

## Department of Gender Studies

### *Ph.D. Curriculum for the Academic Year 2015-16*

#### B. Ph.D. Program in Comparative Gender Studies

#### *Fall Term*

##### Mandatory courses:

##### **1<sup>st</sup> Year Ph.D. Preparation Seminar – 2 credits (Elissa Helms)**

The PhD Preparation Seminar is a mandatory course for first-year PhD students in Comparative Gender Studies at CEU. It is a workshop-style course designed to guide probationary doctoral students through the conceptualization and development of the PhD Thesis Proposal and accompanying Fields and Themes Paper, the written materials required for the Comprehensive Exam and subsequent advancement to PhD Candidacy (i.e. proceeding to the research and writing of the doctoral thesis). The first meetings of the class will focus on understanding the form, function, and scope of the PhD Proposal as well as the practical considerations that go into preparation for the Comp Exam. We will discuss the components of a thorough and convincing proposal (central hypotheses, research questions, situating projects within relevant scholarly literatures and debates, methodological and theoretical approaches, methods and research design, scholarly significance), and students will give each other feedback on broad outlines of these elements. Subsequent sessions will concentrate on identifying key scholarly literatures and fields as well as underexplored or neglected areas/questions within those research fields, as a basis for identifying and developing each student's Fields and Themes Paper (FTP), the accompanying bibliography, and ultimately a clear scholarly rationale for each thesis project. A draft FTP must be completed by the end of the fall term. In the winter, attention will shift to the PhD Proposal itself, with a concentrated set of meetings in which we workshop student proposal drafts and exchange feedback on how to strengthen them. A final meeting will address Comprehensive Exam Committees and strategies for moving through the rest of the PhD program.

An additional goal and function of this seminar is to nurture the exercise of dialogue, debate, and constructive criticism within the student cohort as a whole. By listening to one another, and discussing each other's projects students will develop key analytical and academic skills: critical analysis, self-reflexivity, scholarly debate (written and verbal), as well as methods and strategies for engaging in interdisciplinary research and dialogue (as a complex and challenging yet central facet of gender studies, this PhD program, and to our department as a whole). The seminar is also intended to foster dialogue between students and their supervisors, as well as build students' academic confidence for participation in events such as conferences – which require clear and confident presentation of data and findings, confidence in public delivery/speaking, and the ability to field and answer questions related to the research in an open, self-reflexive and informed manner. The seminar will deploy a number of approaches and activities to encourage students to play a central and active part in the learning process and in the collaborative preparation and structuring of their exam materials.

**The Uses of Comparative and Integrative Perspectives for Women's and Gender Studies**  
2 credits (Susan Zimmermann)

This course, through the lens of comparative and integrative studies, aims to explore and critically discuss de-colonizing perspectives on gender and in gender studies around the world. These perspectives emerge from a dual process of transforming knowledge production. De-colonizing approaches to knowledge production simultaneously aim to de-universalize knowledge and theory with an unacknowledged focus on privileged world-regions and social strata, and to de-provincialize knowledge and theory related to dominated world regions and social strata which as a rule is deemed "particular". In addition, these perspectives build on a critical reflection of how these two processes relate to each other.

The first part of the course is devoted to the introduction and critical debate of theoretical, epistemological, and methodological perspectives on comparison and integration and the implications of these perspectives for current developments in the humanities and social sciences, including Gender Studies. The focus here is on theoretical and methodological literature and debate related to this theme.

The second and more extensive part of the course focuses on a critical examination of major trends and approaches as well as important themes and fields in comparative and integrative research in Gender Studies. In this part, in each unit we will first learn about and examine research examples of critical importance. We will then 'go back' to more theoretical and general writings related to the approaches and fields exemplified through these research examples. Finally, we will use what we have learned here for developing our wider perspectives on the integrative and comparative perspectives in the humanities and social sciences built in the first part of the course.

Elective Courses

**Advanced Academic Writing Seminar for Gender PhD Students**  
2 credits (Andrea Kirchknopf)

The aim of this course is to provide students from the 2nd year of their studies onwards with the skills necessary for completing a successful Gender dissertation in a timely fashion and to help students develop writing skills that they can use after the completion of their studies.

**Feminist Rethinkings of the Concept of 'Discourse' - 2 credits (Erzsébet Barát)**

The participants in the course will become familiar with the main shifts in the conceptualizations of 'discourse' since its emergence in the 1960s and their feminist contestations. The discussions of the weekly readings will be concerned with the key social theories of how meaning comes to be articulated in and through institutionally regulated intersubjective encounters of sign usage. The central category of analysis, the (linguistic) semiotic concept of these models, 'discourse' is defined – albeit in different ways – as a form of social practice. In short, the course is designed to make students see (1) for what reasons 'discourse' is not a category of language or any other sign system only and (2) the ways in which any naming of a particular discourse could be justified/substantiated in our research. The first half of the course is meant to cover the major social models by Foucault and Habermas and the second half is designed to focus on the changes of the conceptualizations when addressed from a feminist perspective. The last topics of the course will introduce students to the recent achievements of critical studies of discourse in linguistics and their relevance for feminist research. The central question that guides these feminist encounters is: What can a given theory of discourse offer for feminism when exploring the representation of 'woman'? How does the very concept of representation change within the particular discursive models of meaning making?

## ***Winter Term***

### Mandatory courses:

**1<sup>st</sup> Year Ph.D. Preparation Seminar - 2 credits (Elissa Helms)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Year PhD Writing Seminar - 2 credits (Francisca de Haan)**

### Elective courses:

**Traveling Concepts in Gender Studies - 2 credits (Jasmina Lukic)**

Generating ‘traveling concepts’ is an inherent feature of all theories. And in feminist theory, with its intentional, self-reflexive eclecticism, the question of traveling concepts is of particular importance. Producing an interdisciplinary frame of thinking, where traditional modes of knowledge production are put in question, feminist theory is continually re-thinking its key concepts, thus creating changes in conceptual framework that have significant theoretical and methodological implications.

In this course students are invited to participate in a critical debate over several key concepts in contemporary feminist thinking, exploring the ways these concepts have been used in more recent theoretical debates. The emphasis is on feminist perspective, but in some cases, for the sake of clarity and better understanding of specific conceptual histories, other perspectives are also included.

## ***Spring Term***

**3<sup>rd</sup> Year PhD Writing Seminar /continued/ - 2 credits (Francisca de Haan)**