Women’s Studies

2021 Subject Outline | Stage 1 and Stage 2

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Introduction

Subject Description

Women’s Studies is a 10-credit subject or a 20-credit subject at Stage 1, and a 20‑credit subject at Stage 2.

In Women’s Studies, students look at the world from the perspectives of women. Students examine the diversity of women’s experiences and their relationships to others, and the diversity in gender representation of women in cultural texts. Through the study of women’s diverse experiences, gender identity can be recognised as a key characteristic of all societies.

Students identify complex and contradictory ideas that exist about femininity and masculinity, and how being a woman or a man may influence an individual’s experiences and expectations. As students engage with how gender shapes, and is shaped by, societies, they develop a critical insight into their world from a gender perspective.

An interdisciplinary approach is used in Women’s Studies to explain how ideas about femininity and masculinity have come to influence diverse areas of knowledge. This approach also provides opportunities to explore the ways in which societies and their institutions are shaped by a gender hierarchy, and how masculine qualities may gain preference over feminine qualities. Students explore how the value placed on some qualities or characteristics above others may not be natural or neutral.

Capabilities

The capabilities connect student learning within and across subjects in a range of contexts. They include essential knowledge and skills that enable people to act in effective and successful ways.

The five capabilities that have been identified are:

* communication
* citizenship
* personal development
* work
* learning.

The capabilities, in particular those for communication, citizenship, learning, and personal development, are reflected in the learning requirements, content, assessment design criteria, and performance standards in this subject. The focus on citizenship is developed through a study of the relationship between gender and social, political, economic, and legal participation. Skills of critical social inquiry and learning are integral to this understanding of citizenship. Personal development is a focus of the content of Women’s Studies, where developing an understanding of gender identity enables students to explore choices in their own lives.

Communication

In Women’s Studies, students read, view, discuss, debate, write, and/or develop texts for a range of purposes. As students express and analyse their own opinions and those of others, they learn to recognise global and cultural differences.

Within and outside the classroom, students use the language of gender analysis as they develop and express their own ideas. They develop the ability to critique written, oral, and multimodal texts from a gender analysis perspective. Within the texts that students create, they use language and skills in ways that are appropriate to gender analysis. Purposes and contexts for communication vary, and include a range of forms, such as writing in a persuasive style.

Citizenship

In Women’s Studies, students examine the influence of culture on the construction of gender identity across social and cultural contexts, and time. The opportunity for cross‑cultural inquiry provides students with the ability to consider how different societies shape gender relations within their institutions, religions, and everyday relationships. Students explore concepts of citizenship through gender roles and status in private and public domains, such as family, community, government, and law. Students question the equality of women’s participation in social institutions and identify strategies for empowerment and equality.

Personal Development

In Women’s Studies, the connection between personal identity and gender roles is explored by students as they come to understand gender as an attribute that shapes their own sense of identity. Students consider how social identity, specifically gender identity, affects their position in society. This knowledge enables students to challenge restrictions and explore choices in their own lives. Students critique gender representations of women in cultural texts such as advertising and music videos, and explore the influence on their own and others’ roles and identities in society.

Work

In Women’s Studies, students have opportunities to develop and apply a range of employability skills. An understanding of women’s issues is increasingly important in industry, politics, religion, and law, as well as social service areas such as health and education. Students develop valuable workplace attributes, such as analytical thinking, problem-solving, research, communication, time management, and organisation skills. Students access practical information about the legal and social resources that are designed to provide equity and protect women from discrimination in the workforce, and to promote their status and well-being.

Learning

In Women’s Studies, students undertake critical social analysis, enhance their communication skills, and extend their knowledge of themselves, societies, and social change. The inquiry and research methods of social sciences are used by students as they access and critique a broad range of print, multimedia, and human resources. From these resources they discuss, organise, analyse, and evaluate ideas to inform their own learning about women, gender, and empowerment. Students apply their understanding of gender analysis to the creation of their own texts. They develop skills to identify and analyse gender in the media and to recognise the power of various media to reproduce ideas about gender. Students have the opportunity to refine their research skills through analysis of a key issue in Women’s Studies.

Literacy in Women’s Studies

A range of literate practices is expected of students in Women’s Studies. The key practices are:

* accessing a range of relevant print, oral, and visual texts
* developing research skills through specific instruction, where some key resources and readings are identified by the teacher and analysed by students as a group before they individually broaden their research
* engaging in individual reflection and contributing to group discussion
* identifying and critically evaluating ideas and concepts in texts, using the language of gender analysis
* creating texts for different purposes; this involves developing appropriate structures and coherence to produce a range of written texts.

Numeracy in Women’s Studies

Students use numeracy skills in Women’s Studies to add to their knowledge and understanding. These skills include:

* accessing, using, analysing, and critiquing quantitative information and data
* critically analysing primary and secondary data and timelines relevant to women’s achievements and struggles
* using graphic texts (e.g. charts, maps, graphs, data tables) to convey meaning about gender
* developing statistical information that reflects the experiences of women in various contexts.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Knowledge, Cultures, and Perspectives

In partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and schools and school sectors, the SACE Board of South Australia supports the development of high-quality learning and assessment design that respects the diverse knowledge, cultures, and perspectives of Indigenous Australians.

