



Gender Studies

Gender – how did it happen 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 Officer
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria

Why is there a gender pay gap?

Why are the All Blacks the 'national team'?

Why is 'male' or 'female' part of a person's identity?

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', or 'trans*', 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 Otago?

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, news media, documentary, public debate, advertising, 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:

- biological and cultural explanations of sex and gender
- bodies in popular culture
- cultural construction of sexuality
- consumer culture and work
- family life
- gender in the media
- violence
- changing concepts of what it means to be male or female
- gender, sexuality and state power
- reproduction

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, Art History, Clothing and Textiles, Education, English, Film and Media, Geography, History, Law, Pacific Studies, Physical Education, Politics, Religious Studies, and Visual Culture. It's up to you!

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

Background required

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

Career opportunities

- 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
- Team work

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

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

PROFILE

Georgia Knowles

MA Gender Studies

Georgia graduated in 2015 with a Master of Arts in Gender Studies. Before that she completed a BA in Anthropology, Linguistics and History, and then a Postgraduate Diploma in Gender Studies. She now works as a gendered violence subject-matter expert for the New Zealand Government. In this role Georgia develops, designs and implements initiatives that aim to prevent sexual violence, family violence and suicide across the country.

Georgia values the communication and analytical skills she learnt in the Gender Studies programme:

"Gender studies taught me how to think critically, how to ask the right questions and how to express my views clearly. This is a crucial skill for my work where I am asked to justify why we should or shouldn't invest in different gendered violence prevention activities."

Although Georgia didn't start out in the Gender Studies programme, she thinks it's definitely a subject worth trying as soon as you get to Otago:

"I took a few Gender Studies papers as part of my Anthropology degree and enjoyed it so much I went back to do my Postgraduate work in Gender Studies. Part of the reason I came back was because the staff were amazing and supported me with my studies and with how to get the most out of being a student at Otago. I still keep in touch with them now!"

"I would encourage everyone to take part in the Gender Studies programme. It taught me analytical skills for thinking and writing about gender, as well as about things like race, class and ability. It is definitely the most relevant course I took at Otago because what I learned there can be applied to any situation."



For questions about
Gender Studies
otago.ac.nz/gender