

English/American Studies

Also relevant for literary studies, cultural studies, linguistics

Course: American Studies, English Studies

Group of courses: Humanities

Provided by: Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier

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Course objectives:

Students should be taught both the theoretical principles and the methodological concepts of gender studies and their relevance for American and English literary and linguistic studies. Students should be enabled to recognise and reflect critically on the significance of the category of gender (also in relation to categories such as race, ethnicity, sexuality and class) in cultural forms of representation (especially literature and film). They should also be made aware of the gender hierarchies inherent to language, the linguistic construction of gender (linguistic turn) and gender-specific language behaviour through historical linguistics and pragmatic linguistics.

Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content:

The subject-specific focus is on the investigation of Anglophone literature, culture and language, making use of various positions and methods drawn from gender studies.

- Theoretical principles, positions and methods from gender and queer studies: Introduction to central concepts (sex, gender, sexuality, difference/alterity), debates and problems and how they are positioned and defined within discourses and discussions that are particularly relevant to cultural studies psychoanalysis, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, deconstruction, structuralism and post-structuralism, post-colonialism, etc. and theoretical reflection on the interfaces between these disciplines and discourses with regard to gender.
- Gender and language: Examination of the gender-related symmetries and asymmetries in English and their historical roots and development, as well as gender-specific language behaviour and how it relates to the social position of the sexes.
- Revision of the canon/literary and cultural history, the sifting and new readings of male and female authors neglected or ignored by existing hetero-normative and patriarchal literary and cultural history. In addition, the re-reading and re-positioning of male and female authors established in the canon from the perspective of gender studies. In this way students should become aware of the different perspectives on genre borders and periods that result from a revision of the canon and be able to recognize the extent to which the formation of the canon is connected to hegemonic power structures.
- Feminist and gender-orientated (literary) criticism and theory examining the representation of gender and sexual difference in literary texts and gender-specific literary production (e. g. écriture féminine) and its reception, and thus critically questioning the one-sided view of literature shaped by the patriarchal perspective. Also gender studies investigating how the hierarchical relationship between the sexes (gender difference, gender identity and gender roles) manifests itself in various aspects of Anglophone culture, in particular literature.

Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:

A specific gender module is desirable to ensure that not only basic principles are presented, but also that further intensive and focused study building on these is possible. However, where individual universities decide against a special gender module, it would be possible to integrate the modules suggested here into other modules, such as literary studies, cultural studies or linguistic modules.

We would suggest the course content presented above as modules, viz.

1. Theoretical principles. Positions and methods of gender and queer studies
2. Gender and language
3. Revision of the canon/literary and cultural history
4. Feminist (literary) criticism and narratology

Degree Stage:

Gender studies content should be taught from the second or third semester onwards, when students are already familiar with the basic principles of the subject. This is important because it often involves a revision of "traditional" English/American studies, for example with relation to forming the canon. Gender studies should be taught both at Bachelor's and in greater depth Master's stages.

Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

- Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Braithwaite, Ann, and Catherine M. Orr. *Everyday Women's and Gender Studies: Introductory Concepts*. New York/London: Routledge, 2017.
- Buikema, Rosemarie, Liedeke Plate, and Kathrin Thiele, editors. *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture: A Comprehensive Guide to Gender Studies*. London/New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York/London: Routledge, 2004.
- Ferguson, R.A. *Aberrations in Black. Toward A Queer Of Color Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Giffney, Noreen, and Michael O'Rourke, editors. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Queer Theory*. London: Routledge, 2018.
- Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990.
- Launius, Christie, and Holly Hassel. *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies: Ways of Seeing, Thinking, and Knowing*. New York/London: Routledge, 2014.
- Munoz, Jose Esteban. *Disidentification. Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Olson, Greta, Mirjam Horn-Schott, Daniel Hartley, and Leonie Schmidt, editors. *Beyond Gender: An Advanced Introduction to Futures of Feminist and Sexuality Studies*. New York/London: Routledge, 2018.
- Puar, Jasbir. *Terrorist Assemblages. Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Stimpson, Catharine R., and Gilbert Herdt, editors. *Critical Terms for the Study of Gender*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Woodward, Kath. *The Short Guide to Gender*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Journals:

- Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies | [Website](#)
- Feministische Studien. Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung. | [Website](#)
- Feminist Review | [Website](#)
- figurationen. Gender – Kultur – Literatur. | [Website](#)
- FKW – Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und visuelle Kultur | [Website](#)
- Freiburger Zeitschrift für GeschlechterStudien. | [Website](#)
- Gender. Zeitschrift für Geschlecht, Kultur und Gesellschaft. | [Website](#)
- gender forum. An Internet Journal for Gender Studies. | [Website](#)
- Hypatia – A Journal of Feminist Philosophy | [Website](#)
- InterAlia. A Journal of Queer Studies | [Website](#)
- Journal of Gender Studies. | [Website](#)
- online journal Kultur & Geschlecht | [Website](#)
- Open Gender Journal – Open-Access-Zeitschrift in Kooperation mit der Fachgesellschaft Geschlechterstudien | [Website](#)
- querelles-net. Rezensionenzeitschrift für Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung. | [Website](#)
- Signs – Journal of Women in Culture and Society | [Website](#)
- Women: A Cultural Review. | [Website](#)