dual role you will occupy within the university as both a student and a worker. The WGSS Department looks for ways to ensure your employment experience complements your educational experience. We aim to provide students with strategic opportunities to develop their Teaching Portfolios and meaningful classroom experiences that will advance their research agendas. See below for more information on Teaching and Funding.

## **Foreign Language Requirement**

PhD students are expected to have a good command of at least one language other than English. The language of instruction for WGSS courses is English, so all graduate students must demonstrate full command of written and spoken English.

Students for whom English is a second language are exempt from any additional foreign language requirement, unless they are planning to undertake research that requires proficiency in a language other than English or their native language.

Students must fulfill your Foreign Language requirement before you take your Comprehensive Exam. You are encouraged to discuss your plans for fulfilling the Foreign Language requirement with the Graduate Program Director during your first year, as we recommend completing this requirement by the end of your second year.

You can fulfill the Foreign Language requirement in one of three ways:

- 1) Earning a grade of B or better in a graduate-level translation or language acquisition course taught at Stony Brook. Credits for a graduate translation course do not count

toward the Graduate Coursework requirements. You may also request permission to have a translation course taken at another institution count toward the requirement. You will need to give a copy of the course syllabus and your transcript (showing a grade of B or better for the class) to the Graduate Program Director, who will review your request in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee.

- 2) Passing an examination consisting of two parts, each one hour long, to be taken with a dictionary: 1) read a short critical, scholarly, or theoretical article, summarize it in English, and then discuss with the proctor of the exam; 2) translate a short scholarly article or passage of medium difficulty. Whenever possible, this exam should be given by WGSS Core or Associated Faculty.
- 3) Passing an hour-long oral examination. Students intending to do interviewing or field research in this foreign language are strongly encouraged to choose this option. Again, whenever possible, this exam should be given by WGSS Core or Associated Faculty.

## Comprehensive Exam

One of the most significant milestones in the WGSS PhD program is the Comprehensive Exam. The Comprehensive Exam is designed for you to show that you have the historical, theoretical, and methodological foundations needed to undertake doctoral research. The exam process is intricately connected to your dissertation project and serves as a launching pad for the dissertation prospectus and the dissertation itself.

While you must demonstrate the breadth of your knowledge (i.e. your familiarity with interdisciplinary methods; feminist, queer, and trans theories; and the scholarly debates and trends in the fields most relevant to your research), you are also required to prove the depth of your knowledge when it comes to your specific area of research (i.e. your expertise on the topic your dissertation will explore).

Upon passing the Comprehensive Exams, you will “advance to candidacy.” That is, you will become a PhD candidate. You will want to update your CV to reflect this change, as this status matters. PhD candidates are “ABD”: they have completed **a**ll the requirements for a PhD **b**ut the **d**issertation. Many grants and fellowship list “advancement to candidacy” as an eligibility requirement. Similarly, adjunct teaching positions often require that an applicant be a PhD candidate or hold a Master’s degree.

PhD students will normally take their comprehensive examination no more than one year after completing their coursework. To stay on track with your degree progress, students should advance to candidacy before the end of their third year. If you have not taken your exams by the end of the third year, this will be discussed during your Annual Review and may result in your advisor and/or the Graduate Studies Committee developing a plan of action to get you back on track. See below for more information on Satisfactory Progress in the program.

## *Brief Overview*

The Comprehensive Exam consists of two parts (a written component and an oral component) and is based on a three-part Reading List developed by the student in consultation with their Exam Committee.

The Written Component consists of three 8-hour days spread across one week. Each of the three days is dedicated to one part of the Reading List. On each of the days, your Exam Chair will send you the question(s) prepared by the member of your Exam Committee in charge of the list scheduled for that day. You have the whole day to answer the required questions and submit them to the Exam Committee. See below for more information.

The Oral Component usually takes place one or two weeks after the Written Component and often lasts approximately 1.5 hours. This component occurs as an in-person meeting between you and your Exam Committee. (With permission from your committee, this meeting can take place virtually.) Your committee members will ask you to clarify and/or elaborate on what you submitted for the Written Component. See below for more information.

Students are responsible for scheduling their Comprehensive Exam. At least three months before you plan to take your exam, send your Exam Committee a “Doodle Poll” (or similar survey) to determine their availability. The Graduate Program Coordinator can help you secure a room on campus with any necessary A/V equipment (in case a committee member will be participating remotely).

### **Exam Preparation To-Do List:**

- Discuss plans with Primary Advisor
- Assemble Exam Committee
- Compile Reading List
- Study! Strategically use Directed & Self-Directed Readings.
- Schedule the Written & Oral Components (at least 3 months in advance)
- Submit Exam Committee’s approval of Reading List (at least 1 month before exam)

## *Exam Committee*

It is never too early to start thinking about your Comprehensive Exam. At the very least, you should start discussing the exam with your Primary Advisor during your second year. Your advisor will provide crucial guidance as you begin compiling your Reading List and assembling your Exam Committee.

Your Exam Committee will consist of your Primary Advisor and at least one other WGSS faculty members (either Core Faculty or Associated Faculty). It is common for the third person to also be WGSS faculty, but there may be cases where students petition to have an “external” member on their Exam Committee (a non-WGSS Stony Brook professor or someone from another university).



Each of your committee members will be responsible for overseeing one of the three parts of your Reading List. As such, your committee members should play a role in the development of your list. This means that the process of compiling your Reading List and assembling your Exam Committee takes place simultaneously. Your Primary Advisor will help you strategize about how to organize your list, which professors could oversee the different parts, and when to reach out to them about serving on your Exam Committee.

Many students find it useful to complete Directed Readings (WST 690) with some or all of their Exam Committee members as they prepare for the exam. Because you are required to meet regularly with the person overseeing your Directed Reading, WST 690 provides you with the opportunity to discuss the materials on your reading list with your mentors while also developing working relationships with them. You may not enroll in a Directed Reading without permission from the instructor. Generally speaking, Directed Readings should be set up at least one semester in advance.

Once you have completed your coursework requirements, you can also enroll in Self-Directed Readings (WST 696) while preparing for the exams. In most cases, you would enroll in WST 696 credits with your Primary Advisor. It is up to you two to decide how to incorporate Self-Directed Readings into your exam prep process and what satisfactory completion would entail. You may not enroll in a Self-Directed Reading without permission from your Primary Advisor.

You will need to ask one of your committee members to serve as your Exam Chair. This is strictly an administrative position. During the Written Component, the Exam Chair will be responsible for collecting the questions from your other committee members and then sending them to you on the designated days. During the Oral Component, the Exam Chair will serve as “emcee” of the event – facilitating the discussion, keeping track of the time, and overseeing the committee’s decision-making process about whether you have passed the exam.

In most cases, your Exam Committee will become your Dissertation Committee. You should also keep this in mind as you’re assembling your committee. While there are certainly instances where it makes sense to adjust your committee after passing your Comprehensive Exam, students often find it helpful if there is a continuity in mentorship across the exam process and into the writing of the dissertation.

*Note: The person who serves as your Exam Chair cannot also serve as your Dissertation Advisor. Since your Primary Advisor and your Dissertation Advisor (often the same person, but not always) have a vested interest in you passing your exams, you are required to have a different person serve as Exam Chair and oversee the proceedings. Keep this in mind as you plan for your Comprehensive Exam and begin assembling your Dissertation Committee. See below for more information on the composition of Dissertation Committees.*

## *Reading List*

Students will work with their Primary Advisor to determine the precise format of their reading list. While there is a basic structure that all reading lists must follow, you have a great deal of flexibility here.

The purpose of the Reading List is for you to demonstrate your breadth and depth of knowledge and to show that you are fully prepared to undertake your proposed dissertation research. Since every dissertation project is different (especially in an interdisciplinary program like WGSS), we know that every Reading List will be unique. That said, you are strongly encouraged to ask your Primary Advisor or the Graduate Program Director for sample reading lists. You can also reach out to other WGSS PhD students who have already passed their exams to see if they will share their lists and their experiences.

The Reading List must be divided into three parts that correspond, in whatever way you and your Primary advisor see fit, with these three themes:

- 1) **Feminist theories/interdisciplinary methods.** This portion of your list should lay the theoretical and/or methodological foundation for your dissertation research.
- 2) **One of the PhD program's four areas of specialization:** 1) globalization & transnational social movements; 2) media analysis and/or the politics of representation; 3) bodies, disability, and the politics of health; or 4) critical analyses of sexuality. This portion of your list often situates your dissertation project within broader field/s of study. You can be quite creative in how you engage with the program's areas of specialization.
- 3) **Special topic area.** This portion of the list deals most directly with the topic of your dissertation.

Generally speaking, your Reading List will narrow in focus and scope across the three parts – starting with your theoretical/methodological foundations, moving into an exploration of the fields your project plans to engage, and ending with a deeper dive into your specific area of expertise.

One month before your scheduled Comprehensive Exam date (the first day of the Written Component), you must submit proof to the Graduate Program Director that your Reading List has been approved by your Exam Committee. This can be done over email. For instance, you can send a copy of your Reading List to your Exam Committee and the Graduate Program Director and ask your committee members to “reply all” with their approval of the list. The Graduate Program Director will add your Reading List to your WGSS file.

## *Written Component*

The Written Component of the exam will take place over the course of a single week and will consist of three 8-hour days. (For instance, you could do your exam on Mon, Wed, and Fri, taking Tues and Thurs to rest and recover.)

Each of the three days is dedicated to one part of the Reading List. Your Exam Chair will send you the question(s) you need to answer that day, and you will have eight hours to compose and submit your response (which, in most cases, amounts to approximately ten double-spaced pages of writing).

While all Comprehensive Exams must follow this general format, you and your Primary Advisor have lots of room to adapt the process to your needs and preferences. For instance, you can decide what time you will start your exams, which days of the week you take them, the order in which you will do the three parts, how many questions you will answer each day, and whether your committee members will give you a choice of which questions to answer.

### *Oral Component*

The Oral Component is often scheduled during the two weeks following the Written Component. This component brings you together with your entire exam committee for a meeting that usually lasts 1.5 hours. This meeting usually takes place on campus, but can be held virtually.

Your Exam Chair will facilitate the Oral Component and keep time during the meeting. In most cases, you will spend approximately 20 to 30 minutes on each part of your Reading List (i.e. each day of the Written Component). The committee member who wrote the questions begins and leads their section, but the other committee members can chime in as they see fit.

During the Oral Component, you will be asked to expand on what you've written, clarify portions for your committee, and, sometimes, respond to exam questions you didn't answer in writing. In many cases, the Oral Component is a generative conversation where you can further demonstrate your mastery of your Reading List and explain how these historical, theoretical, and methodological frameworks will inform your dissertation project. It is also common to reserve time at the end of the meeting to discuss the next steps you'll take toward writing your prospectus and advancing your doctoral research.

### *Exam Outcomes*

At the end of the Oral Component, after each of your committee members have asked you about their respective questions, you will be asked to step out of the room while your Exam Committee discusses your overall performance in the Written and Oral Components.

Your committee will determine whether you satisfactorily demonstrated your breadth of knowledge in women's, gender, and sexuality studies (i.e. familiarity with interdisciplinary methods and feminist, queer, and/or trans theories) and indicated your deepening knowledge of your proposed dissertation project.

The Comprehensive Exam may be passed or failed. If a student fails their Comprehensive Exam, they can retake the Written and Oral Components once more, six weeks after the initial exam was scheduled. If a student were to fail the Comprehensive Exam a second time, they will face likely dismissal from the program, and next steps would have to be discussed with the Graduate School.

### *Clarification: Comprehensive Exam & the WGSS MA Degree*

Passing the Comprehensive Exam does not mean that you have earned an MA in WGSS. The Comprehensive Exam is a central requirement for the PhD; it cannot also be used to fulfill the requirements for the MA (which is an entirely different degree). This policy is officially in effect as of Fall 2020 and applies to any PhD student starting the program this semester or at any point after.

If a PhD candidate (i.e. a student who passed their Comprehensive Exam) withdraws from the program before completing their dissertation, they will have the option of substituting their Comprehensive Exam for the thesis required for the MA degree. As such, they would be able to leave Stony Brook with an MA in WGSS.

If a PhD student (i.e. a student who has not taken their Comprehensive Exam) wants to leave the program, they can petition the Graduate Studies Committee for permission to switch into the MA program. If approved, they will work with the Graduate Program Director and their Primary Advisor to determine whether they will complete the degree requirements by writing an MA thesis or by substituting a PhD Comprehensive Exam.

