

# Gendering Global Studies

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## ABSTRACT

Gender constitutes a fundamental intersection of social power relations in processes of globalization. As such, it could be expected that gender should be a prominent focus in Global Studies which is concerned with issues of inequality and human progress. This article discusses how this engagement remains troubled in many regards and the possibilities for more focus on gender into Global Studies. Specifically, the article draws on the experience of teaching an intensive course on ‘Gendering Global Studies’ and discusses the pedagogy of teaching gender and the various challenges arising from this. Specific attention is given to the attempt to establish an inclusive learning environment; a balancing of a wide range of perspectives, particularly masculinities research and a strong conceptual focus on intersectionality; and a discussion of how a gender focus impacts on method and research practice. The article contributes to overall discussions about the nature of Global Studies; but more importantly it also seeks to highlight some of the ongoing challenges and opportunities in gender teaching in social sciences, and to offer concrete suggestions and pathways for bringing in a gender focus into Global Studies teaching.

## KEYWORDS

*terror, Global studies, gender analysis, feminist pedagogy, methodology, international relations/terror, globale studier, kønsanalyse, feministisk pædagogik, metodologi, internationale relationer*

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I have learnt a lot. At least having the clarification that Gender is not necessarily about women but power relations is really cool for me. (Comment in student evaluation, autumn 2014)<sup>1</sup>

**G**lobal Studies programmes have proliferated significantly in the last years; their broad focus, interdisciplinary perspectives and concern with issues of inequality and human progress have made them popular study choices for many students. Gender, as one of the core intersections of social power relations, could be expected to constitute a main focus in these programmes, and yet it appears that this engagement remains troubled in many regards.

This article addresses some of the core questions posed by the editors and contributors to this collection: how can we integrate gender in the curriculum, and engage students in gender discussions? Should a focus on gender be mainstreamed across different courses, or even disciplines, or should it be a distinct discipline? What are the disciplinary and methodological challenges in bringing gender into existing teaching programmes? In this article I discuss and reflect upon several key challenges for injecting a gender focus into Global Studies, drawing on the experience of an intensive course on “Gendering Global Studies” at Roskilde University.

The course title, which also serves as title for this article, might already point towards a certain agenda in bringing in more focus on gender in Global Studies teaching. While ‘gendering’, that is using ‘gender’ as verb in its gerund form, might not fully correspond with many observers’ linguistic aesthetics, it is rather useful as signifier for a programmatic, continuous engagement with an academic discipline or community.

As will hopefully become clear, setting up this course was very much a conscious and deliberate attempt to break with established patterns in the Global Studies programme in which my teaching is mainly based. As Sjöberg has pointed out quite succinctly, there is an important connection between political and pedagogical motivations: ‘The question *how* we teach gender [...] is intrinsically linked to *why* we teach gender’ (Sjöberg 2007: 338, emphasis in original).

For my course, the determination that a gender focus should be included in the overall curriculum was only the starting point; as the article will elaborate, the crucial elements were really the format and pedagogy of the course. Fundamentally, my objective was to transcend the ‘gender lecture’ phenomenon (or maybe rather pathology) that so often occurs in programmes with many introductory/overview-style courses; even in my own teaching I have reproduced this pattern. Why there are so few courses (in programmes without a clear gender studies focus) that indeed succeed in *mainstreaming* gender throughout their curriculum and sessions remains one of the key challenges for scholars trying to raise the prominence of gender issues in teaching. Institutional resistance, constraints from study programme rules and, of course, practical concerns regarding restructuring of existing syllabi and having to change one’s own and often entrenched knowledge and understanding of certain themes, probably go some way towards explaining the resilience of ‘the gender lecture’. Yet it remains, at the end of the day, a pedagogical and hence ultimately political decision to teach gender as if it was merely one issue amongst many others. I now invite the reader to engage with my experiences and reflections to consider for themselves whether my attempt at indeed gendering Global Studies is a worthwhile way forward.

