

Cultural Studies

Course: Cultural Studies

Group of courses: Humanities

Provided by: Prof. Dr. Ulrike Brunotte

Last edit:

Table of contents

Course objectives	2
Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content	2
Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum	3
Degree Stage	4
Basic Literature/Recommended Reading	4

Course objectives:

The following proposals for integrating gender studies (issues, topics and methods) into degrees in cultural studies are closely based on the design of the bachelor's degrees in cultural studies and archaeology at the Humboldt Universität Berlin. Some of the modules described below therefore relate to existing or planned modules at this institution.

Unlike subject areas with well-established traditions, methods and contents (such as German or Archaeology), cultural studies except in the institutions of the former German Democratic Republic is essentially an "invention" of the late 1980s (H. Böhme et al., 2000). Partly due to Anglo-American and French influences in the area of post-colonial studies, gender studies formed an integral part of degrees in cultural history and cultural analysis right from their very beginnings. Cultural studies offers a cross-disciplinary methodological approach for investigating categories of difference class and race, as well as gender and their cultural role. Using this approach, students learn to reconstruct the implicit and explicit function of gender in various knowledge cultures. Combining approaches from media studies, cultural anthropology and the history of science helps to shed light on the gender encoding of objects of knowledge and artefacts, cultural media and their technology and practices, and even dramatisations of the body and body awareness. At the same time, the object is to enable students to reconstruct the role of gender as a medium for cultural memory and communication.

Teaching content/subject-specific gender studies content:

Investigating and reflecting critically on the cultural and symbolic practices of modern, highly-mechanised civilisations forms the core of the discipline. This includes looking at these practices as a historical process, from their emergence in the ancient Mediterranean area onwards (the Annales School), and investigating their history from the perspective of colonial and global power struggles. In all of these areas, gender plays a underlying and unifying role. As a "fluctuating" category, gender always plays a key role in determining the boundary between nature and culture. Cultural studies embraces the historical tension between these two; it is a self-reflective approach, an archaeology of the history of culture and knowledge (Böhme et al.). It therefore also involves research into imaginary gender types and gender struggles from the ancient world, figures of enduring fascination. In terms of methodology, the focus is on the history of writing. However, this is accompanied by investigations of material (technical), visual and figurative traditions ("pathos formulas") and aesthetic modes of perception.

Without embodiment (incorporation, performance), culture as the representation of creative, symbolic order would be impossible. At the same time, embodiments are formed in fields of discourse and through gender encoding. As a result of this, examining the different forms of embodiment from the normative, idealised bodies of aesthetic, political and medical (physiognomic) discourse, to imaginary or real collective bodies such as nations and armies, or virtual bodies in cyberspace forms a key part of gender research in cultural studies. Gender-sensitive historical anthropology (Wulf) also includes the broad field of cultural aisthesis the practices and techniques of perception which should also be examined for its explicit and implicit understanding of gender.

Culture manifests itself in generalised cultural activities, expressed in the form of cults, rituals and performances and played out on different spatial, institutional and structural planes. All cultural forms of action and communication are transmitted via specific media and shaped and formed through media and discourse. From a purely technical or phenomenological perspective, the "media" are viewed as

the mediators of objects of perception, individuals and societies (Luhmann/Böhme). Gender figures, by contrast, are seen as the central cultural encoding media. There is thus a special relationship between the media studies area of the discipline and gender studies, this is the area where new feminist approaches from the fields of cultural studies and film theory (von Braun 2005) are taken up.

Another central area of gender studies in its broader sense as a form of cultural studies is Post-colonial Studies. Post-colonial Studies are currently establishing themselves in German degree courses in critical connection with Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978). Approaches from religious anthropology such as those of Mary Douglas and Victor Turner have been absorbed and discussed in a global and post-colonial perspective. Homi Bhabha writes as follows: "Post-colonial perspectives emerge from colonial testimonies from third world countries and the discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical division of east from west and north from south. They intervene in those discourses of modernity that attempt to impart a hegemonic 'normality' to the unbalanced development and differing histories of nations, ethnic groups, communities and peoples, often marked by discrimination" (Bhabha 1992: 171). However, the first study linking a gender studies perspective with a post-colonial studies perspective did not appear until 2003. A new area within Post-colonial Studies is Critical Whiteness Studies. This investigates in a self-reflective way the history of white hegemony, that is to say, the implicit and explicit imaginations and encodings of white superiority.

