Intersectionality & Interdisciplinarity in Gender Studies Research

Fall 2018/19; 2 credit.

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Course description
In this course we investigate the concepts of intersectionality and interdisciplinarity, and how they relate to conducting feminist research and knowledge production. We examine the theoretical and conceptual development and interrogation of each, and use these to think through what it means to do research that is intersectional or inter-disciplinary. The first half of the course pays attention to interdisciplinary perspectives in feminist and gender studies, and queries disciplinization processes. The second part of the course focuses on the theory and method of intersectionality, as an approach based upon feminist and gender theories. The course investigates its origin and development of intersectional research in gender studies, and discusses several representative research cases. Students are invited to discuss their own research projects as well.

Learning outcomes
1. Understand inter-disciplinarity and what it means in/for feminist and gender studies.
2. Critically assess the concept of inter-disciplinarity and the process of knowledge production in academia
3. Understand the concept and historical development of intersectionality in feminist studies.
4. Have the ability to assess research that deploys an intersectional approach and develop research skills that utilize intersectionality

Assessment
Participation & attendance = 30%
Essay = 30%
Critical reflection = 20%
Research proposal = 20%

Participation & attendance – 20%, ongoing
Active participation from all students is required in seminars. You are expected to attend every seminar and engage actively in the conversation, based on the weekly readings and your understanding/interpretation of them. Please come to each class having completed all the set readings, prepared for informed discussion and ready to ask questions.

Essay – 30%, end of week 5
For this assessment you should write an essay, no more than 2,500 words, on feminist/gender perspectives on interdisciplinary research. The essay should cover:

- What is interdisciplinarity? How has it developed as a concept in academic work?
What are the specific feminist contributions to interdisciplinarity and to the concepts of ‘disciplines’? How/why is feminist and gender work seen as interdisciplinary?

What impact can/does interdisciplinarity have on research and knowledge production?

The aim of this assessment is to demonstrate your understanding and engagement with the first half of the course.

**Critical reflection – 20%, end of week 9**
For this assessment you should write a short reflective piece, no more than 1,500 words, on your understanding of intersectionality. Your essay should include discussion of what intersectionality is, its development in feminist work, any debates/tensions, and the implications of the concept for approaches to research. You can focus your attention particularly to some of the core texts of the field: Crenshaw, Yuval-Davis, hooks, Collins, amongst others. The aim of this assessment is to demonstrate your understanding and engagement with intersectionality as a concept. It will additionally serve to solidify your understanding of intersectionality as you move to develop your research plan for the final assessment piece.

**Research proposal, max 5 pages, 30%, end of week 12.**
The final assessment is to submit an ‘intersectional’ research proposal. Like any proposal, it will need to outline the research issue and question, and the phenomenon, object or issue area under study. Drawing on your insights gained on intersectionality, the proposal should detail how you would approach this research, and what research methods you would utilise (e.g. interviews, and with who, specific texts or issues). You can structure the plan as you wish, ideally with sub-headings, but it should contain the following elements:

- Research topic;
- research question and justification;
- brief review of any existing literature;
- methodology, with a clear statement on how intersectionality has informed this approach;
- any potential limitations.

You should begin preparing your plan early (such as thinking of a research question, topic, and approach). In week 11, our seminar will be dedicated to working on the research plans. You will work in small groups, going over what you have done so far, and working through any issues with your peers. This seminar is an opportunity for you to give and receive feedback from myself and your peers about this piece of assessment, so you will need to be prepared (that is, have a rough outline of your plan already). You could also bring in your reflection piece on intersectionality to assist with your discussion, returning to how you understand intersectionality and how you might take these insights into your research. The final plan is due by the end of the final week of term.
# Topic and reading schedule

## Seminar 1  Introduction

**Reading:**

## Seminar 2  Feminist research in/of interdisciplinarity

**Reading:**

## Seminar 3  Power and disciplinary knowledge production

**Reading:**

## Seminar 4  Doing interdisciplinary work

**Reading:**

**Seminar 5**  
**Introduction to intersectionality**

**Reading:**  


**Seminar 6**  
**Intersectionality as theory, concept, discipline**

**Reading:**  


**Seminar 7**  
**Intersectionality as method**

**Reading:**  


**Additional sources:**


**Seminar 8**  
**Power and inequality**

**Reading:**  


Additional sources:


**Seminar 9**  
**Doing intersectional research (1)**

Reading: Anna Kaijser & Annica Kronsell. 2014. “Climate change through the lens of intersectionality.” *Environmental Politics* 23(2): 417-433.


**Seminar 10**  
**Doing intersectional work (2)**


**Additional sources:**

[http://roar.uel.ac.uk/3331/1/Vol_4_Issue_1_Floya_Anthias.pdf](http://roar.uel.ac.uk/3331/1/Vol_4_Issue_1_Floya_Anthias.pdf)

**Seminar 11**  
**Research plan workshop**
Seminar 12  Conclusion and reflections

Reading:  Jasbir K. Puar. “‘I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess’: becoming intersectional in assemblage theory.” *philoSOPHIA* 2(1): 49-66.


Additional sources


Liz Stanley (ed.). *Knowing feminisms: on academic borders, territories and tribes.* London: SAGE. Ordered via ILL.