The article sets out with a brief outline

of the overall Global Studies programme; subsequently, the design and objectives of the course are presented. The discussion of the concrete classroom setting then focuses on, amongst other issues, the attempt to establish an inclusive learning environment; a balancing of perspectives that include a wide range of perspectives, particularly masculinities research, as well as a strong conceptual focus on intersectionality in Global Studies; and a discussion of how a gender focus impacts on methodology, method and research practice. In addition to my own observations and literature on teaching gender, I will also draw on students' evaluations and feedback to illustrate some of the learning outcomes. The article then concludes with a broader contextualization of this experience in the context of ongoing discussions about the nature of Global Studies.

#### THE BACKGROUND – GLOBAL STUDIES

Global Studies programmes are characterized by a set of key commitments (Juergensmeyer 2013). As transnational, inter/transdisciplinary and problem-oriented programmes, they are situated within a deep historical appreciation of the emergence of global processes, while at the same time being keenly aware of the specific contemporary manifestations thereof. Global studies are, furthermore, generally positioned within a critical, multicultural understanding of global and globalization processes, with an acute interest in postcolonial and other emancipatory moments and movements. As *Theorizing Global Studies*, one of the textbooks used in many of these programmes, points out, the task of Global Studies is to bring together

voices in order to debate the processes and dynamics impacting upon all aspects of modern social life. It incorporates critical voices for whom this fundamental dynamic might not be 'globalising' at all [...] it is also inhe-

rently multidisciplinary, and incorporates a range of research areas (O'Byrne & Hensby 2011: 4).

While the intellectual profile of Global Studies as an academic discipline is still developing (Nederveen Pieterse 2013: 500),<sup>2</sup> concerted efforts are being made to discuss, define and delineate the core issues that constitute the Global Studies curriculum, most notably by the Global Studies Consortium, an international organization of graduate programmes in global studies.<sup>3</sup> Originally proposed at a workshop in Santa Barbara in 2007, the consortium meetings are attended by representatives from over forty graduate programmes in Asia, Europe, and North America.

While Gender studies are fast establishing themselves as stimulating and pluralist teaching programmes, there seems to be a curious tendency to relegate gender as analytical category into a whole catalogue of research themes, rather than understanding it as a fundamental category of social power relations intersecting with global processes (together with other social stratifications like religion, class, ethnicity, sexuality etc.). As O'Byrne and Hensby concede, gender is one of the areas where theorizing global studies requires more work:

most of the major contributors, from which ever disciplinary background, have been men, and while there have certainly been important feminist analyses of specific global problems, such as traffickings, 'honour killings' and the sexual division of labour, there is currently no systematic feminist theorization of global change per se (O'Byrne & Hensby 2011: 209).

There are of course a whole range of feminist and gender scholars whose work would provide ample material for a discussion of this claim, but even critical perspectives on e.g. global economic processes have often disregarded the contributions of feminist

theory (Waylen 2006). Moreover, methodologically many scholars remain at an individualistic level of analysis when including gender analysis, if at all, asking how global processes affect ‘women’ or ‘men’, rather than how gendered understandings, assumptions and subjectivities structure global processes themselves (Salzinger 2004: 47). At the same time, there are many Global Studies programmes that do indeed contribute to engaging their students in gender analysis.<sup>4</sup> Gender studies as such also appear to have realized the global dimension of their focus through emerging Global Gender Studies programmes; albeit apparently independently of the Global Studies consortium.<sup>5</sup>

Teaching programmes, even when they are discussed and (somewhat) coordinated at a transnational level, of course always have a local inflection that is a reflection of the teaching repertoire and research interests of local (current and previous) staff. As Nederveen Pieterse writes,

if we examine actual global studies as it is researched and taught at universities across the world, it mostly consists of an uneven agglomeration of globalization and international studies, in which disciplines predominate mainly according to how the programme has come about and which group of faculty initiates and hosts the process (2013: 504)

