



MINOR GENDER AND DIVERSITY STUDIES 2024-2025

For registration please fill out the separate Minor Registration Form

		Title	Code	ECTS	assessment
Period 1:02-09-2024 / 25-10-2024	Course	The Making of Crucial Differences	MCD3000	12	grade
Period 2:28-10-2024 / 20-12-2024	Course	Crucial Differences in the 21 st Century	MCD3001	12	grade
Period 3: 06-01-2025 / 31-01-2025	Course	Crucial intersections of disability and age	MCD3005	6	grade

Course 1: The Making of Crucial Differences (MCD3000)

This course offers a historical inquiry into the development of important social differences marked through categories like gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, and social class from the Enlightenment until the mid-twentieth century. The course introduces students to seminal approaches within gender studies, postcolonial studies, and queer theory as critical lenses for analysing different historical case studies, philosophical texts, and literary works. Specifically, the course looks into the ways in which dominant Western discourses of identity have formed divisions between self and other; black and white; the Orient and the West; male and female; hetero- and homosexual; upper, middle, and lower classes; and how these differences were used to maintain cultural hierarchies and social inequalities. Special attention is directed to the co-construction of gender, sexuality, race, and class as categories that shaped — and were shaped by — the entangled histories of colonialism, slavery, capitalism, and modern science.

The course combines an intersectional theoretical perspective with Michel Foucault’s discursive approach to the analysis of power and knowledge, and asks how gender, sexuality, race, class, and other crucial differences were conceptualized and “invented” both within and against the dominant discourses of Western modernity. The idea of the “dialectic of Enlightenment” posited by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno is taken as a meaningful reference point. The purported aim of the modern age was to liberate human beings from fear and install them as masters of nature. The Enlightenment promised liberty, democracy, and equality, yet at the same time it has created dynamic patterns of inclusion and exclusion that continue to structure and divide society today. The course thus highlights the failure and paradoxes of major modern progress narratives, while at the same time it affirms the capacity of minoritarian knowledge production to negotiate, resist, and survive the violent realities of systemic racism, sexism, heteronormativity, and other intersecting forms of oppression.

Intended learning outcomes Upon completion of this course students are able:

- to demonstrate an understanding of seminal approaches within historical gender studies, postcolonial studies, and queer theory;
- to examine how historical configurations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, social class, and other categories of difference have operated as systems of power and inequality in a variety of contexts from the Enlightenment to the mid-twentieth century;

- to reflect on the “dialectic of Enlightenment” and illustrate this idea with concrete examples;
- to evaluate current discursive figures, narratives, tropes, and practices in light of their *longue durée* and genealogy in history;
- to take part in seminal academic and societal debates within historical gender and diversity studies through oral and written modes of communication.

Course 2: Crucial Differences in the 21st Century (MCD3001)

Prerequisite: course MCD3000

This course examines the complex interactions between gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, disability, age, and species difference in the contemporary world. Through a critical inquiry into various topical cases as well as major theoretical 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. The course is rooted in 4 intersectional feminism, critical race theory, queer and trans studies, decolonial theory, and other critical frameworks that link together academic scholarship and grassroots activism. It thus aims to help students develop the twenty-first century skills and competencies necessary for understanding, navigating, and resisting current forms of sexism, racism, homo- and transphobia, speciesism, and other systems of domination.

The emergence of various social movements during the 1960s and 1970s—including the women’s movement, the civil rights movement, the free speech movement, and LGBT+ activism—serves as a historical and conceptual starting point of the course. Special attention is directed to how intersectional feminisms and queer activism have challenged the identity politics of mainstream social justice movements, and to the implications of these interventions for academic knowledge production. Subsequently, the course looks into the entangled workings of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, religion, and other “crucial differences” through a variety of current case studies. From the “headscarf debates” and anti-Muslim racism in France to the medicalisation of intersex bodies, from the rise of Dutch homonationalism to queer environmental activism in the emerging ecosexual movement, the course critically examines the manifold dynamics of difference, power, and inequality in the twenty-first century. Simultaneously, the course traces a future landscape of possibility for minoritarian subjects—including women, queer and trans people, persons of colour and indigenous people, as well as a range of nonhuman “others”—by mapping critical strategies of resistance, resilience, and social justice.

Intended learning outcomes Upon completion of this course students are able:

- to demonstrate an understanding of current theoretical approaches within gender studies, postcolonial studies, and queer studies;
- to examine how contemporary configurations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, social class, and other categories of difference operate as systems of power and inequality in a variety of contexts in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
- to analyse the dynamics through which multiple forms of identity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, equality and inequality are produced and reproduced by applying intersectionality as a critical theory and method;
- to identify and take part in topical academic and societal debates within contemporary gender and diversity studies;
- to construct and carry out an effective research design for an undergraduate research paper within the field of gender and diversity studies.

Course 3: Crucial intersections of disability and age

Prerequisite: course MCD3000 and MCD3001

description to be announced