



Gender & Sexuality Studies Teaching Assistantship

- Are you working toward a Graduate Certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies?
- Have you taken graduate courses in Gender and Sexuality Studies at Northwestern?
- Are you looking to gain experience creating your own course, which incorporates a focus on gender and sexuality or foregrounds feminist scholarship and methodologies?
- Would you like the opportunity to dedicate time and attention to honing your teaching skills?

Consider joining the Gender and Sexuality Studies Program as a graduate teaching assistant!

Overview:

Who: Full-time graduate students who are entering their fourth or fifth years* are eligible to apply for the GSS Teaching Assistantship (GSS TA). GSS TAs typically hail from programs and departments across The Graduate School and have in the past included graduate students from Comparative Literature, English, Learning Sciences, Musicology, Performance Studies, Religious Studies, Rhetoric and Public Culture, and Screen Cultures.

GSS typically awards four Teaching Assistantships annually.

What: During the academic year of appointment, GSS TAs will have the opportunity to create and teach their own undergraduate seminar. These small, discussion-based seminars are capped at 15 students and typically reflect the research interests of the GSS TA. Courses vary widely and have recently included: “Environmental Justice: Feminism, Rhetoric and Policy”; “Trash!: Hoarding, Bad Object-Orientations, and Performance”; and “By Any Media Necessary: Gender, Sexuality, Race, & Media Activism.”

Additionally, GSS TAs will TA for one undergraduate GSS course during each of the two remaining quarters of their appointment year. These courses are typically capped at 90 students. This means that the largest cohort of students each GSS TA can expect to work with is 45, spread over a maximum of three different discussion sections.

GSS TAs will meet monthly with the GSS Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and their fellow GSS TAs. These meetings ensure that GSS TAs have the necessary support throughout their appointment, as well as the opportunity to share experiences, seek advice and guidance, and share teaching approaches and best practices.

This teaching-intensive position provides graduate students with three quarters of funding thus enabling them to dedicate time and attention to instructing gender and sexuality studies courses for undergraduates.

On average, GSS TAs should anticipate dedicating approximately 12-15 hours per week to this role. Time commitments will fluctuate throughout each quarter according to in-classroom commitments, time spent grading, and preparatory work.

Why: By serving as a GSS TA, graduate students will develop skills in course design and instruction, build pedagogical approaches through collaboration with peers, and learn from GSS faculty members.

By the end of their appointment, GSS TAs will have acquired proficiency in generating and applying course content and methodologies, along with a practiced syllabus. Additionally, GSS TAs will have applied experience as an instructor-of-record, familiarity with university policies (i.e., those pertaining to academic integrity, safety protocols, accessibility), and knowledge of student support services and registrar procedures and deadlines.

How: Teaching Assistantships are competitively awarded through a multi-tiered selection process and based on individual applications and course proposals, as well as interviews with current GSS faculty. GSS TAs will receive three-quarters of stipend (according to the standard rate set by TGS), tuition, and health subsidy. This additional funding may enable graduate students to “bank” quarters and should be discussed with the student’s home department and confirmed with TGS, if necessary.

When: Prospective GSS TAs should apply for the position in the Spring Quarter preceding the year that they intend to serve in this role. Appointments begin at the start of the following Fall Quarter (e.g. those applying and awarded the role in spring 2022 will assume their duties beginning fall 2022).

*Graduate student applicants should be in their third or fourth year of study when applying. Applications from current fifth- and sixth-year students may be considered in unique situations, such as the COVID19 pandemic, at the discretion of The Graduate School and the student’s home department.

Detailed Timeline and Position Specifics:

I. Application (Winter and Spring Quarter):

First round:

Students may apply for the position through the online portal at <https://fellowships.tgs.northwestern.edu/gaship/>

Second Round:

Selected candidates will be interviewed by the selection committee, which is headed by the GSS Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and composed of GSS faculty. After the interviews, all applicants will be notified by the DGS about the outcome of the search.

II. Appointment (following Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarter):

Onboarding (final two-weeks of summer break):

The GSS DGS will schedule a meeting with GSS TAs approximately one- to two-weeks prior to the start of the Fall Quarter. In this meeting, GSS TAs will discuss their upcoming assignments, needs, and concerns with the DGS, and identify the ongoing date and time of their monthly check-in.

