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8th Conference of the *Swiss Association of Gender Studies (SAGS)* Basel, September, 8 & 9, 2025

In 1927, Virginia Woolf stands in the reading room of the British Museum. She finds neither knowledge, nor literature created by women. Pondering the reasons for these “blank spaces”, Woolf problematizes the way in which (academic) knowledge is produced and hierarchies are created between different forms of knowledge. Further, women are denied the resources and spaces they need to creatively produce knowledge, as Gertrude Bustill Mossell had already noted 33 years earlier. Gender studies research and teaching in its various forms and formats across the globe have inherited and continued these projects of uncovering and filling the gendered, sexualized, classicist and racialized gaps in available knowledges as well as creating ‘room’ for thought and alternative modes of knowledge production. This always involves the critical, self-reflective examination of one’s own knowledge practices and positionalities.

Gender Studies has called putative facts and beliefs about “nature” and knowledge into question. Critique and debate have shown how conceptions of sexed and gendered being and beings have played central roles in (knowledge) politics and ‘border wars’ concerning the very nature of nature and the importance of matter and materialities. Additionally, diverse modes of knowledge production have been explored for how they might give rise to new realities. These knowledges, and the modes of being that they have brought into existence and/or made visible, have been the subject of controversies and the target of attacks and pushbacks; the discipline of gender studies itself has likewise been contested and disparaged.

Key questions for gender studies as a heterogeneous, multi- and interdisciplinary endeavor, thus, are: Who (and what) participates and can participate in knowledge production? How is knowledge authorized or discredited? In what ways are knowledges about gender and sex entangled with power dynamics? Which knowledges? Which power dynamics? And not least, what ways of knowing and knowledges are needed for ‘better worlds’ to become realities?

Against the backdrop of pressing current issues – climate changes, artificial intelligence, anti-democratic and authoritarian seizures of power, wars and persistent global and domestic inequalities – the 8th conference of the Swiss Association of Gender Studies invites participants to address these – and other – questions together on September 8/9, 2025 at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

The conference welcomes all questions and topics pertinent to gender studies. The following **thematic strands** are proposed as central for exploration in the conference:

- 1. Revisiting feminist theories and gender studies:** Which concepts, analytical terms and theoretical interventions have prevailed so far, which have fallen into oblivion and/or should be revitalized? Which are missing and which come with troubling and troublesome heritages? Which dialogues between the different theoretical, thematic and activist strands of feminist theory and gender studies are currently flourishing, which are in conflict or at an impasse? What are the (hierarchical) relations between different analytical tools and approaches? What roles do the materialities of gender and sex, as well as dialogue with the natural and biomedical sciences, play in all of this?
- 2. Applying gender studies:** What forms and methods of applying gender studies have proven productive in different situations and contexts? How can the teaching of gender studies critically address the numerous challenges of inclusion in knowledge production, including the inclusion of more-than-humans? How can gender studies be translated for diversity and gender equality work? How can gender studies be related to and articulated through different media and for different publics? What challenges arise in the relation between academic and (non-academic) practice-based knowledges?
- 3. Circulations of gender/ed knowledge(s):** What knowledge about gender, sex/ualities and bodies have been and are produced, taken up, and spread by whom and in which contexts – from politics, to economics, education, law, medicine and cultural institutions? Which knowledges have been and continue to be dismantled or not distributed in the first place? How are these different bodies of knowledge entangled with power relations, and what role do different technologies and media play in their constitution, mediation and circulation?
- 4. Knowledge politics, blank spaces and epistemic injustices:** What does critique of existing knowledges and dominant modes of knowledge production look like and what can it achieve? What do epistemic responsibility and justice mean and how can they be realized within gender studies and beyond? How are feminist and queer knowledges complicit in epistemic injustices? Which questions are not, or else too little addressed within gender studies? What issues constitute blank spaces in existing bodies of knowledge? Under what conditions, and in which different socio-material and political situations, is participation in the production or sharing of knowledge(s) im/possible? What spaces and forms of articulation are available or must yet be invented? How to deal with what is not or cannot be known? How is gender (non-)knowledge mobilized to consolidate hierarchies and exclusions, to strengthen authoritarian positions and exploitative structures and relations?
- 5. Knowing gender in the past tense:** How can gender's past be listened to and recognized? How do past, forgotten conceptions and practices of gender, gender roles, sex acts and sexuality challenge or inform knowledge and knowledge production today? What other forms of (gendered) knowledge and knowledge production can be uncovered in past epistemes? How could gender's plural histories be made productive for the ongoing development of concepts and knowledge practices?
- 6. Utopias, speculations and re-visions:** What did emancipatory proposals for multiplying existences and creating 'better worlds' look like in the past? What form do or could they take today? What is needed to imagine and bring these worlds about? And, what part does knowledge (production) play in these processes? Which bonds of kinships, alliances and solidarity need to be woven and how? How does speculative knowledge become practice?

The conference welcomes speakers of all career stages and invites theoretical as well as empirical contributions from all disciplines as well as inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, artistic performances, and other forms of intervention addressing the conference topic as well as other questions and topics pertinent to gender studies.

Submission Details

Abstracts can be submitted for individual contributions, complete panels (including student panels), and other formats relating to the conference theme, as well as to other questions and topics relevant to gender studies.

Abstracts for individual contributions should be about one page long and include (a) the title and a short description of the contribution, (b) up to four keywords and an indication of the thematic strand(s) (listed above) to which the contribution(s) will contribute (c) a few biographical notes on the speaker(s).

Proposals for complete panels should include at least three, and not more than five speakers. Abstracts for panel proposals should be about three pages long and include (a) the title and a description of the panel, (b) up to four keywords and should identify the thematic strand (listed above) to which the panel will contribute, (c) the name(s) and some biographical notes on the person(s) chairing the panel, (d) titles and short descriptions of the individual contributions to the panel, including the name(s) and biographical notes for each speaker.

Proposals for other formats, such as workshops, walks or performances should be about one page long and include (a) the title and a short description of the contribution, (b) up to four keywords and an indication of the relevant thematic strand(s) (listed above), (c) a few biographical notes on the convenors/performers/artists, (d) if relevant, the number of possible participants (min. and max.), the duration of the format, and the spatial and material requirements (if any).

Open submissions focusing on questions and topics not covered by the conference theme can take the form of individual contributions, complete panels (including student panels) and other formats. For each submission modality, see the details provided above.

Submissions are also welcome from the different working groups of the research network of The Swiss Association for Gender Studies.

Please note, should you have any special requirements for your contribution (room, technical infrastructure, etc.), please indicate these in your abstract.

Abstracts can be submitted in English, French or German via the conference webpage by the 15th of March 2025 as one PDF document. Submissions open on February 1st, 2025. Please note that each person can submit only one abstract. Abstracts will be peer-reviewed by members of the conference's organizing committee and scientific advisory board.

Keynote Speakers

Elsa Dorlin, Professor for Political and Contemporary Philosophy,
Université Toulouse (France)

Katrin M. Kämpf, Assistant Professor/artistic and scientific collaborator
in Queer Studies, Academy of Media Arts Cologne (Germany)

Conference Venue

University of Basel, Kollegienhaus, Petersgraben 50, 4051 Basel,
Switzerland

Important dates

- Submissions open: 01.02.2025
- Deadline for conference submission: 15.03.2025
- Notification of acceptance: April 2025
- Publication of conference program: May 2025

Conference Office and Contact Details

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Conference web page:

www.genderstudies.philhist.unibas.ch/de/sags-conference-2025

Concept and Organizing Committee

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