

# History

Historical content in cultural studies disciplines such as German Studies, English/American Studies, Romance Studies, Literary Studies and Linguistics, Religious Studies, Art History, Archaeology, Music, Media Studies as well as Educational Sciences and H

Course: History  
Group of courses: Humanities  
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## Course objectives:

It is not about having a gender – it is about doing gender. This could be the current lemma of historical gender research. In recent decades, both research and teaching have repeatedly referred to the praxeological and linguistic turn (cultural turns). These turns, which in part meant rediscovering and accentuating perspectives and methodological approaches for the analysis of societies in most disciplines, have brought new perspectives into historical gender studies. “Doing gender” (as opposed to “having a gender”) corresponds to an understanding of gender and gender relations as historically conditioned constructions that portray a snapshot in time. These constructions, practices, conditions, relations, thoughts and perceptions, such as individual prerequisites for gender assignments, are subject to historical gender studies.

The historization of gender roles enables students to gain insight into specific moments of origin and lines of argumentation. This does not only refer to assigning roles and meanings, but also to how the latter have been dealt with in the humanities. Anatomical gender constructions are analysed and historicised in the same way as horizons of perception in intellectual history. Stories of origin, changes and discontinuities are considered from different perspectives and thus “brought to light”. In recent years, not only femininities and masculinities have been considered, but the entire epistemological allocation of gender has been exposed as being historically defined.

In fact, the history of genders and their relations to each other is not linear and progress-oriented. Some processes take place simultaneously without necessarily influencing each other. Others contradict each other, but they are never self-contained. Awareness of gender is therefore strongly depending on context. It is not only conceptualised as book and educational knowledge, but is also related to practical action. Concepts such as “doing gender” or “performing gender” deal with the actions and positioning of bodies; they deal with the display of gender, which is what creates normative gender understanding and knowledge.

Through the critical analysis of sources of all kinds, students acquire the competence to generate knowledge about gender constructions, assignments, positions of power, as well as discontinuities and resistances. In order to make truly well-founded statements on the topic of gender, they learn to critically examine and classify source content through the reception of literature and to relate it to other research. Students also learn not only to “see” the changeability of gender relations, but to understand it as a central factor of power constellations and social structures, which stresses the social relevance of this subject area. Gender structures are a central factor of social power constellations and social structures. Thus, the acquisition of key qualifications such as the ability to critically read sources, to use research tools, to understand social categories such as gender and power, and the ability to relate these to other categories, makes it possible not only to work scientifically but also to use them for one's own actions. The acquired knowledge can be used in various ways for socio-political projects or individual action.

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

Academic studies on gender history began forty years ago with the analysis of women's life worlds. Women were often placed alongside corresponding renowned men of intellectual history. Whether it was additive or compensatory historiographies that emerged, it quickly became clear that it was a matter of researching gender structures as a whole as a model of society. Therefore, archives were diligently searched for traces of women and statements on the subject of gender. Large models of order

in historiography, such as the epochal classification specific to our subject, were increasingly questioned and redefined.

Definitions of turning points in history such as Antiquity – Middle Ages – Modern Age proved to be too static and too much oriented towards a linear progress for gender history. Even the division between Pre-modern and Modern Ages has not always been productive for researching gender structures. On the one hand, categories such as publicity and privacy allow valuable insights into the exclusion of women from certain areas of society that had been practised since the Enlightenment. On the other hand, they turned out to be unsuitable for the study of other cultures or certain endogamous social forms such as monastic life. Thus, the great challenge of historical gender studies remains to productively shape the contingency of its very own concepts without being arbitrary.

History as an academic discipline has been redefined by various developments in its own and neighbouring disciplines. The shift towards a growing orientation towards cultural studies and their methodologies has accentuated the constructive character of gender through different eras, social constellations and perceptions. It was also possible to focus on historiography itself and to question and re-evaluate the formation of traditions within the discipline. Common images, stereotypes and assumptions of existing gender relations and structures, for example in literature, have been exposed as (re)projections of the emerging historical science of the 19th century. Thus, the formation of tradition has been historicized and restructured, and monocausal explanatory models as well as comprehensive statements about gender were rejected. Instead, methods from other disciplines were successfully incorporated into the subject.

## **Methods**

Both qualitative and quantitative types of sources and research objects were defined, which have greatly increased the knowledge about gender. Life worlds, models, patterns of structure, symbolic representations, action spaces, practices, relationship patterns, emotions and political concepts underwent new processes of analysis. The normative determination of gender relations and gender images also placed individual and group-specific action at the centre of considerations. The research subject was decentralized and its construction diversified. As usual in traditional historiography, people are no longer ascribed only autonomy, logic, self-reflection, self-reference and absolute independence, but also constraints, coincidence, arbitrariness and unconsciousness. Thus, historical gender studies suggest an openness that is widely discussed among historians. It claims that some motivational situations may not even be historicisable and explainable.

The methods are therefore no longer aimed at “comprehending” and “bringing to light” facts and truths, but at possible actions, statements and processes of subjects in the past. Gender is understood as a multiple relational, interdependent and structuring category. This requires well-founded and critical methodological knowledge. The latter enables students to critically examine historical phenomena and sources, to relate them to research and to transfer the findings into their own lifeworld. The reconstruction of past lifeworlds can thus trigger new discussions, perspectives and interpretations.

