



GENDER STUDIES (BA)

Program Learning Assessment

2011-2015 Assessment Planning Cycle Key Findings and Proposed Actions

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**John Jay College of Criminal Justice
The City University of New York**

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Gender Studies (BA)

Mission

The mission of the undergraduate Gender Studies major is to acquaint students with masculinities, femininities and sexualities as interpreted and enacted differently historically, scientifically, and culturally, in turn shaping human development, behavior, and the course of justice. Through interdisciplinary coursework and training in research methods, the major aims to develop versatile, independent thinkers with solid analytical, expository, and research skills.

Learning Goals

Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Gender Studies from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a student will:

- 1) Be able to identify and analyze how assumptions about gender and sexuality influence the construction of human identity, and do so with sensitivity to historical, cultural, and geographic contexts.
- 2) Produce written arguments that explore the complex interrelationships between gender and sexuality and other identity categories, such as race, class, nationality, age, and physical disability.
- 3) Discuss major topics and approaches in the history of feminist theory, queer theory, masculinity studies, and gender studies, and be able to critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of any given approach.
- 4) Perform independent research on a topic related to gender or sexuality with stated disciplinary and interdisciplinary methods, and compose an informed research paper communicating scholarly and disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approaches to gender analysis.
- 5) Connect scholarly inquiry on gender and sexuality to theories of justice, criminality, and human rights, concerns specifically related to John Jay's educational mission.

Assessment Cycle Review

This assessment cycle was the first for the Gender Studies Program, which began only in 2011. Therefore the goals of this first assessment cycle were to assess each course in the core at least once and assess whether the learning outcomes for each course met up appropriately with the learning goals of the major and minor. Much of this work was about tightening up and focusing the new curriculum.

As per the goals, we were able to assess each core class in the major and minor. We spent the most time on the two required courses, GEN 101 Introduction to Gender Studies and GEN 205 Gender and Justice, because we see these courses as doing the intellectual labor of outlining the content and to some extent the methods of Gender Studies. We changed the curriculum and/or the learning goals after each course was assessed.

GEN 101 Introduction to Gender Studies – This course required the most assessment because it was our first and thus we were learning the tools of assessment as well as how best to teach the content of the course. We temporarily settled on a better, standardized vocabulary exam to help students focus on the core concepts and vocabulary of Gender Studies. Professors Stoudt and Gentile took the lead on these assessments with additional help by Professor Burns.

GEN 205 Gender and Justice– We found the students had difficulty identifying appropriate resources for papers and did not fully grasp how institutions promote oppression. We changed the curriculum to include more general ideas of justice and to help students connect their individual experiences with privilege and oppression to larger social and economic systems. This resulted in more students meeting and exceeding our expectations for the Learning Objectives. Professors Stoudt and Gentile took the lead on these assessments with additional help by Professor Burns.

GEN/BIO 255 The Biology of Gender and Sexuality – Was assessed once. After this assessment we realized the balance of the content between biology and gender was uneven and the main focus seemed to be on the biology. Then I worked with Professor Lents to place this course in the General Education requirements and a lab was added. We need to revisit this course and begin the assessment process on the new incarnation. Professors Lents and Gentile worked on this assessment. The next one will be with Professors Corthals and Gentile.

GEN/PHI 333 Theories of Gender and Sexuality – We assessed this course and found that students were better able to scaffold knowledge about gender studies content and methods after having the improved GEN 101 and 205 sequence, but they had difficulty doing close readings of the texts and creating meaning from them. The course assignments were shifted to include more in-class examples of this technique. This course needs to be reassessed. Professors Gentile and Lee worked on this assessment.

GEN/HIS 364 History of Gender and Sexuality: Prehistory to 1650 – When we assessed this course we found that the History methods were not as prominent in the curriculum. The course curriculum was updated to remedy this and the learning outcomes were changed to reflect more historical goals. These changes were effective according to our second assessment as the historical methods were better understood. Professors Gentile and Perry.

GEN 401 Senior Seminar in Gender Studies – We only had enough students to do a pilot assessment in the Spring of 2015. We found students had clear ideas of their research interests but little understanding of methods to frame their capstone projects. We realized from this assessment that we need to continue discussing interdisciplinary methods in all our courses to see if that will help students. We also realized we do not have any mention of activism in our program goals. All of the student capstone research exemplified activist research. So we will be revising the program goals this semester. Professors Gentile and Perry.

