

Bounded Sex? Gender, Sexuality and Identity in and beyond European borders

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Time Slot:	Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m.
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	45
ECTS Credits:	6

Course Description

This interdisciplinary course offers an in-depth exploration of gender, sexuality, and identity within the European context, with a particular focus on Berlin and Germany. Drawing on historical, political, and social sciences, as well as film, news reports, essays, biographies, and field trips, we will critically examine the construction and evolution of the sex/gender system in Europe. Through an intersectional analysis, students will engage with key theories in Women's and Gender Studies, investigating how various identities — shaped also by race, class or nationality — interact with and challenge traditional understandings of gender and sexuality.

Our exploration will reveal both the inherent instability of the sex/gender system and the socio-political forces that have contributed to its persistence over time. Special attention will be given to Berlin as a microcosm of broader European dynamics, highlighting how historical events, cultural shifts, and contemporary struggles in this city reflect and influence larger trends in gender and sexual politics across the continent.

Learning Objectives

Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex histories and contemporary realities of gender and sexuality in Europe. They will also train the analytical tools necessary to critically assess the ways in which these issues continue to shape, and be shaped by, the evolving cultural and political landscapes of the region. Field trips and case studies in Berlin will provide firsthand insight into the lived experiences and ongoing struggles of diverse communities, further grounding theoretical concepts in real-world contexts.

By the end of the semester, students will be able to: 1. Discuss gender and gender roles in a nuanced manner. 2. Formulate academic theses about some of the major social, medical, and political concerns facing women, nonbinary, transgender and intersex people. 3. Discuss some of the historical and current issues related to gender politics in Germany.

Student Profile

Should be in their fourth semester of college/university education or beyond.

Assignments and Grading

Class Participation: 250 Points

Independent Project Report: 250 Points

Midterm Exam: 250 Points

Term Paper: 250 Points

Completion of the Midterm Exam as well as the Term Paper is needed for a grade.

FUB Grade	Points of 1,000
1.0	980-1,000

1.3	950-979
1.7	900-949
2.0	850-899
2.3	800-849
2.7	750-799
3.0	700-749
3.3	650-699
3.7	600-649
4.0	500-599
5.0	< 500

Attendance

Attendance in class is mandatory. We also expect you to be punctual out of respect to both your instructor and your fellow students. If you cannot attend class because you are ill, please report sick to the FU-BEST office (info@fubest.fu-berlin.de) and to your instructor by e-mail before class.

Absences are **excused** in case of **illness**; however, for the fifth sick day and every other sick day after that (consecutive or cumulative, counted not per individual course but for the program overall), you will need to turn in a doctor's notice ("Attest" in German) to the FU-BEST office in order for them to count as excused, too.

If you miss an exam due to an excused absence, your instructor and the FU-BEST team will arrange a make-up exam for you; you may also be entitled to a term paper deadline extension. If you, however, do not fulfill all course requirements needed for a grade by the (later) date determined by the program, passing the course is no longer possible.

Please also note that if you miss more than half of a course's sessions (even if due to excused absence), passing the course is no longer possible.

Personal travel and visits by relatives or friends are **not** accepted as reasons for absence (i.e., absences for these reasons always count as unexcused).

Regarding **unexcused** absences, please note the following:

- Any unexcused absence has consequences for at least the participation portion of the grade.
- Two unexcused absences lead to a formal warning and a lowering of the course grade by a fraction.
- Three unexcused absences will result in an "F" (5.0) on the transcript.

An absence for more than half of a particular day's session will be considered an absence for that day.

Class Participation

Includes short oral presentation on one of the readings plus info sheet (1 page/10 mins.) containing:

- note on author (and historical context)
- short summary of main argument
- interesting quotes
- central/novel/ambiguous terms
- open questions

To be handed in on the day before the presentation.

Independent Project Report

Choose a queer or feminist site in Berlin for your independent project.

