

# LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

## Women's and Gender Studies

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### I. Scope

This Collections Policy Statement covers materials within the scope of women's and gender studies. For the purposes of this statement, women's and gender studies is defined as an interdisciplinary, international field of scholarship and research that centers inquiry on women, gender and feminisms. Feminisms, plural, refers to the numerous genres of feminism and their unique theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and corresponding social justice movements (Liberal, Radical, Eco, Marxist, Materialist, etc.). As a discipline women's and gender studies prioritizes marginalized subjects and identities, and is informed primarily by feminist theories and local, national, and transnational social justice movements. While gender touches almost every discipline and realm of human life, it is important to emphasize that a) gender, sex, and sexuality are by definition different concepts and (b) there is a great diversity of approaches to defining, applying and critically interrogating these terms across disciplines. Therefore, materials on gender studies related specifically to LGBTQIA+ sexuality are out of scope for this document, as those topics are covered by the Collections Policy Statement for [LGBTQIA+ Studies](#). As an interdisciplinary subject, it is often necessary to reference related Collections Policy Statements as subjects overlap. For example, to find further guidance on the Library's collecting of materials related to women's literature, see the [Literature and Language](#) Collections Policy Statement. For further guidance on collecting medical materials related to women and gender, see the [Medicine](#) Collections Policy Statement.

This statement provides specific guidance for a group of core materials in the Library of Congress Classification range HQ, but as it is an interdisciplinary field, relevant and important materials can be found throughout the classified collections. Therefore, this document also provides general guidance related to relevant materials across all subject areas. Due to the fast pace of emerging scholarship in this field, these areas may not be exhaustive, and attention must be paid to the continually evolving terminologies and language related to sexuality and gender.

### II. Research Strengths

As the de facto national library for the United States, the Library of Congress has amassed an expansive and historically significant collection of materials, in all formats collected by the Library, related to women's and gender studies in the U.S. and internationally. The Library's collections in these areas have benefited from decades of U.S. Copyright deposit, government transfer, gifts and sustained purchasing to

provide researchers with access to rare imprints and long runs of historical materials from the United States Government, U.S.-based women's and gender based organizations, and a wide range of popular and academic publications. Due to the depth, breadth and longevity of the Library's collecting and the diversity of its acquisition sources, the collections include many early works on topics within or related to Women's and Gender Studies that were not widely collected during their time of publication, in many cases making the Library one of the few repositories that can provide access to such materials.

#### Areas of distinction in the Library's collections

- The Library has particularly strong collections related to national and international studies of feminisms, women, and gender in intellectual, social, and political movements. Examples of this strength include manuscript collections, such as the papers of the National Woman's Party, the League of Women Voters, the Female Anti-Slavery Society, ERAmerica, and the personal papers of a number of influential women throughout history. These manuscript collections are complemented by expansive collections of related publications, such as organizational publications, found within the General Collections.
- A vast collection of personal papers of important women including Lili Vincenz, Rosa Parks, Mary Church Terrell, Romy Medeiros da Fonseca, Maxine Singer, Clara Barton, and countless others in all fields or endeavors.
- Images of key figures and notable people and organizations represented in photographs, graphic images, artwork, paintings, prints, and other visual formats. Collections of distinction include the College Women's Association of Japan Print Show Collection, Women of Protest: Photographs from the Records of the National Woman's Party, and the Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection.
- A great strength includes the collection of rare, early 19<sup>th</sup> century titles related to women's and gender studies, many of which are not widely available elsewhere. For example, the Library has full runs of several historic primary source periodicals like *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, and *The Woman Voter*. The Library also has a number of first edition and limited run monographs, including titles like the self-published first edition of *Feminist Revolution* (1975) by the collective Redstockings, a text which was ultimately censored when it was later printed in a larger run by a mainstream publisher.
- The General Collections and international collections contain a wealth of foreign-language publications and primary source materials. For many areas of the world, such as China, Russia, and Latin America, its collections are the finest and most comprehensive research collections outside the country of origin.
- The Library of Congress holds hundreds of zines on topics related to Women's and Gender Studies.
- The birth control and reproductive rights movement in the United States including the Margaret Sanger Papers and the Gregory Pincus Papers. Also, a great number of specialized monographs, periodicals, and reports.
- The Women's and Gender Studies Web Archives and other web archive collections include important primary sources, firsthand accounts, and records of social, cultural, and political movements for gender equality. This archive provides enduring access to resources which illuminate underrepresented perspectives and identities, many of which are not typically found in traditional print resources. Sites which document topics relevant to the history, current field, and future directions of Women's and Gender Studies as an academic discipline are likewise collected.
- Historical and contemporary resources on women, gender and the law. The holdings in this area are enhanced immeasurably by the Law Library's collections. The Library aspires to collect significant leading journals, periodicals, monographs, reports, electronic resources, websites, and reference works in this area. Publications of U.S. and foreign governments, of international organizations such as the United Nations, and other legal materials, are valuable for tracking the social and political reform and economic and demographic changes affecting women and gender over time and in all countries.