### **Prospectus**

#### *Dissertation Research Credits*

After completing your coursework, taking your comprehensive exam, and advancing to candidacy, you will still need to register for 9 credits to maintain full-time status at the university. Generally speaking, students meet this requirement by enrolling in WST 699 (Dissertation Research on Campus), WST 700 (Dissertation Research off Campus), or WST 701 (Dissertation Research off Campus – International).

You should consult your Dissertation Advisor and/or the Graduate Program Coordinator to determine which designator makes sense for you. In most cases, you will register for 9 credits of dissertation research with your Dissertation Advisor.

*Note: You can only register for WST 699, 700, or 701 AFTER you've advanced to candidacy, but it is okay if you are still working on the prospectus and have not officially begun dissertating yet.*

#### *Dissertation Committee*

Within three months of passing the Comprehensive Exam, you must be prepared to schedule your Prospectus Review with your Dissertation Committee. This must be scheduled at a date no later than one year after completion of coursework. Shortly after passing your exam, you should discuss your timeline with your Dissertation Advisor and start finding out your Dissertation Committee's availability for the Prospectus Review.

In many cases, your Primary Advisor will become your Dissertation Advisor. That said, there may be instances where students choose to switch advisors as they shift into the dissertation process. You can always seek guidance from the Graduate Program Director or the Department Chair as you are making decisions about your Dissertation Advisor.

In consultation with your Dissertation Advisor, you will discuss the composition of your Dissertation Committee. In many cases, your Exam Committee will become your Dissertation Committee. That said, there may be situations where students may want to make changes to their committee or invite additional mentors to their project.

Your Dissertation Committee must consist of at least four professors: your Dissertation Advisor; one “internal” committee member; one “external” committee member; and a fourth person who can be “internal” or “external.” WGSS Core Faculty are always considered “internal,” and WGSS Associated Faculty can be considered “internal.” The “external” committee member is often a professor from an entirely different institution who has expertise in your specific area of research, but, in some cases, this role might be filled by a Stony Brook professor who is not WGSS Core Faculty.

Note: Your Dissertation Advisor must be WGSS Core Faculty. In some cases, the Graduate Program Director will consider petitions from students to request a WGSS Associated Faculty member serve as their Dissertation Advisor. There may also be instances where students elect to have someone from outside WGSS serve as a Dissertation Co-Advisor, but that person cannot also count as the “external” committee member. You would still need to find another “external” person.

While you are required to have at least one “external” committee member at your Dissertation Defense who will sign off on your complete dissertation, it is up to you and your Dissertation Advisor to determine when to bring the external member(s) on to your project. In some cases, external members join the committee at a very early stage and participate in the Prospectus Review and the research and writing process. In other cases, external members join the committee at a very late stage and only see a complete draft of the dissertation.

### *The Prospectus*

Once you’ve established your Dissertation Committee, you will need to consult with your Dissertation Advisor as you complete your Prospectus. In some cases, the other members of your Dissertation Committee will play a role in overseeing the development of your prospectus. You should be in regular conversation with each of your committee members to clarify their expectations and to establish a clear process for gaining their approval on your Prospectus.

The Prospectus is your dissertation project proposal. You will likely have a draft of your prospectus done before you even take your Comprehensive Exam, as you will have crafted a version during WST 680. As such, after you pass your exam, you will not be starting from scratch; instead, you’ll just be working to finalize the document and prepare for your Prospectus Review.

The Prospectus must propose a project appropriate for the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Not counting footnotes or bibliography, your prospectus should be between 2,000 and 5,000 words. Generally speaking, the Prospectus consists of the following components:

- **Title**
- **Project Overview:** a brief description of your topic, your research questions, and the argument you will advance in the dissertation
- **Research Methods:** explain the methods you will employ; describe the data you will collect or the archive you will assemble; address plans for securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, if relevant
- **Scholarly Contributions:** discuss the current state of research on your topic; provide rationale for undertaking your project; explain the interventions you hope to make to the field of WGSS or your related fields
- **Chapter Outline:** an outline of how you will present your findings and develop your argument, with brief descriptions of the introduction, chapters, and conclusion
- **Bibliography**

Every dissertation project is different (especially in an interdisciplinary program like WGSS), so every Prospectus will be unique. Your Dissertation Advisor (and the rest of your Dissertation Committee) will offer guidance as you figure out the best approach for your project. That said, you are strongly encouraged to ask your Dissertation Advisor or the Graduate Program Director for sample prospectuses. You can also reach out to other WGSS PhD students who are already dissertating to see if they will share their prospectuses and any other advice.

### *Prospectus Review*

Once your Dissertation Adviser (and, depending on what you've arranged, your other committee members) have approved the prospectus, you will need to finalize the date for your Prospectus Review (which is sometimes referred to as your "Prospectus Defense"). This meeting usually takes place on campus, but can be held virtually. The purpose of the Prospectus Review is to give you the opportunity to discuss your proposed project in detail with your Dissertation Committee and to demonstrate that you are ready to proceed with your research.

One of your Dissertation Committee members (not your Dissertation Adviser, but someone who is WGSS Core or Associated Faculty) must serve as Review Chair during the meeting. Like the Exam Chair, this is a strictly administrative role. The chair will facilitate the Prospectus Review and, if necessary, keep time during the event. You and your Dissertation Adviser should discuss who to choose.

Students are responsible for scheduling their Prospectus Review. Strategize with your Dissertation Adviser about the best time to send your Dissertation Committee a "Doodle Poll" (or similar survey) to determine their availability. At the very least, you should schedule your review one month in advance. The Graduate Program Coordinator can help you secure a room

with any necessary A/V equipment, in case a committee member is participating remotely or if you are planning to use visual aids during the review.

The Prospectus Review must last at least one hour and often lasts no more than 1.5 hours. You and your entire Dissertation Committee must attend, but you can also invite other faculty or graduate students if you'd like. Three weeks prior to your Prospectus Review, you should send your prospectus to all of your committee members.

You and your Dissertation Advisor should discuss the precise format, but, generally speaking, the Prospectus Review proceeds as follows:

- **Brief summary of the project.** You will begin the review by briefly summarizing your project and clearly communicating the core thesis of your proposed dissertation.
- **Questions from committee members.** Each member of your committee has an opportunity to ask questions about your project and, if desired, to offer suggestions. In most cases, the most “outside” committee member goes first (i.e. the person who has had the least engagement in your project). Your Dissertation Advisor will be the last person to ask questions.
- **Questions for committee members.** You will have the chance to ask your committee questions.
- **General Discussion.** If you have invited other faculty and students to attend the review, you may invite comments, questions, and feedback from the audience.
- **Deliberation.** The Review Chair will ask you to leave the room while your Dissertation Committee discusses whether they approve your prospectus.

If your Dissertation Committee determines that your prospectus is satisfactory and that you are prepared to begin the research and writing process, they will approve the document. Your Review Chair or your Dissertation Advisor will inform the Graduate Program Director of your success, and you will submit your prospectus for inclusion in your WGSS file.

In some cases, your Dissertation Committee may decide not to approve your prospectus and will request revisions before signing off. It is up to you and your committee to determine a timeline for revisions, but you are required to gain approval of your prospectus within one year of completing your graduate coursework. After completing your revisions, if your committee is satisfied with the updated prospectus, there is no need for a second Prospectus Review. Your Dissertation Advisor can inform the Graduate Program Director of your committee's approval, and you can submit your prospectus for inclusion in your WGSS file.

*Reminder! The Prospectus Review is the one time when your entire Dissertation Committee is in the same room until you have finished your project and are getting ready to graduate. They are all focused on YOU and your work. This is super exciting. Take advantage of that time.*

## **Dissertation**

### *The Dissertation*

The dissertation represents the culmination of your doctoral study and must be an original contribution to the scholarship in your field(s) of expertise. Although there are no strict regulations on length, dissertations are usually between 200 and 400 pages (not including the bibliography or other supplemental material). Your Dissertation Committee may, in special cases and with justification, allow students to submit a shorter and longer dissertation.

Once your prospectus is approved, you should talk to your Dissertation Advisor and your other committee members about their expectations for their involvement in the research and writing process. You should be meeting regularly with your Dissertation Adviser, but it is up to you two to decide what constitutes “regularly.” While it is common for your other committee members to play different and perhaps less active roles in your dissertating process, you should stay in contact with your entire committee to fully benefit from their specializations and to ensure that they are satisfied with the way your research and writing are developing.

Some committee members will want to read each chapter as you finish them; others will prefer to wait and read a full draft of the entire dissertation. Some committee members will be willing to read partial or in-process drafts of chapters; others will prefer to receive more polished drafts. We strongly recommend using the WGSS Memorandum of Agreement (which you can request from the Graduate Program Director or the Graduate Program Coordinator) to create a record of what you and your committee members have decided. This can be a great way of holding both you and your mentors accountable to a certain process.

As you are nearing completion of your dissertation, you should strategize with your Dissertation Advisor to figure out your timeline for defending, revising, and submitting your dissertation. You should be in touch with your committee members to find out their availability and to discuss how much time they will need to read your completed dissertation.

When your Dissertation Adviser is satisfied with your dissertation draft and you have formatted it in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations (available on the Graduate School’s website), you should send legible copies of the complete dissertation to your entire Dissertation Committee. Unless you have made different arrangements, you should make sure everyone has the full draft of your dissertation in hand at least one month in advance of your scheduled defense.

### *Dissertation Defense*

The Graduate School requires doctoral students to complete a formal oral defense of their dissertation. All dissertation defenses must take place on campus and require full attendance of your Dissertation Committee. Any exceptions to this rule require approval from the Dean of the Graduate School.



Dissertation Defenses must be announced at least three weeks in advance and are open to all interested members of the university community. While you and your committee may decide to hold the examination portion of your defense (where they ask you questions about your research) as a committee-only event, the presentation you give on your dissertation must be a public event. The Graduate School will advertise your defense campus-wide.

At least three weeks prior to your defense, you must complete the Doctoral Defense Announcement form (available on the Graduate School's website). This form must include an abstract of your dissertation and details on the time and location of your defense. You must get this form approved by your Dissertation Advisor and the Graduate Program Director, and then the Graduate Program Coordinator will oversee its submission to the Graduate School.

Students are responsible for scheduling their own Dissertation Defenses. Send your Dissertation Committee a "Doodle Poll" (or similar survey) to determine their availability. The Graduate Program Coordinator can help you secure a room on campus with any necessary A/V equipment (in case a committee member will be participating remotely).

One of your Dissertation Committee members (not your Dissertation Adviser, but someone who is WGSS Core or Associated Faculty) must serve as Defense Chair during the meeting. Like the Exam and Review Chairs, this is an administrative role. The chair will facilitate your Dissertation Defense and, if necessary, keep time during the event. You and your Dissertation Adviser should discuss who to choose.

You and your Dissertation Advisor can discuss the details of your defense, but defenses are typically structured like this:

- **Opening Statement.** You give a 15- to 20-minute opening statement providing an overview of your project, your methodology, your overarching argument, etc.
- **Questions from Committee.** Each member of your committee is given approximately 20 minutes to comment on and ask questions about your project. In most cases, the most "outside" committee members go first (i.e. the person who had the least engagement in your project). Your Dissertation Advisor will be the last committee member to ask questions.
- **Public Discussion.** Faculty, students, and other community members in attendance will have an opportunity to comment, ask questions, or provide feedback on your project.
- **Deliberation.** You (and the audience in attendance) will be asked to leave the room while the committee confers.
- **Decision.** You will be invited back into the room, and the Defense Chair will announce the committee's decision.
- **Cover Sheet.** If your committee has determined that you successfully defended your dissertation, they will sign your Dissertation Cover Sheet. (Be sure to bring a copy with you!)

In many cases, a Dissertation Committee will sign the cover sheet with the understanding that the student will make minor revisions before submitting the final version of their dissertation to the

Graduate School. It is up to you and your Dissertation Adviser to determine whether a final review of the revisions will take place. You have three months following a successful defense to submit the final version of your dissertation.

### *Final Steps*

As you near the completion of your degree, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the Graduate School's policies and deadlines related to submitting your dissertation and applying for graduation. These policies are, in most cases, non-negotiable, and these deadlines are often inflexible. You should let the Graduate Program Director know that you are preparing to finish your PhD, and you should be in touch with the Graduate Program Coordinator with any questions or concerns as you proceed.

