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A Comparative Report on European Gender Studies Master Programs

Central European University

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Introduction

There are numerous Gender Studies programmes in Europe, including over 130 master-level programmes, around 50 bachelor programmes and over 50 doctoral programmes, according to the list in the *Tuning Brochure*¹ (2010: 46). These programmes run under different names, including ‘gender studies’, ‘women’s studies’, and various specialisation names, such as ‘gender history’ or ‘gender, sexuality and society’, ‘gender, media and culture’, to name a few. Students looking for European master programme options may look at portals listing university study programs. On www.mastersportal.eu, for example, 64 MA and MSc programmes in gender studies are available in EU countries. Over half of the programmes available on this portal are located at various universities in the UK, and there are many programmes in Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, Germany, France, Spain and Italy. In Central-Eastern Europe there are gender studies master programmes in the Czech Republic, Poland and Bulgaria. In Hungary a new gender studies MA programme will be launched in 2017 at ELTE University. Central European University is special in this respect, because it is also in Hungary, but it is not a state-run national university, but a private international one. It has several MA programmes in gender studies, and also a PhD programme, and it is a place for students not only from Hungary and CEE but increasingly for international students to study gender studies on master’s and doctoral levels.

Besides MA programmes specifically in gender/women’s studies, there are gender studies specialisations and gender studies courses included in other master programmes all over Europe, the number of which is difficult to calculate. For example there is a gender studies specialisation within the English and American Studies MA programme at the University of Szeged, Hungary. There are also inter-university joint programmes, such as the two-year GEMMA programme (Erasmus Mundus Master’s Degree in Women’s and Gender Studies), which is a programme run by 7 universities, and offers a joint degree in interdisciplinary gender studies. Students in this programme usually spend half of their study time at one of the seven universities and the other half at another one, which offers them a great selection of courses, subject areas and scholars to engage with, based on their specific field interests.

¹ ATHENA, Advanced Thematic Network in Activities in Women’s Studies in Europe (2010). *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Gender Studies*. Referred to here as the *Tuning Brochure*.

Gender studies programmes are always interdisciplinary, regardless whether they offer training in a number of fields in arts and social sciences or they specialize in a certain field, such as sociology, psychology, or cultural studies. Interdisciplinarity transgresses disciplinary boundaries, both theoretically and methodologically, it questions existing disciplinary canons, and thus “allows for new synergies to emerge” (Lykke 2004, cited in *Tuning Brochure* 2010: 24).

The degree of institutionalisation of gender studies varies throughout Europe, within specific national and cultural contexts, and also locally, among institutions with the same national context (do Mar Pereira 2008). According to a research project called “Employment and Women’s Studies: The Impact of Women’s Studies Training on Women’s Employment in Europe” (EWSI), conducted in 2001-2003, six phases of the institutionalisation of gender studies in Europe can be distinguished: “the activist phase”, “the establishment phase”, “the integration phase”, “the professionalization phase”, “the disciplinization phase”, and “the autonomy phase” (see: Griffin 2005). According to Griffin, the degree of institutionalisation “is conditioned by several intersecting factors, among others, high or little university autonomy in developing curricula; flexible or rigid disciplinary structures; attitude of the women’s movement; state support or the lack of this support” (Griffin 2005, 92). The position of gender studies in Europe has been constantly changing. In the 1990s-2000s the following issues were highlighted as having a lasting impact on gender studies practice: “the Bologna process; the development of international training programmes; the changes in the funding structure; the access of new EU members from former soviet sphere countries, and the tightening connections between Gender Studies and equal opportunities specialists in governmental, non-governmental and private institutions” (*Tuning Brochure*, 2010: 32).

Not only the level of institutionalization, but also the content of gender studies programmes and courses offered varies among countries and also among universities within each country. Nevertheless, these programmes usually address the following areas: “feminist history; feminist theory and methodology; feminist literature and philosophy; gender and representation; sexuality and body; race and ethnicity; development of new technologies and their impact on women; women’s health; gender, welfare state and globalization” (Griffin 2002: 22). Women’s/gender studies as an academic field has emerged mostly from the women’s movements of Anglophone countries (especially the USA and Britain), therefore most of the significant theoretical literature has been written in English. This gives an extra

task and challenge to gender studies scholars and educators in countries whose native language is other than English, as texts have to be translated and theories adapted to local contexts (Braidotti, 2000: 18-19).

The autonomy of gender studies as a discipline versus the integration of gender studies into other disciplines and study programmes is a dilemma (Braidotti, 2000: 18). On the one hand, it is positive that single gender studies courses or modules/tracks have been integrated into the curricula of various disciplines. This is what the GeSt project also aims at. This way students studying in other degree programmes may choose these courses and expand their knowledge of gender issues in their field. On the other hand, integration into other programmes and offering gender studies courses as elective may undermine the academic prestige of gender studies and contributes to its remaining invisible, disregarded or dismissed (*Tuning Brochure*, 2010: 47-48). These pro/contra arguments may be contextualised and complexified by the local and national academic environments. For example, in a country or university where the establishment of a gender studies programme is unimaginable (due to a number of possible reasons including academic hostility, financial constraints, lack of scholarly competence, among others), it can be fruitful to introduce single gender studies courses or gender studies tracks in MA programmes. In the long run, this may or may not be a step towards the autonomy of gender studies in the given institution/country, but it will definitely increase the number of people with some degree of gender studies expertise, some of whom may contribute to institutionalizing gender studies later.

