Gender and Sexuality Concentration

Gender and sexuality permeate almost every corner of social life, from the most macro-level institutions to interpersonal interactions to the very understanding of who we are as individuals. The differentiation of people into reproductive and sexual categories has structured human societies throughout history and informs the distribution of material and immaterial resources, prestige, and social power. Reflective of the ubiquity of these social categories, the study of gender and sexuality is one of the fastest growing areas of scholarly inquiry in sociology and the Sex and Gender Section now has the most members of any section in the American Sociological Association. In addition to shedding light on these categories, sociological research on gender and sexuality has made important inroads in understanding the interaction between processes at the macro and micro levels of society—a puzzle that has been at the core of sociology for more than a century. Furthermore, investigations of the intersection of gender with other social categories, such as ethnicity and class, have been particularly generative in the last two decades.

Gender and sexuality research at Rice addresses some of the most pressing contemporary issues of equality: are there physical and mental health disparities between men and women? How do women and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) professionals navigate male-dominated fields like science and engineering, and how do men and women balance family life with these careers? Why does occupational sex segregation persist? How prevalent are health disparities between LGBT and heterosexual adults? Are LGBT parents any different than heterosexual parents? How does women’s activism vary across the 20th and 21st centuries? The ability for students to explore the intersections of gender and sexuality with race/ethnicity, urban and community relations, culture and religion, and population health is a unique strength of our graduate program. Students can also take advantage of lectures and events sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women, Gender and Sexuality (CSWGS) [link] and the Women’s Resource Center [link]. In addition, the certificate program through CSWGS offers graduate students the opportunity to gain formal certification of interdisciplinary training in gender and sexuality research.

Students pursuing the gender concentration will engage with the conceptual complexities of gender and sexuality (e.g. what is gender and sexuality?) as well as the institutional, interactional and individual-level processes that reproduce gender and sexual inequalities. Finally, students will be encouraged to explore how gender and sexuality scholarship informs their own theoretical and empirical interests.

Related Faculty:

Jenifer Bratter
Erin Cech
Justin Denney
Elaine Howard Ecklund
Bridget Gorman
Elizabeth Long