Focusing on the concrete Global Studies programme which provides the setting for this discussion, the lack of a sustained focus on gender in both undergraduate and graduate teaching in the “International Studies” and “Global Studies” programmes, respectively, is rather curious, given the overall number of scholars employing gender as key analytical category in their work within the department, from a development studies as well as a public administration perspective. It is indicative, though, that the Global Studies curriculum, despite best efforts to be structured in an interdisciplinary way,

has, for a long time, retained a strong International Relations (IR) bent. The challenges of incorporating, or even mainstreaming, gender into an IR curriculum have been amply discussed (e.g. Sjöberg 2007; Oestreich 2007; DeLaet 2012). For instance, in the teaching programme relevant for this article, the introduction to International Relations, a ten-weeks lecture based course, is characterized by a markedly conventional focus, following the ‘schools of thought’ approach that purports to present strands of International Relations perspectives as distinct, clearly delineated. When I joined the teaching team, gender and feminist perspectives were at least elevated to an individual session, rather than being grouped together with Marxist approaches in the ‘critical session’. In recent discussions of the course content, even this was questioned, as the male course convener argued:

On the basis of my observations in relation to our exams one area where students struggle is in relation to feminism. As this is an introductory course with many second year undergraduates I think we should consider sticking to the ‘school’ path and reserve various critical approaches – which do not constitute IP schools as such – for later.<sup>6</sup>

As other teachers have also noted, students often struggle in the beginning when presented with gender analysis because it requires them to engage with a complex and often unsettling social reality. They tend to gravitate towards e.g. realism because it is ‘easy’. Gender on the other hand does not have a set of principles that can be applied mechanically (e.g. Oestreich 2007: 328). Sjöberg also points out that the study of gender in global politics personalizes gender and IR (Sjöberg 2007: 337), which is in stark contrast to the depersonalization inherent in many perspectives predicated on, for example the public/private distinction in global processes. This depersonalization becomes apparent already in the

classroom setting. Whereas ‘traditional’ theories of International Relations allow for a comfortable separation between theoretical (and even policy) discussions and the student who is engaging in them, gender does not afford this safe distance. Rather, teaching gender perspectives, more often than not, forces students to engage with the reality that they themselves are bearers of gender. Whichever theoretical perspective on gender is applied, the confrontation with gendered realities in global politics can be unsettling for many students. What is more, gender analysis and reflective methodology often constitute challenges for students who are often rather narrowly trained in standard methodologies and methods, also through their contestation of the universalism and essentialism inherent in many social science methodologies. This, of course, is particularly the case for (neo)positivist methodologies and methods; even more problematic is the dogma of ‘value-free research’ prevalent in many social sciences. It is here that critical perspectives and emancipatory commitments of feminist research can be helpful to show to students that an insistence on ‘value-free’ research is in itself inherently prescriptive and normative. But just like there are actually possibilities for fruitful engagement with gender variables from a positivist point of departure (see e.g. Reiter 2015), there is no canon of ‘gender methodology’. Quite to the contrary, the richness and pluralism of research on gender can contribute to clarifying and buttressing its relevance.

Rather than only through a focus on substantial discussions of gender in global processes, it is through this methodological link that the course discussed in this article proceeds to familiarize with, and inspire students for gender analysis. To situate myself in this context, I have been teaching in the Global Studies programme for about four years. My academic training was interdisciplinary and strong on critical analysis from various angles (historical materialist as

well as post-structuralist). My own research focuses on the political economy of European integration as part of ongoing developments of global capitalism. It might be on anecdotal evidence but still indicative of the overall context that, within my immediate teaching group in Global Studies, whenever discussions of gender issues (or Marxism) come up people nod in my direction; a situation some readers might be familiar with.

