

## Architecture

**Relevant for: Interior Design, Construction in Existing Contexts, Historic Preservation, Construction Management**

Course: Architecture, Townplanning

Group of courses: Engineering

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## Course objectives:

The introduction of gender studies into architectural education is intended to make students aware of the influence cultural constructions of gender have on the professional identity of architects, architectural discourse and theory as well as on the design and realization of buildings and cities. Thus, goals and intentions of women's and gender studies, in particular, how these disciplines perceive space, architecture (especially housing and public buildings) and urbanism, are not only introduced to students but become an integral part of architectural education.

Because the realization of architecture requires the collaboration of a number of experts, students must also acquire "soft skills" to be enabled to deal with all those involved in the planning process in a fair and open-minded manner.

Due to the increasing globalization of the architectural profession it is imperative that students gain knowledge of how space is conceived and used in other cultures, especially in relation to factors such as gender, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

## Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content:

The inclusion of gender studies in Architecture and Urban Design curricula focuses on four main areas:

### Description of specialist fields:

Students should

- gain knowledge of the (explicit and implicit) influence that cultural constructions of gender have upon the planning, realization and perception of buildings, cities, landscape and spaces;
- understand that architecture (including building design, interior design and product design) and urbanism (including strategies for urban design and expansion, urban renewal and urban shrinkage) can be seen as a reproduction of gender relations;
- be enabled to analyse the background, objectives and strategies that are integral to the concept of gender mainstreaming and, most importantly, to apply these to the design of public buildings, large-scale urban projects, as well as with regard to building projects in the fields of historic preservation, construction in existing contexts, urban design and urban regeneration.

### Methodological and theoretical approaches:

Students will

- become aware of the importance of the background, objectives and integration strategies of gender research with special emphasis given to the relationship between gender, space, material and form, particularly in different periods and cultures;
- become familiar with research undertaken on gender, space, urbanism and landscape in related disciplines such as sociology, art history, philosophy, political science, economics, etc.;
- learn about the ways in which different groups perceive bodies in space (e.g., morals, sense of shame, etc.) and how these attitudes influence the planning and utilization of buildings and cities in differing cultures;
- be sensitized to gender-specific impacts on the design of buildings and cities in non-European cultures;
- be made aware that the development, production and implementation of technology (structural systems, building materials and construction methods; computer software and hardware; media

products) are not value-free or value-neutral. Students should also acquire an understanding of the impact cultural constructions of gender in specific social, historical and cultural contexts have had on the development of building materials and products as well as new technologies (development of the computer, CAD, new media, laser technology, etc.).

#### **Areas of practice:**

It is intended that students

- develop an understanding of the (explicit and implicit) influence that cultural constructions of gender have had upon the production of architectural theory and discourse ("key texts") in both current and historical contexts;
- are made aware that concepts of "gender" and "gender relations" (e.g., the production of binary opposites such as strong/weak, order/chaos, light/dark, healthy/sick, vernacular/high art, rational/irrational, handmade/machine-made, tradition/modernity, which reproduce the dichotomy of masculine/feminine) are integral to the language of architectural theory and urban discourse.
- Women's texts on architectural theory and history, interior design, and urban design in their historical and contemporary contexts should be an integral part of all modules.

#### **Aspects of professionalism:**

Students should

- learn about different experiences of women and men in the profession of architecture in both contemporary and historical contexts. Special emphasis should be placed upon the gender-specific roles that have developed in this profession throughout history, in particular during the 20th century. Although the proportion of men and women who study architecture is relatively equal, the number of female architects who are self-employed, tenured professors or otherwise work in positions of authority is relatively small. Social and cultural mechanisms, which have enabled this discrepancy, should be examined and strategies to overcome gender-specific divisions of architectural work should be introduced.
- should acquire "soft skills" (communication, negotiation methods, presentation, mediation, conflict management), particularly in the field of construction management, especially under aspects of sexualised forms of interaction;
- be sensitized to the importance of a constructive and impartial means of working with all those who collaborate on the process of planning and building.

## **Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:**

Architecture is concerned with the complex organization of space. Because the study of this subject requires knowledge of many disciplines – from humanities-oriented subjects such as architectural history and theory to fine arts, building typology and design as well as applied technology and project management – it is imperative that students acquire a multifaceted understanding and an increased awareness of gender issues in these diverse subjects.