- Significant collections of sound recordings, films, and footage of musicians, actors, and others involved in the visual and performing arts, including the personal papers of Isabelle Sayers and Frances Benjamin Johnston.

### III. Collecting Policy

The Library of Congress selectively collects current and historical materials in all formats, and in a wide range of languages, that explore the social, political, and cultural elements of women and gender as they intersect with other identity categories, including, but not limited to, race, class, age, sexuality, political affiliation, citizenship status, and geographic location. Due to constant innovations in publishing, collecting attention is paid to emerging publications, subjects and formats.

#### The Library Collects:

- Materials which focus exclusively or to a significant degree on subjects related to women, gender, feminisms, and all topics and subtopics of women's and gender studies, with an emphasis on underrepresented and/or marginalized subjects and materials related to intersectionality.
- U.S. published materials required to build a comprehensive collection of women's and gender studies materials able to support high level research. Select foreign language publications required to support a global research level collection, with emphasis on those materials with scholarly content and those relating to a particular country, or to a gender-based movement as a whole.
- Scholarly works in all languages and formats on women's and gender studies and its subfields are collected. The Library acquires current works of scholarship, historical publications, and retrospective publications needed to fill in gaps or strengthen the collections in specific areas.
- Influential works, including those not necessarily scholarly in nature, are also be collected. Substantial subject bibliographies and other reference works on women's and gender studies and its subfields may be acquired.
- The Library will continue to collect in the areas of feminist scholarship, including materials on feminist theories, research methods and methodologies, feminist research frameworks and epistemologies, and pedagogies. Important theoretical concepts include feminist theories, standpoint theory, intersectionality, situated knowledge, gender and spirituality, critical race theory, epistemic authority, post-colonialism, social constructivism and more. Works in these areas may be collected. Materials in this area often overlap with other Collections Policy Statements, especially [Education](#) and [Philosophy](#).
- Primary sources and first-hand accounts of women and gendered aspects of lived experiences, including those materials which are self-published or are in a non-traditional format, and especially zines. First-hand accounts and primary source materials of high research value should be acquired, particularly when they illuminate areas which have been understudied or represent unique perspectives on the intersections of life and gender in the United States. For guidance see the Collections Policy Statement on [Ephemera](#) and the [Supplementary Guidelines on Independently Published and Self-Published Textual Materials](#).
- Materials related to the social, political, and cultural aspects of gender, especially items which reflect the experience of or relationship to race, class, sexuality, social and economic class, political affiliation, and geographic location or other aspects of identity.
- The Library collects materials in a wide range of formats and languages which document both the public and private social, cultural, and political participation of women, women's and gender-based

rights organizations, and female-identified and/or gender non-conforming politicians, political activists and social justice movements. In addition, politicians or political organizations which are feminist, female-identified, gender non-conforming, or emphasize gendered issues should be collected. In general, materials which provide a record of social, cultural, and political activities as they intersect with gender identities and representations, including feminist movements and individuals may be collected.

- Born digital content and electronic resources are increasingly critical to conducting research and provide access to resources in a variety of formats. Examples of such resources include but are not limited to websites, online databases, e-journals, e-books, electronic resources, and physical carriers in all formats, whether free or fee-based, required to support research in women's and gender studies.

### Topics of special interest

In order to ensure a broad representative collection, the Library seeks to expand its collecting in several thematic areas within the women's and gender studies subject area. Areas of special interest for the Library that will, when possible, be collected comprehensively include materials on the following subjects:

- Critical Race Feminisms including but not limited to: Black, Chicana, Latinx, Filipinx, Asian, American Indian and Indigenous feminisms
- Feminist frameworks, including but not limited to: liberal, radical, cultural, ecological, psychoanalytic, anti-fascist, Marxist, socialist, post-colonial, global, and transnational feminisms
- Feminist & gender-based media studies, print cultures and publishing, especially zines and independent media
- Gender roles, femininity/masculinity studies, the social construction of gender, gender theory
- Gender and the environment, especially ecofeminism, agricultural labor, and the gendered impacts and organizing around climate change
- Historic and contemporary feminist organizing, including collectives, manifestos, newsletters, flyers and ephemera
- Feminist philosophies, especially epistemology, pedagogy, and metaphysics
- Women and gender in the context of colonialism, nationalism, and globalization
- Gender-based oppression and violence, rape culture, sex trafficking, especially statistics, data sets and firsthand accounts
- Works related to feminism and science studies that apply feminist theory to the sciences to understand the practice, activities and goals of science, including feminist technoscience studies
- First person accounts of imprisonment, incarceration, arrest, and detainment
- Labor and economics, with an emphasis on gendered labor, paid and unpaid domestic and reproductive work, federal labor programs, female-headed households, housing access and programs, poverty status, feminist economics, the gender wage gap, alternative economies and non-traditional labor, including sex work
- Women's ways of knowing, especially non-traditional primary sources
- Gender and relationship structures, including caregiving and parenting
- Experiences of immigration, migration, and diaspora including refugees
- Resources which reflect the historic and contemporary access to reproductive healthcare, with a focus on social, cultural and political aspects and including fertility, abortion and contraception access and legislation.

