In her 1990 book, Gender Trouble, Judith Butler claimed that gender was both performative and compulsory. This class will explore the historical and contemporary significations of gender and sexuality in relation to the institutions that govern and define them. As we investigate the material consequences of different epistemes of gender as “natural,” embodied, philosophical, psychological, physiological, performative, and/or compulsory, this course will probe you to think about how power and inequality have structurally impacted categories of gender and sexuality.

This class will also investigate gender as it intersects with other forms of identity, such as race, class, ability, and geography. We will read feminist and gender theorists, women’s rights activists, queer and transgender theorists, fiction, poetry, and blogs to construct a wide-ranging historico-cultural understanding of gender as a social and material category. Through class discussions, reflection posts, presentations, three short papers and one final paper, students will read, think, discuss, present, and write on gender in history, gender and economy, gender and the law, and gender and the self. At the end of the course, you should be able to understand and articulate certain principles of gender as socially and culturally constructed while also exploring its cultural gaps, local meanings, and personal significance of gender and sexuality in cultural politics and everyday living.

Writing in the Professions is a writing course specifically designed for juniors and seniors in all majors other than English. The course is appropriate for upper-level students in all CMU colleges, has no writing prerequisites, and assumes that you may not have had much college-level writing instruction past your freshman year. The basic idea of the course is to give you experience in developing the writing skills you will be expected to have as you make the transition from student to professional. The course will cover resume writing, proposal writing, writing instructions, the difference between writing for general and specific audiences, and analysis of visual aids in various texts. The course requires that students work both independently and in groups.
76-221  Books (By Women) You Should Have Read By Now  
Instructor:  Jamie Smith  
Meetings:  MWF 9:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.  

In this course, we will explore several works of literature by women writers that everyone should read in their lifetime. Some of these works, like Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice and Daphne Du Maurier’s Rebecca, have been some of the most commercially successful novels of all time. Others, like Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, helped create entire genres of fiction. Still others, like Harper Lee’s To Kill A Mockingbird, are amongst the most controversial and banned works ever written. As we read, we will discuss: what is the “literary canon” how does it relate to cultural capital? In what ways have women writers influenced literary and cultural production? In what ways can these vibrant texts engage with important issues of their (and our) time, like gender, race, sexuality, nationality and class? Instructor lectures will additionally introduce other cultural and historical materials like visual arts, periodicals, music, film, letters, and secondary criticism in order to enhance students’ experiences with these literary works by women.

76-270  Writing for the Professions  
Instructor:  Ana Cooke  
Meetings:  MTWRF 12:00 p.m. to 1:20 p.m.  

Workplace communicators use words and images to connect people with information. To be effective, they must learn to do so across genres and media, and with a keen sense of audience, purpose, contexts, and constraints. In this course, you will sharpen your abilities to communicate information effectively, ethically, and responsibly to people with different needs. Our assignments and conversations will take us through a wide range of genres and rhetorical situations (oral and written) that you can expect to encounter in the workplace. A high level goal for the course is to combine theory, methods, and known best practices for putting our readers at the center of our writing strategies, with a strong emphasis on communicating with non-expert audiences and strategies for successfully navigating novel situations. By the end of the course, through writing, feedback, analysis, reflection, and revision, you will leave with a set of polished exemplars of your ability to communicate nimbly across genres.