The Graduate School has detailed information on Dissertation and Thesis Submissions on their website, including a handout on Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations. The format is very detailed and complex, and the requirements are quite stringent. You should consult these guidelines before circulating your dissertation to your committee members before your defense, but you absolutely must make sure your final dissertation meets these standards before submitting it to the Graduate School.

*Important Note!* While the dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School electronically, a hard copy of the completed signature page must be delivered to the Graduate School. The signature page must have original ink signatures for all committee members and should be submitted to the Graduate School as soon as possible after the Dissertation Committee approves your dissertation. This will require you mailing the form to "external" members from other institutions and having them mail it back to you. Be sure to account for this time-consuming process. The Graduate School must receive the signature page by the dissertation deadline PRIOR to the submission of the dissertation.

## M.A. REQUIREMENTS

### At-A-Glance

Graduate Coursework: 30 total credits (10 total classes)

*Core Courses: 9 credits (3 classes)*

*WGSS Electives: 6 credits (2 classes)*

*Additional Electives: 15 credits (5 classes)*

Foreign Language Requirement (Optional)

Thesis Proposal

Final Thesis Project

### Graduate Coursework

In addition to the minimum requirements of the Graduate School, WGSS MA students are required to complete 30 credits of graduate coursework. At Stony Brook, this is the equivalent of 10 classes. You must take three core classes (9 credits) and seven elective classes (21 credits).

#### *Core Courses*

**WST 600:** Feminist Interdisciplinary Histories and Methods (offered every Spring)

**WST 601:** Feminist Theories (offered every Fall)

**WST 698:** Practicing WGSS/Teaching Practicum (offered every Spring)

All students seeking the MA must take the required courses listed above when they are offered.

During your first year, you are encouraged to take WST 601 in the Fall and WST 600 and WST 698 in the Spring. These courses cannot be replaced by Independent Study or Directed Reading credits, except in the most unusual circumstances and by petition to the Graduate Program Director. This petition would need to be signed by the instructor overseeing the Independent Study or Directed Reading and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.

#### *Elective Coursework*

You are also required to take seven elective graduate courses. Two of those courses must be WGSS Elective Courses. You have a great deal of flexibility in terms of the remaining nine elective courses.

## WGSS Electives

**WST 610.** During most semesters, the WGSS department offers at least one section of WST 610: Advanced Topics in WGSS. Different instructors teach the course each year, so every iteration covers a new topic. You can take this course more than once.

**WST 600 or 601.** Alternatively, you may wish to fulfill one of your 600-level WGSS Elective requirements by taking WST 600 or 601 again. Each year, a different instructor teaches the Feminist Interdisciplinary Histories and Methods and Feminist Theories seminars, which means the content varies greatly by year. As such, WST 600 and 601 can serve as valuable electives for students.

**WGSS-Approved 500-level & 600-level Electives.** MA students can also count 500-level or 600-level gender- or sexuality-themed classes offered by another department toward their WGSS elective requirement. Students should contact the Graduate Program Director before enrolling in the course to seek approval. The Graduate Studies Committee will review any requests to substitute non-WST classes for the WGSS elective requirement.

## Additional Electives

To fulfill the remaining Additional Electives requirement, you must take five other 500- or 600-level graduate courses. You are welcome to take these classes in any department at Stony Brook.

MA students can count one WGSS Independent Study (WST 599) toward the Additional Electives requirement. You may find it helpful to use the independent study as an opportunity to start delving into your thesis topic and developing your thesis proposal

## Foreign Language Requirement (Optional)

MA students are only required to fulfill the foreign language requirement if they are planning to undertake research that requires proficiency in a language other than English or their native language. Be sure to discuss the Foreign Language Requirement with your thesis adviser as soon as possible.

Students should complete this requirement before starting their thesis research. You can fulfill it in one of three ways. Since the process is the same for MA and PhD students, please see page 9 for details.

## Thesis Proposal

### *Thesis Committee*

MA students must complete a thesis requiring original research on a topic appropriate to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. During your first year, you will choose a Thesis

Advisor. By the end of that year, you will need to have assembled a Thesis Committee. Your Thesis Committee consists of your Thesis Advisor and two other professors (at least one of whom must be WGSS Core or Associated Faculty). This committee will oversee the completion of your Thesis.

### *Thesis Proposal*

Once you've established your Thesis Committee, you will consult with your Thesis Advisor as you prepare your Thesis Proposal. In some cases, the other members of your Thesis Committee will play a role in advising the development of your proposal. You should communicate regularly with each of your committee members to make sure they approve of the direction your project is taking.

There are no set guidelines for how you must format your proposal. That said, proposals usually include the following components: 1) title; 2) project overview; 3) research methods; 4) scholarly contributions; and 5) brief bibliography. Your Thesis Advisor will offer you guidance as you figure out the best approach for your project.

Once your Thesis Advisor has approved your proposal, you can share your proposal with your Thesis Committee for final approval. Once your committee has approved your proposal (this can be done via email), you should update your Degree Progress Form and inform the Graduate Program Director. If you are planning a Proposal Review, you should make arrangements with your committee in advance to ensure that you are sending your proposal far enough in advance that everyone has time to read it.

### *Recommended: Proposal Review*

As you're working on your proposal, you should talk to your Thesis Advisor about the possibility of holding a Proposal Review. You are not formally required to hold a review, but students often find the process of meeting with their entire committee before beginning their research quite helpful.

Students are responsible for scheduling their Proposal Reviews. Talk to your Thesis Advisor about the best time to send your Thesis Committee a "Doodle Poll" (or a similar survey) to determine their availability. At the very least, you should schedule your review at least one month in advance. The Graduate Program Coordinator can help you secure a room with any necessary A/V equipment, in case a committee member is participating remotely or if you are planning to use visual aids during the review.

The Proposal Review will last about one hour. The purpose of the review is to give you the opportunity to discuss your proposed project with your Thesis Committee and to demonstrate that you are ready to proceed with your research. This is a really exciting event. Your entire committee will be together and totally focused on your work. Take advantage of the opportunity. Ask questions. Seek advice.

If your Thesis Committee determines that your proposal is satisfactory and that you are prepared to begin the research and writing process, you can get started on your project. In some cases, your committee might request revisions before granting their approval. It is up to you and your committee to determine how long you will have to make revisions and who will need to review your updated proposal before you move forward with research and writing. Once the Proposal Review is complete and your proposal has been approved, you should update your Degree Progress Form and inform the Graduate Program Director.

## **Final Thesis Project**

### *Thesis Research Credits*

After completing your coursework requirements, you will still need to register for 9 credits to maintain full-time status at the university. Generally speaking, students meet this requirement by enrolling in a combination of WST 597 (Directed Reading for Master's Students), WST 598 (Thesis Research), or WST 599 (Independent Study). You should consult your Thesis Advisor and/or the Graduate Program Coordinator to determine which designator makes sense for you.

### *The Thesis*

The thesis represents the culmination of your master's degree and must be a substantive study of a WGSS topic based on original research. Since every project is different (especially in an interdisciplinary program like WGSS), we know that theses may vary in length and take different forms. You will work with your Thesis Advisor and the rest of your committee to establish clear expectations and guidelines for your project. Generally speaking, MA theses can be between 10,000 and 20,000 words (but no more than 50,000 words).

Once your proposal is approved, you should talk to your Thesis Advisor and your other committee members about their expectations for their involvement in the research and writing process. You should be in regular contact with your Thesis Advisor, but your other committee members might play different and perhaps less active roles. That said, it is wise to keep your entire committee up-to-date on your progress and on any significant changes to your project to ensure that you benefit from their specializations and that they are satisfied with your progress.

### *Final Steps*

As you are nearing completion of your thesis, it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the Graduate School's policies and deadlines related to submitting your thesis and applying for graduation. These policies are, in most cases, non-negotiable, and these deadlines are often inflexible. You should let the Graduate Program Director know that you are preparing to finish your MA, and you should be in touch with the Graduate Program Coordinator with any questions or concerns as you proceed.

You should also start strategizing with your Thesis Advisor to figure out your timeline for defending (if desired), revising, and submitting your thesis. If you are not opting for a defense,

then you will just need to talk with your committee members to discuss how much time they will need to read and provide feedback on the full draft of your thesis. You will want to make sure you receive their comments/suggestions with enough time for you to make the necessary revisions, send your thesis back to them for their final approval, and have them sign your Thesis Cover Sheet. In other words, you need to finish your thesis well before the end of the semester.

The Graduate School has detailed information on Dissertation and Thesis Submissions on their website, including a handout on Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations. The format is very detailed and complex, and the requirements are quite stringent. You should consult these guidelines before circulating your dissertation to your committee members, but you absolutely must make sure your final thesis meets these standards before submitting it to the Graduate School.

Important Note! While the thesis is submitted to the Graduate School electronically, a hard copy of the completed signature page must be delivered to the Graduate School. The signature page must have original ink signatures for all committee members and should be submitted to the Graduate School as soon as possible after the Thesis Committee approves your dissertation. The Graduate School must receive the signature page by the thesis deadline PRIOR to the submission of the thesis.

### *Optional: Thesis Defense*

MA students have the option of scheduling a Thesis Defense after they have completed a full draft of their thesis. A defense provides you with the opportunity to share your research in a public setting with the broader WGSS community.

Students are responsible for scheduling their own Thesis Defenses. At least a month before your defense, send your Thesis Committee a “Doodle Poll” (or similar survey) to determine their availability. Confirm with your committee members how far in advance they need to receive your full thesis before your defense. The Graduate Program Coordinator can help you secure a room on campus with any necessary A/V equipment.

You and your Thesis Adviser can discuss the details of your defense, but they typically involve three parts: 1) Student Presentation (approximately 15 minutes); 2) Questions from Thesis Committee (15 minutes per committee member); 3) Public Discussion (questions from other faculty, students, and community members in attendance).

After the questions and answer period ends, you (and any audience members) will be asked to leave the room while the committee confers. If your committee determines that you successfully defended your thesis, they will sign your Thesis Cover Sheet. In many cases, a Thesis Committee signs the cover sheet with the understanding that the student will make minor revisions before submitting the final version of their thesis to the Graduate School. It is up to you and your Thesis Adviser to determine whether a final review of the revisions will take place.

## ADVISING & MENTORING

### First-Year Advising

Upon admission to the PhD or MA program, your default advisor is the Graduate Program Director. You will meet with the Graduate Program Director shortly before your first semester begins to discuss your coursework plans for the year, to talk about your larger goals for graduate study, and to start filling out your Degree Progress Form (to be saved in your digital student file, which you can access whenever you'd like). As you get started in the program, you should come to the Graduate Program Director with any questions you have about degree requirements, research projects, teaching activities, or professional development. At a minimum, you should meet with the Graduate Program Director at least once more during the fall and on an ongoing basis during the spring. In sum, the Graduate Program Director will guide you through your first year in the program and will oversee your Annual Review at the end of the spring semester.

### Advising Structure for PhD Students

You will need to select and formally designate a WGSS Core Faculty member to serve as your Primary Advisor by the end of your second year. You are welcome to do this as early as the end of your first year or at any point during your second year. The Graduate Program Director will continue serving in this role until you identify your new advisor and can offer guidance on making this selection. You must have a Primary Advisor in place by the end of your second year.

Once you have identified a potential advisor, you will need to have a conversation with them about your interest in working with them, ask them specifically to take on the role of your Primary Advisor, and then update your Degree Progress Form with this information. Your Primary Advisor will oversee your progress through the rest of your coursework and through the Comprehensive Exam.

After passing your exam and before your Prospectus Review, you will need to identify your Dissertation Advisor. In many cases, your Primary Advisor will become your Dissertation Advisor. It is important to have frank conversations with your advisor about the role they will play in your dissertation project. That said, there may be instances where students choose to switch advisors as they shift into the dissertation process. As you are making this decision, you can always seek guidance from the Graduate Program Director or the Department Chair.

Once you have determined your Dissertation Advisor, be sure to update your Degree Progress Form with this information. See the section above on Dissertation Committees for more information on who can serve as Dissertation Advisors. It is expected that your Dissertation Advisor will oversee your project through its completion. However, if you or your advisor want to change this relationship, either can initiate a conversation about this possibility with the Graduate Program Director or the Department Chair.



## **Advising Structure for MA Students**

By the end of your first year, you need to select and formally designate a WGSS Core Faculty member to serve as your Thesis Advisor. You will need to have a conversation with that professor about your interest in working with them, ask them specifically to take on the role of your Primary Advisor, and let the Graduate Program Director know this information. Your Thesis Advisor will oversee your progress through any remaining coursework, the design of your thesis proposal, and the execution and completion of your thesis project.

