**Report on Gender Studies Curriculum Revision and Course Development PIG**
**August 2019**

The Gender Studies Program is grateful for the PI grant support we received to jump start a process of curricular revision this summer from July 29-August 23. We (Lauren Berger, Eva Hoffmann, Lydia McDermott, Suzanne Morrissey, Nicole Simek, and Zahi Zalloua) held 11 hours of in-person meetings during that time and successfully achieved our objectives: to develop learning goals for a 200-level course focused on intersectionality, to develop frameworks to be used in each iteration of the course, and to put together a bank of potential readings and assignments that instructors can draw from in adapting the class to their individual needs.

Keeping closely to our proposed timeline, we began by gathering data on Gender Studies program learning goals and major requirements at Whitman's "Panel of 19" comparison schools. We reached out to instructors at two institutions who have taught courses similar to the one we were envisioning and were happy to hear back from one team, who shared a reading list with us that sparked further ideas. We spent some time in weeks 2 and 3 discussing readings in intersectionality theory that we all completed together and exploring varying approaches to case studies and group assignments designed to teach effective collaboration (what constitutes a case study and what types of "cases" we might include; where in the semester this work could best fall; how group work could be structured to teach collaboration as a recursive process; and what we wanted students to gain from case studies at each point in the semester). Each of us also reported back to the group on texts that we had divided up among ourselves in order to maximize the time we had to explore a range of approaches to the topic and possible classroom activities and assignments. In addition to developing a course description and student learning goals, we began discussions of the changes to the GNDS major that we plan to finalize this year. We achieved consensus on a plan to restructure the area requirements currently in place for our major, moving from five separate and somewhat divisionally-based area requirements (Social sciences; Humanities; History; Theory; Global) to a three-area requirement (Gender across time; Gender in global context; Theory and methods) that better captures what we want students to learn through this distribution and that provides a clearer and more feasible pathway through the major. Finally, we began considering potential revisions to the GNDS governance structure, in preparation for the outreach to other departments we will be doing this fall.

We copy below the course description and learning goals we have developed for the course we are now calling GNDS 2xx: Problems with Privilege, which we will be proposing to the faculty for discussion and approval this year. In addition to this work, we have also developed a couple possible structuring frameworks (module sequences whose aims and progression we've discussed together, along with suggested readings). We expect that individual faculty members teaching the course will adapt the sequence and shape of the modules we've outlined to reflect their particular expertise and interests. To support that work, we have collected a bank of

readings and notes on our conversations on a Google drive that will remain available to instructors as a resource.

**Impact on student learning:**

It is too early at this point to assess the impact of this work on student learning, but the steering committee will be evaluating impact at three particular points: first, at the conclusion of each iteration of GNDS 2xx, we will discuss the instructor's assessment of student performance, student feedback, and the ways in which students are connecting their work in 2xx to the Gender Studies 100 introductory class. Second, we hope to grow enrollment in the major and minor programs by providing a 200-level bridge opportunity as well as a clearer path through the major. We don't believe there is a single specific number that must be achieved in order to demonstrate that we are adequately serving student interest; rather, we would like to solicit qualitative student feedback about course offerings and a sense of cohort. This can be done by inviting student representatives to steering committee meetings and by conducting exit and alumni surveys. In the longer term, we will also evaluate the impact of our curricular changes on students' senior seminar and thesis performance (which we currently already discuss each year).

**Limitations:**

We were working on a compressed time frame, which served our "jump start" purposes well, but with more time we could have developed more extensive reading bank annotations and module sequence possibilities. We have also not come to a decision yet about which visiting colleague with expertise in transnational and women of color feminisms to bring to campus to review our work with us and provide guidance on our efforts to center these areas in our curriculum. This is a piece of the grant budget we requested but that we did not have sufficient time to explore this summer. The steering committee will take this question up early in the fall, however.

***GNDS 2XX: Problems with Privilege***

**Course Description**

This course engages the now widespread liberal activist slogan "check your privilege" so prevalent on U.S. college campuses. What does it mean today to "check" privilege? Is "checking privilege" enough? When consuming the news and educating ourselves in class, whose voices get to be heard? Who aren't we hearing from? What questions haven't we raised? How do we listen effectively? Intersectionality as theory and method responds to many of these questions. It posits that various structures of discrimination and privilege (such as sexism, racism, and colonialism among others) intersect, influencing our daily lived experience as well as our social institutions and policies. This course presents foundational concepts that allow us to understand power through debates in the field of Gender Studies, and a genealogy of intersectionality and its discontents. The course explores theories and

methods based on intersectionality beyond a race/gender pairing, engages critiques of intersectionality, and facilitates a more nuanced understanding of challenges and opportunities surrounding social justice and identity through the lens of intersectional analysis.

**Learning Outcomes**

This course will enable students to:

- Understand how various dimensions of our identities, such as gender, race, class, age, and ability shape experiences of the social world, of structural and political power and violence, of institutions and representations in varying global contexts.
- Analyze how intersectionality shapes the experiences of marginalized groups in various contemporary areas of social justice, such as housing, education, employment, and wealth.
- Identify key arguments for acknowledging identity politics that pay attention to intra-group differences in order to promote social justice.
- Identify and situate key texts and thinkers who, historically and contemporarily, contribute to the field of intersectionality and its critique.
- Contextualize theories of intersectionality within the larger field of Gender Studies.
- Collaborate effectively with others to identify and address intra- and inter-group differences in the service of social justice

Sample course structure (in broad outline), referencing readings discussed by the group:

I. Problems with Privilege – anchored with Sarah Ahmed and Andrea Smith as entry points into question of how to have conversations about this topic; establish balance between academic voices and activist/practice ones

A. Collective Voice and Political Mobilization

B. Feminisms and Intragroup Diversity

1. category of "women" as complicated by other (different) dimensions of identity
2. race and gender as not occurring "on mutually exclusive terrains"

C. contemporary media examples for analysis and practice/academic work involving intersectionality

II. Intersectionality Defined – Vivian May and Patricia Williams

A. Destabilizing boundaries between race and gender (in relationship to class, sexuality, physical ability, nation, religion, citizenship)

B. "Double disadvantage"

C. Push-pull of identity politics/Oppression Olympics

III. Selfhood and Erasure – Kimberlé Crenshaw and Susan Brison, Anna Julia Cooper

A. Narrative and "evidence"

B. Violence against women of color to discuss ALL gender studies – feminisms, masculinities, queer studies and crip theory

C. Student work with media examples

IV. "Dangerous Crossings" (Claire Kim's term) – focus on case studies: Ann Laura Stoler, Nancy López, Native case studies

A. Politics and victim blame
B. Activism
C. Rhetorics and myth

V. Social Justice: Models/Visions/Revisions (Chandra Mohanty, Audre Lorde, Veena Das, Angela Davis, Michelle Alexander)