The SACE Board encourages teachers to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives in the design, delivery, and assessment of teaching and learning programs by:

* providing opportunities in SACE subjects for students to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences
* recognising and respecting the significant contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Australian society
* drawing students’ attention to the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives from the past and the present
* promoting the use of culturally appropriate protocols when engaging with and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Stage 1 Women’s Studies

Learning Scope and Requirements

Learning Requirements

The learning requirements summarise the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students are expected to develop and demonstrate through their learning in Stage 1 Women’s Studies.

In this subject, students are expected to:

1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction
2. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of gender stereotyping in different social contexts, times, and cultures
3. identify and analyse diversity in representations of women in cultural texts
4. identify and analyse the impact of various social structures and cultural practices on the lives of women of diverse backgrounds and experiences
5. identify and analyse examples of women’s disempowerment, and strategies for empowerment and alternative futures
6. communicate informed ideas, individually and with others, using the language of gender analysis and appropriate forms, with acknowledgment of sources.

Content

Women’s Studies is a 10-credit subject or a 20-credit subject at Stage 1.

A 10-credit subject consists of:

* Gender Analysis Framework: Women, Gender, and Social Identity
* Topic 1: Representations of Women in Cultural Texts
* Topic 2: Key Issues in Women’s Studies (one issues study).

A 20-credit subject consists of:

* Gender Analysis Framework: Women, Gender, and Social Identity
* Topic 1: Representations of Women in Cultural Texts
* Topic 2: Key Issues in Women’s Studies (two issues studies).

Gender Analysis Framework: Women, Gender, and Social Identity

Gender analysis offers a way of identifying and describing aspects of women’s lives, and critically assessing the institutions and ideas of societies and cultures from a gender perspective.

The basic Women’s Studies concepts are gender and identity. These two concepts enable students to understand and analyse femininity and masculinity and the relationship between women’s identity and men’s identity. It is essential that students understand this relationship in terms of their sense of self and their sense of others.

Students should be encouraged to explore gender identity as a broad and dynamic theme with both personal and political implications.

Gender should be understood as:

* a personal and a group experience
* constructed in social institutions
* existing in a diversity of contexts
* a citizenship issue.

Students should consider the social and cultural constructions of femininity and masculinity that extend beyond biological capacity, and then move beyond these stereotypes to develop strategies for recognising women and women’s experiences as significant and as distinct from men’s experiences (e.g. how does being a girl/woman or boy/man make a difference to my past, my present, and my future life?).

Women’s historical and, in some contexts, continuing exclusion from the entitlements of citizenship, and the strategies, campaigns, and programs developed to promote inclusion (e.g. equal pay, equal opportunity in the workplace, sexual harassment legislation, measures for security against sexual assault and violence) should be highlighted as a means of introducing relevant practical knowledge.

Students should be introduced to the ways in which women have assessed their experiences and how they have responded — for example, have women’s expectations changed over time? Why? Is this related to feminist activity? Have feminists’ priorities changed over time?

Students should recognise gender as one aspect of our complex social identities. Identity can be co-located with geographic regions, cultural perspectives, and sexual preferences, and reflect different life experiences.

As students become familiar with using this framework, their gender analysis may continue to be reflective and relevant to their everyday experience.

The understanding of gender, gender stereotypes, and gender identity provides a framework to help students to work through the text analysis of representations of women and the issues study.

Topic 1: Representations of Women in Cultural Texts

Students apply the gender analysis framework to analyse cultural texts. Texts could include popular novels, fairy tales, television programs, films, advertisements, web-based materials, magazines, government reports or policies, cartoons, or video clips.

Students develop skills to identify and analyse gender in cultural texts and to recognise the power of cultural texts to shape and reinforce ideas about gender. Students should become familiar with reading gender stereotypes in a range of cultural representations of women, and work towards applying a gender reading in a chosen text. In developing these skills, students should become more sophisticated in their reading of the text by distinguishing the elements of gender identity emphasised. Examples include the following:

* To what extent do the characteristics used to represent women reflect stereotypes about women’s identities or make assumptions about a woman’s role in the family?
* To what extent are they realistic representations of women’s body shape and appearance?
* Do they represent women as naturally caring or sexually available or subservient to men, and in what ways?
* To what extent do they challenge or refute some or all of these stereotypes?
* To what extent are women represented as powerful in some contexts, but not in others?
* How are men represented in comparison with the ways in which women are represented?
* How could the representation of women be improved?

Topic 2: Key Issues in Women’s Studies

Students apply the gender analysis framework to one issues study (for a 10-credit subject) or two issues studies (for a 20-credit subject).

The following issue descriptions suggest a number of possible interpretative approaches. These approaches are intended as a guide only. Teachers should use their own knowledge and resources to develop their interpretative approaches and should encourage students’ particular interests by providing guidance and resource support where possible.

Issue 1: Women and Work

Many have argued that work is gendered — not only in determining how it is valued, but also in determining who undertakes particular types of work. Women have always worked, but often this work is not paid for or valued. Systems of national accounting, for instance, do not include the unpaid labour of women, or men, in the domestic context. Also, once in the paid workforce, women often confront forms of discrimination and harassment, or are obliged to juggle domestic and workplace demands.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* aspects of the relationship between paid and unpaid work
* legislative measures designed to improve women’s access to the paid workforce (e.g. anti-discrimination, affirmative action, and anti-harassment legislation)
* the different experiences of women in the workplace in different times and/or cultures
* trends in part-time and/or casual work
* family-friendly workplace approaches
* the future of ‘women’s work’.