## **Interdisciplinarity**

Since gender is not only one of many historical categories, but also a fundamental structure of thought in society as a whole, many other disciplines also discuss, research and teach gender issues, gender history and how gender is conveyed. There has been a long-established cooperation with jurisprudence (“female and male criminality”, “witch hunts”) as well as with historical anthropology, with cultural studies, educational sciences and social sciences. In addition, cooperation with the life sciences,

medicine, economics, administrative sciences, nutrition sciences, social work, etc. has only recently become established.

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

The study of history is basically modularized according to epochs: Prehistory and Early History (not at all universities), Antiquity, Middle Ages (specified as Early Middle Ages, High Middle Ages and Late Middle Ages at some universities), Early Modern Age and Modern Age (Modern and Contemporary History). The study of gender is meaningful and possible for all ages and sub-ages on the basis of research literature and sources.

Integration of gender issues is possible via historical cross-sectional themes, geopolitical emphases and different perspectives on history:

- Using gender history as an example, recurring themes such as conflict and war, power and domination, the body, sexuality, social practices, emotions, social structures or work can be explored and historicised.
- Regional and country-specific historical focal points such as the history of Eastern Europe, North American history, Latin American history, etc. can also be analysed productively along gender historical questions.
- Theoretical and methodological debates – on space, symbolic communication, global history, postcolonial analyses, remembrance, etc. – should be conveyed and broadly discussed in teaching.

## **Degree Stage:**

Gender has always been one of the structuring principles of societies, independent of their allocation of power and meaning. Therefore, historical gender studies should already be offered at Bachelor's level. Not only the modularised and epoch-related seminars should be completed in the basic courses, but also the study of gender and gender relations through participation in courses that cover various epochs, additional offers or offers from neighbouring disciplines.

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

- Dinges, Martin (Hrsg.) (2005): Männer – Macht – Körper. Hegemoniale Männlichkeiten vom Mittelalter bis heute. Frankfurt a. M./New York.
- Duby, Georges/Perrot, Michelle (Hrsg.) (1993–1995): Geschichte der Frauen. 5 Bände. Frankfurt a. M./New York.
- Epple, Angelika/Schaser, Angelika (Hrsg.) (2009): Gendering Historiography. Beyond National Canons. Frankfurt a. M.
- Gehmacher, Johanna/Hauch, Gabriella (Hrsg.) (2007): Frauen- und Geschlechtergeschichte des Nationalsozialismus. Fragestellungen, Perspektiven, neue Forschungen. Innsbruck.
- Griesebner, Andrea (2005): Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft. Eine Einführung. Wien.
- Hagemann, Karen/Budde, Gunilla (Hrsg.) (2011): Civil Society and Gender Justice. Historical and Comparative Perspectives. New York.
- Hagemann, Karen/Quataert, Jean H. (Hrsg.) (2008): Geschichte und Geschlechter. Revisionen

der neueren deutschen Geschichte. Frankfurt a. M./New York.

- Honegger, Claudia/Arni, Caroline (Hrsg.) (2001): Gender. Die Tücken einer Kategorie. Zürich.
- Kessel, Martina/Signori, Gabriela (2000): Geschichtswissenschaft, in: Christina von Braun/Inge Stephan (Hrsg.), Gender-Studien. Eine Einführung. Stuttgart/Weimar, S. 119-129.
- Martschukat, Jürgen/Stieglitz, Olaf (2005): „Es ist ein Junge!“ Einführung in die Geschichte der Männlichkeiten in der Neuzeit. Tübingen.
- Opitz, Claudia (2010): Um-Ordnungen der Geschlechter. Einführung in die Geschlechtergeschichte. Frankfurt a. M./New York.
- Paulus, Julia/Silies, Eva-Maria/Wolff, Kerstin (Hrsg.) (2012): Zeitgeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte. Neue Perspektiven auf die Bundesrepublik. Frankfurt a. M./New York.
- Rose, Sonya O. (2010): What is Gender History? Cambridge.
- Schmale, Wolfgang (2003): Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa (1450–2000). Wien/Köln/Weimar.
- Wunder, Heide (1992): „Er ist die Sonn’, sie ist der Mond“. Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit. München.

## Journals:

- Clio. Histoires, femmes et sociétés. | [Website](#)
- Gender and History. | [Website](#)
- Journal of Women’s History. | [Website](#)
- L’Homme. (european) Journal for Feminist History. | [Website](#)

Interdisciplinary Journals for Gender Studies with a vast amount of History:

- Feministische Studien. Journal for the interdisciplinary Womens- and Gender Research. | [Website](#)
- Feminist Studies. FS An Independent Interdisciplinary Journal. | [Website](#)
- Medieval Feminist Forum. Journal of the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship. | [Website](#)
- Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society. | [Website](#)
- Women’s Studies. An Interdisciplinary Journal. | [Website](#)

Historical Journals with an high amount of articles of Gender Research:

- Historical Anthropology. Culture – Society – Daily Life. | [Website](#)
- History and Anthropology. | [Website](#)
- Traverse. Journal for History – Revue d’histoire. | [Website](#)
- Werkstatt Geschichte. | [Website](#)

A weekly Newsletter about the „Archiv der Deutschen Frauenbewegung“ is circulating in Kassel. The international Newsletter with its regional parts will be published two times a year.