#### THE COURSE – METHODOLOGICAL WORKSHOP “GENDERING GLOBAL STUDIES”

The course discussed in this article took place in autumn 2014, and ran again in revised form in the autumn term 2015. In 2014 it was a one-week, all-day intensive course with ca 25 participants. The formal requirements for the course were mandatory attendance and delivery of several short written reflective assignments. The format was that of a ‘methodological workshop’, intended to offer students the opportunity to develop or improve their methodological and research-related skills. The course was open to Global Studies students, as well as International Development Studies students at the master level. Students had the option to choose between this course and Fieldwork Methods, which was more geared towards Development Studies. The course description promised to ‘acquaint students with gender research by providing an overview of the richness and diversity of gender and feminist research. The sessions will touch upon epistemological and ontological concerns, research techniques as well as broader questions of how to engage with emancipatory objectives in research’.<sup>7</sup> The stated course objectives were to familiarise students with different ways of bringing a gender perspective into Global Studies; introduce students to a range of methodological issues with regard to gender/feminist perspectives, and to provide an

overview of methods that can be applied in gender perspectives, and the challenges that come with them. More broadly, I also stressed that the workshop offered students the opportunity to brush up on their general understanding of methodologies and research design – regardless of whether or not they would actually employ a gendered understanding in their work. This strong emphasis on ‘pitching’ the course not necessarily as a ‘gender’ course but as methodological training played on the latent suggestion that it would be ‘scientific’ and applied rather than a straight-out advocacy course, and seemed to resonate well with the students (and my colleagues). Crucially, the focus on methodological issues, as will be discussed later, allowed for a focus on gender in Global Studies not just as an ‘issue’ but as a fundamental way, or methodology, of understanding global processes.

In putting together the course syllabus, emphasis was put on including female authors for the core readings. The textbook used for the course was Ackerly and True (2010) *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science*. About two thirds of the chapters in the book were assigned on the syllabus; I had also encouraged students to buy the paperback version and read the other chapters. Students’ feedback on the readings was very positive. As one participant remarked,

‘[...] especially the Ackerly and True book, which was so good that I decided to buy it even though I could have found the reading online and that I might not do feminist research in my project or thesis (and already was in an overdraft).’

The book significantly contributed to the objective of the course to show to students that, at the end of the day, gender/feminist research is ‘just’ good social science research, but follows a set of methodological commitments and is based on ethics and values that might differ from other, mainly

positivist approaches. Through this, gender analysis was ‘normalised’ as good social science, rather than as being presented as something other, something outside of the purview of measures of validity and academic quality control. Hence the post-positivist, reflective methodologies employed in gender and feminist analysis in themselves are worth learning about, as one student realized:

‘The readings were very handy, and especially good that they can be applied to other fields as well, and not just on gender focus. Even though it was a gender class, I like that I can apply it to all other fields.’

Apart from the methodological readings (including also the seminal piece by Tickner 2005), the edited collection by Sjoberg (2010) *Gender Matters in Global Politics* provided the substantive context for the course, allowing students to read up on particular case studies in areas that they found interesting. This was also complemented by a range of recent articles on issues such as masculinities research (Elias & Beasley 2009; Connell 2011), queer theory (Weber 2015), and intersectionality (Lorber 2011; Walby 2011). The course was structured in a way that the sessions engaged first with conceptual issues (Sjoberg 2010b; Hansen 2010), and then discussed specific feminist, gender and queer perspectives, mainly from a Global Politics/International Relations angle. A discussion of the respective philosophy of science dimensions ran throughout these sessions. A whole session was dedicated to masculinities research as example of a vibrant gender research programme; here a colleague from the department presented his ongoing research on young fathers and concomitant issues of masculinity and manhood. In addition to the academic literature, a whole range of pictures, memes and blog posts (i.e. online sources) was used to stimulate class discussions, for instance the launch of



the UN Women HeforShe campaign in September 2014.<sup>8</sup> Subsequently, the course focused on methodology and methods, researcher positioning and ethical issues. In the evaluation, students rightly pointed towards the relative lack of attention to queer perspectives in the overall course, even though over the last decade Global Queer Studies have been generating significant insights into key international political processes (Weber 2015). This will be discussed below, also in conjunction with the significance of having included intersectionality and masculinities research in the curriculum.