We also held our first curriculum retreat in the Fall of 2014 in order to address the methods question and the transition from GEN 101 to 205. This retreat and a curriculum

development meeting of the regional members of the National Women's Studies Association put our work in a nice context. Our numbers of majors and minors are comparable and higher to programs that are 20-40 years old. Additionally because we have an institutional focus of justice, our curriculum integrates intersectionality and ideals of justice more fluidly than many more established programs. Professors involved in the curriculum retreat included Professors Huse, Jokic, Pauliny, Perry, Pastrana, Rubio, Stoudt, and Burns. Professors Gentile and Pauliny attended the NWSA meeting.

However we suffer similarly to many other GS programs in that we lack an institutional space and identified, dedicated faculty. This impedes the development of community for students and faculty.

As of Fall 2015 Gender Studies will be housed in the new Department of Interdisciplinary Studies. We will see if this helps create a stronger community for students. We are also creating a wiki for faculty to share syllabi, class activities, links, and potential readings. This will help promote community and better continuity between sections and courses. This community building will be measured by a survey to be given in GEN 205 and by attendance at GS events.

The Director has reached out to other programs to compare methodology courses and capstone requirements. These will be assessed in the coming year. We hope to have our own methodology course in the program by Spring 2016 or to have developed a more structured strategy for incorporating methods into all the core courses.

In general, the Gender Studies first assessment cycle was very informative and productive as we revised each course based on the assessment data. The next 5 year cycle of assessments will involve the Advisory Committee more actively.

Gender Studies (BA)

Program Learning Assessment. Key findings and proposed actions
(2011-2015)

Program Learning Goals

1. Identify and analyze how assumptions about gender and sexuality influence the construction of human identity, and do so with sensitivity to contexts.
2. Produce written arguments that explore the complex interrelationships between gender and sexuality and other identity categories.
3. Discuss major topics and approaches in the history of gender studies, and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of any given approach.
4. Perform independent research on a topic related to gender or sexuality with stated disciplinary and interdisciplinary methods.
5. Connect scholarly inquiry on gender and sexuality to theories of justice, criminality, and human rights.

Outcomes Assessment

Program Learning Goal #	% Meet / Exceed ¹	Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective? ⁴		
				Follow-up assessment Sem. Year	% Meet / Exceed	
Fall 2011						
Assessment Context²: GEN 101, Tool³: Paper						
1	95	Assessment tool did not adequately capture the skills students demonstrated in course work.	Revise rubric. Multiple assessment assignments (Sp12).	Sp12	100	↑
2	90			Sp12	78	↑
5	90			Sp12	67	↑
3	90			Sp12	50	↑
Spring 2012						
Assessment Context: GEN 101 (n=28), Tool: Paper						
1	100	Difficulties with LG# 3 (connecting their experiences to the literature of the course) and LG# 5 (reflecting on how the way culture organizes gender and sexuality impacts ideals of justice).	LG#3: Reflection paper assignments (F12). LG#5: Readings on dynamics of gender and sexuality privilege (F12).	F12	61	↓
3	50			F12	72	↑
5	67			F12	45	↓
2	78			F12	69	↓
Assessment Context: GEN 205 (n=18), Tool: Paper						
1	66	Difficulty identifying resources for papers, intersections of identity, and how cultural institutions contribute to shaping gender and sexuality.	Scaffolded writing assignments with research skills (Sp13). Readings on intersectionality & scaffolded writing (Sp13). Feedback on scaffolded writing assignments (Sp13).	Sp13	63	↓
2	44			Sp13	88	↑
3	66			Sp13	50	↓
Assessment Context: GEN 255, Tool: Paper						
1	40	LG#1: Course content may not support the learning goal. LG#4: Criteria was found to be inadequate and overly general. LG#5: Unable to identify science as a culturally constructed institution. May reflect mismatch between learning goal and course content or assignment.	Revise objectives and rubrics. Assess writing portfolios. LG#3: Assess course content. LG#5: Review assignment. LG#4: Assess syllabus (Sp13).			
3	60					
2	50					
5	20					
4	70					

(1) Percent represents ratio of students who met or exceeded expectations. Where scores represent mean performance, the mean score and highest scale value are indicated (e.g., 3.3 out of 4). (2) Assessment context may relate to comprehensive program review, specific academic setting (e.g., course #, capstone, internship), class standing (e.g., seniors, transfers, alumni), post-graduation outcomes (e.g., placement, further education, employers ratings of employee skills), or indicators of learning progress. (3) Examples of tools include exams, portfolios, research projects, lab reports, papers, essays, surveys, licensure tests, performances, presentations. (4) Re-assessment of learning follows the implementation of actions to determine their effectiveness in improving learning outcomes.

