

Musicology

Also relevant for music degrees at universities of music (teacher training courses, performance and/or music education training courses) and related degree courses (cultural studies, theatre studies, popular music and the media, etc.

Course: Musicology
Group of courses: Esthetics
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Course objectives:

Students should

- learn about methodological concepts and theoretical considerations relating to gender studies in musicology
- understand music in the context of historical or contemporary gender relations
- learn about gender-specific areas of activity in musical cultures of the past and present
- understand and question how the mechanisms of canon formation and repertoire building in music function and how this has led to works by female composers being "forgotten"
- be introduced to works by female composers and include these works in their professional activities (music-making, teaching, dramaturgy, etc.)
- understand and analyse the functions of music-making, reception, composing, etc. with regard to constructing and performing gender

Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content:

Women's studies and gender research in musicology focus on gender-specific activities in musical cultures, the construction of gender in and through music and the performance of gender in music-making and approaching music. Not only are musical activity and musical works shaped by gender relations, but music itself is involved in the production of gender relations. Gender is constructed in and through music; music-making and reception are parts of doing gender and the music and concert industries as well as music education are subject to specific gender logics.

Women's studies and gender research are not yet well established in the field of musicology and are still subject to resentment. Concerning the level of research and reflection, there are significant differences between the three main sub-disciplines: historical musicology, systematic musicology and ethnomusicology. Research on gender structures in the field of popular music has so far been carried out primarily in disciplines such as sociology or cultural studies. Their findings have partially been adopted and continued in the sociology of music or cultural-studies-oriented historical musicology. Only historical musicology has undergone a continuous process of theory building and has systematically examined a variety of subject areas. Therefore, it is particularly advisable to demand the consideration of gender in this area of the curricula of musicology courses.

Musicological methodologies

The gender perspective goes hand in hand with a critical reflection of the methodological traditions of the subject and therefore goes beyond the field of gender studies itself. Various studies have investigated the mechanisms by which music history and music-related biographies have been written and musical canons and repertoires have been formed. In particular, these studies have questioned the discipline's focus on the history of composition, contrasting it with approaches from cultural science and history that refer the cultural aspects of music. These include composition – which is usually privileged by traditionally working scholars –, professional and "private" music-making, reception, music patronage, etc. This implies not only a greater focus on female musical figures, who have long been neglected and devalued in terms of their cultural significance; it also opens up performance, composition and reception of music to analysis with regard to constructing and performing gender. In addition, current music-sociological research has been dealing with queer, intersectional and post-colonial theories.

Gender issues in musical culture

There is growing recognition in musicological research of the importance of the category gender for the analysis of music-cultural structures and processes. Gendered forms of agency and fields of activity are examined from both a historical and comparative socio-cultural perspective taking sociological as well as socio-historical aspects into account, e.g. spaces, locations and institutions for music-making, professionalism (music professions, professional training, working conditions), choice of instruments, mobility and travel or gender-typical reception and preferences.

Additionally, an increasing number of studies are looking at questions of mentality and day-to-day life, e.g.:

- music in the discourse of gender relationships, love and sexuality
- public and private spheres of music
- music and religion, rituals and cult
- dancing, singing and the body
- artistic concepts and types of artists (genius, author, muse, star, diva)

Biographies and research on works

Studies on the life and work of individual female composers currently account for a main part of research in women's and gender studies in musicology. Initially, an important motive for research was rediscovering works by "forgotten" women composers and making these available for professional performance not least by producing editions of musical works. To begin with, this branch of research followed the traditional "life and works" approach of historical musicology. However, it has increasingly reflected on basic principles of biographical research, focusing in particular on potential "masterworks" and including social and cultural historical aspects. Only a marginal part of biographies of male composers and performers have taken gender issues into account.

Aesthetics, history of composition and musical analysis

Due to the discipline's tradition with its focus on the history of musical composition, it is particularly claimed to regard aspects of gender in analysing music. Many studies on opera and music theatre (as well as film music) examine gender and gender relations in musical (theatre) concepts. The idea that it is possible to talk about the symbolic representation of gender even in music that is not connected to a text is associated mainly with "new musicology", which approaches musical structures as narratives of sexuality and desire. Another area of research that is gaining importance is the singing voice. Understood as performance of the gendered body, the singing voice is not only shaped by gender concepts, but also constitutes them "by doing".

Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:

The new examination and study regulations should give extra impetus to the development of gender issues in the subject but on no account turn it into a niche subject. Especially lecturers who are not specialists in women's studies should be more strongly encouraged (and enabled) to apply these new perspectives to traditional areas of the subject.

When accrediting or reaccrediting musicological studies, it should generally be examined if it is possible

to incorporate certain gender studies modules and module components. Institutes or universities that lack specific competence in teaching musicological gender studies should be encouraged to deploy additional staff or at least engage guest professors or lecturers.