It is expected that your Thesis Advisor will oversee your project through its completion. However, if you or your advisor want to change this relationship, either can initiate a conversation about this possibility with the Graduate Program Director or the Department Chair.

## **Selecting an Advisor**

During your first year, you should focus on getting to know WGSS Core and Associated Faculty. You can take courses with them, read their work or attend their talks, interact with them at campus events, and/or visit them during their office hours. Your goal is to start identifying professors with research interests and mentoring styles that would make them appropriate advisors or committee members for you.

Keep in mind that you will be working very closely with your Primary Advisor as you move through the major milestones of your program. They will oversee your entire research and writing process, from crafting the proposal to making the final revisions. Your advisor should be your strongest advocate when you're applying for jobs, awards, fellowships, or other competitive positions. Your advisor should be someone who is enthusiastic about the intellectual merits of your project, who appreciates and understands the scholarly contributions you are hoping to make, and who is supportive of your abilities as a researcher and a teacher. In some cases, that person may not specialize in your particular field, and that is okay. This is why you have an entire committee overseeing your dissertation or thesis.

As you are assembling your Dissertation or Thesis Committee, it is wise to think about the different kinds of support that you will need as you undertake your research project. You will need to work with someone who has a depth of knowledge in your research area who can give you informed guidance on and criticism of your work. You will want to work with mentors who will schedule regular meetings, give comprehensive feedback on your writing, and provide mentorship related to your broader professional development (i.e. publications, conference activities, teaching portfolio, grants and fellowships, etc.). You might find all of this in a single advisor, but it is more likely that multiple people will fill these roles. Your goal is to assemble a committee that can collectively support your specific dissertation or thesis.

You will likely find it helpful to talk to other graduate students to learn more about the mentoring styles of different professors, but don't forget that everyone is unique and that you need to find mentors right for your project, your process, and your professional goals.

## Advisor-Advisee Responsibilities

Maintaining a professional relationship with a supportive advisor is a key aspect of development as a graduate student. To form a helpful and productive relationship, it is important to remember that both you and your advisor have specific responsibilities.

### *Advisee Responsibilities*

- Conduct scholarly pursuits in an ethical, academically honest manner.
- Read, understand, and adhere to university guidelines concerning discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct.
- Maintain open and regular lines of communication with your advisor.
  - Establish explicit, well-documented, and mutually agreed upon expectations for your advising relationship at the outset and with the understanding that you will review them periodically.
  - Initiate communication with your advisor. You must take an active role in setting up meetings and maintaining communication.
  - Start conversations about your academic progress, professional development, pedagogical practices, and overall career goals. Revisit these topics with your advisor on a regular basis.
  - Discuss with your advisor the process by which you will receive feedback on your work as you proceed through the program and reach different milestones. (PhD students should consider using the WGSS Memorandum of Agreement, which you can request from the Graduate Program Coordinator or Graduate Program Director) to coordinate receiving feedback on dissertation chapters from their committee.)
  - Share concerns regarding your academic progress. You are not required to divulge private information about your personal life, but you should let your advisor know if you foresee disruptions in your degree completion.
- Take ownership of your academic progress.
  - Familiarize yourself with the Graduate Bulletin and relevant university policies and procedures.
  - Stay informed about the department's degree requirements by reading the program handbook, meeting with your advisor, and consulting the Graduate Program Director and other department representatives.
  - Develop a timeline for completing your degree and achieving other professional goals in consultation with your advisor. Together, regularly revisit your timeline, discuss your progress, and adjust as necessary.
  - Dedicate significant and productive time to your graduate study – not just your coursework and other formal degree requirements, but also your broader intellectual development. Pay attention to the latest developments in your field(s). Read widely.
  - Seek, welcome, and respond to feedback from your advisor. Ask clarifying questions to resolve ambiguities. Respond to feedback professionally, even when you disagree with your advisor's comments. Learning to respond productively to criticism is a key element in graduate training.

- Make writing a habit. Cultivate a writing practice that suits your goals, work habits, and personal lifestyle.
- Start informal study clusters and/or official reading groups. Find a writing partner, and/or form a writing group.
- Take ownership of your professional development
  - Think seriously about your short- and long-term goals and about how pursuing a graduate WGSS degree will move you closer to these futures. Remember why you are here.
  - Take advantage of the professionalization resources available across campus and beyond. Attend publishing workshops. Sign up for pedagogy seminars. Make appointments with fellowship advisors. Join writing bootcamps. Seek help from career counselors. See page 55 for a list of Stony Brook resources.
  - Attend lectures, conferences, and public intellectual events. Introduce yourself to senior scholars in your field(s). Network with emerging scholars and other graduate students.
  - Build a supportive peer network. Share information with other students, and support one another as you navigate the various stages of graduate school.
- Respect the responsibilities of your advisor.
  - Allow sufficient time for your advisor to provide feedback on drafts in advance of submission deadlines. Talk to them about their expectations.
  - Give your advisor ample notice when requesting letters of recommendation. Ask them how much time they need and what materials they will require to meet the deadlines in question.
  - Be considerate of your advisor's other time commitments (i.e. other mentoring obligations, teaching duties, research and writing, department and campus service, and professional obligations beyond the university).
  - Respect your advisor's privacy.
  - Remember that your advisor is here (and only qualified) to provide intellectual and professional support, not legal, emotional, or psychological counseling.

### *Advisor Responsibilities*

- Conduct advising in an ethical, academically honest way.
- Read, understand, and adhere to university guidelines concerning discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct.
- Maintain open and regular lines of communication with advisees.
  - Explain mentoring philosophy and advising style to potential advisees.
  - Establish explicit and mutually agreed upon expectations for advising relationships from the outset. Document the established guidelines. Revisit these expectations regularly.
  - Communicate with advisees regularly, respectfully, and professionally.
  - Discuss the advisee's academic progress, professional development, pedagogical practices, and overall career goals on an ongoing basis.
  - Address problems or miscommunication immediately, so issues can be remedied as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- Aid the academic progress of advisees by providing consistent, encouraging, and intellectually rigorous support.

- Oversee the advisee's progress toward degree. Advisors should stay informed about general degree requirements and Graduate School procedures, but it is the student's responsibility to know the details about department and university policies.
- Offer guidance in choosing courses, preparing for degree milestones, choosing a dissertation or thesis topic, assembling a committee, and developing a prospectus or proposal.
- Guide advisees in developing a timeline for completing their degree and achieving other professional goals. Encourage them to regularly revisit the timeline, discuss their progress, and adjust as necessary.
- Give prompt, thorough, and intellectually challenging feedback on the advisee's work throughout their graduate study. Feedback should be honest and, when necessary, critical, but always respectful and constructive.
- Provide timely written feedback on the advisee's formal academic writing (i.e. article drafts, conference abstracts, dissertation chapters, etc.).
- Offer advice on publishing beyond the dissertation, including journal articles, non-academic publications, and turning the dissertation into a book manuscript.
- Recognize the diverse goals, needs, and backgrounds of advisees. Be willing to employ different mentoring strategies to support students as they face different challenges toward degree completion.
- Aid the professional development of advisees by providing regular, tailored, and informed support.
  - Initiate conversations about the advisee's professional goals. Be open to a wide range of career choices. Support advisees in pursuing academic and non-academic careers (while being upfront about the limits of one's mentoring expertise).
  - Refer advisees to relevant resources and support services on campus and beyond. Help students develop a range of professional skills that will make them competitive for positions in their given field(s).
  - Introduce advisees to other faculty and graduate students on campus and beyond who have complementary research interests. Encourage students to build supportive peer networks and to assemble a constellation of mentors that includes professors outside WGSS and beyond Stony Brook.
  - Share information about relevant conferences, archival sources, teaching resources, recent publications, and funding opportunities.
  - Offer guidance on applying to, presenting at, and attending conferences.
  - Provide timely feedback on the advisee's grant applications and fellowship proposals.
  - Write letters of recommendation for awards, fellowships, teaching positions, and other job opportunities. When students provide the necessary materials in a timely matter, advisors are responsible for meeting recommendation deadlines.
  - Help advisees prepare for the academic job market by demystifying the process, providing feedback on their materials, and coordinating mock interviews and job talks.
- Be considerate of advisees' other responsibilities within and beyond the academy.
  - Hold advisees to high yet attainable standards. Allow reasonable time for students to prepare requested materials and reach significant milestones.

- Help advisees set specific, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals. Encourage them to devise timelines that take into account their unique situation.
- Respect advisees' privacy. Show reasonable discretion when communicating about students with the department. Let advisees know if or when potentially sensitive information may need to be shared.

## ACADEMIC PROGRESS: DEPARTMENT & UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### Academic Classifications

At Stony Brook, full-time graduate students are classified according to their degree program and their previous graduate training. This classification system is internal to the university, so your academic level won't really matter beyond our campus. Still, it is important to know how you are classified as may affect your eligibility for internal awards.

- **G1.** First year master's or advanced graduate certificate student who has completed less than twenty-four graduate credits. G1 students must register for 9 credits per semester, but may wish to register for 12 credits for one or two semesters during their first year.
- **G2.** Advanced master's or advanced graduate certificate student who has completed twenty-four or more graduate credits. G2 students must register for 9 credits per semester.
- **G3.** First year PhD graduate student who has completed less than twenty-four graduate credits. G3 students must register for 9 credits per semester, but may wish to register for 12 credits for one or two semesters during their first year.
- **G4.** Advanced PhD graduate student who has completed twenty-four or more graduate credits. G4 students must register for 9 credits per semester.
- **G5.** Advanced graduate student enrolled in a doctoral degree program that has been advanced to candidacy for the doctoral degree by Day 10 of a semester or term. G5 students must register for 9 credits unless instructed otherwise.

A G1 will be automatically converted to a G2 when the student has completed and received grades for 24 or more graduate credits at Stony Brook; a G3 will be automatically converted to a G4 when the student has completed and received grades for 24 or more graduate credits at Stony Brook; Incompletes are not completed credits. The conversion of G4 to G5 is an administrative change that is done by WGSS and the Graduate School upon advancement to candidacy. For more information on academic levels and maintaining full-time status, please refer to the latest version of the Graduate Bulletin.

### Time Limits

The Graduate Bulletin outlines the university's time limits for graduate degree programs.

**PhD Students.** The time limit for a doctoral degree is seven years for a student who has a previous graduate degree or 24 credits of graduate study in such a degree program. For all other students, the time limit for a doctoral degree is seven years after completion of 24 graduate level credits at Stony Brook University.

**MA Students.** Full-time MA Students must complete all degree requirements within three years. This applies to all first-time matriculated students enrolled in the Graduate School.

In exceptional cases where the program cannot be completed within these periods, students may petition for an extension of the time limit. These petitions require the approval of your advisor and the Graduate Program Director. The WGSS program and/or the Graduate School may require evidence that the student is still properly prepared for completion of the degree. For instance, PhD students may be required to pass the Comprehensive Exam again in order to be permitted to continue work. Please refer to the latest version of the Graduate Bulletin for more information on extension requests.

*COVID-19 Update (Fall 2020 Graduate Bulletin). In light of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, all Stony Brook University Graduate School students who were active during Spring 2020 have been given a one-year time limit extension to complete their degree requirements. These changes will not apply to subsequent terms.*

### **Satisfactory Progress**

You'll find Suggested Timelines for degree completion below. Note: These timelines are recommendations, not requirements. The department understands that every student's situation is unique and that every research project is different. Students should work closely with their advisors and the Graduate Program Director to develop a timeline that makes sense for their particular circumstances.

That said, there are minimum requirements that WGSS students must meet to maintain "good standing" in the program. "Good standing" is a prerequisite to continue in the program. PhD students who fail to meet these minimum standards risk losing their Teaching Assistantship and will face likely dismissal from the program. MA students who do not show satisfactory progress will be placed on probation during the following semester and will be subject to possible dismissal. Below, you'll find more information on the WGSS program's Annual Review process.

### *PhD Students*

The following defines the minimum requirements for satisfactory progress for PhD students:

- Maintain at least a 3.5 average, with no course below B-, in each semester of graduate study.
- Accumulate no more than two incomplete grades in any one semester and not exceed the one-year maximum time limit for each incomplete.
- Receive a satisfactory Annual Evaluation in the spring semester of the first year of study and each subsequent year.
- Satisfy the Foreign Language Requirement before taking the Comprehensive Exam.
- Finish all 48 credits of Graduate Coursework in the first three years of study.
- Take the Comprehensive Exam no later than one year after completion of coursework.
- Complete the Prospectus Review ("Prospectus Defense") within 3 months of satisfactory completion of the Comprehensive Exam.

