

# DIVERSITY STUDIES, CERTIFICATE (LIBERAL ARTS)

Requirements for an undergraduate certificate may be completed at any campus location offering the specified courses for the certificate.

## Program Description

The Diversity Studies certificate is an interdisciplinary and online program of study that explores social difference and inequality related to gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, aging, religion, and disability. How we experience and view the world around us, the opportunities presented to us, and even the people that we surround ourselves with are constrained by invisible and unconscious systems of power. These systems organize our schools, workplaces, healthcare systems, criminal justice system, and media, and reproduce inequality rooted in ignoring or downplaying diversity. The Diversity Studies certificate will encourage students to take an intersectional approach to expose, critique, and confront historical and contemporary sources of social inequality. This certificate will enable students to complement their existing course portfolio by providing an opportunity to deepen their knowledge around issues of difference through a broad range of interdisciplinary coursework. An interdisciplinary approach will make it easier for students to see connections across disciplines and allow them to cluster their coursework in a meaningful and related way. Given the breadth of courses currently offered through World Campus on diversity, as well as the relative flexibility of the proposed certificate, new course development is minimal. Delivery of coursework exclusively through existing online courses will allow the most flexibility to our diverse student population.

The Diversity Studies certificate is designed to encourage reflection on the ethical challenges that arise when we become aware of how privilege, power, and difference are embedded in our world and daily lives. The aim is to move the discourse away from mere tolerance, celebration or appreciation to a deeper understanding and critique of discrimination, intolerance, and inequality in the historical and contemporary global society. The certificate will provide students with skills vital to careers in fields such as human resources, non-profit agencies, social welfare, education, and health and medicine. We have designed the certificate around an intersectional perspective that invites students to see the ways that race, class, gender, disability, sexuality, etc. operate together in overlapping and conflicting ways to affect all aspects of human experience. WMNST 105N, the one PRESCRIBED course for the certificate, introduces students to this intersectional perspective and situates discussions of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability within institutional spaces that include: education, the family, work, religion, the criminal justice system, and the media. After completing this course, students are then required to take 3 credits of ADDITIONAL COURSES that include: AFAM 100N, WMNST 100, WMNST 106N, and ENGL 245/WMNST 245. These courses were selected because they all explicitly take this intersectional approach to understanding social identity, privilege and inequality. After the completion of at least 6 introductory credits, students should be conversant in intersectional, feminist, and critical theory and able to:

1. Apply basic theories of identity, difference, social power and privilege to a wide range of textual and visual materials, and to their own interactions in the context of day-to-day life.
2. Critically engage how race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and disability have been constructed in the United States.

3. Consider transnational dimensions of similar dynamics and contrast these with the United States context.
4. Identify and analyze the multiple ways individuals, communities, and social movements have resisted and remade categories of identity and changed relations of power over time and space.
5. Recognize and explore the constructions of social identity.

For the 6 remaining credits for the certificate, students are given the freedom to choose SUPPORTING COURSES AND RELATED AREAS according to their particular area of interest and/or career focus, be it Human Development and Family Studies, Sociology, Anthropology or Communication Arts and Sciences. We have carefully reviewed the syllabi for all of the courses to be included in the certificate to ensure that, despite having different programmatic orientations, all adhere to a common commitment to understanding power and inequality from a social justice perspective. Given the number of online courses at our university that examine issues of diversity, it is important to allow students to select a portion of their certificate coursework based on what will be most interesting and useful to them in their academic and professional lives.

## What is Diversity Studies?

Diversity Studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that is interested in examining social differences defined by culturally constructed categories of race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, age, diversity, and other markers of identity. Diversity Studies however tends to focus on our own lived experiences, and how our perception of these markers influences personal and cultural interactions – especially our own! It investigates systems of power that organize our schools, workplaces, healthcare systems, criminal justice system, and media, many of them invisible to us. Around the globe those systems of power are organized very differently, sometimes in fundamental ways. Diversity Studies approaches differences intersectionally to expose, critique, and confront historical and contemporary sources of social and cultural conflict. This does not mean “looking past” differences; rather, looking straight at them to find the common ground and empathy that can make us better citizens.

## You Might Like This Program If...

- You want to translate your curiosities, experiences, passions and interests into actionable and meaningful work.
- You seek out inclusive environments, with persons of different backgrounds, cultures, and races to understand their points of view.
- You are passionate about gender equity, human rights, and social justice.
- You want to explore how gender and sexuality play a role in culture, the arts, literature, health, politics, the sciences, law, and education.
- You see yourself as a change agent in this world!

