



# Gender Studies

## What does gender mean to you?

"The skills my Gender Studies degree gave me are skills I draw on regularly: critical thinking and the ability to analyse an issue and think about it from a variety of perspectives are crucial in the work I do."

Georgie Ferrari  
Chief Executive, Sustainability  
Trust, Wellington

What is gender identity?

Why is there a gender pay gap?

Why are the All Blacks the "national team"?

Gender is a complex element of social and cultural existence with far-reaching implications for the course of our lives. It shapes the work we do and how we spend our leisure time. It affects not only our identities, but our income, our family relationships and friendships, the value and meanings we attach to other people and activities, what we eat and how we dress, and even how we speak. Gender Studies explores categories such as "women", "men", "trans", or "non-binary" and how they can be fundamental to our own and others' understandings of who we are.

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## Why study Gender Studies?

At New Zealand's leading Gender Studies programme, we'll surprise you. You'll be introduced to different perspectives on things you've always taken for granted, while you explore television, film, social media, public debate, photography, subculture and fashion as well as scholarly reading.

The staff are enthusiastic! They work interactively, and involve students actively in their own learning. Students are encouraged to think independently and to relate their academic learning to the world they encounter daily.

Gender Studies consistently gains high ratings for student satisfaction with their learning experience. Topics covered in the core programme include:

- Bodies in popular culture.
- Cultural constructions of sexuality.
- Consumer culture and work.
- Family life.
- Gender in the media.
- Social justice.
- Intersectionality.
- Violence.
- Gender, sexuality and state power.

Gender Studies runs a core programme but also introduces you to a whole range of disciplines. A Gender Studies degree can include papers in Sociology, Criminology, Anthropology, Education, English, Film and Media, Geography, History, Law, Politics, and Religion. It's up to you!

Many Gender Studies papers can be credited towards other degree programmes, including majors in Sociology, Film and Media, Politics, Philosophy, and the minor in Criminology.

Gender Studies can be included as a major for a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Arts and Commerce, or a Bachelor of Arts and Science. It is available as a minor subject for several qualifications, including a Bachelor of Science or a Bachelor of Commerce.

## Background required

All students are welcome to study Gender Studies at Otago. No prior knowledge is required.

## Career opportunities

Realise your ideas to create value in the real world by working in:

- Policy development and analysis.
- Human rights.
- Trade union and EEO work.

- Education.
- Human resources
- Health and community advocacy.
- Business and management.
- Journalism and the media.
- Marketing and advertising.
- Arts, entertainment and museum work.

Gender Studies will also enable you to develop personal and professional skills that are highly valued by employers:

- The ability to think broadly, critically and creatively.
- Appreciation of diverse points of view.
- The ability to analyse and participate in debate.
- Research skills.
- Clear and effective written expression.
- Verbal reasoning, verbal address.
- Teamwork.

The critical perspectives and knowledges gained through training in Gender Studies are also applicable well beyond specific career contexts.

A Gender Studies major or minor provides you with skills that will prove useful through all aspects of your life.

## PROFILE

**Poppy Johns** Bachelor of Arts with Honours (Gender Studies)  
Dunedin Coroner's Office and Youthline Otago

"I began my studies at Otago straight out of secondary school. Without much direction other than an interest in the social world, I decided the best thing to do was to take eight papers across different humanities subjects. I was looking for something that would enable me to learn more about society and how it works.

"So I chose to take a Gender Studies paper. I didn't know what to expect but immediately it was apparent that Gender Studies was what I was looking for. The lecturer was enthusiastic, the topics were barrier-breaking, and I was understanding people and the world in a way I had never done before. Gender also enabled me to avoid the restriction of being confined to a single subject; it became clear very quickly that Gender Studies included everything from history to media, geography, medicine, literature, criminology, biology, sexuality, politics, feminism, critical race theory, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and more.

"The way I describe my studies to others is critical social sciences – how to critically understand and analyse the social world beginning with gender. What I came out with is a deeper understanding of people and society, of social issues, how they came about, and potential solutions to remedy or reduce their negative effects. I developed skills such

as research, effective written communication, construction and analysis of ideas, and emotional intelligence.

"I firmly believe Gender Studies makes you better at any job, especially those that involve working with people from different backgrounds. I currently work at the Dunedin Coroner's Office and Youthline Otago.

"At the Coroner's Office, I work with coronial case managers and coroners to prevent unnecessary death. At Youthline, I work as a technical writer; I wrote Youthline's first national manual and several subsequent manuals, I write funding requests, I've designed marketing materials, and I run Youthline Otago's website and social media. In these roles, I work through difficult topics to prevent harm and I am also challenged with working with people from all backgrounds who are sometimes in crisis or distress.

"Since graduating, I have also worked as a tutor and a research assistant on a literature review project for the Ministry of Social Development on young people and relationships. My studies didn't just prepare me for a career in the social field, they also expanded my knowledge, enabled me to grow, ignited my passions, and gave me skills and insight that I use every day in my personal life and in my relationships."



For questions about  
Gender Studies  
[otago.ac.nz/gender](https://otago.ac.nz/gender)