Issue 2: Family Life and Caring

A woman’s role(s) in the family can define her identity at various stages of life. Gender identity is expressed in willingness and capacity to care for others. Women often anticipate the joy of becoming mothers and caring for children or feel anxious about caring for their parents when they are elderly. The obligation to care is not linked to men’s identity in the same way.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* an aspect of caring for others (children, the ill, or the elderly), and how this affects women’s life choices
* caring practices in other cultures or societies — past, present, and preferred futures
* issues related to the provision of child-care services and women’s experiences of these services
* the provision of care for the elderly (e.g. the needs of women as a disproportionate number of the elderly requiring specialist care and support)
* the family as an institution, and its historical development
* the family as it is represented in government policy documents, or in political debates
* changes in family structure and expectations of family life
* who will care in the future.

Issue 3: Health and Well-being

Women’s experiences and understanding of bodily health, health services, sexuality, and sexual preferences influence their well-being. Women can experience discrimination (e.g. in meeting strength or size requirements for particular jobs) or the need for specialist health services (e.g. during pregnancy). Health and well-being may also be sources of empowerment (e.g. in achieving fitness or sporting success). Women’s bodies have changed over time, challenging understanding of the differences between women and men, but raising awareness of other bodily differences between people.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* eating disorders and gendered body image
* specific aspects of women’s health and well-being (e.g. reproductive issues, ageing, disease, or medical treatment)
* women as health professionals
* an aspect of women’s or girls’ involvement in sport
* the impact of cultural attitudes and practices on women’s health.

Issue 4: Women and the Law

Aspects of women’s lives are shaped by law and legal definitions of marriage, crime, and human rights. The law, even when applied equally, has different effects because of different social identities of women. The different impacts of the law, much of which has been written by men, can be devastating for some women. A lack of understanding of legal rights can make the law inaccessible.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* women’s rights as human rights (e.g. measures to prevent domestic violence)
* the connections between gender, the marriage contract, and family law
* the experiences of women who work in the law — from enforcement to judgment
* the purpose and effectiveness of anti-discrimination, affirmative action, or anti‑harassment laws.

Issue 5: Women’s Achievements, Struggles, and Empowerment

Women’s achievements and struggles can be observed in everyday life, or in their attempts to achieve change or make a difference to their world. Students can explore the achievements and struggles of women in different times and cultures and critically explore the strategies that have been used to empower women.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* how gender makes a difference to the everyday achievements and struggles of women
* the achievements of specific women, past and present, and what is still to be achieved
* how the women’s liberation movement came about and what it has done
* a designated period of women’s political activity (e.g. first-, second-, or third-wave feminism)
* the role and relevance of feminism in the twenty-first century
* a specific struggle for women’s equality or freedom in current public debate
* whether empowerment strategies have benefited some women but not others
* the future of social justice and equity — what are the priorities?

Issue 6: Women, Culture, and Society

Culture influences the ways in which gender is constructed and the cultural attitudes that can disadvantage women as a result.

The cultural differences between women, or their different experiences of culture, influence their experiences of gender and their sense of identity.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* women’s experiences of their culture, or cultural expectations of women’s role and the way these affect life choices
* women’s contribution to cultural life (e.g. the arts)
* the implications of different cultural or religious practices
* women’s experiences of arriving and living in Australia, as migrants or refugees
* women and religion
* women’s experiences of racial or class differences.

Issue 7: Negotiated Issue

The content of this issue can be developed by negotiation between an individual student or a group of students and the teacher, using a structure similar to that of Issues 1 to 6.

Assessment Scope and Requirements

Assessment at Stage 1 is school based.

Evidence of Learning

The following assessment types enable students to demonstrate their learning in Stage 1 Women’s Studies:

* Assessment Type 1: Text Analysis
* Assessment Type 2: Group Presentation
* Assessment Type 3: Issues Analysis.

For a 10-credit subject, students should provide evidence of their learning through four or five assessments. Each assessment type should have a weighting of at least 20%. Students undertake:

* at least one text analysis assessment
* at least one group presentation
* one issues analysis assessment.

For a 20-credit subject, students should provide evidence of their learning through eight to ten assessments. Each assessment type should have a weighting of at least 20%. Students undertake:

* at least two text analysis assessments
* at least two group presentations
* two issues analysis assessments.

Assessment Design Criteria

The assessment design criteria are based on the learning requirements and are used by teachers to:

* clarify for the student what he or she needs to learn
* design opportunities for the student to provide evidence of his or her learning at the highest possible level of achievement.

The assessment design criteria consist of specific features that:

* students should demonstrate in their learning
* teachers look for as evidence that students have met the learning requirements.

For this subject the assessment design criteria are:

* knowledge and understanding
* identification and analysis
* communication.

The specific features of these criteria are described below.

The set of assessments, as a whole, must give students opportunities to demonstrate each of the specific features by the completion of study of the subject.

Knowledge and Understanding

The specific features are as follows:

KU1 Knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction.

KU2 Knowledge and understanding of gender stereotyping in different social contexts, times, and cultures.

Identification and Analysis

The specific features are as follows:

IA1 Identification and analysis of diversity in representations of women in cultural texts.

IA2 Identification and analysis of the impact of various social structures and cultural practices on the lives of women of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

IA3 Identification and analysis of examples of women’s disempowerment.

IA4 Identification and analysis of strategies for empowerment and alternative futures.

