

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**Name minor Differences/Inequalities: Introduction to Gender and Diversity Studies**

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Course code: n/a

Full period of this minor: 1-3

ECTS credits in total of this minor: 24/30

Language of instruction: English

Teaching methods: PBL, presentations

Assessment methods: Presentation, Written exam, Take home exam

Keywords:

(or a short description why this minor is interesting)

Dialectic of Enlightenment, Gender, Orientalism, Hegemonic Masculinity, Gender and diversity studies, Intersectionality, Identity politics, Queer theory, Difference and inequality, (Auto-) Biography, Interview, Lifewriting, Gender and Intersectionality

The minor “Differences/Inequalities”: Introduction to Gender and Diversity Studies analysis current societal issues of culture and gender from disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. It has a strong historical and theoretical approach. It is designated for students who want to know more about the history and dynamics of social and cultural differences and the origins of important (in)equalities in the contemporary world. The minor is a contribution from the Center for Gender and Diversity (CGD) to the FASoS programs, meant to complement and enrich them. It uses and introduces gender as an important category of historical and present knowledge production and “as a primary way of signifying relationships of power”. Acknowledging that gender shapes social identities through its intersections with affiliated identity markers, the program takes particular interest in the intersections between gender, class, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, and ‘race’. The minor addresses configurations of gender and diversity and studies the ways in which differences are constructed and have structured cultural texts and images, individual identities as well as societies from the eighteenth century onwards. It traces the interconnection between cultural and political discourses on multiple differences and the development of social inequalities, exclusion and marginalization.

In exploring contemporary debates about identity, difference and inequality in relation to the shifting politics of gender, sexuality, race and other categories of difference, the minor provides historical and contemporary perspectives on issues of importance for daily life. All courses of the minor build on historical or topical case

studies, from the historical ‘Jewish question’ as the litmus test of enlightened universalism to the ‘Muslim question’ and the topical headscarf debates, from the dialectic of freedom, colonialism and slavery to the recent politics of sexual nationalism and the global refugee and migrant crises. The case studies are combined with an introduction to central historical sources – philosophical texts, images and literature – and an introduction to major texts within historical and contemporary gender, postcolonial, queer, and diversity studies. The program consists of a sequence of three clearly aligned, interdisciplinary courses which together provide insight into (1) the making of crucial differences from the Enlightenment onwards to the crises of the modern model of Western thought and culture in the catastrophe of the Shoah, (2) the dynamics and interactions of crucial differences in contemporary configurations and the way in which these crucial differences function on social, cultural, and subjective levels in the present situation, (3) the way in which these differences are represented, reflected and performed in narratives, life-writing and ‘biographical work’.

Upon completion of the three Minor-courses students are able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the interdisciplinary field of gender, queer, postcolonial and diversity studies and its main theories and methods;
2. describe how current societal issues, discourses and cultural problems refer to, imply and make use of gender and other forms of differentiation as categories of knowledge;
3. explain how current discursive figures, narratives and tropes have a *longue durée* and a genealogy in history. (for example in nationalism and colonialism);
4. understand the discourses and practices of cultural constructions of differences and how those differences are connected to societal inequalities, politics of inclusion and exclusion, etc.;
5. define the role of literature, visual culture, philosophy, and the arts as a means of reproduction and (critical) reflection of hegemonic discourses;
6. be aware of and analyze the role of the body (embodiment) as a central cultural signifier;
7. demonstrate knowledge of the main theories, concepts and methods in gender, queer and postcolonial studies, including intersectionality, performativity, orientalism/antisemitism, critical race theory, life-writing and biographical approaches.

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Course period 1: The Making of Crucial Differences

Course code: MCD3000

Course Period: 1

ECTS credits of this course: 12

Full course description

The Making of Crucial Differences offers a historical inquiry into the development of cultural 'differences' marked through categories like gender, race, class, religion, and sexuality from early Enlightenment until the beginning 20th century. The course builds on different historical case studies and introduces "gender" as useful category of historical analysis. These case studies are combined with philosophical texts and literature to look at the way in which Western identity discourses and its colonial subcode have formed dichotomies like self and other, black and white, the Orient and the West, male and female, hetero- and homosexual, upper, middle and lower class and how these 'differences' became social inequalities. The course follows Foucault's discourse theoretical approach and asks how these 'differences' were conceptualized and sometimes newly invented in (medical) science, philosophy and Orientalist-colonial discourse. Adorno- Horkheimer's dictum of a Dialectic of Enlightenment is taken as a meaningful starting point: The aim of modern age was to "liberate human beings from fear and install them as masters of nature".

Enlightenment promised liberty, democracy and equality yet at the same time it has built the crucial forms of in- and exclusion which structure society and individual identities until the present day. The failure and paradoxes of the promises of modern "progress" are questioned in the course. Students will get a first introduction into classical theories of gender, Orientalist- and post-colonial studies and critical (discourse-) theory.

Course objectives

- To acquaint students with cultural constructions and historical configurations and of 'race', class, gender and sexuality starting with the Enlightenment and ending with the catastrophe of the Holocaust; including colonialism and slavery, war and identity narratives, discourses of exclusion.
- To introduce students to critical theories, like discourse analysis and the history of knowledge (Foucault), postcolonial and gender/sexuality studies and studies of Orientalism.
- To acquaint students with the way these categories of difference were conceptualized and intersect, and how they have structured cultural scripts and practices, stereotypes, individual identities, and European history in the long 19th century.
- To acquaint students with the way in which such intersecting categories of difference have constituted (and still constitute) inequalities and differences of power, resulting in invisibility, restricted access to sources etc.

