

# Geography

Course: Geography

Group of courses: Mathematics, Natural Sciences

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## Course objectives:

Students should gain knowledge of how gender relations and social space interrelate. Looking at specific issues of gender research in geography they are made aware of the relationship between social processes and their spatial organisation and learn about the roles spaces play in the construction of social identities and relationships, in the normalisation of dichotomous gender relations as well as in the production and maintenance of intersectional inequality. Students should get familiar with the basics of feminist theory building and social criticism, are made aware of the significance of the category of gender for geographical research and get an overview of the current state of feminist and gender studies in geography.

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

Gender studies are not a subdiscipline of geography, but are relevant for the discipline as a whole. The majority of gender-related geographic research and theory building is currently carried out in the field of human geography. Some analyses in physical geography focus on the question of how the gender category influences concepts of nature/human/environment relations in natural science theory building. As part of scientific theoretical debates, ways of integrating feminist and geographic theories are sought and the implied androcentrism in past and present geographic thinking is criticised. In the sense of feminist science and technology research, techniques of geographical knowledge production such as cartography and geographic information systems (GIS) are also considered. Attention is also drawn to existing discipline-specific inequality and gender-specific divisions of labour in higher education geography. Students should be made familiar with theoretical and empirical findings from these various fields in the course of study. Possible thematic priorities are:

### Urbanism:

- critical reflection of central concepts of urbanism – public/private space, participation, citizenship, exclusion, etc. – from the perspective of geographical gender research
- analysis of the meaning of gender as well as other categories of differentiation for everyday perception, use and appropriation of space
- exploring intersectional inequality structures and their socio-spatial manifestation in cities
- raising awareness for gender-political and heteronormative implications of different urban development policy models
- criticism and development of current research topics and debates – e.g. on gentrification, re-urbanisation, neoliberal urban development, city and infrastructure – considering gender-related concepts and issues

### Economic geography:

- insight into the different approaches of feminist economic critique
- critical reflection of economic theory and model building from a geographic gender research perspective
- analysis of the socio-spatial manifestation of gender-specific and gender-hierarchical divisions of labour
- discussion of gender-political and spatial implications of the changes in paid work
- exploring multiscale connections between global dynamics and local labour relations, e.g. by looking at transnational care chains

**Political Geography:**

- insight into approaches of feminist geopolitics and their analysis of the interrelations between space, power and knowledge
- critical reflection of geopolitical models from the perspective of geographic gender research
- reconstruction of the significance of hegemonic masculinity in geographic research and theory building, taking the historical development of political geography in Germany as an example
- analysis of gender-political implications of global distributional conflicts and the power gap in global North-South relations

**Geographical development research:**

- reconstruction of the significance of feminist, post-colonial and anti-racist theory building for current development research
- analysis of gender-political implications of concepts for modernisation and progress in development research and policy
- critical analysis of social causes of unequal vulnerability
- exploring conflicts of resource distribution and resource access from the perspective of geographic gender research
- reflection of power relations and positionality in the research process, taking specific studies on the global North-South context as examples

**Geographical human-environment research:**

- insight into the different approaches of feminist political ecology and feminist environmental research
- reflection of social and scientific concepts of "nature" and the associated gender dichotomies by means of a feminist theory of science approach
- critical analysis of the feminisation of environmental conflicts and the gendered division of labour in environmental protection

**Methodology/methods:**

- theoretical reflection and critique of androcentric perspectives and essentialist concepts of nature and gender in geographic theory building
- reflection of the relationship between social analysis and social criticism, discussion of the normativity of feminist studies
- critique of the existing methodological repertoire of geographic research from the perspective of feminist geography
- examination of critical research approaches – participative and collaborative empirical research, action research, slow scholarship, etc. – and their significance for geographic gender research
- development of empirical research topics in the area of geographic gender research, operationalisation of theoretical conceptual approaches of feminist geography for specific research projects

## Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:

Issues and findings of geographic gender research should be integrated into all parts and modules of the existing curricula in order to make students aware of how gender and space interrelate and to raise their awareness for the significance of feminist theory and critique for the development of the subject.

In addition, at both Bachelor's or Master's level, specialisation courses on feminist geography and gender studies or a module "Geographical Gender Studies" in the Master's degree course can be offered. The subject-specific content of a module on "Geographical Gender Studies" must be adapted to the content of the respective Master's degree course. All topics listed under "Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content" can be realised in modules or in-depth courses and can be easily implemented with regard to the current state of research. In addition to a more in-depth study of subject-specific content in geographical gender studies, further study of the theoretical basics of feminist geography is recommended at Master's level.

## Degree Stage:

At Bachelor's level, geographical gender studies should be an integral part of all modules of the study course.

At Master's level, the scientific content and theoretical concepts and approaches should be studied in further detail. More in-depth studies are possible in theoretical seminars as well as in empirically-oriented research seminars.

## Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

- Bauriedl, S., Schier, M. & Strüver, A. (Ed.) (2010). *Geschlechterverhältnisse, Raumstrukturen, Ortsbeziehungen: Erkundungen von Vielfalt und Differenz im spatial turn*. Münster.
- Browne, K., Lim, J., & Brown, G. (Ed.) (2009). *Geographies of Sexualities: Theory, Practices and Politics*. London.
- Bühler, E. (1993). *Ortssuche – Zur Geographie der Geschlechterdifferenz*. Zürich/Dortmund.
- Cameron, J. & Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2003). *Feminising the Economy: Metaphors, Strategies, Politics*. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 10(2), 145-57.
- Domosh, M. (1997). *Geography and Gender: the Personal and the Political*. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(1), 81–87.
- Elmhirst, R. (2011). *Introducing new Feminist Political Ecologies*. *Geoforum*, 42(2), 129-132.
- Fleischmann, K. & Meyer-Hanschen, U. (2005). *Stadt Land Gender. Einführung in feministische Geographien*. Königstein/Taunus.
- Hanson, S & Pratt, G. (1995). *Gender, Work and Space*. New York, London.
- Hyndman, J. (2001). *Towards a Feminist Geopolitics*. *Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, 45(2), 210-222.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. Minneapolis.
- Moss, P. (Ed.) (2002). *Feminist Geographies in Practice. Research and Methods*. Oxford/Malden.
- Moss, P., & Al-Hindi, K. F. (Ed.) (2008). *Feminisms in Geography: Rethinking Space, Place, and Knowledges*. Lanham.
- Nelson, L., & Seager, J. (Ed.) (2008). *A Companion to Feminist Geography*. Oxford.

- Rose, G. (1993). *Feminism & Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Minneapolis.
- Strüver, A. (2005). *Macht Körper Wissen Raum? Ansätze für eine Geographie der Differenzen*. Beiträge zur Bevölkerungs- und Sozialgeographie, Bd. 9. Wien.
- Schurr, C. & Wintzer, J. (Ed.) (2011). *Geschlecht und Raum feministisch denken*. Wettingen.
- Staeheli, L., Kofman, E. & Peake, L. (Ed.) (2004). *Mapping Women, Making Politics: Feminist Perspectives on Political Geography*. New York, Abingdon.
- Valentine, G. (2007). Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 59(1), 10-21.
- Wastl-Walter, D. (2010). *Gender Geographien: Geschlecht und Raum als soziale Konstruktionen*. Stuttgart.
- Wucherpennig, C. & Fleischmann, K. (2008). Feministische Geographien und geographische Geschlechterforschung im deutschsprachigen Raum. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 7(3), 350-376.

## Journals:

- [Feministisches Geo-RundMail. Onlinezeitschrift des AK Geographie und Geschlecht](#)
- [Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography](#)