Communication

The specific features are as follows:

C1 Communication of informed ideas in group constructed texts.

C2 Communication of informed ideas in individually constructed texts.

C3 Use of the language of gender analysis, and appropriate forms, with acknowledgment of sources.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Text Analysis

For a 10-credit subject, students undertake at least one text analysis assessment. For a 20‑credit subject, students undertake at least two text analysis assessments.

Students identify and analyse diversity in gender representations of women in cultural text(s), such as films, television shows, magazines, a series of advertisements, video games, multimedia texts, books that explore gender issues, or government reports. This analysis includes aspects of empowerment and/or disempowerment.

Students may negotiate the form of presentation for their analysis. Examples of suggested forms include an oral presentation complemented by visual material and/or sound, a multimodal presentation, or a written analytical argument. A presentation should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* identification and analysis.

Assessment Type 2: Group Presentation

For a 10-credit subject, students undertake at least one group presentation. For a 20‑credit subject, students undertake at least two group presentations.

Students provide evidence of knowledge and understanding of gender, gender relations, and the diversity of women’s experiences in a collaborative activity followed by a negotiated form of group presentation. Examples of presentations include a debate on a particular key issue to be determined by the teacher and class, a scripted role play, or a gender audit of television news or sport.

Students may use a range of presentation forms for a variety of audiences. A presentation should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* communication.

Assessment Type 3: Issues Analysis

For a 10-credit subject, students analyse one issue from Topic 2: Key Issues in Women’s Studies and include aspects of empowerment and/or disempowerment in their analysis.

For a 20-credit subject, students undertake two issues analysis assessments. They analyse two issues from Topic 2: Key Issues in Women’s Studies and include aspects of empowerment and/or disempowerment in their analyses.

Presentation for assessment may take a variety of forms, following consultation with the teacher. Students undertaking a 20-credit subject should present at least one issues analysis assessment in written form.

An issues analysis assessment should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form. Students should acknowledge sources appropriately.

The following format is recommended:

* an introductory statement that outlines and defines the parameters of the selected issue and its context
* a series of paragraphs or equivalent presentation that develops a gender analysis of the issue, including strategies for empowerment and/or disempowerment
* a conclusion that draws significance from the arguments/evidence about the issue
* a reference list and/or bibliography.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* identification and analysis
* communication.

Performance Standards

The performance standards describe five levels of achievement, A to E.

Each level of achievement describes the knowledge, skills, and understanding that teachers refer to in deciding how well a student has demonstrated his or her learning on the basis of the evidence provided.

During the teaching and learning program the teacher gives students feedback on their learning, with reference to the performance standards.

At the student’s completion of study of a subject, the teacher makes a decision about the quality of the student’s learning by:

* referring to the performance standards
* taking into account the weighting of each assessment type
* assigning a subject grade between A and E.

Teachers can use a SACE Board school assessment grade calculator to help them to assign the subject grade. The calculator is available on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au).

Performance Standards for Stage 1 Women’s Studies

| - | Knowledge and Understanding | Identification and Analysis | Communication |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | In-depth knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction.  In-depth knowledge and understanding of gender stereotyping in different social contexts, times, and cultures. | Astute identification and analysis of diversity in representations of women in cultural texts.  Insightful identification and analysis of the impact of various social structures and cultural practices on the lives of women of diverse backgrounds and experiences.  Discerning identification and analysis of examples of women’s disempowerment.  Comprehensive and perceptive identification and analysis of strategies for empowerment and alternative futures. | Well-structured and coherent communication of informed ideas in group-constructed texts.  Well-structured and coherent communication of informed ideas in individually constructed texts.  Astute use of the language of gender analysis, and of highly appropriate forms, with acknowledgment of sources. |
| B | Some depth in knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction.  Some depth in knowledge and understanding of gender stereotyping in different social contexts, times, and cultures. | Thorough identification and analysis of diversity in representations of women in cultural texts.  Well-considered identification and analysis of the impact of various social structures and cultural practices on the lives of women of diverse backgrounds and experiences.  Well-considered identification and analysis of examples of women’s disempowerment.  Capable identification and analysis of strategies for empowerment and alternative futures. | Structured and mostly coherent communication of informed ideas in group-constructed texts.  Structured and mostly coherent communication of informed ideas in individually constructed texts.  Well-considered use of the language of gender analysis, and of appropriate forms, with acknowledgment of sources. |
| C | Considered knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction.  Considered knowledge and understanding of gender stereotyping in different social contexts, times, and cultures. | Competent identification and analysis of diversity in representations of women in cultural texts.  Considered identification and analysis of the impact of various social structures and cultural practices on the lives of women of diverse backgrounds and experiences.  Considered identification and analysis of examples of women’s disempowerment.  Competent identification and analysis of strategies for empowerment and alternative futures. | Generally coherent communication of informed ideas in group-constructed texts.  Generally coherent communication of informed ideas in individually constructed texts.  Considered use of the language of gender analysis, and of mostly appropriate forms, with acknowledgment of sources. |
| D | Recognition and some awareness of the meaning of gender and its construction.  Some basic knowledge and understanding of gender stereotyping in a few social contexts, times, and cultures. | Some identification and attempted analysis of diversity in representations of women in cultural texts.  Some identification and superficial analysis of the impact of various social structures and cultural practices on the lives of women of diverse backgrounds and experiences.  Description of examples of women’s disempowerment.  Description of some strategies for empowerment and alternative futures. | Some endeavour to communicate ideas in group‑constructed texts.  Some communication of ideas in individually constructed texts.  Developing use of the language of gender analysis, and use of one or more forms that may be appropriate, with limited acknowledgment of sources. |
| E | Emerging awareness of the meaning of gender and its construction.  Emerging awareness of gender stereotyping in a social context, time, or culture. | Limited identification of diversity in representations of women in a cultural text.  Attempted identification and some description of the impact of various social structures and cultural practices on the lives of women of diverse backgrounds and experiences.  Attempted description of examples of women’s disempowerment.  Brief description of a strategy for empowerment and an alternative future. | Occasional attempt at communication of ideas in group‑constructed texts.  Emerging communication skills in individually constructed texts.  Attempted use of the language of gender analysis, with limited appropriateness of form or acknowledgment of sources. |

