

**Gender, Nature, Culture: Feminist Posthumanities in Practice ,
10.0 credits**

Genus, natur, kultur: feministisk posthumaniora i praktiken, 10.0
hp

Third-cycle education course

7FTEM11

The Tema Institute

Valid from: Second half-year 2023

Approved by
The Board of PhD Studies

Approved
2023-11-17

Registration number
TEMA-2023-00349

Entry requirements

Entry requirement for studies on third-cycle education (PhD-level) courses

- second-cycle degree,
- 240 credits in required courses, including at least 60 second-cycle credits,
or
- acquisition of equivalent knowledge in some other manner

Specific entry requirements for this course:

- English skills equivalent to English 6/B at Swedish upper secondary school level.

Specific information

The course builds on collective study and self-study (reading mandatory and self-selected readings before lectures), a series of online lectures; on online participation in post-lecture discussions (online seminars), and on physical on-site participation in workshops.

This PhD-course builds thus on active participation in three ways:

- engagement in reading and discussing the literatures before and during the online lectures at the start of the course;
- participation in building a critical community with all other course participants as “critical friends” and student “co-teachers” during and between course sessions; and
- active participation in two on-site workshops where we put some practices to the test on location, experimentally.

This course is open to doctoral students at Gender Studies and the larger Department of Thematic Studies at Linköping University, but also to doctoral students from other universities and disciplines. We welcome practice-led researchers and interdisciplinarians.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course the students will be able to: *Knowledge and understanding*

- Understand and develop on the epistemologies of “situated knowledge” and feminist perspectives to embodiment, environment and ethics as developed inside and outside of Gender Studies.
- Insightful understandings of the feminist troubles with biological, technological and environmental determinisms, as well as the crucial feminist theory contributions to contemporary process ontologies, new materialisms and a co-existential relational ethics of feminist biological -, environmental- and techno-humanities as forms of more-than-human humanities (posthumanities).
- Trace the historical emergence of scientific ways of seeing and knowing the world in modern Europe, and of late-modern ways of reinventing the study of culture: the emergence of the European humanities, and later, cultural studies, gender studies and science and technology studies, and, more recently environmental humanities and other forms of more-than-human humanities that decolonize
- Reflect on the changing nature of disciplines across time and place, and the societal functions of scientific, philosophical and creative work to meet the nested cultural, ecological and technological challenges of our time.

Competence and skills

- Creatively adapt an analytical toolbox for a specific research challenge
- Critically deploy concepts such as gender, nature and culture, as legacy technologies of thought, in a scholarly context
- Creatively and critically practice forms of feminist posthumanities, across the divides of art and science, nature, and culture
- Feel more at home with feminist posthumanities as a configuration of knowledges, for the situated ecologies, biologies, or technologies of a research project
- Ability to explore methodologies and transversal practices of creative writing, storying exposure, in-field philosophy and other methods of feminist posthumanities

Judgement and approach

- Modest witnessing as an approach and research practice of limited claims across science and art, paired with an understanding of feminist visions for change and speculative practice
- Transversal approaches for grounding and changing perspectives
- Critically situate your dissertation work in relation to disciplinary and interdisciplinary, artistic, activist and scientific configurations of knowing the world

Contents

This course aims to introduce the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of research at the intersection of gender, nature, culture by way of select practices of feminist posthumanities. Societal and environmental, but also ontological, epistemological and ethical underpinnings are presented, such as: theories of power, embodied subjectivity and cyborg knowing, and involved interdisciplinary research fields are mapped out, like feminist and gender studies, cultural studies and science and technology studies, and their post-disciplinary, even extra-academic connections and overlaps. After this, doctoral students get to test and practice their analytical skills within this methodological frame. Such exercises are based on their own doctoral thesis and on collaborative workshops on, for instance, feminist time philosophy, archeology, and place-based in-field philosophy on waste as heritage; or geo-arts for understanding mineral environing and embodiment, or more-than-human coastline culture, beach foraging and the making of marine biology-inspired oceanic herbarium for the purpose of honing a multispecies attention. The course builds on ancient as well as recent philosophies of environmental embodiment and embodied environments, on analytical concepts such as “trans-corporeality” and “the cultural imaginary”, and on advances in more-than-human humanities and the feminist, ecological-, technological- and biological arts of living with change and worldly transformation. If gender studies, and even more longstanding feminist theory, offers a long tradition of recognizing the power to define, to make distinctions, and to create categories as key to a host of other power effects, it is clear that there are no topics or phenomena to which feminist posthumanities are not relevant. In such a situation, it is useful to consider feminist posthumanities as hermeneutic tradition of recognizing both the wounds and the wonders of the world, as a set of analytical techniques and skills for storying exposure, rather than a fixed set of positions and models (*after* Franklin, Lury & Stacey 2000:6).

The course provides thus an introduction into the conceptual landscape of gender, nature, culture, and an orientation into its methodological trajectories across the fields of science and art, especially the critical, creative and collaborative practices of feminist posthumanities as developed within The Posthumanities Hub. Notions of different epistemic traditions in the past and present, and of inter-, post-disciplinary and extra-academic research are presented and historically and geopolitically framed. PhD-researchers will be provided with the tools to creatively and critically reflect over the challenges and research questions inherent in their own research practices and doctoral work in relationship to gender, nature, culture and to feminist posthumanities in practice.

Educational methods

The course introduces participants to thinking on situated knowledge practices and performative, even transformational, research methodologies through (online) lectures and seminars on self-studied course readings, experimental workshops and collaborative teaching and learning approaches. Peer learning is a crucial component of this course.

Examination

The course is examined on two mandatory elements. First, it is examined on the basis of an extensive approach to “active participation”. This entails a considerate and co-operative, well-read and suggestive participation in seminar discussions, workshops, in a final oral presentation and in course evaluation. Active participation includes everything from an affirmative approach when “showing up” for workshops to delivering oral critique, and to recommending new suggested course literature. Second, the course is examined, at the end of the course, by the handing in of an individual assignment, such as a) an essay, or b) a modified piece of doctoral work (for instance a drafted methods-chapter). The individual paper assignment is expected to be skillfully processed by the participant in the light of the course concepts and approaches, creatively and critically.

A pass grade for the course demands active participation in lectures, seminars and workshops, and in the final oral presentation, and the individual paper assignment (handed in on time) that clearly relates to and make use of the course content. Both components are mandatory for a pass grade.

Students who have not achieved a passing result due to absence (lectures, workshops etc), or time pressure in relation to the individual paper assignment, are offered re-examination in written form submitted to the examining teacher.

Grading

Two-grade scale

Course literature

A list of recommended literature will be provided by the course coordinator before the start of the course. Course literature is listed inside the distributed course syllabus – a syllabus also detailing the planning and implementation of the course. The reading list contains both mandatory and recommended reading. However, students are expected, as part of the “active participation” to expand on the suggested reading list and to exchange reading tips within the course community. The course builds a collective understanding, based on shared readings, and a deep-seated understanding of the longstanding feminist or proto-feminist ancestry of a lot of contemporary social and cultural theory with calls to take bodies, environments and technologies that make or break us more seriously in the arts and humanities.

General information

The course is planned and carried out according to what is stated in the course syllabus. Course evaluation, analysis and suggestions for improvement should be fed back to the Research and PhD studies Committee (FUN) by the course coordinator.

If the course is withdrawn or is subject to major changes, examination according to this syllabus is normally offered at three occasions within/in close connection to the two following semesters.