

Majoring in

Women's Studies

Description of Women's Studies

What is women's studies?

Women's studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines the contributions, perspectives, experiences, roles and status of women from a multicultural and historical perspective.

What do women's studies majors study?

Women's studies majors study the contributions of women to literature, and history. They explore the unique aspects of female spirituality, and learn how race and class influences women's experiences. They also examine the psychology and sociology of women and examine women's involvement in politics, government and law. Women's studies majors learn about women's particular health needs and investigate the status of women around the globe.

What skills are important for a women's studies major?

Women's studies majors should:

- Be interested in the world and its people;
- Have good oral and written communication skills;
- Be good at synthesizing different topics of information; and
- Be sensitive to the differences between people of different cultures.

What else do women's studies majors study?

The General Interdisciplinary Concentration is intended for students who wish to follow the traditional careers of women's studies majors, primarily in positions where they can work for social change.

Students who select the Women, Health, and Science Concentration will benefit from its specialized curriculum in preparation for careers in basic health or sciences that address the interests and needs of women.

Course Requirements

General education: About 55 credit hours of general education courses are required. These courses give a broad range of knowledge in science, math, writing, arts, ethics, civilization, human behavior, literature, foreign language, and urban environment.

Major courses: A minimum of 30 credit hours of women's studies courses are required. Women's studies majors may take courses such as:

- African American family in social context
- Feminist literary theory
- Feminist social theory
- Global women's spirituality
- History of women in Europe
- Islam and women
- Language and gender
- Lesbian and bisexual women
- Politics of race, class and gender
- Psychology of women
- Sociology of women
- Violence against women
- Women and American politics
- Women and global politics
- Women and the law
- Women, art, and society
- Women in literature
- Women in the justice system
- Women writers

Electives: About 35 credit hours are required.

These courses may be taken in any area. Many women's studies majors focus these electives by choosing to minor (18-21 credit hours) to give them an additional area of specialization. Some also pursue a second major in a traditional discipline to maximize their employment options.

Careers in Women's Studies

Some entry-level areas of employment entered by women's studies majors with appropriate experience and education include the following:

- Child welfare officer
- Community service agency worker
- Corrections case worker
- Domestic violence case worker
- Family/life coordinator
- HIV educator
- Investment counselor
- Lobbyist
- Management trainee
- Market researcher
- Planned Parenthood counselor
- Rape counselor
- Retail manager
- Sales representative
- Social service agency worker
- Women's advocacy program manager
- Women's health crises official
- Writer on women's issues

Jobs that require additional education or experience for student majoring in women's studies include:

- Career counselor
- College student personnel worker
- Resident hall director
- Lawyer
- Marriage and family therapist
- Public health educator
- Rehabilitation counselor
- School counselor

- Social worker
- Sociology professor

Next Steps

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a women's studies major at VCU, consider doing each of the following things. Check them off as you complete each step.

- Check out the VCU Women's Studies Program's website at www.has.vcu.edu/wst/
- Take an introductory women's studies course.
- Read about the women's studies major in the *Undergraduate Bulletin*.
- Review the women's studies major graduation worksheet with an academic advisor.
- Talk to one or more upper-level women's studies students about their major.
- Discuss the major with a women's studies professor.
- Go to the Career Center to read about careers in women's studies.
- Go to the VCU bookstore and browse in the women's studies textbook section.
- Explore internship possibilities through the Career Center and the Women's Studies Program.

□ Read specific information about careers in the Occupational Outlook Handbook located at www.bls.gov/oco.

Virginia Commonwealth University

**College of
Humanities & Sciences**

Women's Studies Program

1000 W. Franklin St.
P.O. Box 843060
Richmond, VA 23284

Phone: (804) 828-6710

Women's Studies Program website:

<http://www.has.vcu.edu/wst/>



This brochure is published by
University College in cooperation
with the Women's Studies Program