## *MA Students*

The following defines the minimum limits for satisfactory progress for full-time MA students:

- Maintain a 3.5 GPA, with no course below B-, in each semester of graduate study.
- Accumulate no more than two incomplete grades in any one semester, and complete all incompletes by the scheduled deadline.
- Receive a satisfactory end-of-year evaluation in the spring semester of their first year.

## **Annual Reviews**

Each spring, students will undergo a review of their academic progress in the degree program. The annual review process involves two parts: first, the self-evaluation you will complete in consultation with your advisor; second, the final department meeting of the year where WGSS Core Faculty discuss the progress of graduate students.

In April, the Graduate Program Director will remind you to update your Degree Progress Form and to complete the Self-Evaluation Form (which they will distribute to students). You will then schedule a meeting with your advisor. First-year students will meet with the Graduate Program Director; MA students will meet with their Thesis Advisors; PhD students who have not advanced to candidacy will meet with their Primary Advisors; and PhD candidates will meet with their Dissertation Advisors. Your advisor may ask you to bring additional materials to the meeting (e.g. CV, writing samples, syllabi from the courses you've taught). After your advisor-advisee meeting, you should make any final changes to your Degree Progress Form and upload your completed Self-Evaluation Form to your digital student file.

In May, WGSS Core Faculty will discuss graduate student progress at the final department meeting. A significant amount of time is dedicated to discussing each of the first-year PhD and MA students, with a focus on their grades, written work, seminar contributions, and, if relevant, teaching assistantship performance. The department collectively evaluates each student's progress and discusses how to best support them to ensure their continued success in the program. For students in their second year and beyond, the departmental review begins with a short report from the student's advisor. If the advisor affirms a student's satisfactory progress, the discussion period is often brief. However, if the advisor identifies issues or concerns (which would have already been discussed during the advisor-advisee meeting), then a longer discussion may take place about next steps, and the Graduate Studies Committee may convene at a later date to discuss the best path forward.

By the end of May, the Graduate Program Director will send each student an Annual Review Letter. Students who have made satisfactory progress toward their degree (and, as explained below, satisfactorily completed their Teaching Assistantship duties) will receive a letter confirming that they are in "good standing." In cases where students have struggled to make satisfactory progress toward their degree (or, as explained below, have fallen short in completing their Teaching Assistantship duties), the letter will outline the department's concerns and will suggest a plan of action for getting back on track and re-entering "good standing."



## Suggested Timelines

*PhD Students Entering without an MA*

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5/6
<p><b>Fall</b> WST 601 Elective Elective</p> <p><b>Spring</b> WST 600 WST 698 WST 599 Elective</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> Elective Elective Elective</p> <p><b>Spring</b> Elective Elective Elective</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> WST 680 WST 690* Elective</p> <p><b>Spring</b> WST 690* WST 690/696* WST 690/696*</p> <p>*690 &amp; 696 must be arranged with instructor at least one semester in advance</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> WST 696* -or- WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p> <p><b>Spring</b> WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p> <p><b>Spring</b> WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p>
<p><b>Milestones</b> Identify Potential Primary Advisors</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b> Select Primary Advisor</p> <p>Comprehensive Exam Preparation - Start Assembling Exam Committee - Start Compiling Reading List</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b> Study for Comprehensive Exam (consider doing a Directed Reading for each of the three parts of your Reading List)</p> <p>Late Spring: Take Comprehensive Exam and Identify Dissertation Committee</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b> Early Fall: Complete Prospectus Review (if you advance to candidacy before the semester begins, enroll in 699/700/701 for Fall)</p> <p>Dissertation Research &amp; Writing</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b> Dissertation Research &amp; Writing</p> <p>Prepare for Job Market</p> <p>Defend Dissertation</p>

*PhD Students Entering with an MA*

<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5/6</b>
<p><b>Fall</b> WST 601 Elective Elective</p> <p><b>Spring</b> WST 600 WST 698 Elective</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> Elective Elective Elective</p> <p><b>Spring</b> Elective Elective WST 690*</p> <p>*690 must be arranged with instructor at least one semester in advance</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> WST 680 WST 690* WST 690/696*</p> <p><b>Spring</b> WST 696* -or- WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p> <p>*690 &amp; 696 must be arranged with instructor at least one semester in advance</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p> <p><b>Spring</b> WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p>	<p><b>Fall</b> WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p> <p><b>Spring</b> WST 699/700/701 (9 credits)</p>
<p><b>Milestones</b> Identify Potential Primary Advisors (*If possible, select your advisor by the end of your first year. Otherwise, you can do this during your second year.)</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b> Comprehensive Exam Preparation - Assemble Exam Committee - Compile Reading List</p> <p>Start Studying for Comprehensive Exam (consider completing a Directed Reading for each of the three parts of your Reading List)</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b> Fall: Continue Studying for Comprehensive Exam</p> <p>Late Fall/Early Spring: Take Comprehensive Exam and Identify Dissertation Committee</p> <p>Late Spring: Complete Prospectus Review (if you advance to candidacy before semester begins, enroll in 699/700/701)</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b> Dissertation Research &amp; Writing</p>	<p><b>Milestones</b> Dissertation Research &amp; Writing</p> <p>Prepare for Job Market</p> <p>Defend Dissertation</p>

*MA Students*

Year 1		Year 2	
<b>Fall</b> WST 601 Elective Elective Elective	<b>Spring</b> WST 600 WST 698 Elective Elective	<b>Fall</b> Elective WST 599* WST 598*  *599 & 598 must be arranged with instructor at least one semester in advance	<b>Spring</b> WST 598 Thesis Research Credits
<b>Milestones</b> By End of Year: Identify Thesis Advisor Choose Thesis Topic Start Assembling Thesis Committee		<b>Milestones</b> Fall: Complete Proposal Review Thesis Research (consider taking an Independent Study on your thesis topic for elective credit with one of your committee members)  Spring: Finish Thesis Project	

**Advanced Graduate Certificates**

WGSS PhD and MA students have the option of completing an advanced graduate certificate while pursuing their WGSS degree. Certificates are designed around a targeted area of focus within a field. They can be a great way for you to develop advanced skills and a solid background in a specialized field. You can pursue certificates in Art and Philosophy; Creative Writing; Media, Art, Culture, & Technology (MACT); Writing & Rhetoric; among others.

PhD students may find it easier to incorporate certificates into their course of study, but MA students are also welcome to pursue certificates. You should discuss your certificate plans with your advisor, and you will need the Graduate Program Director’s permission to officially enroll. That said, the WGSS Department cannot advise students on certificate requirements. You should seek advising from those departments directly.

**Residence Requirements**

The university requires students take at least two consecutive semesters of full-time graduate study at Stony Brook in the program granting the degree. The purpose of the residence

requirement is to ensure that the graduate student participates in the professional life of the program beyond class attendance.

### **Leaves of Absence**

At times, for any number of reasons, a student may need to take a leave of absence from their graduate study. A leave of absence may be taken for a single semester or for as long as one year. Leaves must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School. Please refer to the latest version of the Graduate Bulletin for up-to-date information on the university's Leave of Absence policies. The Request for Leave of Absence form can be found on the Graduate School's "Forms and Publications" website under "[Forms for Continuing Students.](#)"

### **Childbirth Accommodation Policy**

The Graduate School has established the Stony Brook Childbirth Accommodation (SB-CAP) for students who bear children during the course of their graduate study. This enables pregnant and child-bearing graduate students to maintain full-time, registered student status and facilitate their return to full participation in class work, research, and teaching. SB-CAP includes provisions for academic extensions, relief from regular teaching, research, or training duties and short-term financial support for students normally paid as Teaching Assistants. Leave is granted for a period of 12 weeks.

More information, including the request for SB-CAP approval, is available on the [Childbirth Accommodation](#) website. Please note that pregnant graduate students must inform their advisor and the Graduate Program Director that they wish to take leave by the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. Students must have the knowledge and consent of their advisor, Graduate Program Director, and professors, as well as a doctor's note, to be eligible. International students must also consult with Visa and Immigration Services.

*Note: At this time, the Graduate School's parenting accommodations are limited to new birth parents. No accommodations exist for students who are partners of or co-parenting with a pregnant or childbearing person. SB-CAP also excludes students who adopt children or serve as foster parents. Additionally, this policy does not provide accommodations for graduate students providing care for disabled, elderly, or ill family members.*

## TEACHING (PH.D. STUDENTS)

### Teaching & Graduate Education

As mentioned above, teaching is a vital part of graduate education. Teaching Assistantships are the primary means through which WGSS PhD students access funding at Stony Brook. Beyond that, however, the department firmly believes that formal teaching experiences and a background in feminist pedagogy are key components of doctoral degree programs in our field. One of the best ways to learn how to teach and how to communicate our research expertise is to gain on-the-ground experience in developing syllabi, designing lesson plans, facilitating classroom discussions, and crafting assignments and assessment techniques. Our focus on pedagogy is one of our greatest strengths as a department and serves our students well in preparing them for the academic job market.

PhD students play a crucial role in the WGSS Department's undergraduate program – as mentors, graduate instructors, teaching assistants, and “ambassadors” recruiting new majors and minors. As such, we are very aware of the dual role you occupy in the university as both a student and a worker. We aim to provide you with meaningful and manageable teaching assignments that will allow you to build your Teaching Portfolio and advance your research agenda. WGSS class sizes are among the smallest at Stony Brook, which means Teaching Assistants and Graduate Instructors have the flexibility to experiment with new pedagogical approaches and focus on creating innovative, student-centered learning experiences.

### Teaching Assistants & Graduate Instructors

If you have been awarded a Teaching Assistantship along with your offer of admission, you will be given WGSS teaching positions for the first four years of your doctoral study (assuming you remain in “good standing” with your academic progress and satisfactorily complete your teaching duties each semester). After your fourth year, you will no longer be funded through a Teaching Assistantship and are no longer guaranteed WGSS teaching assignments.

During your four years of Teaching Assistantship funding, you will be assigned one of two positions each semester:

**Teaching Assistant (TA).** TAs provide instructional support to WGSS Core Faculty for one of the classes they are teaching. This support usually takes the form of grading and giving feedback on student assignments but can also include (and is not limited to) record-keeping, holding office hours, and facilitating online or in-person discussions. TAs often assist professors in delivering our introductory lecture classes, but can be assigned to support courses at all levels of our undergraduate curriculum.

**Graduate Instructor.** Graduate Instructors serve as the instructor of record for the course they have been assigned. As such, they have total ownership over their courses and are responsible for their design and execution across the semester. This includes (but is not

limited to) building the syllabus, crafting assignments, producing course content, holding office hours, grading and other forms of assessment, and the submission of final grades. Graduate Instructors can be assigned courses at any level of the undergraduate curriculum, including introductory classes, core feminist theory or history classes, and 200- or 300-level special topics classes.

The WGSS Executive Committee is responsible for course scheduling and teaching assignments. Normally, the committee assigns first-year PhD students to TA positions. These support roles serve as solid introductions to teaching, as you'll have the chance to develop your teaching skills while working closely with an experienced instructor. First-year students often assist with large WGSS introductory lectures (where they work alongside other new TAs), but may also be assigned as the sole TA for smaller courses.

After your first year, you may be assigned to work as a TA or a Graduate Instructor. These assignments will vary according to the particular interests and expertise of students and will be largely determined by our undergraduate curricular needs as well as the curricular needs determined by the College of Arts and Sciences. When possible, the WGSS Executive Committee will ask for your preferences or provide you with options regarding your assignment. This kind of flexibility is not always feasible, but we always keep each student's research interests and past teaching positions in mind as we devise the semester's schedule. At times, the university has asked WGSS to support other academic units (like the Writing Program) with our Teaching Assistantships, in which case there may be opportunities to teach outside the WGSS department. Our goal is to provide you with a range of teaching experiences during the four years of your Teaching Assistantship – assignments that will advance your dissertation research and ensure you graduate with a robust and diversified Teaching Portfolio.

If you have questions or concerns about your teaching assignment, you can always contact members of the Executive Committee (the Graduate Program Director, the Undergraduate Program Director, or the Department Chair). You may also find it helpful to consult your advisor or other mentors. See also the section below for Campus Resources related to Concerns or Grievances.