- Visit the site

- Collect data and/ or participate in an event
- Describe and analyze the aims of your particular project and situate in class context in ~1000 words.

Topic & Site Selection due in Session 4, Report due in Session 12, Presentation in last session.

Midterm Exam

Short answers: three out of five each worth 10 points

Essay: two out of three, each worth 35 points

Prepare according to study guide.

Term Paper

Includes engagement with several texts, citations and bibliography, ~3000 words. Make sure to:

- structure your paper using headlines, paragraphs, write in full sentences
- identify your main topic and stick with it
- give references to texts

Individual or group assignment.

Draft (1-2 pages) due in Session 8.

Paper due in Session 11.

Literature

Readings posted on the online learning platform Blackboard.

Course Schedule

Calendar	Topics, Readings, etc.
Session 1	Topic: Introduction <i>Intro to syllabus, getting to know each other</i>
Session 2	Topic: From Women's Rights to Feminist Theory Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wollstonecraft, Mary (1792, 1993). Excerpt from A Vindication of the Rights of Women. In: Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (eds.) An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World, pp. 170-175. • Truth, Sojourner (1851): Speech at the Woman's Rights Convention: https://www.thesojournertruthproject.com/compare-the-speeches/ • Beauvoir, Simone de (2011 [1949]): Introduction. In: The Second Sex. pp. 3-17.
Session 3	Topic: Materialist Feminism Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mariarosa Dalla Costa & Selma James (1972): The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community (incl. Introduction by Selma James). In: Rosemary Hennessy: Materialist Feminism, pp. 33-53. • Additional: On Clara Zetkin and International Women's Day: Frencia, Cintia & Gaido, Daniel (2020). The Socialist Roots of International Women's Day. <i>Tribune Magazine</i>. https://tribunemag.co.uk/2020/03/the-socialist-roots-of-international-womens-day

Session 4	<p>Topic: Reproductive Rights</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davis, Angela. (1990). Reproductive Rights. In: Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (eds.) <i>An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World</i>, pp. 110-113. • Maleck-Lewy, Eva and Marx Ferree, Myra (2000). Talking about Women and Wombs: The Discourse of Abortion and Reproductive Rights in the GDR during and after the <i>Wende</i>, In: Susan Gal and Gail Klingman (eds) <i>Reproducing Gender</i>, pp. 92-115.
Session 5	<p>Topic: Queer Theory</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohen, Cathy J. (1997). "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics." <i>GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies</i>, 3, pp. 437–56. • Podcast: Magnus Hirschfeld (with Laurie Maerhoefer), <i>Bad Gays Podcast</i>, e.g. on spotify (or wherever you find your podcasts) https://open.spotify.com/episode/0PWg7R8qHbKTTVpKcuNBfd?si=41e22f81970a4391
Session 6	MIDTERM EXAM
Session 7	<p>Topic: Black Feminism</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opitz/Ayim, May (1992 [1986]): Racism, Sexism, and Precolonial Images of Africa in Germany in Opitz/Ayim, May; Oguntoye, Katharina, Schultz, Dagmar (eds), <i>Showing Our Colours: Afro-German Women Speak Out</i>, pp. 1-53.
Session 8 & 9	<p>Topic 8: Health and Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist Health Care Research Group (Berlin): Practicing Radical Health Care • Comic: Papadogiannis, Nikolaos, Rachel E. Love, and Terry Anderson. (2022). <i>Comic – Transnational Aids Activism</i>. St. Andrews. https://taa.st-andrews.ac.uk/comic/ <p>Topic 9: Gendered Science</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heaney, Emma. (2021). "Is a Cervix Cis?: My Year in the Stirrups." <i>Aster(ix) Journal</i>. https://asterixjournal.com/is-a-cervix-cis/ <p>Excursion: Gay Museum/Schwules Museum</p>
Session 10	<p>Topic: Intersectionality and Social Reproduction Theory</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arruzza, Cinzia; Tithi Bhattacharya and Nancy Fraser (2018). Notes for a Feminist Manifesto. <i>New Left Review</i>, 114(NovDec), pp. 113-134. • Podcast: Emilia Roig on Intersectionality. <i>55 Voices for Democracy - The Podcast</i>