Architecture History and Theory:

- integration of biographies of female architects, designers, clients and users along with their

attitudes towards building, planning and design; inclusion of historical and current texts written by women, in bibliographies and as subjects for seminar reports

#### Project Management and Construction Supervision:

- critical analysis of the conditions which have led to the establishment of gender-specific roles in the building process; development of gender competence, in particular in areas including negotiation techniques and project management; knowledge of the importance and the background of diversity management

#### Building Typology and Architectural Design:

- impacts of cultural constructions of gender roles on the planning, realization and the perception of buildings (most importantly, housing and public architecture) should be presented in lectures and seminars and also explored in the design studio and the final design projects

#### Design of Structural Systems, Building Construction:

- students should gain an understanding of how gender and body metaphors have shaped the language of structural design and building construction (e.g. the German word for "nut" is "Mutter" ["mother"], beams are specified as "Mutter- und Kindbalken" ["mother and child beams"], there are "Mönch- und Nonnendeckung" ["monk and nun roofing tiles"], "skeleton construction", "headroom" and "handrail"), knowledge of ecological building materials and structural systems with emphasis given to sustainable products and an understanding of building materials and structural systems used in non-European cultures

#### CAD, New Media:

- influence of cultural constructions of gender (in diverse historical and social contexts) on the development of computer technology and new media (e.g., wars as "inspiring" the development of new technologies)

#### Urban Design:

- impacts of cultural constructions of gender on the planning, realization and perception of urban projects must be taught and explored in depth as part of design projects; a presentation and a critical analysis of gender metaphors that appear in the language of urban design and urban history ("virgin territory"; "Big Apple"; metropolis = meter + polis = "mother city"); knowledge of the background of gender mainstreaming in urban design should also be imparted in lectures and explored in-depth in design projects

Additional educational offerings (e.g., public lecture series) should be provided by an equal number of female and male speakers from the areas of professional practice and architectural theory.

## Degree Stage:

At Bachelor's level, the intention of the gender module ("Gender and Architecture") at the beginning of the course of studies (between the first and third semesters) is to present a comprehensive overview of gender-related topics so that the acquired knowledge can be implemented in the further course of

studies and the practical training. Furthermore, gender issues can be further explored in additional courses as described above (e.g. building typology, research on the biographies of female architects).

It is also imperative that students continue to become engaged with gender issues at Master's level. Experience has shown that students and most importantly female students often have increased knowledge concerning gender issues that has been gained from their internships or from time spent in a foreign country prior to the second degree programme. Therefore, they require academic courses that help them to interpret gender-related professional experiences, which they have acquired outside of the university, in a critical and analytical manner.

A further gender module should be offered at Master's level, in which selected issues of gender research can be explored in detail as a basis for further research or seminar reports. The content of the gender module can also be developed in relation to the specific content of the Master degree course (e.g. Construction in Existing Contexts, Urban Design, Construction and Project Management). It is also possible to offer more in-depth courses in the area of gender theory. In this respect, bibliographies of gender-related topics in the subjects of architecture, design, civil engineering, art history, sociology and economics/business administration should be compiled and published. In addition, students should be advised of the availability of scholarships offered in the area of gender studies and gender research.

## Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

- J. B. Brown, H. Harriss, R. Morrow, J. Soane (Hg.): A Gendered Profession. The Question of Representation in Space Making. London: RIBA, 2016.
- L. A. Brown (Hg.): Feminist Practices: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Women in Architecture. London: Routledge (2. Auflage/2. Edition), 2016.
- S. Dümpelmann, J. Beardsley (Hg.): Women, Modernity and Landscape Architecture. London: Routledge, 2015.
- K. Frey, E. Perotti (Hg.): Theoretikerinnen des Städtebaus. Texte und Projekte für die Stadt. Berlin: Reimer, 2015.
- K. Frey, E. Perotti (Hg.): Theoretikerinnen des Städtebaus II. Texte und Projekte für die Stadt. Berlin: Reimer, 2019.
- A.T. Friedman: Women and the Making of the Modern House. A Social and Architectural History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- M. Imboden, D. Kurz (Hg.): Stadt, Raum, Geschlecht. Beiträge zur Erforschung urbaner Lebensräume im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert. Zürich: Chronos, 2000.
- Dörte Kuhlmann: Gender Studies in Architecture. Space, Power and Difference. London: Routledge, 2013.
- M. Pepchinski, C. Budde, W. Voigt, P. C. Schmal (Hg.): Frau Architekt. Seit mehr als 100 Jahren. Frauen im Architekturberuf./Over 100 years of Women in Architecture. Tübingen: Wasmuth, 2017.
- B. Zibell, A. Schröder: Frauen mischen mit: Qualitätskriterien für die Stadt- und Bauleitplanung (Beiträge zur Planungs- und Architektursoziologie), Berlin: Peter Lang, 2008.

## Journals:

Single articles in:

- Kritische Berichte. Zeitschrift für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften. | [Website](#)

- Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians. | [Website](#)
- Journal of Design History. | [Website](#)