### **Other Teaching Positions**

The WGSS Department is sometimes able to hire PhD students for additional teaching positions. Our ability to offer these positions is contingent on a host of factors, such as undergraduate enrollments, the semesterly allocation of adjunct money from the College of Arts and Sciences, and the temporary availability of unused Teaching Assistantships (which can occur when a funded PhD student leaves our program early or secures funding from an external fellowship). As such, there is no guarantee that these positions will be available from year to year.

**Winter and Summer Sessions.** The WGSS Department often offers online undergraduate courses during the university's Winter Session and its two Summer Sessions. These courses are usually taught by WGSS PhD students. All WGSS PhD students are eligible for these positions, but priority is usually given to advanced students (especially students in their fifth

year or beyond who are no longer funded by Teaching Assistantships). Compensation for each Summer or Winter class is usually \$3,000, but may be adjusted if enrollments do not meet certain thresholds.

**Fall and Spring Adjunct Positions.** During some semesters, the WGSS Department offers online or in-person undergraduate classes taught by adjunct instructors. Compensation for WGSS adjunct instructors is usually \$5,500 per course. To fill these positions, we aim to hire WGSS PhD students who are no longer funded by Teaching Assistantships, and we often prioritize students who have most recently gone “off stipend” (i.e. students in their fifth or sixth years). Students who are still funded by Teaching Assistantships (i.e. students in their first four years) are not eligible for these positions. *Note: We are only able to hire adjunct instructors when the College of Arts and Sciences allocates us money for this express purpose or when we have an unused Teaching Assistantship (which we then convert into the equivalent of two adjunct positions, to give more students access to employment and, in many cases, health insurance).*

The WGSS Executive Committee handles the hiring of Winter and Summer instructors and Fall and Spring adjuncts. Appointments are made based on a number of considerations, including a student’s area of expertise, their teaching experience and performance, their individual financial needs, and the employment restrictions placed on international students. The WGSS department strives to distribute these additional teaching positions as equitably as possible.

## **Evaluations & Observations**

The continuation of your four-year Teaching Assistantship depends on you remaining in “good standing” with your academic progress and satisfactorily completing your teaching duties each semester.

As such, your performance as a TA and/or Graduate Instructor will figure into the Annual Review process. You will assess your teaching experience on the Self-Evaluation Form and during your annual advisor-advisee meeting, and the WGSS Core Faculty will consider recent TA Evaluations and Teaching Observations during their final department meeting. In your Annual Review Letter, the Graduate Program Director will document your satisfactory fulfillment of your Teaching Assistantship obligations. In cases where students have struggled to complete their teaching duties, the letter will outline the department’s concerns and will suggest a plan of action for addressing those issues.

In addition to receiving your Annual Review Letter, you will also receive TA Evaluations and Teaching Observations from WGSS Core Faculty over the course of your four-year assistantship. These documents will be made available to you and will be saved in your digital student file. While your advisor or other mentors might draw from their evaluations or observations when writing letters of recommendation for you, these documents will not circulate beyond the department. As such, it is common to receive constructive criticism in these documents.

**TA Evaluations.** At the end of each semester, TAs will receive brief, written evaluations of their performance from the instructor they assisted. For first-year students, these evaluations will figure centrally during the Annual Review process and will be discussed in detail during the final department meeting.

**Teaching Observations.** Graduate Instructors should be observed twice during their four-year teaching assistantship. The first observation should take place during the first semester you serve as a Graduate Instructor. The purpose of this observation is to receive feedback on your first attempts at developing a syllabus, managing a classroom, designing assignments, etc. The second observation should take place closer to the end of your assistantship. The purpose of this observation is to show off your skills as a more experienced teacher. *Note: It is up to you to arrange these observations, but you should strategize with your advisor or the Graduate Program Director. Ideally, you will want to secure observations from two different mentors who have or will be writing letters of recommendation for you.*

## **Teaching Portfolio**

You are strongly encouraged to create a Teaching Portfolio as you move through the WGSS doctoral program. This will serve you well on the academic job market and will come in handy when applying for teaching awards. Teaching Portfolios often include some combination of course syllabi; sample assignments; assessment tools you've designed; other classroom materials you've developed; student teaching evaluations; letters from students or alumni; examples of exemplary work produced by your students; a statement of your teaching philosophy; a list of pedagogy-related seminars, workshops, or other trainings you've completed; and a bibliographic list of materials you find helpful for your own teaching. The Teaching Portfolio will be discussed in further detail during WST 698 and at relevant professional development workshops. You should also consult your advisor as you begin assembling these materials.

## **Campus Teaching Awards**

### *Vivien Hartog Graduate Student Teaching Award.*

This award is administered by the WGSS Department. Named in honor of a WGSS certificate student who died before she could complete her PhD in Sociology at Stony Brook, this award recognizes students who best exemplify Vivien Hartog's commitments to social justice, activism, teaching, and learning. The award is \$3,000. Each spring (often in March), the WGSS Department puts out a call for applications for this award. WGSS Core Faculty review the applications and select the winner(s), who is announced at the WGSS graduation. If warranted, the faculty can opt to split the award between more than one winner. For more information, visit the [Vivien Hartog Awards](#) website.

### *President's Award for Excellence in Teaching by a Graduate Student*

This award is administered by the Graduate School. It is open to all full-time graduate students who have completed at least one academic year of teaching. Each spring, six awards of \$1,000



each are presented to outstanding graduate student teachers. Departments are permitted to nominate two candidates for the award. We will ask students interested in being nominated to identify themselves, and the WGSS Core Faculty will review the candidates and collectively decide on the nominees. For more information on eligibility requirements, nomination materials, and past winners, visit the [President's Award for Excellence in Teaching](#) website.

## FUNDING: ASSISTANTSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS (FOR PH.D. STUDENTS)

### WGSS Teaching Assistantships

Students accepted into the PhD program are often offered a four-year Teaching Assistantship. You must be enrolled as a full-time student to remain eligible for this assistantship, and the continuation of this funding hinges on you remaining in “good standing” in your academic progress and satisfactorily completing your teaching duties.

The Teaching Assistantship funding package consists of:

**Base Stipend.** For the 2023-24 academic year, WGSS Teaching Assistantships provide students with an initial stipend of \$22,962, with a guaranteed increase to \$26,000 per year as of October 1, 2023. This sum is subject to state and federal income taxes. Teaching Assistantships are governed by the Graduate Student Employee Union (GSEU)’s contract with the State of New York. You are only guaranteed teaching positions and eligible for this stipendiary funding for the first four years of the program.

**Graduate Tuition Scholarship.** Your Teaching Assistantship entitles you to a tuition scholarship. During your first year, this scholarship will cover out-of-state tuition costs for any students who are not New York State (NYS) residents. All eligible graduate students are required to obtain NYS residency in order to reduce their tuition costs in future years. See below for more information on NYS Residency Requirements. As long as you maintain full-time status, you will continue to receive the Graduate Tuition Scholarship after your four-years of stipendiary funding expires until you reach the university’s time limit for doctoral degree completion (as outlined on page 33).

**Important!** Your tuition scholarship also comes with a fee scholarship to cover your broad-based fees. This fee scholarship covers the following fees: Counseling and Health, Technology, Transportation, Lifetime Career Development, Academic Excellence, and College Fee. For more information on the fees that you will have to pay, visit the Bursar’s [Tuition and Fee Rates](#) websites.

### Residency and Registration Requirements

#### *Full-Time Status*

You must be enrolled as a full-time student to remain eligible for your four-year Teaching Assistantship and to continue receiving the Graduate Tuition Scholarship after your fourth year. For international students, full-time enrollment is required to maintain F-1 and J-1 visa status. To be considered full-time, you must register for 9 or 12 credits each semester, depending on your academic classification (see page 33). International students should be in regular contact with their International Student Advisors to discuss other requirements they must meet based on their particular circumstances.

To avoid late registration charges, you must always be registered for at least 1 credit before the first day of classes. The FINAL DEADLINE to complete any registration changes is 4:00 PM on Day 10 of classes (weekends and holidays are not counted). If you are not registered as a full-time student by the end of this Late Registration period, you will lose your tuition scholarship and, in the case of international students, jeopardize your visa status. Between Day 10 and Day 15 of classes, you may “swap” courses of equal credit, but a petition to the Graduate School will be required. Calendars and deadlines are posted on the Registrar’s [Academic Calendars](#) website.

Late registration and tuition liability fees are your responsibility, so please be sure to register early and for the appropriate number of credits each semester. Contact the Graduate Program Coordinator if you encounter any registration difficulties, and speak to your advisor and/or the Graduate Program Director if you are unsure what to register for.

### *New York State Residency*

All PhD students who are US citizens or permanent residents but not residents of New York State (NYS) must establish in-state residency before the start of the Fall semester of your second year. If you are not a NYS resident but are eligible to establish residency and have not completed this process by then, then you will be charged the difference between the in-state and out-of-state tuition rate (\$2,000 or more, per semester). This extra charge will be your responsibility, since, beginning with your third semester in the program, your Graduate Tuition Scholarship will be calculated at the in-state tuition rate.

Detailed information on [Establishing NYS Residency](#), along with the Residency Application Form, is available on the Bursar’s website. To establish residency, you should register to vote (at a local post office) and obtain a NYS driver’s license. If you own a car registered in your name and you wish to use free Faculty/Staff parking, you will need to register your vehicle in New York. Other documents that can be used to support your application for residency include a local bank account (with statements mailed to your local address) or a utility bill in your name (showing a local address). Students who wish to remain on their parents’ health insurance policy may still establish residency, providing all other documents have a valid NYS address.

### **Benefits and Health Insurance**

WGSS PhD students are provided with insurance coverage for the four years of their Teaching Assistantship through the SUNY Graduate Student Employee Health Plan. This insurance plan includes medical benefits as well as dental and vision coverage. Be sure to attend the orientation sessions to learn more about enrolling in your plan, accessing your benefits, and enrolling your spouse, domestic partner, and/or other dependents. Detailed information about your plan can be found on the [Human Resources Services’ State Graduate Student](#) website. To view your Benefits Handbook, log on as a ‘Graduate Student’ on the [New York State Health Insurance Program \(NYSHIP\)](#)’s website.

*Note for All Students.* Stony Brook requires every student to have basic health insurance. All students are thus automatically enrolled in the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) or International Student Health Insurance Plan (ISHIP) and will be charged the corresponding premium. These plans are intended primarily for undergrads and provide limited coverage. Since your Teaching Assistantship provides you with insurance, you will want to waive this coverage to avoid the unnecessary expense. This must be done on SOLAR every semester. If you decide to remain on a family health insurance policy, you may do so and will qualify to waive the mandatory coverage, provided you complete the request on SOLAR. If you discover an insurance charge is still on your SOLAR account in late September, please let the Graduate Program Coordinator know.

*Note for International Students.* Be sure to enroll in your Graduate Student Employee Health Plan within 30 days of your appointment date. Once you enroll and payroll deductions begin, the mandatory ISHIP health insurance fee will be removed from your student bill, usually in October. You must present your Social Security card to complete your health insurance enrollment, so it is critical to apply for a Social Security number as soon as possible. (See below for more information on Social Security Cards.) You should also know that the university requires international students to have emergency medical evacuation coverage. This mandatory insurance enables you to return home if you become seriously ill. You will see this charge on your SOLAR account each semester.

## **Payroll Information**

### *Payroll Appointment*

Appointment paperwork is time-critical to ensure you receive your first paycheck on time. In order to appoint you to the payroll system, you must provide your local address plus the following forms of identification:

- US Citizens: valid passport -or- valid driver's license plus Social Security card
- Permanent Residents: proof of permanent residency plus Social Security card
- International Students: valid passport, visa (I-94), and SEVIS I-20

To enroll in the Graduate Student Employee Health Plan, a photocopy of your birth certificate or a copy of your passport will be needed.

*If you change your address, it is important to notify the Graduate Program Coordinator and to update your SOLAR account immediately. Updating your account information in SOLAR is essential, as payroll, academic records, and Visa and Immigration Services are all tied to your account.*

### *Pay Days and Time Reporting*

PhD Students with Teaching Assistantships will receive their checks on Wednesdays, every two weeks. Remember to check your pay stub regularly. Errors can occur, so the sooner you notice a

discrepancy, the sooner we can resolve any issues or errors. Withholdings (especially for insurance) can sometimes be confusing, so please check with the Graduate Program Coordinator before becoming too concerned. Please remember that it is your responsibility to report your attendance every month on SOLAR. You will receive email reminders.