Assessment Integrity

The SACE Assuring Assessment Integrity Policy outlines the principles and processes that teachers and assessors follow to assure the integrity of student assessments. This policy is available on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au) as part of the SACE Policy Framework.

The SACE Board uses a range of quality assurance processes so that the grades awarded for student achievement in the school assessment are applied consistently and fairly against the performance standards for a subject, and are comparable across all schools.

Information and guidelines on quality assurance in assessment at Stage 1 are available on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au).

Support Materials

Subject-specific Advice

Online support materials are provided for each subject and updated regularly on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au). Examples of support materials are sample learning and assessment plans, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student responses, and recommended resource materials.

Advice on Ethical Study and Research

Advice for students and teachers on ethical study and research practices is available in the guidelines on the ethical conduct of research in the SACE on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au).

Stage 2 Women’s Studies

Learning Scope and Requirements

Learning Requirements

The learning requirements summarise the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students are expected to develop and demonstrate through their learning in Stage 2 Women’s Studies.

In this subject, students are expected to:

1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction

2. analyse the social implications of gender relations for a diversity of women across contexts, times, and cultures

3. analyse representations of women for gender bias, and identify ways of effecting change to address gender bias

4. investigate and evaluate the ways in which various social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women

5. evaluate strategies for empowerment

6. communicate informed ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences, using the language of gender analysis, and appropriate forms, with acknowledgment of sources.

Content

Stage 2 Women’s Studies is a 20-credit subject.

The gender analysis framework provides the key concepts and analytical tools that students use in an examination of Key Issues in Women’s Studies.

Gender Analysis Framework

Gender analysis offers a way of identifying, describing, and/or examining aspects of women’s lives. It offers students opportunities to critically assess the institutions and ideas of societies and cultures from a gender perspective that extends beyond biological capacity.

The key concepts of the gender analysis framework are:

* gender identity (femininity/masculinity)
* gender relations (gender stereotypes, private/personal, public/political distinction)
* gender identity and difference (social/cultural location and social/cultural difference).

Gender and identity are basic analytical concepts in Women’s Studies. These key concepts facilitate the analysis of identity as a social construction that is shaped by gender.

Gender analysis allows students to distinguish and interpret gender in two ways. Firstly, gender is understood in a personal sense, as an attribute that shapes a sense of identity. Secondly, gender is understood in a political sense, as a pervasive social construction that can facilitate or hinder social relationships and access to institutions.

These two views of gender introduce a central concern of Women’s Studies — the connection between the personal and the political. Students should learn to recognise gender identity as a social/cultural construction that extends beyond biological capacity and to develop a critical perspective on the gender stereotypes of femininity and masculinity as social patterns that permeate society and culture.

The social/cultural location aspect of the framework establishes a connection between women’s identities and their social location. Students should consider gender identity (femininity/masculinity) and the social context; for example, the connection between women’s identity and gender roles in the private sphere (where women’s traditional role is as carers in families) and in the public sphere (where women are workers and citizens).

Social/cultural difference introduces a feminist understanding of identity politics as a framework for exploring the differences and commonalities between women (and between women and men). Students might consider how the life choices and lifestyles differ between, for example:

* women in different cultures
* women in urban, rural, and remote locations
* women in the ‘developed’ world and the ‘developing’ world.

Students analyse and evaluate the ways in which aspects of identity (age, affluence, sexual identity) affect women’s experiences. Students adopt a reflective approach to this analysis and consider how the privileges of race, class, and ethnicity have affected their own experiences.

Identity politics involve recognising differences — not only between women and men, but also between women. In advocating better or fairer recognition of women, there can be many different expressions of feminism and feminist action.

Key Issues in Women’s Studies

Students use their understanding of gender identity (femininity/masculinity), gender relations (gender stereotypes, public/private distinction), and identity as difference (identity politics) to work through four to six of the following key issues:

* Issue 1: Representations of Women in Cultural Texts
* Issue 2: Women and Work
* Issue 3: Family Life and Caring
* Issue 4: Health and Well-being
* Issue 5: Women and the Law
* Issue 6: Women’s Struggles, Achievements, and Empowerment
* Issue 7: Women, Culture, and Society
* Issue 8: Lifestyle and Choice
* Issue 9: Communication and Technology
* Issue 10: Development and Globalisation
* Issue 11: Negotiated Issue.

The following descriptions of the issues suggest a number of possible interpretative approaches. These approaches are intended as a guide only. Teachers should use student interest and their own knowledge to develop alternative approaches.