Session 11	Topic: Current feminist debates in Germany I: Policing, Disability and Anti-genderism Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thompson, Vanessa Eileen (2021): 'Policing in Europe: disability justice and abolitionist intersectional care', <i>Race & Class</i> 62(3), pp. 61-76. Presentation and Q & A of Documentary Film <i>Willst du mit uns sterben?/Come die with us</i> About a community grave of elderly lesbians in Berlin Schöneberg, and the queer community in Berlin at large. With film-maker Anis Anaïs Looalian
Session 12	Topic: Current feminist debates in Germany II: Ecofeminism Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bauhardt, Christine (2022). Ecofeminist Political Economy: Critical Reflections on the Green New Deal. In: Alexander, S., Chandrashekeran, S., Gleeson, B. (eds) <i>Post-Capitalist Futures. Alternatives and Futures: Cultures, Practices, Activism and Utopias</i>. Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 87-95.
Session 13	Topic: Feminist and Queer Sites in Berlin. Review Session and Course Wrap Up Presentation of Independent Projects in Class

Suggestions for Independent Project Subjects/Sites

Sport/Activities	Archives/Institutes/ Organisations
Selbstverteidigung für Frauen http://svf-berlin.de/ Seitenwechsel FLTI https://www.seitenwechsel-berlin.de/verein Box Girls FLTI https://boxgirls.de/ FRAUMENTOUREN http://www.fraumentouren.de/ Audre Lorde in Berlin http://audrelordeberlin.com/ Queer Tours through Berlin https://www.queerberlin.com/	Spinnboden Lesbenarchiv und Bibliothek Berlin e.V. http://www.spinnboden.de/ Margherita-von-Bretano-Zentrum (MvBZ), Freie Universität Berlin http://www.mvbz.fu-berlin.de Gunda-Werner-Institut in der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung https://www.gwi-boell.de Women in Exile https://www.women-in-exile.net/ Feministischer, Antisexistischer, Queerer Infoladen faq https://faq-infoladen.org/ Schwules Museum/Gay Museum https://www.schwulesmuseum.de/ Savvy Contemporary https://www.savvy-contemporary.com/ Oyouun https://oyoun.de/

Commercial Sites: Bars/Shops/Shows	Women Centers and/or Queer Centers
<p>Other Nature - alternativer Sexladen https://other-nature.de/</p> <p>2nd Thursday/month FLINTA Abend in der B Lage https://b-lage.de/flinta-b-lage/</p> <p>Laura Mèritts Sexclusivitäten Shop + Workshops https://www.sexclusivitaeten.de/</p> <p>Every Tuesday FLTl Night at Möbel Olfe https://www.moebel-olfe.de/index.html</p> <p>She said – Bookshop https://www.shesaid.de/</p> <p>Silver Future – Queer Bar https://www.silverfuture.net/</p>	<p>Beginne https://www.beginne.de/</p> <p>FrauenComputerZentrumBerlin (FCZB) https://www.fczb.de/</p> <p>Schokofabrik https://www.frauenzentrum-schokofabrik.de/</p> <p>S.U.S.I. (Solidarisch, Unabhängig, Sozial, International) https://www.susi-frauen-zentrum.com/</p> <p>Paula Panke https://www.paula-panke.de/</p> <p>Feministisches Frauengesundheitszentrum (FFGZ) https://www.ffgz.de/</p> <p>Casa Kua (Trans, Inter, Queer Community Center) https://casa-kua.com/</p> <p>Schwulen Beratung (Queer Psychosocial Support Center) https://schwulenberatungberlin.de/about-us/</p>