Theatre Studies

Course: Theatre Studies
Group of courses: Esthetics
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Course objectives:

Students should

- become familiar with fundamental problems and questions, theories, methods and the history of gender research
- acquire knowledge about historical and contemporary questions relevant to gender in performing arts (straight and musical theatre, dance, performance art, cabaret)
- develop (critical) awareness of the performativity and theatricality of gender both in relation to performing arts and in relation to social situations in everyday life, politics, the media and popular culture
- develop analytical competence with regard to staging gender in the past and today
- understand and (critically) apply the category of gender in interaction with other categories (sex, race, class, age, dis/ability, etc.) as well as with superordinate concepts such as intersectionality and diversity

Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content:

The focus of gender research in theatre studies is on the study of gender in the performing arts and in theatrical situations in real life (rituals, celebrations, concerts, political actions or movements) from antiquity to the present. Gender-related teaching content or subject-specific content can be divided into five areas:

1. Theoretical and methodological foundations of gender studies in the context of theatre, dance, media and cultural studies:

- introduction to central concepts (sex, gender, desire, difference, identity, alterity, normativity, naturalization, construction/constructivism, power, hierarchy, heteronormativity, gender binary, etc.)
- insight into fundamental questions and definitions of gender in theories and disciplines that were/are relevant to theatre and cultural studies: écriture feminine, deconstructive feminism, feminist film theory, concepts of psychoanalysis, discourse analysis, performativity theories, queer theory, feminist and queer performance theory, masculinity theories, postcolonial theories, intersectionality theories
- context and connection of gender concepts with key theatre concepts such as performativity, performance, corporeality/embodiment, role, theatricality, staging, performance, mask/masquerade, etc.
- methods and tools of gender analysis in relation to historical and contemporary contexts

2. Gender in cultural and theatre history

- introduction to the Western history of gender from antiquity to the present and to the (Western) history of gender studies
- changing concepts of gender on stage
- theatre and cultural history of women on and behind the stage (gender-specific working conditions, prejudices, rules and prohibitions as well as evaluations, hostility towards theatre, women and gender, etc.)
- gender and institutional history

- gender in acting theory and practice from the 18th century to the present (gender binary, bourgeois culture/family, heteronormativity, gender-specific staging and body art, theory of gender characters, etc.)
- cross-gender acting on stage from antiquity to the present (concepts of breeches roles/travesty/cross dressing, drag, masquerade, ambiguity, queerness)
- history, theories and forms of comedy (irony, parody, satire, joke, etc.) in a gender context, for example in cabaret (comedy, puppet theatre, etc.)
- feminist performance art from the 1960s to the present

3. Gender and the body

- studies on gender-defining attributes and codes with regard to the body (the body and doing gender)
- theatrical or aesthetic strategies of embodiment, gender staging and its perception (through nudity, movement, facial expressions, gestures, language, voice, clothes/costumes, cross dressing/voicing, media technologies, objects/things) in different forms of theatre (theatre, dancing, opera, performance, cabaret)
- gender performances in postmodern and contemporary dancing, in postdramatic theatre and in performance art
- staging trans*, inter, queerness and agender
- studies on body politics, including the relationship between critique and norm, subversion and affirmation in staging gender and in the performing arts as well as in subcultures, in the media, at celebrations, rituals or concerts
- processes of undoing gender

4. Comparative perspectives

- staging gender from culturally comparative and transnational perspectives
- differences and similarities between different forms of staging gender (theatre, literature, music, painting, photography, installation or video art), between theatre and other media (film, radio, TV, Internet) and between theatre and popular culture

5. Gender in the context of current discourses

- introduction to current theoretical debates, such as Material Feminism, Posthuman Studies, Affect Studies
- contextualising gender amongst other categories of difference (sex, race, age, class, dis/ability, etc.) and thus in the context of intersectionality and diversity theories
- concepts of re-enactment, counter-memories and feminist and queer archives
- gender and economy, staging gender in the context of neoliberalism and globalisation

Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:

Gender-related content should ideally be integrated into all modules of theatre studies during all study phases. It makes sense to include a gender module in the basic study phase of theatre studies in order to ensure that all students learn the basics and methodological foundations of gender studies. Such an introductory gender module includes subject-specific theoretical, historical and methodological knowledge in the fields of theatre, dance, media and cultural studies, thus also opening up interdisciplinary perspectives. As part of the basic study phase such a module should include the

following content (as described above):

- theoretical and methodological foundations of gender studies
- gender in cultural and theatre history
- gender and the body
- comparative perspectives (cultures, arts, media)
- gender in the context of current discourses

Depending on the study phase, these modules can be extended and integrated into advanced and in-depth modules; an additional gender module can be included as an elective module in the final phase of the course in order to expand knowledge and analytical skills, and in preparation for the examination thesis.

Degree Stage:

Gender aspects should be integrated throughout the entire course of studies. It is important to impart gender studies skills and knowledge already in the first two semesters or in the introductory phase and, in addition to this, to offer further and in-depth seminars in the course of the study programme. In the final study phase, students should have the option to choose gender as a field of specialisation or an elective module.

Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

- Angerer, Marie-Luise/Hardt, Yvonne/Weber, Anna-Carolin (Hg.). Choreographie – Medien – Gender. Zürich: diaphanes, 2013.
- Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Case, Sue Ellen. Feminist and Queer Performance: Critical Strategies. London/New York: palgrave macmillan, 2009.
- Dreysse, Miriam. „Cross-Dressing. Zur (De)Konstruktion von Geschlechtsidentität im zeitgenössischen Theater“. In: Oster, Martina/Ernst, Waltraud/Gerards, Marion (Hg.). Performativität und Performance. Geschlecht in Musik, Theater und Medienkunst. Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 2008, S. 36-47.
- Halberstam, Jack. Female Masculinities. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Hochholdinger-Reiterer, Beate. Kostümierung der Geschlechter. Schauspielkunst als Erfindung der Aufklärung. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2014.
- Munoz, Jose Esteban. Disidentification. Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Pailer, Gaby/Schößler, Franziska (Hg.). GeschlechterSpielRäume. Dramatik, Theater, Performance und Gender. Amsterdam (u.a.): Rodopi, 2011.
- Pewny, Katharina. „Männlichkeiten im Blick der feministischen Performance Studies“. In: Ellmeier, Andrea et al. (Hg.). Gender Performances. Wissen und Geschlecht in Musik, Theater, Film. Wien: Böhlau, 2011, S. 125-138.
- Röttger, Kati. „Theaterwissenschaft. Zwischen Repräsentation und Performanz: Gender in Theater und Theaterwissenschaft“. In: Bußmann, Hadumod/Hof, Renate (Hg.). Genus. Geschlechterforschung/Gender Studies in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 2005, S. 520-557.
- Schneider, Rebecca. The Explicit Body in Performance. London/New York: Routledge, 1997.

- Schößler, Franziska. Einführung in die Gender Studies. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008.
- Schrödl, Jenny. „Die Kategorie ‚Gender' in der Theaterwissenschaft und im Gegenwartstheater". In: Spelsberg-Papazoglou, Karoline (Hg.). Gender und Diversity – die Perspektiven verbinden. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2016, S. 28-39.

Journals:

- Feminist Studies. Journal for interdisciplinary Women's- and Gender Research | Website
- Forum Modern Theatre | Website
- Gender. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society | Website
- Open Gender Journal – Open-Access-Journal | Website
- Performance Research | Website
- Theatre Research International | Website