In addition to these regularly scheduled meetings, GSS TAs are welcome to contact the DGS at any point throughout their appointment and with any questions or concerns pertaining to communication, mentoring, syllabus planning and development, and other related pedagogical matters.

Appointment (throughout the Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters):

GSS TAs are expected to dedicate approximately 12-15hrs each week, on average, to their TA duties. The amount of time spent completing GSS TA duties will vary throughout each quarter and depend upon tasks such as holding office hours and grading.

While both TAing and instructing one's own course, GSS TAs will:

- Attend all scheduled seminars, lectures, and discussion sections.
- Hold regularly scheduled office hours each quarter.
- Meet with students.
- Provide students with feedback on writing and assignments.
- Promptly respond to student and faculty emails.
- Manage Canvas course sites.
- Engage in regular and impromptu meetings with faculty and fellow TAs.
- Familiarize oneself with relevant university policies, including but not limited to: academic integrity, safety protocols, accessibility, maintaining a classroom respectful of diversity, registrar's procedures and deadlines.

Serving as TA:

GSS TAs will receive their TA assignments prior to the start of the quarters that they are TAing. At times, they will TA alongside fellow GSS TAs or TAs from other programs and departments. The specifics of their duties as TA will vary according to the specific faculty member and course to which they are assigned. Typically, GSS TAs will meet with this faculty member prior to the start of the quarter to discuss the syllabus and expectations. Throughout the quarter, GSS TAs will:

- Prepare for and lead weekly discussion sections based on course texts and material.
- Host regular office hours for students.
- Grade assignments and provide students with feedback on their work.
- Communicate with faculty as needed regarding student performance, attendance, and any unanticipated issues that may arise.

Serving as Instructor of Record:

GSS TAs will spend one quarter of their appointment teaching a course of their own. Typically, this course is one of the two that the GSS TA proposed during the application process and is chosen by GSS faculty according to program need. GSS TAs will consult with the DGS and their colleagues prior to the start of this quarter, sharing their course syllabus and discussing the course content—along with any concerns or questions—leading up to the start of the quarter. Prior to and throughout their time as instructor of record, GSS TAs will:

- Finalize course description, syllabus, learning objectives, assignments, and readings.
- Populate Canvas page with information pertaining to the course modules, assignments, and readings.
- Ensure that students understand expectations for the course and grading.
- Prepare for and lead weekly seminar discussions.
- Establish weekly office hours and meet with students as needed outside of scheduled seminar sessions.
- Provide students with clear and written feedback on assignments.
- Communicate any issues, questions, or concerns with GSS DGS.

Courses Previously Conceived of and Taught by GSS TAs:

To review the descriptions of prior courses taught by GSS TAs, please visit:

<https://gendersexuality.northwestern.edu/courses/course-descriptions-21-22.html>

GSS TA courses have included, “[Cultural History of New Media, Gender, and Race](#),” “[Women of Color Feminist Legacies](#),” “[Queer Ghosts](#),” “[Environmental Justice: Feminism, Rhetoric and Policy](#),” “[Feminist Theory, Biopolitics, and the University](#),” and “[Transnational Feminist Performance](#).”

III. *Potential for Extension (subsequent Summer Quarter):*

GSS TAs are invited to apply for a teaching position during the Summer Quarter following their year of appointment. Priority is given to GSS TAs, who will once again create and implement a course of their design. Typically, these courses run according to a five, six, or eight week-schedule; instructors determine the length of their course.

Due to fluctuating Summer Quarter enrollments and required minimums of five students per class, there is no guarantee for summer teaching. GSS TAs that teach during the summer receive compensation according to the pay rates set by Northwestern's School of Professional Studies, which manages summer courses. In 2022, that rate is \$4,250 per course.

Further questions?

- For any questions regarding the GSS TA position, the application process, or the appointment period, please feel free to contact **Eliot Colin, Program Assistant** at gander@northwestern.edu
- For further questions, you may also contact the current **GSS Director of Graduate Studies** at gss-graduate@northwestern.edu