Women’s Studies Minor
Student Learning Outcomes
and
Assessment

Student Learning Outcomes
• Students will gain a critical and analytical understanding of women and gender across history and cultures.
• Students will be able to promote social justice in both an intellectual and activist context.
• Students will gain an awareness of women’s issues.
• Students will understand how social constructions of gender and sexuality affect and have shaped daily experience, broader social structures, institutions, social relations, and cultural and aesthetic production.
• Students will gain an understanding of how gender intersects with race, class, sexuality and nationality.
• Students will have knowledge of basic feminist ideas and methods of analysis.
• The knowledge acquired in women’s studies courses will influence ways in which student acquire knowledge in other courses.

Assessment Plan
Women’s Studies has numerous assessment tools to measure student learning. They are:
• An annual exit interview with graduating minors
• A capstone course or senior seminar taught every Spring
• An annual Women’s Studies essay contest and an annual Women’s Issues Leadership Award
• Course evaluations for all women’s studies courses
• Measurement and assessment tools in all courses
• A women’s studies teaching roundtable held at the beginning of every semester
• The advisor to women’s studies minors conducts an annual exit interview with our graduating minors. This interview encompasses both a written and an oral part. Students are asked to evaluate the minor in terms of its intellectual rigor and how it has added to their education at Loyola, as well as to their preparation for a career and advanced education. Students also make suggestions on how the minor can be improved (i.e. addition of new courses, suggestions for readings and other supplemental materials, etc.). In addition of giving us a clear picture of where the women’s studies
minor is and how it can grow, the exit interview also enables us to assess the social justice commitment and feminist activism of our students. Similarly, participation in Service Learning and internships in which students have participated, indicates ways in which students are putting to use their commitment to feminist activism and social justice.

- Every women’s studies minor takes the Senior Seminar in Women’s Studies either during their junior or senior year. This capstone course is designed to familiarize “students with the relevant and current theoretical developments in the field and provide them with the opportunity to apply this knowledge to their own research” (from the bulletin). More specifically, the seminar has mapped a history of feminism in the western world, with a particular focus on some of the “classic” texts in 20th century feminist thought and theory. Students are required to examine how women from various cultural, class, and racial backgrounds have thought about and responded to the conditions of their lives and to the various systems of oppression and domination that contain them as women or as members of other oppressed groups. Alternatives to gender oppression women have envisioned over the centuries are also part of the course. Particular emphasis is placed on how feminist scholars have theorized this experience.

- All written and oral coursework measure students’ ability to think within, across, and beyond disciplines and encourages an interdisciplinary approach. Assignments include the journal or book review, numerous short papers that encourage students to view the course material comparatively, and a self-generated research paper.

- The Capstone course requires students to use the interdisciplinary knowledge they have gained in their other courses and to incorporate them into their written assignments.

- The annual essay contest encourages students from all women’s studies courses to submit papers they have written during the academic year. Judged by two or three faculty members, the writing contest enables us assess the quality of student papers written in different disciplines as well as to judge how well they reflect the learning outcomes.

- All women’s studies courses are evaluated each time they are taught. Women’s studies has its own evaluation form which students fill out in addition to the College evaluation form. Questions are designed with women’s studies minors and non-minors in mind. Questions for minors specifically assess how the course meets the requirements for a women’s studies course. These evaluations are read by the Director of the Women’s
Resource Center and returned with comments and recommendations to the faculty member.

- Each women’s studies course has its own measurement and assessment tools to appropriately determine a student’s success in this course. Assessment varies: some faculty use strategies from feminist pedagogy such as journaling and creative and/or research papers to measure student success; others use measurement tools standard in their disciplines.

- The women’s studies teaching roundtable enables current and past teachers in the program to talk about their syllabi, feminist pedagogy, and how their course reflects the learning outcomes for the program. Comparing syllabi also helps to avoid duplication in course materials and topics covered in class.