## Program Requirements

To earn an undergraduate certificate in Diversity Studies, a minimum of 12 credits is required.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prescribed Courses</b>		
WMNST 105N	Living in a Diverse World	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
Select 3 credits from the following:		3
AFAM 100N	Black Freedom Struggles	

WMNST 100	Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
WMNST 106N	Representing Women and Gender in Literature, Art and Popular Cultures
WMNST/ENGL 245	Introduction to LGBTQ Studies
Select 6 credits from the following: 6	
AFAM/SOC 409	Racial and Ethnic Inequality in America
AFR 110N	Introduction to Contemporary Africa
AMST 140Y	Religion in American Life and Thought
ANTH 1	Understanding Humans
ANTH 45N	Cultural Diversity: A Global Perspective
ANTH 146	Indigenous North America
ASIA 100	What is Asia?
BBH 302	Diversity and Health
BBH 315	Gender and Biobehavioral Health
CAS 271N	Intercultural Communication
CAS 426W	Communication Ethics
CAS 455	Topics in Gender and Communication
CAS 475	Studies in Public Address
CMLIT 10	World Literatures
CMLIT 153	International Cultures: Film and Literature
COMM 205	Gender, Diversity and the Media
CRIM/SOC 201	Presumed Innocent? Social Science of Wrongful Conviction
CSD 269	Deaf Culture
FR 139	France and the French-speaking World
HDFS 249N	Adult Development and Aging
HDFS 250	Sexual Identity over the Life Span
HDFS 254N	Reading Our Lives: Understanding Diversity and Human Development through Memoirs
HIST 447	Recent American History
HIST 479	History of Imperialism and Nationalism in Africa
JST 10	Jewish Civilization
LHR/WMNST 136	Race, Gender, and Employment
LHR 410	Employment Strategies for People with Disabilities
LHR 458Y	History of Work in America
OLEAD 410	Leadership in a Global Context
OLEAD 411	Women and Leadership
PLSC 210N	Rights in America
PSYCH 422	Human Sexuality
RHS 100	Introduction to Disability Culture
RHS 410	Employment Strategies for People with Disabilities
RLST 1	Introduction to World Religions
RPTM 120	Leisure and Human Behavior
SOC 35	Sociology of Aging
SOC 119N	Race, Ethnicity and Culture
SOC 456	Gender, Occupations, and Professions
SPLED 461	Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders: Issues and Concerns
WMNST 100	Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

WMNST 106N Representing Women and Gender in Literature, Art and Popular Cultures

WMNST 120 Sex, Gender, and the Body

WMNST/ENGL 245 Introduction to LGBTQ Studies

## Certificate Learning Objectives

- **Critical Constructions of Identity:** Critically engage how race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, and disability have been constructed in the United States.
- **Resistance:** Identify and analyze the multiple ways individuals, communities, and social movements have resisted and remade categories of identity and changed relations of power over time and space.
- **Theories of Identity:** Apply basic theories of identity, difference, social power and privilege to a wide range of textual and visual materials, and to their own interactions in the context of day-to-day life.
- **Transnational Contexts:** Consider transnational dimensions of similar dynamics and contrast these with the United States context.

## Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

## University Park

### Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

## Career Paths

Employers today value effective communication, analytical thinking, and teamwork. With its emphasis on how gender, sexuality, race and other forms of diversity impact the experiences of every individual, this curriculum trains its students to recognize the impacts of bias and unequal social power in the social, cultural and political arenas. Graduates enter their post-graduate world sensitive to diverse perspectives that can either facilitate or impede team building, problem solving, and negotiation. Diversity Studies graduates—no matter where their career paths lead—are committed to the kind of institutional and social change that values all voices, and supports social justice.

## Careers

Diversity Studies graduates from Penn State work in a wide variety of professions and industries. You will find us in the legal profession (one alumna runs her own legal firm, serving lower-income clients and gender-based discrimination cases). Others work in communications, marketing and advertising, business, banking and human resources. Activist students find their way into non-profits, advocacy groups, government, human development, journalism and communications. Women's health is a dynamic field—medical care, nursing and research positions are out there, as well as health administration. Teaching attracts many of our graduates.

## Opportunities for Graduate Studies

The scholarly field of Diversity Studies prepares students to study some of the most complex challenges in a world where gender, race, class, sexuality and power are always intertwined. As an interdisciplinary field, it spans the arts and sciences, the humanities, and policy fields and provides applicable training for students seeking to continue their studies. Our scholars gain experience as researchers and teachers with the innovative tools to prepare them as leaders across the public, private and educational sectors.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES  
(<https://wgss.la.psu.edu/graduate/>)

## Professional Resources

- National Women's Studies Association (<https://www.nwsa.org/>)
- National Organization for Women (<https://now.org/>)

## Contact

### University Park

DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES  
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814-863-4025  
[Its5125@psu.edu](mailto:Its5125@psu.edu)

<https://wgss.la.psu.edu>