Gender studies is an interdisciplinary field, and, especially when it is integrated into other fields, it can prepare graduates for many different occupations, instead of one 'core' occupation, such as legal or medical studies, for example. According to Silius (2005), gender studies graduates typically find employment in five occupation sectors: "research and education, equal opportunities, civil society, journalism and information, and the social and health sector" (2005: 118). According to the *Tuning Brochure*, gender studies graduates are employable in the state, private and civic spheres, in occupations "where not a specialized knowledge on certain topics or procedures is required, but all those jobs at academic level that demand professional independence, ability to be (self-) critical and reflective of professional practices, and the ability to demonstrate this in a wide variety of contexts" (2010: 50). Learning critical thinking and analytical skills, challenging power relations, understanding intersectionality, inequality and complexity, tends to make gender studies students more

confident, committed to working on social change, and encourages them to continue their education or work in social activism (Griffin 2005). This is also the experience of the faculty at the Department of Gender Studies at CEU.

Comparative analysis of ten European Gender Studies programmes

A detailed comparative analysis of over a hundred European gender studies MA programmes would be far beyond the scope and resources of this project. The *Tuning Brochure*, which has been cited in the introduction of this report, is a result of such a project, which included a number of universities and lasted for 10 years. In the following, we are comparing 10 European gender studies MA programmes, including that of Central European University, which is a partner institution in the GeSt project. We include CEU because it offers the most significant master's program in gender studies in Central Eastern Europe. The other nine universities, including Swedish, Dutch, Irish and British ones were selected based on the availability of information on their gender studies programmes in English. Analysing MA programmes in national languages other than English is beyond the capacities of the project. Besides, these four countries are among those with the longest history of and greatest theoretical and methodological contributions to gender studies in Europe. All the quotes in the analysis are from the websites of the given programmes.

Name of University	Name of Department	Name of programme	Length / credits (ECTS)	Web link
Linköping University, Sweden LIU	Unit for Gender Studies at Department of Thematic Studies	Gender Studies with specialisation Intersectionality and Change, MSc	1 year / 60 ECTS or 2 years / 120 ECTS	http://www.liu.se/utbildning/pabyggnad/F7MGE?l=en
University of Gothenburg, Sweden UG	Department of Cultural Sciences	Gendering Practices, MA	2 years / 120 ECTS	http://kultur.gu.se/english/education/masters-second-cycle/gender-studies/gendering-practices--master-s-programme-120-hec
University of Amsterdam,	Graduate School	Sociology: Gender, Sexuality	1 year / 60 ECTS	http://gsss.uva.nl/programmes/english-

the Netherlands UvA	of Social Sciences	and Society, MSc		masters/content13/study-programme/study-programme.html
University of Utrecht, the Netherlands UU	Department of Media and Cultural Studies	Gender Studies, MA Women's and Gender Studies, GEMMA Erasmus Mundus MA	1 year / 60 ECTS 2 years / 120 ECTS	http://www.uu.nl/masters/en/gender-studies
University College Dublin, Ireland UCD	College of Arts and Humanities School of Social Justice Women's Studies Centre	Gender, Sexuality and Culture, MA Women, Gender and Society, MA	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time / 90 credits	https://sisweb.ucd.ie/isis!/W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLIS_H?p_tag=PROG&MAJR=Z162 https://sisweb.ucd.ie/isis!/W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLIS_H?p_tag=PROG&MAJR=W249
University College Cork, Ireland UCC	Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences College	Women's Studies, MA	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time / 90 credits	http://www.ucc.ie/en/cke03/
University of Warwick, United Kingdom UW	Department of Sociology Women and Gender Studies Research Centre	Gender and International Development, MA	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time / 120 ECTS	http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/prospectiv/pgtstudy/genderintldevelopment/
University of Manchester, United Kingdom UM	School of Arts, Languages and Cultures Centre for the Study of Sexuality and Culture	Gender, Sexuality and Culture, MA	1 year / n.a.	http://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/masters/courses/list/01167/ma-gender-sexuality-and-culture/
University of Sussex, United Kingdom US	Department of Sociology Centre for Gender Studies Department of International Development	Gender Studies, MA Gender, Violence and Conflict, MA Gender and Development,	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time / n.a.	http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/masters/2016/1614/33337#career http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/masters/2016/3915/34258#course http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/masters/2016/1614/3325

	Institute of Development Studies Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies School of Global Studies School of English Department of Anthropology Department of Media and Film	MA Sexual Dissidence, MA Social Research Methods, MSc Gender and Media, MA		8 http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/masters/2016/1614/33234 4 http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/masters/2016/3915/33306 6 http://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/masters/2016/5031/33359
Central European University, Hungary CEU	Department of Gender Studies Department of History	Gender Studies, MA (1 year) Critical Gender Studies, MA (2 years) Women's and Gender Studies, GEMMA Erasmus Mundus MA (2 years) Women's and Gender History, MATILDA European Master (MA) (2 years)	1 year / 80 ECTS 2 years / 120 ECTS 2 years / 120 ECTS 2 years / 120 ECTS	https://gender.ceu.edu/ https://gender.ceu.edu/degree-programs

Table 1: The 10 analysed European Gender Studies MA programmes

The above table contains the ten universities selected for comparative analysis. Some of these universities offer more than one gender studies MA programmes. Except for Central European University, which has a gender studies department, the gender studies MA programmes are offered by different departments at all the universities. Linköping University has a Gender Studies Unit, but it is not a department but an interdisciplinary research centre. At the University of Sussex, six programmes are offered under the heading of 'gender studies programmes'. They are run by various departments but crosslisted at other departments, which shows that all the programmes are interdepartmental and interdisciplinary. Utrecht and CEU are part of the GEMMA consortium, which, as was mentioned earlier, offers joint degree programmes. The transdisciplinary MATILDA programme at CEU is run collaboratively by

the gender studies and history departments. Besides CEU, three universities participate in MATILDA (University of Vienna, Sophia University St. Kliment Ohridski, University Lumiere Lyon 2). This program, in a similar system to GEMMA, offers a joint degree in women's and gender history. From the University of Sussex, the University College of Dublin and CEU, which offer several gender studies MA programmes, one programme is chosen for this analysis: Gender and Media from Sussex, Women, Gender and Society from UCD, and the one-year Gender Studies programme from CEU. We also analyse the 1-year MA programme of Utrecht University, not the 2-year GEMMA programme.

