Graduate School for Social Research

Critical Epistemologies, Intersectionality and Gender Equality in doctoral and postdoctoral research

INSTRUCTORS

Magdalena Grabowska, Dorota Hall, Kuba Malec, Wiktoria Morawska

(Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences)

Email: m.grabowska@ifispan.edu.pl; dorota.hall@ifispan.edu.pl

Times: Indicated in Section E

First class: October 14, 3 PM (online)

Office Hours: By appointment, please contact instructors

A. Description of the course

With the launch of Horizon Europe, the European Commission established Gender Equality Plans as a basic requirement for participation in its research framework program. The Commission defines GEPs as "a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organization through a process of structural change." For funding calls with deadlines from 2022 onward, GEPs have become part of the eligibility criteria for public bodies, research organizations, and higher education institutions. Furthermore, the integration of the gender dimension into research and innovation content is now a standard requirement evaluated under the excellence criterion, unless explicitly stated otherwise in the topic description. Horizon Europe programs, such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral grants, also mandate the integration of the gender dimension into research and innovation content. The *Critical Epistemologies, Intersectionality and Gender Equality in doctoral and postdoctoral research* course aims to address these requirements through the engagement with theoretical frameworks underpinning European Commission's call for equality, diversity and inclusion. It starts with the discussion of how the gender dimension of research is conceptualized and evaluated by the European Commission and proceeds with unpacking ideas that stand behind it, with a special focus on critical epistemologies and complexities of intersectionality. The course combines theoretical considerations with practical dimensions of preparing research proposals that take gender equality and intersectionality into account. It is addressed to doctoral students who conduct research on various aspects of the social, from the perspective of sociology, social psychology, philosophy of culture, political philosophy and political science. It invites not only those who work on gender-related issues in their projects, but most importantly those who work on other aspects of the social and are interested in adding gender/intersectional/equality dimension to their research or strengthen it.

B. Course objectives

The objective of the course is to provide students with (1) theoretical background underpinning the call for integration of the gender dimension into research and (2) practical knowledge for incorporating gender equality—broadly and intersectionally understood—into their research at both doctoral and postdoctoral levels. After successfully completing this course, students will:

- **Know and understand** (Knowledge, L8H_K):

- Contemporary social theories, identifying key ideas and paradigms in critical epistemologies and gender studies (L8H_KS – Depth and Scope)
- Critical assessments of the evolution of sociological and research paradigms related to epistemic injustice, and knowledge objectivity (L8H_KS – Depth and Scope, L8H_KX – Context)
- Theoretical and methodological foundations of "gender equality" requirement of the Horizon Europe research frameworks (L8H_KX – Context)
- The need for a critical evaluation of the role of social sciences in addressing contemporary societal challenges, understanding its ethical and epistemological limitations (L8H_KX – Context)

- **Be able to** (Skills (L8H_S):

- Critically analyze and synthesize social research from the perspective of gender equality, intersectionality and epistemic inequalities (L8H_SU – Using Knowledge)
- Construct well-reasoned research projects that apply contemporary theories of intersectionality, epistemic injustice and gender equality to research objectives and aims (L8H_SU – Using Knowledge, L8H_SC – Communication, L8H_SO – Organizing Work, L8H_SL – Learning)
- Incorporate, justify and communicate the gender equality component of academic research in the academic setting, engaging in structured discussions and responding to critiques (L8H_SC – Communication, L8H_SO – Organizing Work)
- Use a foreign language at B2 level (CEFR) to participate in academic discourse, presenting research ideas and engaging in professional discussions (L8H_SC –Communication)

- **Be ready to** (Social Competence, L8H_C):

- Evaluate and critique social research projects, assessing their contributions and limitations in relation to issues of epistemic injustice, intersectionality, and gender equality (L8H_CE – Evaluation)
- Demonstrate ethical responsibility in academic research, ensuring integrity in argumentation, citation, and engagement with sources (L8H_CR – Responsibility)
- Participate in scholarly debates and contribute to the advancement of knowledge, engaging with contemporary theoretical discussions in the area of engaged social sciences (L8H_CP – Professional Role)
- Acknowledge the social impact of research, understanding the role of theory in shaping public discourse and policy (L8H_CR – Responsibility, L8H_CP – Professional Role)

C. Course requirements

Requirements for this course include:

1. **Class participation:** By participation we mean that students will come to class well prepared (having thoroughly and thoughtfully read the assigned material), and will share their thoughts during the class discussion.

2. **Presentation of a research project:** This can be the PhD project or another research proposal prepared for a funding agency. The goal of the presentation is that students apply the course readings and knowledge gained during class discussions to their own academic practice,

with a view to strengthen the gender and equality dimension of their planned or ongoing research.

For the reading list for this course see: *E. Outline of topics by class periods* below. Readings are available from the instructors, via a course-specific G-drive. Readings are shared for academic instruction only, and are not to be distributed further.

D. Evaluation of learning outcomes and grading

Evaluation of Learning Outcomes

Depth and Scope (L8H_KS): Evaluated through reading assignments, class discussions, and students' ability to critically assess their own and others' research projects.

Context (L8H_KX): Assessed in students' ability to place theories within their historical, methodological, and epistemological contexts in verbal work.

Using Knowledge (L8H_SU): Demonstrated in students' research projects, where they must apply social theories and methodological approaches to specific research agendas.

Communication (L8H_SC): Evaluated through class participation, discussions, reading reactions, and presented projects.