#### THE (FEMINIST) COURSE PEDAGOGY – DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND RESISTANCE

Having outlined the context and format/objectives of the course, this section now discusses the most important issues with regard to pedagogy and dynamics of gender teaching in the classroom. Fundamentally, my own teaching philosophy is engendered by feminist pedagogy; that is, an approach to learning in which ‘a community of learners is empowered to act responsibly toward one another and the subject matter and to apply that learning to social action’ (Shrewsbury 1987: 6). Wherever possible, this entails not emphasizing authority, but rather encouraging discussion among the group, highlighting the *process* of learning, and challenging students’ (and the teacher’s) assumptions in class.

An important starting point is the attempt to establish an inclusive learning environment, allowing students to bring in their own identities and experiences. The group composition was such that the students came from a wide range of academic experiences, including various social sciences, but also e.g. vocational backgrounds. Among the participants registered for the course, twenty were female, and five were male. The uneven gender balance in the course is indicative of the wider challenge

to get men interested in gender analysis. The overall Global Studies programme is fairly balanced in terms of gender; the alternative to my course was a broad ‘Fieldwork methods’ course. While in the open feedback round at the end all male students indicated that they were very satisfied with the course, some of them also admitted that they initially hesitated to sign up for the course because of the gender focus. The ethnic composition of the course participants was mainly ‘Caucasian’, with about half of the students from Denmark. However there were also participants from an American Hispanic and an Indian background, who made important contributions in raising issues of race, ethnicity and caste in the discussions. Following bell hooks (1994), we briefly discussed the relevance of gender, ethnicity and positionality in the group and the overall learning environment. Within the group, there was a wide spectrum regarding previous knowledge and awareness of gender issues. The students were asked to introduce themselves and comment on any previous engagement with gender they might have had in their academic education, or within their own personal/political contexts. Several students felt the need to state very clearly that they ‘did not consider themselves feminists’, even though that was not the question I had asked them. Others expressed curiosity and interest, but were not familiar with terms like LGBTQ. A few participants on the other hand had been in Gender Studies programmes or had previous experience with gender rights activism. In the sessions, I made sure to take the students’ background into regard, and integrate their experiences into discussions and case studies. As Sjoberg points out (2007: 336), gender and feminism have an *intensely* personal resonance with students; in the class I tried to confront and accept this dimension. To this effect, I also used myself to point out challenges of gender analysis, e.g. the contradiction of critical discussions of gender-

red production processes in the global political economy while wearing H&M apparel manufactured in export processing zones by a predominantly female workforce in deplorable working conditions.

Interestingly, the students' body language in the class was much more pronounced than in other small/intensive discussion-based courses I have taught. This included expressions of surprise, and visible engagement, but more importantly also expressions of skepticism and resistance such as frowning, raised eyebrows and students sitting with their arms folded. How to deal with diversity of positions, and sometimes resistance to the course content, was one of the main challenges in the teaching context. In principle, the students had chosen to participate in the course themselves, and mandatory attendance stipulated that they had to be present all day, barring exceptional circumstances. In the attempt to establish an inclusive environment, I welcomed all students, whether they seemed interested or not; after all, if students do not show up for discussions, or simply shut down and retreat into their facebooks, there is no chance for any constructive engagement at all.

