

240209: VO Theories & Methods

Katta Spiel

Summer 2020

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Office Hours: FR 2-4pm and upon request

Office: Argentinierstraße 8/2nd floor (TU Wien)

Time: FR 4.45-6.15 pm & 6.30-8pm (on 20.3., 3.4. and 29.5.)

no lecture on 27.3., 10.4., 17.4., 24.4., 5.6.

Place: Lecture Hall 16, Main Building, Hochparterre, Stiege 5 HP.122

Course Description

Theories and methods build the base of all knowledge production. Fundamental epistemological implications result from the why and how of our practices. Being able to assess, locate, criticize and contextualize these brings with it the ability to position oneself independently within larger research settings. Due to the interdisciplinary approach, the field of Gender Studies draws on a number of different epistemological, theoretical and methodological approaches. This lecture addresses these basics and provides a frame in that allows to understand which approaches are suitable for which research questions and why.

As part of the course, we will touch on several theoretical concepts of knowledge production: Post/Positivism, Materialism, Critical Theory, Post/Structuralism, De/Constructivism, Situated Knowledge, Feminist Ethics, Intersectionality, Postcolonialism, Participatory Research, Critical Disability Studies, Design and Speculation. Each session presents paradigmatic, ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations and then translates them into methods. We will also engage in an interactive critique of recent studies and publications to exemplify different questions as well as their potentials and limits. Within the framework of each lecture, a handbook will be developed on the basis of individual positions on the topic, which can serve as an individual reference for further study (or just for the exam).

Preferentially, this course will be held in English.

Teaching Materials

- All materials will be made available in moodle
- Slides will be made available before the lecture and updated until the Tuesday after.
- Additional literature will be similarly made available.
- If desired, we can set up a collective slack environment for our class so you may quickly contact me or find study groups etc.
- What else do you need?

Prerequisites

There are no specific prerequisites required to attend this lecture. However, I expect that everyone is enabled to actively contribute to the teaching and learning experiences. Additionally, participants consent to the code of conduct (below).

Learning Goals

With this lecture, you can expect to acquire the following set of knowledges and skills:

1. Referential overview of fundamental approaches to knowledge production
2. Understanding of and appreciation for different theoretical stances in Gender Studies
3. Experience with a range of methods and their implications on epistemological positioning
4. Skills in critically analysing and using these methods
5. Vocabulary for the contextualisation of your personal research practices
6. Ability to personally position yourself within a set of different theories

You are also encouraged to formulate and communicate your own learning goals for this lecture.

Structure

Every lecture starts with a brief introduction into a given topic in which I will provide a detailed structure touching on paradigm, ontology, epistemology and methodology before I zone in on a specific example that will be presented in more detail. You will be invited to briefly experiment with some methods for yourself and reflect on the approach. Afterwards, we will collaboratively critique a recent study or publication using the method. In this lecture, you are invited to ask many questions.

You are asked to create a small booklet or zine as an individually shaped and curated overview of theories and methods in Gender Studies. You can choose between an oral or written exam,

according to your individual preference, although I restrict the opportunity for dates to within a week at the end of the semester as well as at the beginning, middle and end of the following semester. You may take the booklet/zine as an aid. Other aids will not be permitted (except to ensure accessibility). The exam is successfully passed with achieving at least 50% of possible points.

Code of Conduct

During the lecture

You may use a laptop or similar digital device for digital note taking. Though, as an interest to your learning process and success, I generally prefer handwritten notes (you may also just choose to do them in the booklet/zine). If you choose a digital device, though, I am asking you to not use it for anything else. However, you absolutely may knit, crochet, draw and anything else that supports your focus. Please silence your phones. If you have to take a phone call, you can leave the room at any point. You may eat and drink in this lecture. When you do so, though, please consider everyone else in the room and, therefore, stay away from strong smells in your food (No Leberkäse rule).

Attendance

You are expected to attend all lectures, but there is no strict rule for attendance. I assume you are able to individually assess how important attendance is for your learning. If you come late or leave earlier, please try to keep the disruption for others to a minimum.

Overall Conduct

You are as responsible as I am for a positive learning environment that allows every one to learn independently from their academic or personal background. Many social structures in our daily lives make this already more difficult for marginalised people. Assume the best. I encourage you to not just allow, but encourage and invite critique. If you don't like someone's tone, take a step back and try to ignore it. Reflect your privileges and allow space for others (including their mistakes). I am also striving towards this goal. Additional parameters will be defined in our first lecture. Otherwise, the Code of Conduct of the University of Vienna applies.

Detailed Schedule

The schedule is tentative and will be continuously adapted to your interests and needs (as much as possible). The learning goals refer to core concepts you should understand each week and may also aid you in preparing for the exam.

FR 05.03.2020_16.45-18.15 Introduction

- Introduction of basic theories on gender
- Presentation of schedule
- Discussion of expectations (yours and mine)

FR 13.03.2020_16.45-18.15 Terms and Post/positivism

- Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology, Paradigm, Theory & Method
- Objectivity as ideology
- *Method*: descriptive stats 101

FR 20.03.2020_16.45-20.00 Ethics & Critical Theory

- Normative ethics
- “Ethics of care”
- Ethical practice
- Difference between Critique, Critical Theory and Critical Practice
- Critique on Critical Theory
- Postcritical approaches
- *Exercise*: Critique vs Criticism

FR 03.04.2020_16.45-20.00 Post/structuralism & Materialism

- Discourse and analysis
- Thought and speech
- Critical Realism
- Materialist Entanglements
- *Method*: object oriented research

FR 08.05.2020_16.45-18.15 Queer(ing) Theory

- Queer Studies
- Queer Research(ers)
- Queer Theory

FR 15.05.2020_16.45-18.15 Situated Knowledge(s) and Intersectionality

- Standpoints and positionality
- Privilege and marginalisation
- Interplay and amplification of multiple marginalisations
- *Exercise*: positioning

FR 22.05.2020_16.45-18.15 PostColonialism

- Subaltern knowledge
- Universalism
- Research privileges
- *Exercise*: uncomfortable walk

FR 29.05.2020_16.45-20.00 Critical Disability Studies & Participatory Research

- Models of Disability
- Embodied Knowledge
- Bodyminds
- Situated action research
- Validation and transformation
- *Method*: Participatory Evaluation

FR 12.06.2020_16.45-18.15 Design & Speculation

- Research and presentation beyond text and numbers
- Design as critical practice
- Reflexivity as a quality criterion
- *Method*: speculative design

FR 19.06.2020_16.45-18.15 Finale/Reflection

- According to your interests and needs

FR 26.06.2020_16.45-18.15 1. option for exam