Issue 1: Representations of Women in Cultural Texts

Representations of women in cultural texts vary and may invoke gender stereotypes or fail to account for the diversity of women. Students could choose appropriate text(s) from popular novels, poetry, scripts, television programs, films, advertising, web-based materials, magazines, government reports or policies, cartoons, lyrics, music genres, video clips, or a work from a visual arts medium.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* whether or not the representations invoke gender stereotypes or associate women with a particular social location such as the home (and invoke other types of identity stereotypes, such as ethnic or class stereotypes)
* whether or not a narrative text facilitates a particular gender perspective (e.g. does it repeat the fairy-tale romance narrative?)
* whether or not the representations take account of the diversity of women’s experiences or generalise about the experience of women by not acknowledging differences
* other examples in the same genre that contrast with the text chosen in terms of character development or diversity
* women and creativity
* different ways of representing women, with the option for students to produce their own representation(s).

Issue 2: Women and Work

Many have argued that work is gendered — not only in determining how it is valued, but also in determining who undertakes particular types of work. Women have always worked, but often this work is not paid for or valued. Systems of national accounting, for instance, do not include unpaid labour in the private sphere. Also, once in the paid workforce, women often confront forms of discrimination and harassment, or are obliged to juggle work demands in both private and public spheres.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* whether or not women have equal choice in the work that they do in the public sphere of paid employment and in the private sphere of domestic work
* whether or not gender will continue to be important in determining how people work
* the ramifications for women of the increasing trend towards casual and part-time employment
* the different experiences of women in workplaces in different times and/or cultures
* whether or not changes in technology and innovation have changed the gendered nature of work
* the different treatment of women in the Australian workforce and in developing countries
* legislative measures designed to improve women’s access to the paid workforce (e.g. anti-discrimination, affirmative action, and anti-harassment legislation, or enterprise bargaining legislation)
* the involvement of women in the union movement or in professions
* the successes and failures of workplace campaigns, such as the equal pay campaign.

Issue 3: Family Life and Caring

Women’s roles and experiences in the private sphere of the family are diverse. Motherhood and roles as carers have linked women to the private sphere in a particular way, whereas masculine identity is more frequently linked to the public sphere. The family can be seen as an institution that reinforces and perpetuates gender inequality, while it can also be regarded as a source of women’s empowerment.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* aspects of caring for others (children, the ill, or the elderly), and how they affect women’s life choices
* the organisation of caring practices in other cultures or societies — past, present, and the possible or probable future
* the provision of child-care services and women’s experiences of these services
* attitudes to ageing women, their needs, and treatment
* the definition of the family and its relevance as an institution in different women’s lives
* the family as it is represented in government policy documents or in political debates
* the changing nature of family life (e.g. same-sex relationships, co-parenting options, single-parent families, or being child-free by choice)
* the conflicting demands of family life and responsibilities and working life.

Issue 4: Health and Well-being

Women’s experiences and understanding of their bodies, health issues, and health services influence their well-being. Social and cultural attitudes to women and women’s bodies also have an impact on their health and sense of well-being. Understanding health issues and access to, or lack of access to, specialist health services impacts on the lives of women in many ways.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* relationships between eating disorders and gendered body perception
* specific aspects of women’s health and well-being (e.g. reproductive issues, ageing, disease, or medical treatment)
* the implications of reproductive technologies
* the impact of cultural attitudes and practices on women’s health
* women’s role as mainstream and/or alternative health providers both historically and currently
* the relationship between well-being and different social identities or lifestyles
* an aspect of women’s or girls’ involvement in sport.

Issue 5: Women and the Law

Aspects of women’s lives are shaped by law and legal definitions of marriage, crime, and human rights. The law is gendered as male and, even when applied equally, has different effects because of different social identities of women.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* the connections between gender difference, the marriage contract, and family law
* the experiences of women who work in the law — from enforcement to judgment
* the specific experiences of women at the hands of the law (e.g. rape law, custody disputes and divorce, de facto relationships, measures to prevent domestic violence, experiences of women in prison)
* the purpose and effectiveness of anti-discrimination, affirmative action, or anti‑harassment laws
* the function and operation of the Australian Human Rights Commission or the role of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner
* the campaign for international recognition of women’s rights as human rights and its effect on international law (e.g. recognition of rape as a war crime)
* women’s difference under the law and the success of measures to address difference (e.g. Aboriginal women and both state and customary law; women and both state and religious law).

Issue 6: Women’s Struggles, Achievements, and Empowerment

Women’s achievements and struggles can be observed in everyday life, or in their attempts to achieve change or make a difference to their world. Students can explore the achievements and struggles of women in different times and cultures, and critically investigate the strategies that have been used to empower women.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* how gender makes a difference to the everyday achievements and struggles of women
* the achievements of specific women, past and present
* the women’s liberation movement and what it has done
* a designated period of women’s political activity (e.g. first-, second-, or third-wave feminism)
* the role and relevance of feminism in the twenty-first century
* a specific political action, such as the vote for women or the equal pay campaigns
* whether empowerment strategies have benefited some women but not others, because of race or poverty
* whether empowerment is an individual or a group concern — should feminists anticipate women’s equality with men? How has this question influenced feminist thought and action? Are women equal but different?
* the future of equity and social justice — what are the priorities?

Issue 7: Women, Culture, and Society

Culture influences the way gender is constructed and the cultural attitudes that can disadvantage women as a result.

