

## Gender Studies

Course: Gender Studies

Group of courses: Law, Economics and Social Sciences

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Last edit: Prof. Dr. Katja Sabisch, June 2018

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## **Course objectives:**

It is a unique feature of gender studies that the category of gender is placed at the very centre of interest and analysis, examining it in interrelation with other social categories such as sexual orientation/desire, class, ethnicity or age.

Gender studies are characterised by an interdisciplinary perspective and therefore facilitate a well-grounded dialogue between different disciplines such as history, social sciences, literary studies, law, media studies, natural sciences or educational science. Due to this programmatic approach similar teaching and research perspectives such as queer, disability, post-colonial or critical men studies may also refer to the structures we suggest here.

Gender studies content and teaching objectives follow international approaches of research providing a comprehensive overview of the development of different theoretical and methodological traditions of gender research. Central to this is the international perspective, which might have a different emphasis depending of the respective research institution. Among its core disciplines are history, social, literary and media sciences, which are linked by understanding the category of gender as an intersectional historical, social and cultural construction.

This is the basis for analysing and reflecting upon the cultural and social change of gender relations at both national and international level, taking an application- or research-oriented approach. Students should be enabled to independently develop and apply theoretical knowledge and methodological competence in new situations or in multidisciplinary contexts. Furthermore, they should learn to familiarise themselves with complex issues and use gender-related knowledge as empirical knowledge as well as reflective and foundational knowledge. Thus, students should be enabled to make scientifically sound decisions, taking social and cultural insights into account.

Gender studies have both practical and scientific teaching objectives, since the acquired competences can be applied both practice-oriented in fields such as gender equality promotion (keyword "gender competence") and in scientific contexts (e.g. doing a doctorate with a focus on gender).

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

Depending on the specific orientation of the participating teaching units, gender studies may focus on different areas of research. Therefore, we recommend to place the focus on the history and development of interdisciplinary gender research in the basic modules. On the basis of such historicisation, essential aspects of gender studies, e.g. androcentrism in academia, the tense relationship between science and politics (second-wave feminism/women's studies), epistemological basics (feminist epistemology) or theoretical and methodological challenges (intersectionality) can be pointed out.

As students often come from different disciplines, which may lead to uncertainties, we recommend an accompanying tutorial, which addresses remaining questions regarding the different disciplines and theory traditions.

Teaching content in the advanced specialisation modules is usually subject-specific and related to the teaching and research profiles of the participating professors. It is of central importance that the category of gender – as a historical, social, cultural, biological, psychological or media concept – is in

the focus of analysis by selecting relevant literature, methods and (practical) examples. Ideas for this are provided in the respective subject curricula.

In order to do justice to the interdisciplinary nature of gender studies as a discipline, the subject-related perspectives of the advanced specialisation modules should be linked and regularly reflected upon in colloquia or method workshops. By discussing their research projects students are made familiar with the possibilities and limits of disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary research.

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

Due to the interdisciplinary character of gender studies and the fact that students often come from different disciplines, a basic module should be offered at the beginning of studies, which ensures that students have a common and substantial basis. Suitable are introductory seminars in which an overview is provided (keyword: historicisation of interdisciplinary gender studies) as well as introductory lecture series.

Already at this early stage, depending on the subject orientation of the study course, the focus may vary, so that, for example, the historicity or mediality of gender, socialisation processes, social inequalities, intersectional analyses or methods of gender construction and gender relations can be at the centre of basic gender education.

For the advanced modules, which may have different profiles according to the subject-specific orientation of the participating chairs, a thematic superstructure is appropriate. Thus, central terms such as "work" or "representations" subsume courses that analyse the subject matter from different disciplinary perspectives. In the following, we provide a modularisation concept that integrates the disciplines of social, media and historical studies (see the Master's degree course Gender Studies at the Ruhr University Bochum).

### **1. Advanced module "Work, Institutions, Cultural practice"**

This module deals with gender structures in various fields such as culture, politics, religions, labour markets, economics, public, family and health care. Here, social structures, practices, stagings and subjectively important problems are discussed against the background of social gender relations. (Re)production and changes in gender division of labour and gendered cultural fields are also in the focus.

### **2. Advanced module "Cultural and Media Representations"**

The focus of this module is on the analysis of cultural, especially media constructions and representations of gender. Gender constructions are examined with regard to different cultural and media constellations and the public from a national, international, global, historical and cultural perspective. The relationship and emergence of hegemonic and marginalised discourses and the associated structuring of the public sphere are also in the focus.

### **3. Advanced module "Identities, Positions, Differences"**

This module deals with social positioning in the intersecting fields of gender, class and ethnicity and also focuses on the historicity of these areas of conflict. At the same time, it addresses power and power systems in the context of gender and ethnicity and deals with the constitution and effectiveness of identities as well as with tendencies to question, dissolve and hybridise them. Here, intrasocial and transnational contexts are taken into account.

Depending on the profile of the university, the implementation of a practice module in which the students gain practical work experience is recommended. A more research-oriented empirical studies

module in which students conduct their own research projects should be offered as well. It is essential that the various experiences students make during the course of studies are reflected upon at the end of studies, e.g. in the form of a joint colloquium, so that the possibilities and limitations of the interdisciplinary subject can be discussed and evaluated.

## **Degree Stage:**

The suggested modules are mainly based on experience at Master's level, but may also be used with restrictions for the concept of a Bachelor' degree course.

## **Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:**

- Bergmann, Franziska, Franziska Schößler, und Bettina Schreck (Hrsg.). 2012. Gender Studies. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Degele, Nina. 2008. Gender/Queer Studies. Eine Einführung. Paderborn: Fink.
- Kortendiek, Beate, Birgit Riegraf, und Katja Sabisch (Hrsg.). 2018. Handbuch Interdisziplinäre Geschlechterforschung, Geschlecht und Gesellschaft, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-12500-4\\_155-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-12500-4_155-1)
- Rendtorff, Barbara, Claudia Mahs, und Verena Wecke (Hrsg.). 2011. Geschlechterforschung. Theorien, Thesen, Themen zur Einführung. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Von Braun, Christina/Inge Stephan. 2009. Gender@Wissen. Ein Handbuch der Gender-Theorien. Wien/Köln/Weimar: utb.

## **Journals:**

- Gender. Zeitschrift für Geschlecht, Kultur und Gesellschaft. | [Website](#)
- Feministische Studien. | [Website](#)
- Open Gender Journal. | [Website](#)

More relevant Journals with an emphasis on Gender Studies can be found via [https://www.uni-due.de/genderportal/forschung\\_zeitschriften.php](https://www.uni-due.de/genderportal/forschung_zeitschriften.php)