

# Unit Name: Women's and Gender Studies Assessment Summary Fall 2008-Spring 2009

What are the student learning outcomes in your unit?

The WOST Program has 5 student learning goals:

To analyze academic disciplines at the intersection of gender, race, and class, equipping students to identify and analyze assumptions about gender built into the varying approaches of disciplines and areas of knowledge

To encourage original scholarship and research about women that takes into consideration gender, race, class, and sexuality and that evaluates the effects of assumptions about gender on research, teaching, and the various disciplines

To provide a collaborative, decentered learning environment which values students' ideas and encourages the open exchange of information, opinion, and rational argumentation

To integrate real-life experience with academic skills, praxis with theory

To foster an individual and critical approach to learning

**Which outcome did you assess this academic year?**

Depth and breadth of learning about diverse feminisms, and application of this knowledge to everyday life.

**How did you assess their skills before, during and / or at the end of the semester / academic year?**

2008-9 was the first year our department operated under its new name, and the first year that WOST 201 was taught by a single faculty member. Our courses kept their emphasis on women's experiences, and added emphases on gender and sexuality. In addition, the department operated under transitional leadership. Given this plethora of transitions, we focused our assessment on goals derived from 2008, looking to see whether they had been met, and where improvement might be needed, especially regarding the new course and new emphases. The prior Director had convened a faculty meeting in January 2008 focused on assessment. Using one of Woolvord's assessment methods, each faculty member was asked to report on an area where our students succeeded academically and one where they struggled. Based on this discussion, we focused on redesigning the W200/201 course to insure that students get the basic tools needed to understand feminist theory and points of view other than their own. By looking at syllabi and student evaluations, we then assessed whether these goals were met.

**Please summarize the data you have collected this semester / academic year.**

Student comments on their evaluations emphasized information learned about women: "A lot of the things I learned about women I never know about and I am a woman," or "really opened my eyes to women's rights and how unequal women are compared to men," or "'reading material [was] from a wide variety of authors and periods of time in history, [with] wealth of knowledge and insight into women.'" Others emphasized the experimental/praxis element of the intro course: the course "focuses on the subject material and mental critique of the info," or "Many of her classroom exercises proved very helpful."

**Please describe any programmatic changes you have made or are planning to make based on the data you have collected.**

The same instructor will offer the introductory course in 2010, and will extend this initial assessment into something more programmatic. Early in the semester, she will assign a personal essay about feminism's impact on student's personal and scholarly lives. Using this as a baseline, the department will then review final essay exams for this course, noting which of the five instructional goals show the most improvement, and which the least. This data will be analyzed, and used to set goals for improving the course for spring of 2011. Further, The department will collect and review syllabi for other courses offered by the WGS department, seeking clarification from faculty where necessary. The goal is to lay the groundwork for exploring how these goals transfer into upper level WGS coursework.