The cultural differences between women, or their different experiences of culture, influence their experiences of gender and their sense of identity. In addition, cultural diversity adds a dynamic element to society; yet, when one cultural practice dominates, this diversity can be muted or constrained.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* women’s experiences of their culture, or cultural expectations of a woman’s role and the way this affects life choices
* the undervaluing of women’s contribution to cultural life (e.g. the arts)
* the implications of different cultural or religious practices
* women’s experiences of arriving and living in Australia, as migrants or refugees
* women and religion
* women’s experiences of racial or class differences.

Issue 8: Lifestyle and Choice

This issue allows students to examine critically the intersection of gender identity, difference, and personal choice.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* the relationship between gender identity and freedom of choice in determining lifestyle
* social or cultural expectations about gender identity in relation to freedom of choice
* the alternative lifestyle choices that some women make, and the consequences of these choices for their social freedom or experience of social exclusion/inclusion; these choices might include involvement with countercultural communities or religious or spiritual communities
* the experiences, contributions, and struggles of women in various religious communities.

Issue 9: Communication and Technology

Women’s access to, or involvement in, the development of communication systems and technologies can be understood as a gender issue. Technologies have extended women’s choices and changed the options they have in work and relationships.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* the gendered nature of technologies
* the advantages and disadvantages that a form of communication or technology has for women
* the impact of technological change on domestic labour, and whether this change has necessarily benefited women
* the relationship between technology and women’s paid labour (e.g. in the armed services, the mining industry, the sciences)
* gender as a factor in the development and use of information and communication technologies
* the impact of reproductive technologies.

Issue 10: Development and Globalisation

The experiences and expectations of women in other countries can be different from those of women in Australia. This issue allows students to consider the differences and/or commonalities of women’s experience of geographical location, level of industrial development, or government system.

There are a number of possible approaches to the study of this issue, including an examination of:

* the impact of globalisation on women (and men) (e.g. the plight of rural communities)
* the relocation of manufacturing to sources of cheap labour and the new international division of labour (e.g. women in factories in economically less-developed countries producing goods for consumption in economically developed countries)
* the feminisation of poverty
* the traffic in women’s bodies and sex tourism
* women’s different experiences of citizenship
* the role and function of the United Nations, the World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund and their impact on women in different countries
* the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in addressing the different experiences of women around the globe
* the contribution of women to various global environmental issues.

Issue 11: Negotiated Issue

The content of this issue may be negotiated between an individual student or a group of students and the teacher.

Assessment Scope and Requirements

All Stage 2 subjects have a school assessment component and an external assessment component.

Evidence of Learning

The following assessment types enable students to demonstrate their learning in Stage 2 Women’s Studies:

School Assessment (70%)

* Assessment Type 1: Text Analysis (20%)
* Assessment Type 2: Essay (20%)
* Assessment Type 3: Folio (30%)

External Assessment (30%)

* Assessment Type 4: Issues Analysis (30%).

Students should provide evidence of their learning through six or seven assessments, including the external assessment component. Students undertake:

* one or two text analysis assessments
* one essay
* three assessments for the folio
* one issues analysis.

Assessment Design Criteria

The assessment design criteria are based on the learning requirements and are used by:

* teachers to clarify for the student what he or she needs to learn
* teachers and assessors to design opportunities for the student to provide evidence of his or her learning at the highest possible level of achievement.

The assessment design criteria consist of specific features that:

* students should demonstrate in their learning
* teachers and assessors look for as evidence that students have met the learning requirements.

For this subject the assessment design criteria are:

* knowledge and understanding
* gender analysis
* investigation and evaluation
* communication.

The specific features of these criteria are described below.

The set of assessments, as a whole, must give students opportunities to demonstrate each of the specific features by the completion of study of the subject.

Knowledge and Understanding

The specific feature is as follows:

KU1 Knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction.

Gender Analysis

The specific features are as follows:

GA1 Analysis of social implications of gender relations for a diversity of women across contexts, times, and cultures.

GA2 Analysis of representations of women for gender bias.

GA3 Identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias.

Investigation and Evaluation

The specific features are as follows:

IE1 Investigation and evaluation of the ways in which various social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.

IE2 Evaluation of strategies for empowerment.

Communication

The specific features are as follows:

C1 Communication of informed ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.

C2 Use of the language of gender analysis.

C3 Use of appropriate forms, including persuasive writing, and with acknowledgment of sources.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Text Analysis (20%)

Students undertake one or two text analysis assessments in which they analyse, for gender bias, the representation of gender in a text or texts, including cultural texts. Texts that could be analysed include films, lyrics, music videos, video games, speeches, paintings, government or non-government reports, websites, or a series of advertisements.

The form of presentation may vary depending on the audience. Examples of suggested forms include an oral presentation complemented by visual material and/or sound, a multimedia presentation, or a written analytical argument.

If one assessment task is undertaken, the presentation should be a maximum of 2000 words if written or a maximum of 12 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

If two assessment tasks are undertaken, each presentation should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* gender analysis
* communication.

Assessment Type 2: Essay (20%)

Students undertake one gender analysis assessment in the form of a persuasive written essay of a maximum of 1200 words.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* gender analysis
* investigation and evaluation
* communication.

Assessment Type 3: Folio (30%)

Students undertake three gender analysis assessments.

These assessments may take a variety of forms of presentation, and a different form is recommended for each assessment. Examples include a documentary, a scripted role play, a speech, an analytical report, a newspaper article, or a short-answer assignment under timed conditions. The form of presentation may vary depending on the audience.