"Men's studies" or "masculinity studies" are a relative newcomer in the canon of cultural studies-oriented gender studies. They deal with the production of masculinity (or masculinities) in terms of cultural history, focusing particularly on forms and modes of the "hegemonialisation" (Connell) of normative concepts in colonial and/or class-specific contexts. Another area is "Queer Studies", which look at social strategies of marginalisation and stigmatisation of non-heteronormative masculinity or masculinities (Mosse, Brunotte).

Cultural studies, in the sense of a self-reflective archaeology of the history of knowledge and science (Böhme), must as a central concern investigate the role of gender as an (often hidden) epistemological basis of knowledge (cf. von Braun). The history of knowledge, no longer understood as a "triumphal history" of progress, but rather in the sense of "science as cultural practice" (Bödecker et al 1999) and as the history of power (Foucault), investigates the concepts, methods and theories of science in terms of how gender is encoded in them, and in turn encodes them a process that is not always free from violence.

Integration of gender studies content into the curriculum:

On principle, a certain amount of critical reflection on the implicit and explicit gender encoding of cultural forms of knowledge, media and practices is present in all modules. In addition, special modules should be created to deal with the focus areas outlined above.

1. Module element: Embodiment/media/memory/gender

- Students learn the basic gender encoding in all forms of embodiment scientific discourse, figurations and imagined collective bodies. The broader concept of the media is developed and students are introduced to the theory of embodiment, performance, etc.

2. Module element: Gender as a category of knowledge

- Introduction to theories of knowledge (Foucault etc.) that reflect on gender as a basic category of knowledge, and at the same time on the gender encoding of objects of knowledge

3. Module element: Masculinity/masculinities/hegemony/bodies

- Introduction to masculinity studies (theories, approaches, methods)

4. Module element: History of fascination/pathos formulas/imaginary gender figures

- History of the fascination with mythic gender constructions up to the present day, using selected iconographic figures/groups (Lacoön, the sphinx, Salomé)

5. Module element: Colonial history, gender and race

- Introduction to Post-colonial Studies

6. Module element: Objects, techniques and practices and their implicit gender encoding

- Students gain an orientation (differentiated by historical period, media and region) in the subject matter of cultural science, and the ability to interpret and contextualise these fields and objects in an appropriate, gender-sensitive way.

Degree Stage:

Modules 1-4 should be integrated into the Bachelor's degree; module elements on systematic, more advanced questions (modules 5-6) can form part of the Master's.

Basic Literature/Recommended Reading:

- Aby Warburg: (1923), 1988: Schlangenritual. Ein Reisebericht, Berlin: Wagenbach.
- Judith Butler 1991: Das Unbehagen der Geschlechter, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp
- Michel Foucault 1977: Sexualität und Wahrheit. Der Wille zum Wissen, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.
- Christina von Braun/Inge Stephan 2000: Gender Studies. Eine Einführung, Stuttgart: Metzler Verlag.
- Dies.: Gender@Wissen. Ein Handbuch der Gender-Theorien (2005) Köln/Weimar/Wien: UTB
- Hartmut Böhme, Peter Matussek, Lothar Müller 2000: Orientierung Kulturwissenschaft. Was sie kann, was sie will, Rowohlt, Hamburg.
- Maria do MarCastro Varela/Nikita Dhawan (2005): Postkoloniale Theorie. Eine kritische Einführung, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag
- Robert W. Connell 1999: Der gemachte Mann. Konstruktion und Krise von Männlichkeiten, Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- George Mosse (1996): Das Bild des Mannes. Zur Konstruktion der modernen Männlichkeit, Frankfurt/M.: Fischer
- Ulrike Brunotte 2005: Zwischen Eros und Krieg. Männerbund und Ritual in der Moderne, Berlin: Wagenbach
- Peter Burke 2005: Was ist Kulturgeschichte?, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.
- Martina Löw/Bettina Matthes (Hg.) 2005: Schlüsselwerke der Geschlechterforschung, Wiesbaden: VS
- Jan Assmann 1992: Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen, München: Beck.
- Doris Bachmann-Medick (Hg.) (1996): Kultur als Text. Die anthropologische Wende in der Literaturwissenschaft, Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp
- Roger Bromley/Udo Göttlich u.a. (Hg.) 1999: Cultural Studies. Grundlagentexte zur Einführung, Lüneburg.