### *Direct Deposit*

Graduate students are strongly encouraged to set up Direct Deposits of payroll checks. You must provide your account number and bank electronic routing number, both of which are printed on your checks. You will also need to submit a voided check or a direct-deposit letter from your bank in order to ensure these numbers are recorded properly. Direct deposit can be set up with any domestic financial institution. Some students find it convenient to establish accounts at the Island Federal Credit Union, which has branch offices on our campus (in the Student Activity Center and over at the Health Science Center). It often takes two pay periods or more for the direct deposit to become active. Any changes to your Direct Deposit instructions must be filed with Human Resources (Administrations Building, Rom 390).

### *Social Security Cards for International Students*

International students must apply for an SSN as quickly as possible after completing registration, as this number is required for both payroll and insurance enrollment purposes. The purpose of a Social Security Number (SSN) is to help the government keep track of an individual's earnings in the US for tax purposes. Detailed instructions, a link to the [application form](#), and a list of documents to take with you are included on the Visa and Immigration Services (VIS)'s [Social Security Information](#) website. Please note that you also need a SSN Authorization Letter from VIS, which you can request through the [VIS Online Portal](#). As soon as you receive your Social Security Card, please bring it to the Graduate Program Coordinator so they can make a photocopy for your permanent record and for the Payroll and Insurance Offices.

### **Going “Off Stipend”**

It is crucial to remember and plan for the fact that your Teaching Assistantship only lasts for four years. At the end of that time, you will no longer be guaranteed WGSS teaching positions, you will not be eligible for the \$22,500 annual stipend, and you will not receive insurance through the Graduate Student Employee Health Plan. While the WGSS Department will continue to provide mentoring support, intellectual community, and professional development to off-stipend students, we cannot guarantee students any form of material or financial support beyond their fourth year in the doctoral program. Off-stipend students do remain eligible for and will be considered and/or nominated for campus travel awards and internal fellowship opportunities, but this is a very limited and highly competitive pool of resources. With this reality in mind, we strongly urge PhD students to begin researching external funding opportunities early in their careers, to take full advantage of the campus's fellowship advising resources, and to apply widely and aggressively for research grants and dissertation fellowships.



## **Internal Fellowships: Incoming Students**

### *Graduate Council Fellowship.*

Graduate Council Fellowships (GCF) are available to exceptionally qualified incoming doctoral students. GCF candidates are nominated by their respective graduate programs in January. The WGSS Core Faculty collectively select our nominee(s) during the admissions process. The Graduate Council Fellowships and Awards Committee reviews the nominees and typically awards 45 fellowships, renewable for up to five years, each academic year. The GCF award supplements the program's offer of support with an additional \$50,000 in funding over the five-year support period. You can find more information about the fellowship and the nomination procedures on the [Graduate Council Fellowship](#) website. *Note: Only US citizens and permanent residents are eligible for these fellowships.*

### *Turner Fellowship.*

Turner Fellowships are administered by the Center for Inclusive Education and available to incoming graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds. Turner candidates are nominated by their respective graduate programs in January. When filling out the application for admission to Stony Brook University, the student should identify their racial or ethnic background and indicate their interest in being considered for the Turner Fellowship award. The WGSS Core Faculty collectively select our nominee(s) during the admissions process. Nominees will be asked to write a one-page personal statement demonstrating how they will contribute to the diversity of the student body in their graduate program and/or how they have overcome disadvantage or other impediment to success in higher education. The Turner Fellowship supplements the program's offer of support with an additional \$50,000 in funding over the five-year support period. You can find more information about the fellowship and the nomination procedures on the [Turner Fellowship](#) website. *Note: Only US citizens and permanent residents are eligible for these fellowships.*

## **Internal Awards & Fellowships: Continuing Students**

The Graduate School and the Center for Inclusive Education administer competitive fellowship programs for continuing graduate students. In most cases, students are not permitted to apply directly to these programs. Instead, departments are asked to nominate students for these awards and limits are often placed on how many nominees can be put forth. Below, you'll find brief descriptions of the major fellowship competitions on campus.

Once we receive the official call for nominations, the WGSS Department asks students interested in being nominated to identify themselves. The WGSS Core Faculty reviews the candidates for the Annual Graduate Student Awards and collectively decides on our nominees. The Graduate Studies Committee reviews the candidates for the Turner Dissertation Year Fellowship and the Graduate Fellowship and Faculty Research Program and collectively decides on those nominees.

Our nomination decisions are based on a number of factors, including (but not limited to) how well the student and their project meet the award's criteria; the student's academic performance, publication record, and other scholarly activities; the student's record of applying for and receiving grants and fellowships; the student's financial need and other individual circumstances (i.e. research expenses, visa requirements); and how to most equitably distribute these fellowship nomination opportunities.

### *Annual Graduate School Awards*

The Graduate School coordinates an annual awards program to honor outstanding students, faculty, and staff. Nominations for these awards are usually due early in the Spring semester. Here, you'll find brief descriptions of the awards WGSS PhD students are usually eligible for. For detailed information on eligibility requirements, application materials, and past winners, please follow the links below and refer to the [Annual Students, Faculty, & Staff Awards](#) website.

[Alumni Association Doctoral Summer Fellowship](#). The award is intended to support the student in the final stages of their research and dissertation by enabling them to continue their work over the summer, when other funding for doctoral candidates is especially scarce. One fellowship of \$4,500 is awarded each year.

[Alumni Association's Dean's Choice Award for Leadership](#). The award recognizes a graduate student who has demonstrated strong leadership abilities in engaging the graduate student community. One award of \$1,000 is granted each year.

[Faculty-Staff Dissertation Fellowship](#). The award is intended to assist a graduate student who has advanced to candidacy and whose research project requires fieldwork, archival work, or other research efforts requiring the student to be away from campus for an extended period. One award of \$10,000 is granted each year.

[Joyce Turner Dissertation Fellowship](#). The award recognizes graduate students in the humanities or social sciences who have advanced to candidacy but who need financial assistance to complete their research investigating issues of race, class, gender, sexuality or ethnicity. One award of \$10,000 is granted each year.

[The Madeline Fusco Fellowship](#). The fellowship is intended to assist women or minority graduate students who have advanced to candidacy but who need financial assistance to complete their dissertations. One award of \$5,000 is granted each year.

[Mildred and Herbert Weisinger Dissertation Fellowship](#). This award is given to a graduate student who has advanced to candidacy and is working on a dissertation that bears high scholarly promise but that might be delayed without financial assistance. One fellowship of \$ 10,000 will be awarded each year.

[President's Award to Distinguished Doctoral Students](#). This award recognizes an outstanding student who is expected to graduate in May. The awards committee considers the following: the merit of the candidate's dissertation project; their service and other contributions to the



university; and how they overcame personal struggles or hardship during their doctoral study. Five awards of \$1,000 are given each year.

[Stony Brook Foundation Board of Trustees Dissertation Completion Endowed Fellowship](#). This award is given to a graduate student who has advanced to candidacy and is working on a dissertation that bears high scholarly promise but that might be delayed without financial assistance. Fellowships of \$10,000 are offered each year.

### *Turner Dissertation Year Fellowship*

The Turner Dissertation Fellowship provides support to PhD candidates from underrepresented or otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds who have not previously been supported by the Turner Fellowship Program. The number of awards granted annually varies according to available funding, which means the deadlines for these awards also varies. You can find more information on the [Turner Dissertation Fellowship](#) website. *Note: Only US citizens and permanent residents are eligible for these fellowships.*

### *Presidential Dissertation Completion Awards*

As part of President McInnis's efforts to support graduate students, the Graduate School launched the Presidential Dissertation Completion Award Program. This fellowship provides one or two semesters of stipend support - \$11,250 or \$22,500 – for an advanced doctoral student who has experienced a delay in their degree progress due to circumstances beyond their control. To be eligible, students must establish that they do not have another source of stipend support for the requested semester(s). The fellowship allows the student to complete their degree requirements without adding any additional service or teaching duties. Successful applications will demonstrate solid achievement and steady pre-pandemic progress to degree, compelling need for additional support, and a viable plan and potential for degree completion by the end of the funded period. You can find more information on the [Presidential Dissertation Completion Award](#) website.

### *Guiliano Global Fellowship Program*

The Guiliano Global Fellowship Program provides PhD students in the humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences with funding to complete travel and research for a journal article, dissertation, work of artistic expression, or outside-of-the-academy career development. Awards are generally offered in the amount of \$2,000 depending on the strength of the application, cost of the activity, and availability of funds. You can find more information on the [Guiliano Global Fellowship Program](#) website. *Note: Unlike the other internal fellowships listed above (which require departmental nominations), students can apply directly to this program.*

## **Campus Travel Awards**

### *Vivien Hartog Travel Award*

This award is administered by the WGSS Department and consists of three one-time annual travel grants of up to \$750. Named in honor of a WGSS graduate certificate student who died

before she could complete her PhD in Sociology at Stony Brook, this award provides current PhD and MA students for travel expenses for academic conferences or for dissertation or thesis research. You can apply for the award more than once as long as you meet the eligibility criteria; however, priority will be given to students who have not previously received a Vivien Hartog Travel Award. Detailed information on eligibility requirements and how to apply can be found on the [Vivien Hartog Awards](#) website. Applications are due on November 15.

### *Distinguished Travel Awards*

The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) and the Graduate School administer the Distinguished Travel Award (DTA). The DTA is issued twice a year (in the Fall and Spring), but the number of awards granted varies subject to available funding. The goal is to provide financial support to graduate students sharing their works at meetings, conferences, exhibitions, or conferences that will enhance the national and international reputation of their department and the university. Awards may not exceed \$1500. The WGSS Department can only nominate two PhD students for each award cycle. The WGSS Department will put out a call for students interested in being nominated, and the Graduate Studies Committee will review the candidates and select the WGSS nominees. Please review the eligibility requirements and application procedures on the [Distinguished Travel Award](#) website.

### **Campus Professional Development Awards**

#### *GSEU Professional Development Awards Program*

Thanks to an agreement between the State of New York and the Graduate Student Employees Union (GSEU), the Professional Development Awards Program provides funding for professional development activities to eligible graduate students with Teaching Assistantships. These activities include (but are not limited to): research, curricular development, conference or workshop attendance, grant proposal development, coursework not part of your degree program, artistic or creative endeavors, preparation of material for publication, or job-related professional development activities. For more information on eligibility requirements and application procedures, visit the [GSEU Professional Development Awards Program](#) website.

### **Humanities Institute: Funding Opportunities**

#### *NY Public Humanities Fellowship*

In partnership with Humanities New York, the Humanities Institute at Stony Brook (HISB) often administers the Public Humanities Fellowship. The program's goal is to bring humanities scholarship into the public realm, develop the fellow's skills for doing public-facing scholarship, and strengthen the public humanities community in New York State. The year-long fellowship involves a combination of training in the methods and approaches of the public humanities and work by the fellow to develop a public project related to their own scholarship in partnership with a community organization. The fellowship stipend is \$8,000 plus a \$500 travel and research

stipend and is supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Applications are usually due in early Spring. You can find more information on HISB's [Public Humanities Fellowship](#) website.

### *Cornell University's School of Criticism and Theory*

Each year, HISB offers one fellowship to support a graduate student's attendance at Cornell University's School of Criticism and Theory (SCT). The SCT is a six-week summer institute that has existed for more than 30 years and provides the opportunity for graduate students and faculty members to take seminars with some of the world's leading critical theorists. The SCT provides an unparalleled opportunity for advanced training in critical theory and for making connections with an international cohort of peers and world-class scholars. Applications are usually due in the late Fall. You can find more information on the [HISB](#) website.

### **External Fellowship Opportunities**

Throughout your doctoral studies, you will want to apply for external funding to support your travel, research, and writing. Don't wait until your fourth year as your Teaching Assistantship is about to expire to start learning about grants, fellowships, and other awards. Start exploring external funding opportunities early in your graduate career. Apply for travel awards and smaller research grants on campus, outside funding agencies, and academic professional organizations. Attend grant-writing workshops on campus, read up on the art of writing funding proposals, and take advantage of fellowship advising resources at Stony Brook and beyond. Securing external funding will make it easier for you to focus on your research and finish your dissertation during your fifth and sixth years. Furthermore, the prestige of obtaining external grants and fellowships can serve as a distinct advantage when you're on the academic job market.

Grants, fellowships, and other awards are all very different. Many funding opportunities are limited by specific eligibility criteria (which often include US citizenship requirements and frequently excludes international students). Additionally, the money you are awarded often comes with strings attached: the conditions of the award will likely limit how you can use the funds and may require you to complete certain activities or produce particular outcomes during the award period. So, be sure to research funding opportunities very carefully. Below, in the Campus Resource section, you will find links to Stony Brook's external funding resources.