Students should be clearly advised of the requirements of each assessment.

A presentation should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* gender analysis
* investigation and evaluation
* communication.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Issues Analysis (30%)

Students undertake one issues analysis. They negotiate and undertake a detailed,  
in-depth, independent investigation of a gender issue that is derived from one of the issues in Key Issues in Women’s Studies. Possible topics should be identified by students as they study key issues in class and develop responses to issues of gender and identity in cultural texts.

The issues analysis should be presented as a piece of analytical and evaluative writing of a maximum of 2000 words. Students must acknowledge sources appropriately.

The following format is recommended:

* an introductory statement that outlines and defines the parameters of the selected issue and its context
* a series of paragraphs that develop a gender analysis of the issue, including implications of bias
* a conclusion that draws significance from the arguments/evidence about the issue
* a reference list and/or bibliography.

The following specific features of the assessment design criteria for this subject are assessed in the issues analysis:

* knowledge and understanding — KU1
* gender analysis — GA1 and GA2
* investigation and evaluation — IE1
* communication — C1, C2, and C3.

Performance Standards

The performance standards describe five levels of achievement, A to E.

Each level of achievement describes the knowledge, skills, and understanding that teachers and assessors refer to in deciding how well a student has demonstrated his or her learning on the basis of the evidence provided.

During the teaching and learning program the teacher gives students feedback on their learning, with reference to the performance standards.

At the student’s completion of study of each school assessment type, the teacher makes a decision about the quality of the student’s learning by:

* referring to the performance standards
* assigning a grade between Aand E for the assessment type.

The student’s school assessment and external assessment are combined for a final result, which is reported as a grade between Aand E.

Performance Standards for Stage 2 Women’s Studies

| - | Knowledge and Understanding | Gender Analysis | Investigation and Evaluation | Communication |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A | In-depth knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction. | Astute and detailed analysis of social implications of gender relations for a diversity of women across contexts, times, and cultures.  Perceptive analysis of representations of women for gender bias.  Discerning identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias. | In-depth investigation and evaluation of the ways in which various social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.  Perceptive and insightful evaluation of a range of strategies for empowerment. | Perceptive and coherent communication of informed ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  Perceptive use of the language of gender analysis.  Discerning use of highly appropriate forms, including persuasive writing, and with clear acknowledgment of sources. |
| B | Some depth in knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction. | Detailed analysis of social implications of gender relations for a diversity of women across contexts, times, and cultures.  Well-considered analysis of representations of women for gender bias.  Clear identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias. | Some depth in investigation and evaluation of the ways in which various social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.  Well-considered evaluation of strategies for empowerment. | Mostly clear and convincing communication of informed ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  Thoughtful use of the language of gender analysis.  Well-considered use of appropriate forms, including persuasive writing, and with clear acknowledgment of sources. |
| C | Considered knowledge and understanding of the meaning of gender and its construction. | Generally competent analysis of social implications of gender relations for a diversity of women across contexts, times, and cultures.  Considered analysis of representations of women for gender bias.  Competent identification of ways of effecting change to address gender bias. | Competent investigation and evaluation of the ways in which various social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.  Considered evaluation of strategies for empowerment. | Generally clear communication of informed ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  Generally competent use of the language of gender analysis.  Considered use of mostly appropriate forms, including persuasive writing, and with generally clear acknowledgment of sources. |
| D | Recognition and some awareness of the meaning of gender and its construction. | Some attempted analysis, with mostly description, of social implications of gender relations for women.  Some consideration of representations of women for gender bias.  Identification and some description of one or more ways of effecting change to address gender bias. | Consideration of one or more ways in which social structures, cultural practices, and ways of thinking disempower women.  Some description of strategies for empowerment. | Some endeavour to communicate basic ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  Some use of the language of gender analysis.  Some use of one or more forms that may be appropriate, and with limited acknowledgment of sources. |
| E | Emerging awareness of the meaning of gender and its construction. | Brief description of one or more social implications of gender relations for women.  Limited consideration of representations of women for gender bias.  Identification of a way of effecting change to address gender bias. | Attempted description of a way in which social structures, cultural practices, or ways of thinking disempower women.  Identification of elements of a strategy for empowerment. | Limited attempt to communicate basic ideas about the diversity of women’s experiences.  Emerging use of the language of gender analysis.  Attempted use of one or more forms, with limited appropriateness, and limited acknowledgment of sources. |

Assessment Integrity

The SACE Assuring Assessment Integrity Policy outlines the principles and processes that teachers and assessors follow to assure the integrity of student assessments. This policy is available on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au) as part of the SACE Policy Framework.

The SACE Board uses a range of quality assurance processes so that the grades awarded for student achievement, in both the school assessment and the external assessment, are applied consistently and fairly against the performance standards for a subject, and are comparable across all schools.

Information and guidelines on quality assurance in assessment at Stage 2 are available on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au).

Support Materials

Subject-specific Advice

Online support materials are provided for each subject and updated regularly on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au). Examples of support materials are sample learning and assessment plans, annotated assessment tasks, annotated student responses, and recommended resource materials.

Advice on Ethical Study and Research

Advice for students and teachers on ethical study and research practices is available in the guidelines on the ethical conduct of research in the SACE on the SACE website (www.sace.sa.edu.au).