Outcomes Assessment

Program Learning Goal #	% Meet / Exceed	Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective?		
				Sem. Year	% Meet / Exceed	
Fall 2012						
Assessment Context : GEN 101 (n=60), Tool : Portfolio						
1	61	Students better able to meet requirements of the class, but continue to have difficulty with LG#5 in terms of how systems of institutional power are organized around and reinforce ideals of gender and sexuality.	Indirect assessments of learning, such as grades, students ratings of their knowledge, skills and evaluation of course content (F13). LG# 5: Paper on forms of institutional structures (F13).			
3	72					
5	45					
2	69					
Assessment Context : GEN 364 (n=29), Tool : Paper						
1	65	Gender Studies majors meet expectations for learning, but have difficulty understanding the contexts of justice.	Discuss developing assignments on social construction of ideas of justice in GEN 205 (F13).			
3	76					
Spring 2013						
Assessment Context : GEN 205 (n=8), Tool : Paper						
1	63	Changes to GEN101 better prepared students for GEN205. Students still had difficulties integrating knowledge of institutional oppression with individual ideas of agency.	Readings and discussion of neoliberalism and notions of individual responsibility in the context of justice (Sp14). Reach out to other Gender Studies programs within CUNY to compare assessment strategies and learning goals (F13).	Sp 14	68	↑
2	88			Sp 14	85	↓
3	50			Sp 14	50	=
Assessment Context : GEN 333 (n=8), Tool : Paper						
1	58	Students demonstrated scaffolded knowledge base from GEN101 / 205. Most significant impediment to success is the inability to do close reading of text, distill its main points and compare them with others.	Assignments and in class activities modeling close readings of texts and comparing theoretical arguments (Sp14).			
2	58					
3	58					
Spring 2014						
Assessment Context : GEN 205 (n=36), Tool : Paper						
1	68	Despite scaffolded writing assignments and drafts of the final paper, students did not appear to be able to translate their understandings of intersectionality and justice to methodology and research.	Consider altering LG 3 so students not expected to understand research methodologies yet (Sp 15). Consider a 200 level research methods course to introduce students to interdisciplinary research methods (Sp 15).	Sp 15	70	↑
2	85			Sp 15	80	↓
3	50			Sp 15	60	↑
Spring 2015						
Assessment Context : GEN 205, Tool : Paper						
1	70	Course restructured to better introduce interdisciplinary methods of analysis and the relationship between research methods and knowledge construction. Changes were successful. However, students struggled with expanding their world views about justice and gender.	Course to include a few more readings on methods and on the social construction of knowledge. Course will be run as a writing intensive course and include more peer reviews of writing and more low stakes writing assignments (F15).			
2	80					
3	60					

Outcomes Assessment

Program Learning Goal #	% Meet / Exceed	Findings	Proposed Actions (Semester Implemented)	Was action effective?
				Follow-up assessment Sem. Year % Meet / Exceed
Spring 2015 (cont.)				
Assessment Context : GEN 364, Tool : Paper				
1	50	Students had difficulty applying historical methods and analysis, struggled to understand the historical contexts of gender and sexuality, and had difficulty understanding how historical agents from the past are crucial to our present day positions.	Continue to emphasize the role of historical methods and context within the course readings and provide feedback to the GS students around these issues (F15).	
4	60			
2	60			
Assessment Context : GEN 401, Tool : Capstone Paper				
1	90	Students often have a particular image of their research interest but have difficulty being intellectually flexible to understand other contexts for their research ideas. We wonder if because there is not a specific Gender Studies methods course, students have difficulty conceptualizing a comprehensive research methodology to frame their capstone projects.	Meet with capstone instructors to get a better sense of expectations for research levels. Retool the LOs to better focus our expectations for student learning. Work on creating a more focused methods course and discuss methods throughout GEN 101 and GEN 205 (Sp 16).	
2	70			
3	50			
4	40			
5	50			