Here, we've included a list of major research grants and dissertation fellowships that support interdisciplinary humanities- and social science-based research. This is, by no means, an exhaustive list; it's just meant to jump start your search.

[American Association of University Women \(AAUW\) Fellowships](#)

[American Institute of Indian Studies Fellowships](#)

[Asian Cultural Council](#)

[Boren Fellowships for Overseas Research](#)

[Carter G. Wood Institute for African-American and African Studies Predoctoral Fellowship](#)

[Center for Engaged Scholarship's Dissertation Fellowship](#)  
[Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships \(Ethics & Religion\)](#)  
[Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange Doctoral Fellowships](#)  
[CLAGS Awards & Fellowships](#)  
[CLIR Mellon Fellowship for Dissertation Research in Original Sources](#)  
[Council of American Overseas Research Centers Fellowships](#)  
[Critical Language Scholarship Program](#)  
[Ford Foundation Predoctoral & Dissertation Fellowships](#)  
[Getty Foundation Predoctoral Fellowships](#)  
[Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation Dissertation Fellowships](#)  
[Henry Roe Cloud Dissertation Writing Fellowship in American Indian and Indigenous Studies](#)  
[Hobart & William Smith's Fisher Center Predoctoral Fellows](#)  
[Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy Grants](#)  
[Individual Advanced Research Opportunities in Eastern Europe & Eurasia](#)  
[Josephine DeKarman Fellowship](#)  
[Marilyn Yarbrough Dissertation/Teaching Fellowship](#)  
[Marquette University's Mitchem Dissertation Fellowship](#)  
[Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowships](#)  
[MIT's Diversity Predoctoral Fellowships](#)  
[National Women's Studies Association \(NWSA\) Awards & Prizes](#)  
[New York Historical Society Fellowships](#)  
[Social Science Research Council's Fellowships](#)  
[Society for the History of Technology's Kranzenberg Fellowship](#)  
[Sociologists for Women in Society's Fellowships](#)  
[Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship](#)  
[UPenn's Predoctoral Fellowships for Excellence through Diversity](#)  
[Williams College's Gaius Charles Bolin Dissertation Fellowship](#)  
[Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies](#)  
[US Institute of Peace Jennings Randolph Peace Scholar Dissertation Fellowship](#)

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

### Student Services

[Bursar's Office](#). Billing and payments; withdrawals and refunds; tuition and fee information; NYS residency.

[Center for Prevention and Outreach](#). Support services related to sexual violence, mental health, and alcohol or other substance use.

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#). Clinical services; virtual workshops; community programs.

[Human Resources](#). Payroll; direct deposit; benefits and insurance information

[LGBTQ\\* Center](#). Community building, education and outreach, and social justice organizing for LGBTQ\*-identified students.

[Registrar's Office](#). Enrollment; class offerings; academic calendars; transcripts.

[Student Health Services](#). Primary care; travel health; immunizations; pharmacy; laboratory.

[University Library](#). Library catalog; online databases; research guides; Interlibrary Loan.

[Visa and Immigration Services](#). Visa applications; immigration intake; I-20 requests; SEVIS fees; international student advising.

### Research, Writing, & Academic Support

[Center for Inclusive Education](#). Advocacy, financial support, community building, and professional development for students from underrepresented or otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds.

[Office of Research Compliance](#). Ensures compliance with laws and university policies; securing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for “human subject research”

[Student Accessibility Support Center](#). Support service center for students with disabilities; assists with academic accommodations and other accessibility needs.

[The Writing Program's Graduate Support Services](#). Online and in-person writing classes; workshop series; writing groups; dissertation and thesis bootcamps.

## **Fellowships Advising**

[External Scholarships & Fellowship Advising](#). Grant-writing workshops; [fellowship advising services](#); [external funding databases](#).

## **Teaching Support**

[Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching \(CELT\)](#). In-class support; training in software and online learning technologies; college teaching seminars and other pedagogy workshops.

## **Professionalization Services**

[Graduate Professional Development](#). Creating [Individual Development Plans](#); academic and non-academic career exploration and preparation; workshops and seminars throughout each semester.

## **Research Centers**

[Center for Changing Systems of Power](#)

[Center for Dance, Movement, and Somatic Learning](#)

[Center for Digital Humanities](#)

[Consortium for Digital Arts, Culture, and Technology \(cDACT\)](#)

[Humanities Institute](#)

[Institute for Globalization Studies](#)

[Latin American and Caribbean Studies](#)

## **Graduate Student-Led Organizations**

[Graduate Student Organization \(GSO\)](#). The GSO is the graduate student government at Stony Brook University. The GSO website has a host of useful information for new and continuing students, including the [GSO Survival Guide](#).

[Graduate Student Employees Union \(GSEU\)](#). PhD students employed through Teaching Assistantships are represented by GSEU of CWA Local 1104. GSEU has been a vital force on Stony Brook's campus fighting for graduate student worker rights and advocating for a more just approach to graduate education.

## CONCERNS & GRIEVANCES

### Program-Related Concerns

What should you do if you have questions or even serious concerns? You might be worried about something that happened in a seminar or at a campus event. Maybe you have concerns about department policies or procedures. Perhaps you have a question about your teaching assignment. You might find that you're having difficulties with a faculty or staff member.

Depending on the specifics of your situation, you have several avenues (listed below) for how to proceed. But, in many cases, the best place to begin is right here in the WGSS department. You have several options of people you can talk to who can help you access relevant resources and explore possible solutions. You can ask for reasonable confidentiality when warranted, and you can expect thoughtful discretion from the faculty and staff members you contact about your concerns.

- **Primary Advisor.** You should always consider starting with your Primary Advisor. As the person who probably knows your situation best – and as your number one advocate on campus – they are often the best person to help you sort through concerns and explore your options.
- **Graduate Program Director.** If you're not able to talk to your Primary Advisor (for whatever reason), you can always reach out to the Graduate Program Director.
- **Department Chair.** And, if you're unable to talk to the Graduate Program Director (for whatever reason), you also have the option of reaching out to the Department Chair.
- **Elected Graduate Representatives.** You might also look to your peers for assistance. The elected graduate representatives can help you locate key campus resources; they can offer anonymize your concerns and bring them to the Graduate Studies Committee on your behalf; and they can also help students coordinate over shared issues or questions, so that collective concerns can be effectively communicated to the WGSS faculty.

### Teaching Concerns

Teaching is always a challenging experience. Please do not hesitate to reach out to WGSS faculty for support as you navigate your Teaching Assistantship assignments.

If you are working as a Teaching Assistant, you are strongly encouraged to stay in regular contact with the instructor you're assisting. We consider TAing a mentoring experience, so you should feel comfortable asking questions about the course material, seeking advice on fulfilling your duties, and requesting support for dealing with challenging student situations.



If you are working as a Graduate Instructor, you will not have someone directly overseeing your teaching. But you are strongly encouraged to talk to your primary advisor and your other mentors about your work as a teacher. WGSS faculty tend to think about teaching and research as deeply intertwined, so your mentoring exchanges need not be limited to your academic progress.

If you have teaching concerns that you cannot raise with the professor you're assisting or with your primary advisor, you can always reach out to the Graduate Program Director, the Undergraduate Program Director, or the Department Chair.

If you are having trouble with or are worried about a student and the situation is too serious to be handled at the department level:

You can reach out to [the CARE Team](#), which is a university-based, multidisciplinary team committed to maintaining a safe working and learning environment. This team addresses student behavior that may pose a health or safety threat to the campus community through an individualized, coordinated, and thoughtful process intended to gather relevant information and intervene when appropriate.

You can also contact the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#). This office can assist you in addressing and resolving situations in which the behavioral choices of students may negatively impact others and/or themselves. They consider a range of interventions, including informal guidance, reflective conversations, and formal student conduct processes.

## **Conflict Resolution**

If you find yourself in a conflict situation with a faculty or staff member, we recommend reaching out to your Primary Advisor, the Graduate Program Director, or the Department Chair for advice about how to resolve the situation. If the solutions proposed during these discussions do not seem satisfactory, you can request the assistance of an ad hoc conflict resolution committee.

The Graduate Studies Committee can serve as the conflict resolution committee. However, if the Graduate Program Director is involved in the complaint, the Department Chair will take their place. If any other committee members are involved in the complaint, then the most senior WGSS faculty member will take their place. The student is welcome to invite their Primary Advisor or another faculty mentor to accompany them to any meetings with the conflict resolution committee.

If the conflict resolution committee is unable to resolve the complaint, the Department Chair may refer you to another campus office or advocate. Our hope is to be able to find a solution within our department, but we recognize there will be instances where taking things outside WGSS will be most beneficial.



## **Formal Academic Grievances**

A variety of appeals and grievance procedures are available to graduate students who wish to challenge accusations of academic or professional misconduct or who wish to report improper academic practices by faculty members (i.e. arbitrary or malicious actions related to grading, other evaluations, or additional academic matters). The Graduate School does require that these appeals or grievances first be considered at the program level. Students wishing to file formal academic grievances should contact the Graduate Program Director and/or the Department Chair.

In accordance with Graduate School policy, the WGSS Department's first step will be to establish an ad hoc grievance and appeals committee. This committee should be distinct from the Graduate Studies Committee, but members from that committee can serve in this capacity. Any faculty named in the grievance or party to it in a compromising way cannot serve on the grievance and appeals committee. The committee must consist of no fewer than four members and an equal proportion of faculty and graduate students. The student is welcome to invite their Primary Advisor or another faculty mentor to accompany them to any meetings with the grievance and appeals committee.

If the student or other relevant parties are not satisfied with the committee's ruling, they have the option of appealing to the Vice Provost of Graduate Education. They must submit a written appeal of the program's decision within two weeks. When warranted, the Vice Provost will pass the matter on to the Graduate Council Appeals Committee, who will advise them on the disposition of the case and possible penalties. The Vice Provost is responsible for making and implementing a final decision. For more information on the grievance and appeals procedures, please refer to the Graduate Bulletin.

## **Labor Grievances**

If you have concerns about your Teaching Assistantship that could not be resolved through the avenues suggested in the "Teaching Concerns" section – or if you believe the terms and conditions of your employment contract are being violated – then you can turn to the [Graduate Student Employee Union \(GSEU\)](#). You might start by speaking to the WGSS Department Mobilizer or other GSEU representatives on campus about your Teaching Assistant or Graduate Instructor position. GSEU can provide you with detailed information regarding your contract and can offer guidance regarding grievance procedures.

## **Discrimination or Sexual Misconduct Complaints**

The [Office of Equity and Access \(OEA\)](#) handles complaints concerning discrimination or sexual misconduct. You can report sexual misconduct or age-, race-, gender-, sexuality-, religion-, and disability-based discrimination using the online [Report It](#) system. The university's Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action policy outlines the forms of discrimination prohibited against on our campus.

You do not need to discuss the incident(s) with a supervisor, the department, or anyone else before accessing these reporting options. You are, of course, welcome to discuss these issues with your Primary Advisor, the Graduate Program Director, or the Department Chair. But please remember that all WGSS faculty are mandatory reporters and are required to report information about known or suspected prohibited conduct to the Office of Title IX.

The OEA's [Title IX](#) site includes information about local and campus resources for reporting sexual violence or harassment and for finding confidential advocacy, emotional, and medical support services.

### **Other Campus Offices & Advocates**

[Graduate Student Advocates \(GSAs\)](#). You can contact GSAs if you have a serious problem or concern that you don't know how to handle and that you are unable to resolve by speaking to your advisor, the Graduate Program Director, the Graduate Program Coordinator, or the Department Chair. GSAs have addressed conflicts with faculty advisors, housing problems, health insurance issues, discrimination cases, problems with funding, and questions of academic standing.

[International Student Advocate](#). If you are an international student facing the problems listed above or are in search of recommendations for seeking immigration-related legal advice, you may also contact the GSO's International Student Advocate at [ISA@sbgso.org](mailto:ISA@sbgso.org).

[Ombud's Office](#). Graduate students can take advantage of the Ombud's Office, and GSAs will sometimes refer students there. All contact with this office is considered confidential in accordance with professional standards of practices. Depending on the nature of the question or problem, the Ombud may offer specific advice or mediation, provide information, or make appropriate referrals. The Ombud is also open to people who need someone to listen impartially and suggest a course of action or a range of options.