Often it will be preferable to integrate gender issues into generally defined modules and classes rather than constructing special modules. There are organisational as well as subject-related reasons for this.

On the subject-related side, there is the fact that gender studies are still not very well established in musicology, as discussed above. Consequently, published research is only available in few subject areas and the specific competence of the teaching staff is limited. As a consequence, university-level teaching of gender studies in musicology – if at all existing – is limited to examining the few female composers or presenting a general survey of the field in courses with unjustifiably broad titles such as "Women and Music". Often such courses are an excuse for completely ignoring issues relating to women's studies outside these special classes.

On the organisational side, the challenge is that musicology is not often offered as an independent subject (e.g. as a single- or double-subject Bachelor's or Master's degree course). More often it takes the form of individual modules as part of degrees in performance, music education or teacher training, or other related degree courses (cultural studies, theatre studies, popular music and the media, etc.). An integrative approach to gender studies in more generally defined modules will ensure that gender issues are not neglected even where musicology forms such a small part of these degree courses that gender studies in the area of musicology could not be incorporated in the form of special modules.

To ensure that gender studies receive enough attention even when not taught in specially designed modules, course objectives should be designed so that they are not based on an assumed canon of "great composers" or "masterworks". In addition to topics in the history of composition and musical aesthetics, which usually predominate here, the modules should look at questions relating to cultural history (the social history of music, the history of mentalities, the history of popular music), the history of musical performance, and listening to music/reception. It is also desirable that descriptions of generally defined modules should contain examples of topics where gender issues play a significant role. This is particularly relevant for modules in the following areas:

Modules on general topics in music history and general surveys of music history,

- e.g. gender-specific areas of activity in musical cultures of the past and today as well as knowledge about women composers and their works.

Modules on the history of composition, e.g.:

- selected works of women composers
- female and male roles in opera
- setting text to music in the context of historical constructions of gender
- music genres in the context of social and gender history

Introductory courses, e.g.

- principles of gender studies in musicology

Modules on ethnomusicology, e.g.

- gender relations as "signatures" of music cultures
- gender-specific areas of activity and locations for music-making

Modules in the area of musical sociology/music culture/the cultural history of music, e.g.

- genres and genders
- subcultures and gender construction
- types of artists as gender roles
- music in everyday life, musical institutions and gender-specific participation
- music-making as gender performance
- listening to music and music appreciation as gender performance
- professionalism and gender

Modules on music psychology, e.g.

- gender-specific perception of music
- musical development and gender identity
- Are there gender-specific biological conditions for music-making?

Degree Stage:

The proposed integration of gender issues into teaching should span the entire course of study. Specific modules (or parts of modules) on gender aspects should not be left for later phases of the studies (in the sense of a progressing specialisation). They are also appropriate as exemplary issues to learning basic methodological approaches.

Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

- Rebecca Grotjahn and Sabine Vogt (eds.) (2010): Musik und Gender. Unter Mitarbeit von Sarah Schaubberger, Laaber: Laaber-Verlag (Kompendien Musik, Bd. 5).
- Heesch, Florian and Katrin Losleben (eds.) (2012): Musik & Gender. Ein Reader. Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag.
- Kreutziger-Herr, Annette and Melanie Unseld (eds.) (2010): Lexikon Musik und Gender. Stuttgart, Kassel: J.B. Metzler.
- Citron, Marcia J. (1993): Gender and the Musical Canon. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Biddle, Ian and Kirsten Gibson (eds.) (2009): Masculinity and Western Musical Practice, Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate.
- Hoffmann, Freia (1991): Instrument und Körper. Die musizierende Frau in der bürgerlichen Kultur. Frankfurt a. M., Leipzig: Insel.
- Koldau, Linda Maria (2005): Frauen – Musik – Kultur. Ein Handbuch zum deutschen Sprachgebiet der Frühen Neuzeit. Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau.
- Liebsch, Katharina and Rosa Reitsamer (eds.) (2015): Musik. Gender. Differenz. Intersektionale Perspektiven auf musikkulturelle Felder und Aktivitäten. Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot:

Münster (= Forum Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung, Bd. 44).

- McClary, Susan (2004, 1991): *Feminine endings. Music, gender, and sexuality*. With a new introduction. Minneapolis [et. al.]: Univ. of Minnesota Pr.
- Pendle, Karin (ed.) (2001): *Women & music. A History*. 2. ed., Bloomington, Ind. [u. a.]: Indiana Univ. Pr.
- Whiteley, Sheila (2000): *Women and Popular Music. Sexuality, Identity, and Subjectivity*. London [et al.]: Routledge.

Journals:

- Jahrbuch Musik und Gender | [Website](#)
- Women & Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture. | [Website](#)