The curricula available on these programmes' websites are very different. This is more related to the general structure of available information on the given university's website than to different approaches to gender studies. In the following we will look at the commonalities and differences among the selected programmes along the following headings: (1) overall curriculum goals; (2) course structures; (3) course content, (4) learning outcomes; and (5) employability.

All programmes are cross- and interdisciplinary, with teaching faculty having a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, but some are hosted by one department (UG, UU, US, CEU), some by the cooperation of a department and a gender studies research centre (UW, UM), and some (UvA, UCC, UCD, US) are based on the collaboration of various units (departments, schools, centres). At LIU, the programme is run by the Gender Studies Unit, which is part of the Department of Thematic Studies at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The analysed programmes at UW (Gender and Development) and US (Gender and Media) are more specific in contents than the rest of the courses. Gender and Development at UW is run by the Department of Sociology. Gender and Media at US is offered by the Department of Media and Film, whereas the other gender studies programmes at this university are joint programmes of various departments, schools and centres.

1. Overall curriculum goals

Not all the analysed programmes have their curriculum available on their websites. Some do, others include curricular information under various headings. As for overall curriculum goals, two of the ten programmes (UvA and UCC) do not have stated curricular goals. All courses

mention or refer to interdisciplinary approaches and intersectionality. The overall goals have differing foci.

Both Swedish universities focus on the potential of gender studies to challenge power relations and work on equity and social change, on educating “agents of change”, the latter of which is also the aim of the UU programme. LIU has a strong emphasis on activism and initiating social change:

“You will learn how to actively change, develop and challenge existing norms and structures. (...) The programme provides you with knowledge of theories and methodologies in gender studies – intersectionality and change, and enables you to develop academic skills to analyse and to intervene innovatively and professionally in gendered and intersectional processes of transformation in society. A key ambition is to offer opportunities to reflect on and develop an understanding of the links between activism, theory, professional development and career paths.”

UG has an emphasis on training people for “an international labour market that increasingly requires advanced knowledges about – and critical perspectives on – power relations, equality work, and social and cultural norms” through developing “a meta-theoretical perspective on knowledge production”. It aims to “give students theoretical and practical means to work in fields that focus on securing equal opportunities as well as challenge social and cultural norms based on gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class, functionality etc.” The contact with community and organisations working on women’s and gender issues is also mentioned by UCC, which also suggests a practical, “agent of change” approach to gender studies. UCD’s programme Women, Gender & Society is hosted by the School of Social Justice. The programme description claims the School has a strong tradition of social activism, and social change, social and economic justice, a feminist perspective and tackling multiple discriminations are emphasized in the description. The programme offers students to “develop a critical understanding of economic and social policy, a new understanding of women through history and a whole new outlook on gender roles and identities in contemporary society.”

The Gender and International Development programme of UW aims to challenge colonial and patriarchal approaches by claiming it is “an international, interdisciplinary and analytical course which does not assume that development is about the ‘third world’ modelling itself on the west, nor about women modelling themselves on men”. Its specific goals are to analyse how development is gendered and how intersectionality works. In the Gender and Media programme of the US, interdisciplinary approaches and teaching faculty are emphasized, and

the focus is described in a somewhat more detailed manner than at UW: “This MA focuses on the production, circulation and reception of media representations of masculinity, femininity and sexuality. It also explores ways in which questions of gender and sexuality might shape and inform media relations more generally, for example in the negotiations of the public/private divide.”

The programmes at UM and CEU are the most theoretical and research-oriented in their goals. UM, besides offering “training in research methods”, aims to “introduce new approaches to gender studies and sexuality studies”, “challenge current understandings of gender and sexuality” and “examine cultural production and cultural theory in relation to other power systems”, that is, it clearly focuses on contemporary theoretical currents and criticism. CEU’s programme “aims at developing independent and critical thinkers with a broad basic knowledge of gender studies and the skills to approach gender as a key element of social and symbolic order at the local and the global levels”, and introduces “major theoretical and methodological approaches to gender studies from a range of disciplines”, i.e. theoretical engagement, teaching research methodology and interdisciplinary approaches are emphasized.

2. Course structure

The examined programmes have different course structures. Most programmes are either 1-year or 2-years long, with 60/120 ECTS of credits to earn, but there are varieties, and it is not clear for all programs whether their credits are ECTS or some other credit-system, especially with the two Irish programmes at UCD and UCC, as can be seen in *Table 1*. The Irish (UCC and UCD) and two of the British programmes (US and UW) offer the options of 1-year full-time or two-year part-time study, and the LIU programme is divided into two levels, each 60 ECTS, and students can take either the one-year full-time or the two-year full-time option for 60 or 120 credits. The rest of the programmes do not offer such options, they are either 1-year or 2-year long full-time. The proportions of course credits and credits for the thesis are greatly varied among the programmes, being between 25% and 50% (e.g. 30 credits for thesis out of 120 at LIU, or 45 out of 90 at UCC).

