

## Theology (Protestant)

### Also relevant for Catholic Theology

Course: Theology (Protestant)

Group of courses: Humanities

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## Course objectives:

Students should become familiar with the basic theories of feminist theology and gender-oriented theological work. They should recognise the relevance of the category of gender in the various disciplines on the basis of standard approaches, works and texts and learn to critically reflect upon the scientific methods of the individual disciplines by taking gender-sensitive approaches. With respect to debates on gender and diversity, connections can be drawn from the theological discourse to other academic fields such as history, cultural studies and social sciences.

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

If we understand gender studies as the reconstruction and deconstruction of the category of gender (as sex and gender) with regard to women and men, then feminist theology has not come far in Germany since its beginnings in the 1970s. Since feminist theology defines itself as a part of liberation theology, gender studies are sometimes in part explicitly rejected by resolute feminist pioneers arguing that gender studies merely articulate questions of gender difference and construction and not that of women's liberation. A key factor is the refusal to form a general definition: "There is not one feminist theology, but a wealth of very different approaches and forms" (Luzia Scherzberg, Grundkurs Feministische Theologie, Mainz 1995, 18). As a common characteristic, both feminist theology and theological gender studies work interdenominational and interdisciplinary. Gender research, now established in all disciplines of theology, implies a multitude of different concepts and approaches. The concepts of intersectionality and masculinity as well as queer theory have become subjects of discussion in almost all theological disciplines. As there is no "one feminist theology and theological gender studies", but rather a great diversity and even disparity, the following suggestions should be understood only as basic guidelines and ideas.

### Presentation of the individual Subject Areas:

The exegetic disciplines (Old Testament and New Testament) should introduce students to social science, cultural science, archaeological and feminist methods of interpretation of the Bible and to historical research on biblical literatures and their environment, as represented by Luise Schottroff, Marie-Theres Wacker, Sylvia Schroer and Irmtraud Fischer, for example. US-American approaches on men and masculinity in the Hebrew Bible should also be integrated.

Systematic theology should cover gender-specific connotations within dogmatic systems. A critical analysis of the metaphorical speech of God and about God is necessary. This debate has been initialised by the – admittedly radical – criticism of Mary Daly. Here, the focus is brought to male images of God and a mainly androcentric anthropology and hamartiology. For example, Judith Plaskow's feminist teaching on sin questions the definition of sin as pride and hubris and sees self-negation as a more appropriate category of sin for women. More recent concepts in feminist ethics see a value for society in women's solidarity/sisterhood which, according to feminist interpretation, does not exist in the androcentric canon of values (see Ina Praetorius). Regina Ammicht-Quinn critically questions conventional Christologies and develops a new theology of incarnational physicality/corporality.

Historical theology is concerned with the position of women in churches and congregations in the sense of a supplementary women's history research, which has so far been subject to research, but is hardly integrated in historical overviews. Here, it is important to work towards a historiography based on

gender and diversity research that takes methodologically innovative aspects of the history of piety and mentality into account. Methods and perspectives of recent cultural history as well as the concepts of doing/undoing gender, hegemonic masculinity, queer studies and intersectionality must be integrated and reflected upon. Religious construction processes of gender roles, socialisation and educational processes as well as religiously connoted hierarchies and specifically gendered forms of piety and religious living must be taken into consideration.

In practical theology, students should discuss the implications of gendered homiletics and forms of religious services, and current approaches to gender-inclusive teaching in confirmation classes and schools in the field of religious education. The subject should enquire into the lack of representation of femininity/female role models in religious education contexts (see Annebelle Pithan, *Gender, Religion, Bildung* 2009). In addition, integration and counselling of people in identity-building processes and in the daily life in church services, occasional services and in pastoral and community work will have to be discussed (Ulrike Auga, Michael Brinkschröder, Isolde Karle). Here, an interdisciplinary cooperation with religious studies could be beneficial (Márcia Elisa Moser).

#### **Methodical and theoretical Approaches:**

Due to the great disparity of the field of research it is necessary to critically reflect and compare different hermeneutic approaches (including Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza's liberation theology). Following Michel Foucault or Joan Scott, gender studies can discuss discourses and cultural construction processes that create and manifest power relations in social relations. Gender can be understood as a "marker" that structures social processes and logics hierarchically. Claudia Opitz-Belakhal and many others question opposing forms of piety from a historical perspective. In particular, the relationship of body/physicality and biology or medical access is a field of research that affects all disciplines of theology. Due to globalised migration in particular, problems of the intersectionality of ethnicity, class and gender must be increasingly discussed in all theological areas.

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

Instead of offering a specific gender module, we recommend integrating a module element into every course in the individual disciplines. This would ensure that the subject of gender is dealt with in every discipline with regard to its subject-specific questions. Suggestions for subject-related courses can be developed from the recommended literature list (see below).

#### **Degree Stage:**

An introductory lecture offering a basic overview of the genesis and theories of gender studies could be offered at an early stage of study. At later stages of study, the content can be dealt with at greater depth within the individual disciplines (see above).

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

- Amnicht-Quinn, Regina: *Körper – Religion – Sexualität. Theologische Reflexion zur Ethik der Geschlechter*. Mainz 1999. Creanga, Ovidiu (Ed.): *Men and Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible and*

Beyond, Sheffield 2010.

- Frettlöh, Magdalene L.: Gott Gewicht geben. Bausteine einer geschlechtergerechten Gotteslehre, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2006.
- Gause, Ute: Kirchengeschichte und Genderforschung. Eine Einführung in protestantischer Perspektive, Tübingen 2006.
- Guest, Deryn/Goss, Robert E./West, Mona/Bohache, Thomas (Eds.): The Queer Bible Commentary, London 2007. Karle, Isolde: „Da ist nicht mehr Mann noch Frau ...“. Theologie jenseits der Geschlechterdifferenz, Gütersloh 2006.
- Krondorfer, Björn (Ed.): Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism. A Critical Reader, Göttingen 2012.
- Leicht, Irene/Rakel, Claudia/Rieger-Goertz, Stefanie (Eds.): Arbeitsbuch Feministische Theologie (mit CD-Rom), Gütersloh 2003.
- Leutzsch, Martin: Männlichkeit und Weiblichkeit im Neuen Testament, Münster 2010.
- Mommertz, Monika/Opitz-Belakhal, Claudia (Eds.): Das Geschlecht des Glaubens. Religiöse Kulturen Europas zwischen Mittelalter und Moderne, Frankfurt 2008.
- Hendrix, Scott H./Karant-Nunn, Susan C. (Eds.): Masculinity in the Reformation Era, Kirksville 2008.
- Ornella, Alexander Darius/Knauss, Stefanie/ Höpflinger, Anna-Katharina (Eds.): Commun(ica)ting Bodies. Body as Medium in Religious Symbol Systems, Zürich 2014.
- Schottroff, Luise/Wacker, Marie-Theres (Eds.): Kompendium Feministische Bibelauslegung, Gütersloh 2007.

## Journals:

- Religion and Gender | [Website](#)