

Graduate Conference of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

May 26 - 28 2026

Gender as a topic, category and perspective in (cultural) research

Call for Papers

Gender approaches and perspectives have now become established in almost all (cultural) disciplines and fields of research. In 2023, the Science Council published a recommendation on the further development of gender studies in Germany. In it, the German Science Council (Wissenschaftsrat) emphasises the importance and social relevance of gender perspectives and dimensions. At Paderborn University, established structures have been enabling gender-focused collaboration across interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary connections for many years. The 18th Graduate Conference, which is taking place as part of the Graduate Week, builds on these structures.

We invite doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers and those interested in pursuing a doctorate to examine gender in all its complexity and diversity as a subject of study, analytical perspective and/or intersectional category in (cultural) research and knowledge contexts. In examining (socio-) cultural phenomena, practices and discourses that touch on questions of gender, gender constructions and gender relations from historical and contemporary perspectives, we would also like to discuss and reflect on methodological approaches and challenges in different academic cultures and fields during the conference.

The 2026 graduate conference will therefore focus on research projects that (aim to) incorporate gender dimensions and aspects, as well as contributions that explore gender-related issues, either as a primary focus or in relation to adjacent themes such as feminist theory. We particularly welcome research approaches that employ interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives. Possible topics or questions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Methodological, subject-specific and theoretical reflections

To what extent do intersectional, gender and queer theoretical approaches expand or limit cultural studies perspectives and research designs? How are gender dimensions treated and which methods are used in various disciplines and fields of research? Which new insights do postcolonial and decolonial gender perspectives offer? ...

Didactic discourse and education

How is gender considered in the discourse of various subject-specific didactics and in (e.g. gender-aware and sexuality) education? To what extent is gender addressed as a subject of teaching and learning? How do gender aspects influence knowledge formation, transfer and production? ...

Cultural representations and practices

Where and how is gender negotiated or represented in literature, film, music, art and (social) media? What role do physical materiality and performativity play in the construction and staging of gender? To what extent are culture(s), religion(s) and gender interrelated, and how do they become subject of scientific analysis? ...

Historical and social dimensions

What significance does gender have in social and historical transformation processes or in political contexts (e.g. in times of anti-democratic discourse)? How can a critical examination of gender orders that challenges power and domination be achieved? How do gender relations influence access to social participation? To what extent do they simultaneously structure and shape areas such as care economies? ...

Inter- and transdisciplinary interfaces

How does gender function as a category of knowledge and analysis across disciplinary boundaries? What might an intersectional research design look like in practice? What potential and challenges arise when gender cuts across disciplines? ...

Presentations (German or English) may take up to **20 minutes** plus discussion time. Please send abstracts (max. 300 words) by **January 30, 2026** to the following e-mail address: **gfkw@mail.uni-paderborn.de** – which can also be used for inquiries. The publication of selected contributions is planned in the form of an anthology.

In addition, there will be a new panel in which we would also like to consider **student work** related to the topics of the graduate conference. We cordially invite you to contact interested students who have already written gender-related research papers, theses or term papers to inform them about the student panel and encourage them to submit their work.

We look forward to receiving numerous submissions!

With best regards from the organisers of the Graduate Conference, Dr.in Julia Diederich, Oxana Eremin and Stefanie Leinfellner together with the Graduate Forum and Graduate Centre team.