The LIU programme consists of two independent, 1-year long units with 2 terms. Students are “eligible for a Master of Social Science (60 credits) in Gender Studies with specialization Intersectionality and Change” after completing the first year, including writing a 15 ECTS

master thesis. In Term 1 students take 3 mandatory courses; in Term 2 there are two mandatory courses and the master thesis writing for 1-year students, and two more mandatory courses for 2-year students. In Term 3 there is one mandatory course and there are 2 periods, in both of which there are two optional courses to choose from. In Term 4 the 2-year students write a 30 ECT master thesis. This programme is unique among the ten programmes we are analysing, because it “combines online distance education with intensive mandatory on-campus gatherings.” “The courses consist of lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, supervisions and course assignments, both in the on-campus classroom and online.” Classroom interaction with teachers and fellow-students in the distance education part is arranged via digital classrooms. Each year there are three mandatory on-campus weeks. In addition, as elsewhere, students are required to engage in independent studying.

At UG the programme consists of 4 semesters. In the first one, students take two mandatory (core) courses. The programme has four strands: *Equality Politics, Organisation and Law; Cultural Theories and Practices; Cultural Heritage; Body Politics and Social Health*. In the second semester students choose one of the strands and take one core course within the chosen strand plus one elective course within the programme. In the first part of the third semester students take an 8-week long internship, either at a workplace, in an organisation or in a research project. Students can also take one elective course within their strand. In the second part of this semester students take one core course. During the fourth semester students complete their master thesis.

The 1-year Gender, Sexuality and Society MSc at UvA is one specialisation track within Sociology. There are 5 other tracks: Comparative Organisation and Labour Studies; Cultural Sociology; Migration and Ethnic Studies; Social Problems and Social Policy; and Urban Sociology. The first semester starts with a mandatory course in Sociology and a thematic core course, which is a specialisation course within the track. Then students take an elective course relevant to their thesis topic, and the semester ends with an intensive winter school in research methodology. During the semester a mandatory course called “Labour Market Orientation” is also offered, which shows that UvA finds it important to prepare students for being successful with their qualification on the labour market. In the second semester students take one elective course and a thesis writing seminar, and complete the semester by writing their master thesis. One of the two elective courses can be replaced by an internship.

At UU the academic year starts with the NOI♀SE Summer School, which is “an interactive week of lectures, work groups, and social activities”. There are two semesters, both divided into two study periods. Starting from 2016-2017 (the system has been slightly revised), students take 3 courses per study period in the first semester. The courses are a combination of compulsory and elective courses, the proportion of which is not specified on the website yet. The second semester comprises a “full-time internship (15 EC) at an (inter)national organisation, institution, or company of [the student’s] choice”, and the master thesis, which is expected to engage with some aspect of the internship experience.

In the UCD programme the MA degree is acquired through achieving 90 credits: 60 for courses and 30 for thesis. Students take 5 core courses in the first semester and two electives in the second semester, when they also write their thesis. At UCC the programme is also worth 90 credits, 45 of which is the thesis, and the other 45 comprises 5 mandatory courses. There are no elective courses in this programme.

At UW students take two core modules in gender and development, and a third optional core module in research methodology, and 3 optional modules, at least one of which has to be in the field of gender/development. There is no credit information available. At UM there is one mandatory core course (30 credits) and the thesis (60 credits), a research training unit (no credit information available) and the rest of the credits are to be collected from optional courses, which are usually worth 30 or 15 credits. Unfortunately there is no information available about the overall number of credits of the programme. At the US there are three terms. In the autumn term there is one mandatory and one optional course, in the spring term there are two optional courses, and in the summer term students complete their research-based thesis (60 credits). Optional courses are 30 credits, but there is no available information about the complete number of credits and the credit number of the mandatory course.

At CEU² the academic year starts with a mandatory one-week pre-session called Zero Week, with orientation sessions, gender studies lectures and workshops, course presentations and academic writing sessions, the last of which continue throughout the year. Although other programmes emphasize that they are international, CEU is perhaps the most international in terms of faculty’s and students’ national backgrounds, and the only one of the 10 programmes where there is mandatory academic writing instruction in English. The one-year MA

² Course structure, requirements and learning outcomes are available in the downloadable student handbook of the programme. Short course descriptions and syllabi are also downloadable from here: <https://gender.ceu.edu/courses/program/136>

programme here is worth 80 ECTS, divided as follows: “The program consists of 40 credit hours to be completed over the course of three semesters. In the fall and winter terms, students must complete 32 course credits, including the mandatory courses of Foundations of Gender Studies I and II, a methodology course, and two semesters of Academic Writing. The remaining courses are chosen from among the department’s offerings which cover a range of topics and disciplinary approaches. It is also possible to take classes in other CEU departments. In the spring term, students earn a final 4 credits for the thesis writing workshop and 4 for thesis writing.” One CEU credit equals 2 ECTS.

3. Course content

Below we list the courses of the examined MA programmes, with credits where indicated. For some programmes (UM, CEU) the syllabi of the courses are available on the website, at others short descriptions of the courses are available (LIU, UvA, UU, UCD, UW, US, CEU). LIU, GU, UU and CEU also have their curriculum available on their website.

Linköping University:

Term 1

- Introduction to Studies of Intersectional Gender at Advanced Level (6 credits)
- Gender Studies – Intersectionality and Change (12 credits)
- Analytical Tools (12 credits)

Term 2

- Career Paths and Professional Communication (6 credits)
- Case Study: Analyzing Change (9 credits)
- Two-year Master’s students: Feminist Genealogies and Social Movements (7.5 credits)
- Two-year Master’s students: Historiographies of Intersectional Gender Studies (7.5 credits)
- One-year Master’s students: Master Thesis (15 credits)

Term 3

- Theories and Methodologies (15 credits)

Optional courses, Period 1

- Intersectional equality work in organisations (7.5 credits)
- Feminist Pedagogy and Intersectional Gender Didactics (7.5 credits)

Optional courses, Period 2

- Science Communication and Critical Media Interventions (7.5 credits)
- Internship (7.5 credits)

Term 4

- Master Thesis (30 credits)