Organizing Work (L8H_SO): Assessed through proposing independent research and structured assignments including presented research projects.

Learning (L8H_SL): Measured by students' ability to revise and improve their work based on peer and instructor feedback.

Evaluation (L8H_CE): Evaluated through peer-review assignments, where students critique each other's projects and provide constructive feedback.

Responsibility (L8H_CR): Assessed through adherence to academic integrity, proper citation, and engagement with ethical dimensions of sociological research.

Professional Role (L8H_CP): Measured in students' ability to present their research, engage in academic discussions, and respond to critiques.

Grading

Grades will be based:
50% on **Class participation**,
50% on **presentation of the research project**.
Total possible points = 100 (corresponding to 100%)

Class participation will be graded based on reading reactions, clarity and addressing the topic in an adequate manner. Presented research projects will be evaluated based on the quality of the

argument, the structure of the presentation, and the level of compliance with Horizon Europe's gender equality requirements.

Students receiving more than 90% of possible points receive at least a **5-**, more than 80%, at least a **4-**, more than 70% at least a **3-**, and more than 60% at least a **2**.

E. Outline of topics by class periods

1. Introduction – OCTOBER 14, 3 pm

2. Gender equality in Horizon Europe projects: main guidelines and perspectives from EC projects' evaluators – OCTOBER 28, 3 pm

Guest speakers:

- Katarzyna Wojnicka, University of Gottenburg
- Roberto Kulpa, Edinburgh Napier University

3. Knowledge production, objectivity and neutrality of science, positionality of researcher(s) – NOVEMBER 18, 3 pm

Readings:

- Harding, Sandra. (1986). *The Science Question in Feminism*. Cornell University Press (excerpts).
- Haraway, Donna. (1988). 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective'. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14(3): 575–599. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

4. Epistemologies of ignorance – DECEMBER 2, 3 pm

Readings:

- Tuana, Nancy. (2006). 'The speculum of ignorance: The women's health movement and epistemologies of ignorance.' *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 21(3): 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2006.tb01110.x
- Alcoff, Linda Martín. (2007). Epistemologies of ignorance: Three types. In: S. Sullivan and N. Tuana (Eds.), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance* (pp. 39–58). Albany, New York: SUNY Press.

5. Epistemic injustice: testimonial, hermeneutical, contributory – DECEMBER 16, 3 pm

Readings:

- Fricker, Miranda. (2007). *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (excerpts).
- Dotson, Kristie. (2012). 'A cautionary tale: On limiting epistemic oppression'. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 33(1): 24–47. https://doi.org/10.1353/fro.2012.a472779

6. Epistemic oppression and exploitation – JANUARY 13, 3 pm

Readings:

- Tuana, Nancy. (2017). Feminist epistemology: the subject of knowledge. In: I.J. Kidd, J. Medina, and G. Pohlhaus, Jr. (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice* (pp. 125–138). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Berenstain, Nora. (2016). 'Epistemic Exploitation'. *Ergo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 3(22): 569–590. http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/ergo.12405314.0003.022

7. Gender equality, intersectionality and marginalized perspectives in non-gender equality focused research projects – FEBRUARY 24, 3 pm

Guest speaker:
- Małgorzata Rajtar, IFiS PAN

8. Intersectionality: theoretical and activist legacies – MARCH 3, 3 pm

Readings:
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. (1991). 'Mapping the margins*:* Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color'. *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241–1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039
- Lorde, Audre. (1984). *Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference*. Paper delivered at the Copeland Colloquium, Amherst College (1980), reproduced in *Sister Outsider*, Crossing Press, CA (1984). Available at: https://www.roosevelthouse.hunter.cuny.edu/devdev/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/AudreLorde-Writings3.pdf

9. Complexities of intersectionality: qualitative research – MARCH 17, 3 pm

Readings:
- McCall, Leslie. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30(3): 1771–1800. https://doi.org/10.1086/426800
- Weston, Kath. (1996). Me, Myself and I. In: *Render Me, Gender Me: Lesbians Talk Sex, Class, Color, Nation, Studmuffins*. New York: Columbia University Press (republished in 2010 in: Y. Taylor, S. Hines, M. E. Casey (Eds), *Theorizing Intersectionality and Sexuality* (pp. 15–36). Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

10. Complexities of intersectionality: quantitative research – MARCH 31, 3 pm

Readings:
- Humbert, Anna Laure, and Eileen Drew. (2010). 'Gender, entrepreneurship and motivational factors in an Irish context'. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship* 2(2): 173–196. https://doi.org/10.1108/17566261011051026
- Sochas, Laura, and Jenny Chanfreau. (2023). *Austerity as Reproductive Injustice: Stratified Effects of Local Authority Spending Cuts on Having A(Nother) Birth*. Paper presented at the British Society of Population Studies (BSPS) Annual Conference, Keele University, September 11–13.

11. Gender and gender equality in survey research – APRIL 14, 3 pm

Guest speaker:
- Ilona Wysmułek, IFiS PAN

12. Ethics, vulnerability, and no harm in doctoral and post-doctoral research projects – APRIL 28, 3 pm

Guest speaker:

- Adrianna Surmiak, Institute of Applied Social Sciences, Warsaw University

13. Students' projects discussion – MAY 12, 3 pm

14. Students' projects discussion – MAY 19, 3 pm

15. Students' projects discussion – MAY 26, 3 pm