Final qualifications

After completion of this course students are able to:

1. define the historical configurations of differences from early Enlightenment until the beginning 20th century and the Shoah;
2. reconstruct the way in which Western identity discourses (including racism and homophobia) and their colonial and anti-Semitic subcode have constructed differences that run parallel to politics of inclusion and exclusion and legitimize inequality and (even) extermination;
3. reflect on the “dialectic of Enlightenment” (Adorno/Horkheimer);
4. define and work with gender as category of historical analysis;
5. explain how current discursive figures, narratives and tropes have a longue durée and a genealogy in history (for example in nationalism and orientalism);
6. define the role of literature, images, and philosophy as a means of reproduction and (critical) reflection of hegemonic discourses;
7. be aware of and analyze the role of the (heroic, male) body as central cultural signifier in modern nationalism/colonialism;
8. demonstrate understanding of the main theories and concepts in historical gender studies, postcolonial studies, (orientalism/antisemitism), and critical theory.

Prerequisites

n/a

Course period 2: Crucial Differences in the 21st Century

Course code: MCD3001

Course Period: 2

ECTS credits of this course: 12

Full course description

This course addresses contemporary configurations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class, and the way in which these ‘crucial differences’ function on social, cultural, and subjective levels in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Through a critical inquiry into topical cases as well as major texts within contemporary gender and diversity studies, the course traces the multiple ways in which identity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, equality and inequality are produced and reproduced in ongoing flows of negotiation and transformation. From the headscarf debates in France to queer theory, and from critical whiteness studies to the politics of sexual nationalism, the course traces the complex interaction between gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity and class in the contemporary world.

Course objectives

The main objectives of this course are:

- To acquaint students with contemporary configurations of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and class, and the way in which these 'crucial differences' structure contemporary cultural texts and images, as well as social and individual identities and institutions.
- To familiarize students with topical debates, themes and theories in contemporary gender and diversity studies.
- To teach students how multiple identities and experiences of difference and inequality interact, by familiarizing them with intersectional approaches to gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity and class.
- To provide students with the analytical skills to examine the dynamics of the production and reproduction of identity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, equality and inequality.

Final qualifications

After completion of this course, students are able to:

1. demonstrate insight into how contemporary configurations of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity and other categories of difference structure contemporary cultural discourses and practices, as well as social and individual identities and institutions;
2. analyze multiple dynamics of identity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, equality and inequality by applying intersectionality as a critical theory and method;
3. identify and take position in topical academic and societal debates within contemporary gender and diversity studies;
4. present key insights, motives and approaches in gender and diversity studies to a diverse audience through written and oral modes of communication;
5. work in international and intercultural teams, listen to each other and respect differences in a critically self-reflexive way;
6. construct and carry out an effective design for an undergraduate research paper within the field of gender and diversity studies.

Prerequisites

n/a

Course period 3: Crucially Different Lives, Narrated (Auto-)Biographies

Course code: MCD3002

Course Period: 3

ECTS credits of this course: 6

Full course description

“Crucially Different Lives, Narrated (Auto-) biographies” is designed to explore life stories/histories and auto/biographical writing in relation to the construction of differences we studied in Course A and B. It provides the opportunity to mobilize the insights you have gained during the previous two courses, by making use of them in analysing texts and doing narrative interviews that document a “history from below” and the ‘crucially different’ life of a person you have chosen. How do the discussions that you came across in these courses inform the lives of men and women from all walks of life? In what ways are differences that we have discussed lived, remembered, and written/narrated by so-called ‘authors of the self’? What exactly is the connection between autobiography and contemporary theorizing about the subject and the so called “death of the subject”? How can differences be read, interpreted, and written by the authors of an-other’s life? How are they narrated and acted in narrations and performances of the self?

Course objectives

This course aims to come closer to understanding differences through shifting the level of analysis to that of the individual self. It will start on the premise that the differences we have studied so far are not only constructed in discourse and power relations, but also orally narrated and represented in life-writing-documents. However, in individual ‘biographical work’, and minority stories the social scripts, gender norms and stereotypes of ‘Otherness’ are not only performed and repeated, but also exceeded. Rather than looking at constructions and performances of crucially different lives as separate ends, we will learn they exist in a continuum. Auto/biographical accounts — whether they are written, visualized or narrated— offer the possibility to investigate how the two approaches are interwoven into auto/biographical texts. The course will provide you with skills of reading and interpreting auto-biographical literature as well as with interview skills to conduct narrative interviews and analyse the biographical work of your interviewee. The course aims to assist you in analysing the ways in which the categories of gender, ‘race’, class, and sexuality interact with one another in the formation of subjectivity, differences and ‘different’ selves.

Final qualifications

After completion of this course, students are able to:

1. understand the narrative construction of self and differences in shifting focus to the individual level;
2. do a close-reading life-writing documents from biographies to literary fiction.
3. demonstrate knowledge of (auto-)biography studies, narrative approach, and life-writing;
4. able to apply theoretical knowledge on gender and diversity studies to a concrete case study;
5. apply theories of narratology, biographical work, and life-writing to their project;

6. define how individual “biographical work” and minority self-stories perform but also work through and go beyond mainstream discourses and stereotypes;
7. reflect on the ethical dimension of qualitative interviews, decide about their narrative material and their use of the interview for the research project;
8. present the individual story of their interviewee in a broader cultural-political context;
9. conduct qualitative interviews and develop a research project.

Prerequisites

n/a