University of Gothenburg:

Mandatory courses

- Theories in Gender Studies (15 hec)
- Methodologies of Gender Studies (15 hec)
- Internship in gendering practices (15 hec)
- Interdisciplinary Challenges in Gender Studies (15 hec)
- Master's Thesis in Gendering Practices (30 hec)

Elective courses:

- Critical Studies on Gender Equality Policy and Diversity (15 hp)
- Cultural Theories and Cultural Practices (15 hp)
- Gender and global development (15 hp)
- Global Health (7,5 hp) and Micro Perspectives of Health Economics (7,5 hp)
- Gender and sexuality across culture (15 hp)
- Independent explorations in a field of Gender Studies (7,5 hec)

University of Amsterdam

Core Course:

- Intersections of Culture, Gender and Sexuality

Electives (6 credits each)

Semester 1:

- Gender & Sex in the city
- Stay With the Trouble: Race, Class, Sexuality and Queer Identities
- Body, Emotions & Culture
- Sexuality, Race and Class entangled

Semester 2

- Theorizing Gender

University of Utrecht

Semester 1, Part 1:

Compulsory courses (15 credits each)

- Research Lab 1: Doing Gender
- Feminist Toolbox: Theories and Methodologies

- Feminist Research Practice

Semester 1, Part 2:

Compulsory course

- Research Lab II: Designing Gender Research

Elective courses (15 credits each)

- Feminist Approaches to Art and Affect
- Somatechnics: Bodies and Power in a Digital Age
- Postcolonial Transitions and Transitional Justice

Semester 2, Part 1:

- Internship (15 credits)

Semester 2, Part 2:

- Thesis (15 credits)

University College Dublin

Core modules:

- Feminist and Gender Theories
- Gender and Globalization
- Feminist and Egalitarian Research
- History of Feminist Politics
- Critical Thinking and Writing

Optional modules:

- Gender, Inequality and Public Policy
- Space, Place and Gender
- Sexuality: Identities and Stigma
- Gender, War and Violence
- International Human Rights Law
- Education and Equality
- Masculinities, Gender and Equality
- Liberation Psychology

University College Cork:

Modules (90 credits)

- Feminist Theory (10 credits)
- Gender and Society I: Contexts (5 credits)

- Dissertation³ in Women's Studies (45 credits)
- Gender and Society II: Interdisciplinary Perspectives (15 credits)
- Directed Study in Women's Studies (15 credits)
- Research Skills Part 1: Feminist Methodologies (5 credits)
- Research Skills Part 2: The Literature Review (10 credits)⁴

The UCC website claims that the programme “involves research skills training, feminist research methodologies, feminist and gender theories and a series of seminars on Women, Gender and Society that address specific themes. These themes vary from year to year, but are likely to be chosen from among the following: Representations of Gender in History, Literature and Popular Culture; Masculinities; Motherhood; Women, Work and Family; Women and Violence; Gender, Embodiment and Sexual Identity, including foundational aspects of Queer Theory; The Women's Movement; Gender and Social Policy; Women and Politics.”

University of Warwick

Core modules:

- Gender, Imperialism and International Development
- Gender Analysis and Development Practice

Optional modules:

- Death, Sovereignty and Power in the (Post) Colony
- Market Life: Wealth and Poverty in Global Capitalism
- Sociology in a Biological Age: Power, Sociality and Difference
- Qualitative Methods in Social Research
- Quantitative Methods in Social Research
- Understanding Social Science

University of Manchester:

Mandatory course:

- Gender, Sexuality, and Culture (30 credits)

Dissertation (60 credits)

Optional courses (15/30 credits each):

³ Please note that at British and Irish universities the master thesis is called ‘dissertation’. This is not the same as a doctoral dissertation.

⁴The indicated credits add up to 105, but the programme is offered as a 90-credit one. There is no explanation of the difference available on the website.

- The American Body: Race and sexuality in the Twentieth Century
- Reading the Contemporary
- Queer Cinema and Beyond
- Modernism and its Margins
- Postcolonial Literatures, Genres and Theories
- Key Issues in Twentieth-Century Cultural Theory and Literary Criticism
- Contemporary Fiction
- Gender, Sexuality and the Body
- Gender, Time and Change
- New Developments in Theories of Gender and Sexuality

University of Sussex:

Core module:

- Dissertation Gender and Media (60 credits)

Optional modules:

- Activist Media Practice
- Cultural Identities: Social Practices
- Feminism and Film
- Film Studies: Theories and Methods
- First Person Film
- Gender, Sexuality and Digital Culture
- Global Cinemas
- Global News Industries
- Independent Chinese Documentary: From the Margins to the Masses
- Interactive Project Development
- Media Histories and Cultural Change
- Media Theory and Research
- Media, Culture and Communication
- Music and the Media of Performance (Practice)
- Music and the Media of Performance (Theory)
- New Developments in Digital Media 1a
- New Developments in Digital Media 1b
- Photography: Documentary, Landscape, Politics
- Queering Popular Culture
- Sound Environments (Practice)
- Sound Environments (Theory)
- The Cinematic Body
- The Politics of Promotional Culture

- Women and Human Rights
- Writing for the Screen

Central European University:

Autumn semester:

Mandatory courses:

- Foundations in Gender Studies 1 (4 credits)
- Academic Writing 1 (1 credit)
- Public Lecture Series (1 credit)

Elective courses:

- Gender and Migration: Local, National and Global Lives (4 credits)
- Gender and Politics (4 credits)
- Gender, Sexuality and the Non/Human (4 credits)
- Gender, Violence and War (2 credits)
- Gendered Memories of the Holocaust (4 credits)
- Human Rights and Biopolitics (4 credits)
- Islamic Feminism in Historical perspective (2 credits)
- Markets and Inequalities: An Intersectional Approach (4 credits)
- Preserving and Interpreting Knowledges of the Past and Promoting Social Justice (4 credits)
- Queer Theory (2 credits)
- Re-Imagining Social Movements (4 credits)
- The Nature of Performativity (4 credits)

