



An Introduction to Gender Theoretical Concepts through Feminist Writing

Introduktion till genusvetenskapliga begrepp genom feministisk litteratur

Credit points: 7.5 credits

Responsible department: Umeå Centre for Gender Studies

Main field of study: Gender Studies

Level: PhD Studies

Subject area: Gender Studies

Grading scale: Pass (G); Fail (U)

Course approval

The course syllabus has been confirmed by the Director of Umeå Centre for Gender Studies on May 19, 2020 and is valid from the autumn semester of 2020.

Aim and Contents

This course is mainly aimed at doctoral students who are comparatively new to gender theory. The course provides an introduction to some of the problems, questions and dichotomies that are, and have been, central to much of feminist thinking and writing. With the help of non-academic texts (fiction, essays etc.) the course introduces basic concepts such as feminism, sex/gender, internalised sexism, and intersectionality. During the course, the doctoral student will read a selection of feminist texts from late 19th century to present time. By analysing and contrasting non-academic feminist writing with academic texts, the course also provides an opportunity to reflect upon different types of knowledge. Many feminist thinkers and activists have questioned norms of what is considered knowledge, how it is produced and valued, and by whom. The juxtaposition of academic and literary feminist texts brings multiple perspectives on knowledge production and dissemination.

Expected learning outcomes

Upon the completion of the course the PhD student should:

Knowledge and understanding

- Account for the gender concepts introduced during the course.
- Recognize and differentiate between some of the different research practises within gender studies, particularly in relation to qualitative vs quantitative methods.

Skills and abilities

- Be able to review and discuss the different disciplinary practises of feminist knowledge production as presented in the non-academic and academic texts, individually as well as with others.
- Be able to both in written and oral form reflect upon the relationship between academic and literary feminist texts.



Judgement and approach

- Ability to analytically reflect upon how some of the introduced gender concepts can be used in various fields of academic research.
- Ability to critically reflect upon feminist knowledge production and research practises in relation to their own PhD thesis.

Forms of instruction and examination modes

The course is organised into thematic seminars based on academic and literary feminist texts. The course is examined through active participation in seminars and an individual written assignment. In relation to each seminar, the doctoral student shall have read the assigned literature and prepared notes according to given instructions. The course is concluded with an individual paper comprised of a short literary text and a longer analytical reflection on the potential of creative feminist writing in an academic setting. The student must problematize their own literary text in light of main arguments and appropriate theoretical concepts from the course literature. Only the theoretical part of the paper will be graded.

The course is given in English.

Course literature

Atwood, Margaret. "Rape Fantasies." 1977.

Bearman Steve and Marielle Amrhein. "Girls, Women and Internalized Sexism." In: *Internalized Oppression: The Psychology of Marginalized Groups*. E.J.R. David (ed). Springer Publishing Company. 2013.

Gay, Roxane. *Bad Feminist: Essays*. 2014. (Selected excerpts.)

Le Guin, Ursula K. "The Matter of Seggri." 1994.

McRobbie, Angela. "Post-Feminism and Popular Culture." In: *Feminist Media Studies*, 2004, 4:3. (pp. 255-264)

Moran, Caitlin. "Chap. 4: I'm a Feminist!" In: *How to Be a Woman*. London: Ebury. 2011.

Perkins Stelton, Charlotte. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. 1892.

Quawas, Rula. "A New Woman's Journey into Insanity: Descent and Return in *The Yellow Wallpaper*." In: *Journal of the Austrasian Universities Language and Literature Association*, 2006, issue 105. (pp. 35-53)

Strain, Megan L., Amanda L. Martens and Donald A. Saucier. "'Rape Is the New Black': Humor's Potential for Reinforcing and Subverting Rape Culture." In: *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, 2016, Vol. 2, No.1. (pp. 80-95)

Stryker, Susan. "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix." 1994.

Additional literature of maximum 100 pages may be added prior to the examination assignment and seminars.



Optional literature

- Beasley, Chris. "Feminism's Critique of Traditional Social and Political Thought". In: *What Is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory*. SAGE Publications. 1999.
- Elliot, Patricia. "Chap. 3: Desire and the '(Un)Becoming Other': The Question of Intelligibility". In: *Debates in Transgender, Queer, and Feminist Theory: Contested Sites*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2010.
- Genz, Stéphanie, and Benjamin A. Brabon. *Postfeminism: Cultural Texts and Theories*. Edinburgh University Press. 2009. (Especially "Introduction: Postfeminist Contexts".)
- Workman, Nancy. "Vulnerability in Margaret Atwood's 'Rape Fantasies': A Game of Cards About Life". In: *Studies in Canadian Literature/Études en littérature canadienne (SCL/ÉLC)*, 2000, vol. 25, nr 2. (pp. 131-144)