This policy does not preclude the acquisition of materials falling outside the above policies, for the permanent collection, when such materials contain information of particular concern to Congress and to the United States Government. This includes information not found elsewhere in the Library of Congress collections, or that must be acquired to facilitate reference or research use.

#### **IV. Acquisition Sources**

Copyright deposits of American publications have contributed to the strength of the women's and gender studies collections. Other methods of acquisitions include exchange, gift or donations, purchase, subscription, federal transfer, and Cataloging in Publication, which have been significant sources contributing to the breadth and depth of this collection. Each of these methods will continue to be important and can be expanded or improved, but other channels are monitored in order to identify relevant materials in the constantly changing world of publishing.

The Library's Overseas Offices in Cairo, Islamabad, Jakarta, Nairobi, New Delhi, and Rio de Janeiro continue to be exceptional resources for the Library's acquisition of women's and gender studies material from areas of the world that are not represented well in the international book trade. Of particular importance is the ability of the overseas offices to acquire materials which are hard to obtain by traditional acquisition methods, or which represent understudied or under collected topics. Digital materials, including websites, are an area of increasing attention.

Electronic resources and digital content are increasingly critical to conducting research. In addition to acquiring traditional materials such as databases and electronic journals, there are a number of opportunities to expand digital collecting. Web archiving as an acquisition tool will continue to become increasingly important in order to capture resources which exist only online, and are not available by other means of acquisition and which will not be received through Copyright. Web archiving provides an opportunity to preserve for future generations incredibly vulnerable, unique, and rare content that is not often collected by other institutions and cannot be collected in a traditional format. It is in the interest of the Library to expand electronic resource acquisition as digital content and formats proliferate.

#### **V. Best Editions and Preferred Formats**

For guidance regarding best editions for material acquired via the Copyright Office, see: <http://copyright.gov/circs/circ07b.pdf>.

For guidance regarding recommended formats for material acquired via all other means; e.g., purchase, exchange, gift and transfer, see: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs>.

For information regarding electronic resources and web archiving, see the following Supplementary Guidelines: <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/electronicresources.pdf> and <http://www.loc.gov/acq/devpol/webarchive.pdf>.

#### **VI. Collecting Levels**

There are a wide variety of approaches to cataloging and classifying materials in the area of women's and gender studies, and therefore, it is not effective to limit or describe collecting based on the Library of Congress Classification system. However, specific guidance is provided here for the HQ classification

range (see table below), where a number of core materials historically have been classified. For the U.S. materials that fall within the scope of this document, the Library acquires a broad range of materials at a research support level (level 4) and attempts to acquire at a comprehensive level (level 5) specific topic areas. Unless otherwise designated in the chart below, materials from outside the U.S. are collected at an instructional support level (level 3).

Subjects listed under the above “Topics of Special Interest” (See Collecting Policy) will be collected comprehensively whenever possible **HQ Collecting Levels for Women’s and Gender Studies**

The range of numbers HQ1-HQ2030.7 covers only a portion of the women’s and gender studies collections which are classed from A to Z throughout the classification schedules.

LC Classification	Subject	Collecting Levels		Notes
		U.S.	Non-U.S.	
HQ12-472	Sexual Life. Erotica.	4	3	See: LGBTQIA+ Collections Policy Statement for guidance on transgender, non-binary, and other gender non-conforming subjects and LGBTQIA+ sexuality studies.
HQ503-1064	The Family. Marriage. Home.	4	3	
HQ1075-1075.5	Sex Roles	5	4	
HQ1088-HQ2030.7	Men. Women. Feminism.	4	3	
HQ1121-HQ1154	History of women.	5	4	
HQ1180-HQ1190	Study and teaching, women’s studies. Feminist Theory.	4	3	
HQ1201-HQ1229	General works	4	3	
HQ1236	Women and the State.	5	4	
HQ1240	Women and development.	5	4	
HQ1381	Women and economics.	5	4	
HQ1389	Women and art. Women/Gender Based Political Art.	4 3	3 3	General works are 3 as collecting is comprehensive at the National Museum of Women in the Arts.
HQ11390-HQ1391	Women in public service.	5	4	
HQ1397	Women in science and the arts.	5	4	
HQ1401-HQ1870.9	Women by region or country.	4	3	

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