Winter semester:

Mandatory courses:

- Foundations in Gender Studies 2 (2 credits)
- Academic Writing 2: Thesis Development (1 credit)
- Public Lecture Series (1 credit)

Elective courses:

- Affect, Embodiment, Agency (2 credits)
- Communism and Gender: Historical and Global Perspectives (4 credits)
- Discourse Analysis (2 credits)
- Family, Gender and Sexuality (2 credits)
- Feminist Biopolitics and Cultural Practice (4 credits)
- Gender and Nationalism (2 credits)
- Gender and Sexuality in Compulsory Education (2 credits)

- Genes, Reproduction and Gender (2 credits)
- Neo-Victorian Cultures Today: Postmodernist Literary and Filmic Adaptations of the Past (2 credits)
- Qualitative Methods: Oral History (2 credits)
- Qualitative Research Methods: Feminist Methods, Oral History and Life Narratives (2 credits)
- Sexological Subjects: Sex, Science and the Making of Modern Society (4 credits)
- Special Topics in Gender and Migration: What's New about the 'New Refugee Crisis'? (4 credits)
- The Politics of Reproduction (2 credits)

Spring semester:

Mandatory courses:

- Advanced Topics in Gender Studies (2 credits)
- Thesis Writing Workshop (4 credits)
- Public Lecture Series (1 credit)

At CEU the offer of elective courses varies each year, as permanent faculty offer different courses and visiting lecturers change every year. The courses listed above are those of the 2016/2017 academic year. There are also cross-listed courses from other departments among the elective courses, which we do not list here. Also, some of the courses offered by the Department of Gender Studies are cross-listed with other departments. In the winter term one of the three elective research methodology courses is mandatory.

As we can see, there is a great variety in course offers, the number and proportion of compulsory and elective courses. What is common is that all programmes offer theoretical foundations courses and qualitative methodology courses, and that approaches are intersectional and interdisciplinary at every university.

4. Learning outcomes

As far as learning outcomes are concerned, only four of the ten programmes list them: LIU, UG, UCC and CEU. At UCD learning outcomes are described in each course description. At the selected British and Dutch universities no such descriptions are available.

At LIU the learning outcomes are divided into 'knowledge and understanding', 'competence and skills' and 'judgement and approach'. They are slightly different for the 1-year and 2-year programmes, the alterations in the text are marked in *italics* for the 1-year programme and in **bold** for the two-year programme.

“Knowledge and understanding

For a Master of Social Science (60/120 credits) the student shall:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in Gender Studies, with special reference to Intersectionality and Change, including both *an overview* / **broad knowledge** of the field and **a considerable degree of** specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work,
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in Gender Studies, with special reference to Intersectionality and Change,
- demonstrate *that she or he understands how* / **an in-depth understanding of the ways in which**, within the framework of Gender Studies with special reference to Intersectionality and Change, it is possible to act as an agent for change in higher education, organizations, politics, media, communication and in society at large and
- **demonstrate an in-depth knowledge about and understanding of the historical emergence of the field, its transdisciplinary character and its relation to feminist traditions.**

Competence and skills

For a Master of Social Science (120 credits) the student shall:

- demonstrate the ability to **critically and systematically** integrate knowledge and to analyse, assess and deal with complex phenomena, issues and situations even with limited information,
- demonstrate the ability to identify and formulate issues **critically**, autonomously **and creatively** as well as to plan and, using appropriate methods, to undertake advanced tasks within predetermined time frames **and so contribute to the formation of knowledge as well as the ability to evaluate this work**,
- demonstrate the ability in speech and writing both nationally and internationally to report clearly and discuss her or his conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences, and
- demonstrate the skills required for participation in research and development work or **autonomous** employment in some other qualified capacity.

Judgement and approach

For a Master of Social Science (60/120 credits) the student shall:

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in **the field of** Gender Studies with special reference to Intersectionality and Change, informed by relevant disciplinary, interdisciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work
- demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used, and

- demonstrate the ability to identify the personal need for further knowledge and take responsibility for her or his ongoing learning.”

UG refers to the Swedish national targets for master programmes in gender studies and also states the local targets. They are, as at LIU, also divided into ‘knowledge and understanding’, ‘competence and skills’ and ‘judgement and approach’.

“Outcomes

National qualitative targets for a Master’s programme in Gender Studies is to be found in Högskoleförordningen [The Higher Education Ordinance Act], (SFS 1993:100), The Degree Ordinance, appendix 2. The local targets are:

After completion of the programme the student is expected to be able to:

Knowledges and understanding

- explain and independently discuss theories of Gender Studies and show significant knowledges in contemporary research in the field of Gender Studies and the historical emergence of this field
- transfer theoretical knowledges into practical use
- develop further theoretical insights through encounters between theory and practices
- in an advanced way explain, identify and independently discuss knowledges in one of the programme’s strands, especially aspects that are related to gender research as it is performed in respectively area of study
- discuss, in an advanced way, the challenges and possibilities that come with interdisciplinary perspectives on knowledge productions and other practices
- explain, in an advanced way, the complex and multiple meanings of the concept “gendering practices”, among other things the relations between theory and practices, the performative aspects of power relations, and the politics of knowledge production

After completion of the program the student is expected to be able to:

Skills and abilities

- in a reflexive way use relevant methods and develop an advanced methodological approach on knowledge production in the field of research and other professional areas
- in a reflexive way develop methods that are usable, and possible to develop, in relevant professional contexts
- independently, and in a creative way, formulate subject-relevant research questions, and plan and execute assignments within established timeframes
- orally, and in writing, present and discuss the results of one’s studies in national as well as international, academic as well as non-academic contexts

After completion of the program the student is expected to be able to:

Judgement and approach

- make evaluations in regard to scientific, societal and ethical aspects on research and development”

The description of the learning outcomes of the UCC programme is somewhat shorter and more general:

“On successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- formulate arguments that reflect a critical and comprehensive, interdisciplinary knowledge of feminist debates around social and cultural issues
- communicate those arguments effectively both orally and in writing
- apply concepts, theories and methodologies appropriately at postgraduate level
- assess how differences (race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, time, place, values etc.) inform theoretical positions
- critically evaluate evidence drawn from existing research and scholarship
- design and pursue independent research
- use the transferable skills developed through engagement with the self-directed learning, research and academic writing aspects of the course”

CEU offers the following learning outcomes for the 1-year MA programme:

“Graduates of the one-year MA in Gender Studies at CEU will have mastered the following skills and fields of knowledge and demonstrate the ability to:

- discuss and understand the major fields and themes of interdisciplinary gender studies, their historical and geographic origins, and the main points of debate that have arisen within this field;
- grasp and apply the methodological, theoretical, and writing and oral presentation techniques necessary in academic research and critical analysis while also being able to convey their analyses to audiences not specialized in gender studies;
- engage in critical and creative reading and analysis from a gender perspective of social and cultural theories, empirical research, and social and cultural phenomena;
- reflect critically and in a complex manner on the entanglement between gender relations and gender inequality on the one hand, and other social and cultural differences on local and global levels on the other;
- grasp and critically understand the main threads of scholarly debate on how gender categories and inequalities work in tandem with other social categories such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, global inequality, age, disability, and the like;
- translate an interest in a certain social or cultural phenomenon into a manageable research project, develop pertinent research questions, and identify and use the appropriate research methods to answer these questions;

- reflect critically on and denaturalize their own social, cultural, and political belonging, being aware of the situated nature and limitations of their own knowledge.”

All the descriptions of learning outcomes emphasize critical thinking and analytical skills. As discussed earlier, LIU focuses on educating people to become agents of change. In the description the acquisition of skills and knowledges necessary for working in positions related to designing and implementing gender equity and gender mainstreaming policies are emphasized, and also analytical skills, knowledge of research methodology and the responsibility to remain involved in life-long learning are claimed to be acquired on the successful completion of the programme. Both LIU and UG consider knowledge of the historical emergence of the field of gender studies an important learning outcome, i.e. the knowledge of not only contemporary theories but also earlier ones. CEU mentions not only historical but geographical origins of gender theories, thus referring to the aim of deconstructing Western-centred theoretical approaches. UG highlights the relations between the theoretical and the practical and considers the ability of applying theoretical knowledge in practical ways as an important learning outcome. UCC and CEU do not mention practical or employment-related learning outcomes; they focus only on the development of theoretical, analytical and research skills and knowledges. All four universities state the importance of gaining the ability to formulate ideas in ways understandable for different audiences, both in academic and non-academic environments.

5. Employability

All programmes claim that they prepare students both for a variety of jobs and for doctoral studies both in gender studies and other fields. However, not all of them are equally engaged with their students’ career perspectives. The website of the CEU programme doesn’t mention employability. Some programmes have one or two brief general sentences about career perspectives, some have longer passages with concrete organisations and companies where graduates work mentioned, and some of the programmes offer career courses as compulsory elements of the curriculum (LIU, UvA). Below the statements of the analysed programmes about employability are quoted:

Linköping University:

“As a student of the master’s programme in Gender Studies – Intersectionality and Change you will be prepared for a career in higher education and research as well as professional work with intersectional gender in organisations, media, communication and politics. This programme can also develop your current career through further training within gender work. Below follows some examples of jobs of some of our alumni:

- Tess Consoli, PhD student, University of Massachusetts, Boston, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development.
- Saad Khan, Staff Researcher, Institute of Educational Development, Brac University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.”

University of Gothenburg:

“The content of the programme will prepare students for an international labour market that increasingly requires advanced knowledges about – and critical perspectives on – power relations, equality work, and social and cultural norms.

The programme offers four different strands of study within the interdisciplinary field of Gender Studies, developed to prepare the students for different parts of the labour market: Equality politics, organisation, and law; Cultural heritage; Cultural theories and practices; Body politics and social health.”

University of Amsterdam:

“An education in the social sciences will impart a broad range of skills that easily translate into a multitude of careers.

Specific career examples from alumni of the Gender, Sexuality and Society programme are:

- Executive assistant at the Association for Women’s Rights in Development
- Communications and New Media Manager at Womankind Worldwide
- Individual and couples therapist for adults and adolescents
- Gender advisor at PLAN International

The programme gives students a good basis to pursue their studies at the PhD level. Students with an excellent academic record will be encouraged to complete their Master's studies with the development of a proposal for PhD study at the University of Amsterdam.”

Utrecht University:

“The insights from gender studies and emancipation research are useful to a growing number of organisations and companies seeking to develop and/or critically reflect upon policies to effectively intervene on behalf of specific target groups and market segments.

Our programme provides connections to an extensive network of national and international contacts and organisations within and outside academia, thus guaranteeing a variety of professional opportunities to our students.

After graduation, you will be a gender expert with an ever-growing field of work awaiting you. Graduates can find employment in international (non-profit) organisations and institutions that pay attention to gender and ethnicity, such as:

- national and international archives, documentation centres, and platforms ([Atria](#), [IHLIA](#), [ATGENDER](#))
- women's associations ([Mama Cash](#), [Women on Waves](#), [European Women's Lobby](#), [WO=MEN](#))
- organisations relating to migration and refugees ([Pharos](#), [Zami](#), [Tiye International](#))
- governmental organisations (ministries related to cultural affairs, education, and equality)
- arts & media sector (national/regional newspapers, [Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam](#), exhibitions such as [Yes Naturally](#))
- institutions that promote expertise in the field of gender, diversity, policy and culture ([Atria](#), [Movisie](#))

Facts and figures

A 2010 survey of the Gender Studies programme shows that 92% of our graduates are currently employed. One [out] of three graduates lives and works abroad, with the most popular foreign destination being the United States.

The survey also shows an enormous variety in organisations and job descriptions that students can pursue after the study programme. The most popular careers are:

- Pursuing an academic career (23%)
- Working in the educational sector (26%)
- Having one of many diverse careers in a variety of non-profit organizations (51%)
- Becoming an independent entrepreneur (10%)”

University College Dublin:

“For students who are inspired to continue their study in Gender Studies, Sexuality Studies, Literature and Cultural Studies, this MA is an ideal preparation for the PhD. However, the quality and flexibility of the MA has allowed the majority of our graduates to pursue careers in a wide range of professions, including teaching, publishing, advertising, public relations, media, public service, librarianship, development and advocacy work.”

“Graduates have become central members of local communities, key members of NGOs, employees in public-sector agencies, education and media organisations in roles such as: social researchers, project development managers, lecturers, journalists and policy advocacy officers.

Graduates work in Amnesty International, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Medicines Sans Frontieres, National Broadcasting Authority and the National Women's Council of Ireland.”

University College Cork:

“You will develop skills that enhance your employability, including critical thinking; analytic skills; innovative approaches to social issues; gender expertise; understanding of power dynamics and diversity; awareness of social justice and legal issues.

Graduates enter a wide range of occupations in the public and private sectors, including equal opportunities/equality advisory; research and education; non-governmental/civil society organisations; journalism and the information sector; and the social and health sectors.

There are also academic possibilities such as studying for a PhD, and some students enter further professional training, e.g. studying law, training as a social worker or counsellor, moving into the equality or community sectors.

Many graduates suggest that the course reinforces their self-confidence and encourages them to become involved in community or political activism.”

University of Warwick:

“What can I do with a degree in Sociology?”

People who study Sociology go into a wide variety of jobs. You will gain a range of very valuable skills, including: how to work independently and how to find information, extract what is important from it and turn it into an argument. You’ll learn to work in collaboration with others, but also how to work effectively without close supervision. All Sociology degrees teach research methods. These allow you to generate new knowledge from both quantitative and qualitative sources. You will learn how to analyse results from a various data ranging from large statistical studies to in-depth one-to-one and group interviews. You will also learn to carry out your own research both individually and in groups.

The study of Sociology will change the way you see the world around you and how you relate to others. The skills you learn are relevant to the workplace and are valued by employers.

What do Warwick Sociology MA graduates do?

Over 72% of our 2012/2013 sociology graduates who were available for work or study, gained employment or further study within six months of graduation.

Examples of our Sociology MA graduates’ job titles include:

- Management Trainee, NHS
- Teacher, Birmingham City University
- Researcher, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation
- Project Intern, Lokahi Foundation
- Research Trainee, Office for Public Management (OPM)
- Learning Coach, Oxford and Cherwell Valley College

Our Sociology MA graduates have gone on to the following further study:

- PhD in Social Sciences, Loughborough
- PhD in Sociology, University of Manchester
- PhD in Sociology, Goldsmiths
- PhD in Politics, Warwick
- PhD in Social Policy, University of Warwick
- PhD in Sociology, University of Warwick”

University of Manchester:

“Students in our programme have gone on to take up a diverse range of careers in both the public and private sectors. Some have gone on to pursue postgraduate research, and several have taken up jobs as teachers.”

University of Sussex:

“This MA equips you with the skills for a career in the media industries, cultural and events management, and in fields in which a knowledge of both gender politics and the media is useful.”

As was mentioned in the Introduction, gender studies programmes offer knowledges and skills that can be used in various segments of the labour market, especially in combination with other disciplinary knowledges. From this perspective, specialised gender studies programmes and gender studies tracks in other MA programmes may be more useful. However, according to research, “Gender graduates find jobs in all corners of the labor market, both in public and private domains. The transfer of knowledge about gender therefore takes place in many different situations, official equal opportunities being only one of them” (*Tuning Brochure*, 2010: 50).

The area of equal opportunities is, of course, attractive to gender studies graduates. However, it differs by country whether there are such jobs available, and the institutionalisation of gender studies and the existence of equal opportunities policies may be related in some countries while in others such expertise may not be so much in demand (*Tuning Brochure*, 2010: 52). Many gender studies graduates are inclined to work in NGOs and independent organisations, but again, it depends on the country how much these organisations can offer jobs. In Central Eastern Europe, for example, the civic sector is weak and many NGOs, especially those who are doing critical work, are small, underfunded and their operation depends on voluntary work.

The quoted programmes claim that skills and knowledges acquired through gender studies, such as critical thinking, analytical skills, the ability to generate new data from various sources, understanding power relations, social awareness, the ability to work independently, and, of course, knowledge of gender issues and gender-based cultural divisions and social inequalities are highly valuable at the international labour market. For increasingly international student populations at (Western) European universities, this is very promising. However, this can also mean that gender experts trained at such universities, especially those who come from other countries, will have to look for jobs in other countries if their own national environment is not so open to gender expertise. This can be a factor in the reproduction of international imbalance in the degree of institutionalisation and mainstreaming gender in different national contexts and in the employability of gender experts in their own field of interest.

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