Students' reactions of resistance and skepticism towards gender/feminist teaching have been reported by many educators (see e.g. Moore 1997 for an overview). Moore here understands resistance as 'unwillingness to consider research or theories that contradict one's sense of social order' (Moore 1997). The concomitant attitudes of denial and recalcitrance act as barrier to learning; from a pedagogical perspective it is imperative (but not always easy) to find ways of engaging with these students without showing frustration. Manifestations of such resistance in the concrete course setting discussed here included one student voicing a suspicion that the course had a 'male-bashing' bias, i.e. would be derogatory towards men. Other students (who did not consider themselves femini-

sts) questioned whether inequalities between men and women still persisted, and whether we should spend time and effort studying them, at least in a Danish context. Many of these arguments were made on the basis of personal anecdotes/opinions – which meant that I had to respond to them very carefully, as I had strongly encouraged the students to participate in the course with their personal experiences, and I did not want to dismiss students' positions without sufficient discussion; in moments where students were clearly just out to be provocative it was actually other students who intervened. This resistance to identify and discuss structural forces of gender inequalities and exploitation, which necessarily goes beyond individualistic explanations (Moore 1997), constitutes a major challenge in teaching gender (similar to e.g. discussing structural racism). By emphasizing *how* to put research focus on these structural dimensions, the course was able to transcend the initial discussion of *whether* they should be analysed, and instead focused on the ways in which these inequalities can be discussed. Intersectionality here constituted a key concept – as was the analytical focus on masculinities, which seemed to assuage even the skeptical students' fears that the course would privilege women's positions. In the concluding session, we thematised the initial skepticism of some of the students, and it seemed that they had indeed changed their positions and at least understood the relevance of a gender focus. Engaging students about potential resistance can clearly reduce its impact (Moore 1997: 132). Some key challenges remain, however, in particular as it is predominantly female teachers who are doing courses with a significant gender dimension. As Moore's 1997 class exercise shows, male teachers are perceived as less biased and more authoritative in teaching gender, even when the content is essentially the same as in courses taught by a female scholar. I decided to confront this head-on by positioning myself



clearly as a feminist. My own situating within the feminist spectrum also had an effect on the course content, as well as my teaching. Coming from a historical materialist background, my own position is more standpoint than Butler, and more focused on exploitative structures than fluid gender identities. I addressed this openly, and invited students to challenge the course content, which they did on more than one occasion.

After the first few sessions, the students in general seemed to feel comfortable discussing even sensitive issues. More importantly, I had invited them to join me in reflecting on and establishing a classroom setting focused upon gender-sensitive teaching.<sup>9</sup> That is, without any formal training in gender-sensitive teaching, my main objective was to establish a setting in which male and female students would be equally supported, and that potential issues with gender in teaching would be detected and discussed by the students. As it turned out, this worked even better than I had hoped. On the third day of the course, the students initiated a discussion of the frequency with which male and female members of the group contributed to class discussions. While there were only a few male students, the group had noticed, those students were disproportionately more prominent in class, both in voicing their positions as well as responding to questions. The students rightly pointed out that there were several factors to this situation – the male students apparently being more confident and comfortable in speaking out, while many of the female students had a tendency to remain in the background. But importantly the students also suggested that I had an important function in initiating and moderating discussions, and that there might be a bias in how I did just that. My own reaction to this was part pride of my students for making this point, and part self-realisation that I did indeed tend to give the word to students who ‘had something to say’ without

reflecting on the gendered patterns of interactions this practice created. In the subsequent discussion of how to proceed, the students themselves suggested setting up a gendered speaker quota, specifically that male and female speakers should alternate. I was very happy to comply with their request, and made sure that the quota was implemented as they had specified. Only one of the group participants had previous experience with such quotas, though, and as the students found out, quotas are hard to live up to – after an enthusiastic start the conversation became slow and dragged on rather painfully, with the male students frustrated that they could not participate and the female student uncomfortable with having to make contributions that they otherwise would not have made. The students decided to cancel the quota system after the morning session. As far as teaching moments go, I could not have wished for a better opportunity to get students to reflect upon how gender played a role in their own higher education, and how difficult it was to break through these patterns.

## OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

The concrete outcome of the course was fully successful in the standard metrics of course evaluation – all students who had participated passed the course. In the student evaluations ( $n=17$ ), all students stated that they ‘were satisfied with the course’, and the overall level of the course was assessed as 4.2 out of 5. But that is just metrics; relevant for this discussion are outcomes that might be less tangible, but none the less important. The course had not resulted in all the students becoming raging feminists, nor did the majority of the students proceed with actually adopting a gender/feminist analysis perspective for their semester projects immediately after the course. There were a few participants who did decide to adopt a gender lens, though, and several of them contacted me again

during their research process with specific questions on theory and methodology. For a teaching programme where gender themes had not been prominent in students' work, this increase should in itself be seen as positive outcome of the course. There were also several students who decided on including a gender analysis for their master thesis in the subsequent semesters; one of them was subsequently nominated as 'best thesis' nominee of our Global Studies programme in the summer term 2015. Moreover, students took the overall focus of the course, the injection of a gender focus into Global Studies, with them into other courses; to this extent the strategy of Gendering Global Studies was indeed fruitful, even though it remains to be seen if this will have any bottom-up effect on the programme as such.

In my own evaluation, one of the most important outcomes was sustained by what I would call a 'pedagogy of unsettling'; that is, challenging students to reconsider and reflect upon their own assumptions about social reality, in particular with regard to global processes. Students came out of the class less certain than they had entered it. During our discussions, many students had expressed frustration and disillusion over the fragmentation of identities and experiences (e.g. when transcending the western-liberal idea of a 'global sisterhood') or the apparent lack of possibilities for political agency (e.g. in light of the many structural inequalities). In order to enable them to translate the overall course objective into positive and constructive practices, I had made a point of discussing Spivak's concept of strategic essentialism (Spivak 1985), and pointed to the role of social movements and global initiatives in the area of gender and women's rights in the concluding session. At the same time, the experience of teaching the course had also 'unsettled' me in more than one way; both as a teacher and scholar. One of the concrete outcomes of

this course for me is a determined effort to familiarize myself better with recent queer and postcolonial debates; a very welcome interdisciplinary kick in the back.

While many of the observations shared above might have been specific to this course and its participants, there are also generalizable reflections relating to pedagogy and methodology of teaching gender. One of the core issues that should be discussed here is the issue of designing and teaching the course with an explicit focus on methodology. This strategy of highlighting methodology and methods of gender analysis, and hence circumventing more 'politicised' discussions on whether and how a substantive gender focus should be included in courses, seems a promising starting point to indeed 'gender' global studies, by stealth if necessary. It is not an unproblematic approach, however, considering that it does not per se *openly* challenge the structural exclusion or neglect of gender issues in the core curriculum. There is a certain element of sad pragmatism in such a strategy; but still in my experience it was the best way of going about introducing more of a gender focus into the programme. In particular, the method of 'normalising gender' as good social science methodology also worked on my colleagues – the very existence and success of the course contributed to the realization that the students were indeed interested in this, and in creating a general climate in which bringing more gender focus into the curriculum becomes a matter of carefully discussed and negotiated steps, rather than a radical and subversive act.

It depends, however, also on an organic diffusion of the core learning outcomes; that is, on students themselves insisting on the inclusion of gender dimensions in teaching, and on applying gender analysis in their own work. To encourage them to do so, it is crucial to familiarize them with the full potential and rich diversity of gender and feminist research in a learning environ-

ment which enables them to immerse themselves in an emancipatory and pedagogically encouraging context.

### CONCLUDING OUTLOOK

Within the broader context of Global Studies, the course proved to be a useful way to raise the issue of the inclusion of gender and feminist analyses. This article has however not offered a conclusive answer as to whether gender perspectives should indeed be mainstreamed across courses or even study programmes. The distinct social science focus of the course would render it difficult to translate some of the core outcomes relevant for related disciplines. Seen in a broader perspective of the higher education context in which the Global Studies programme is based, it appears that there are several ways in which other programmes have opted to bring a gender focus to the fore, e.g. through making gender a distinct key focus such as in *Global Gender Studies*, or by means of a gender certificate that in effect allows students to mainstream gender across their own study trajectory.<sup>10</sup> Overall, it seems that there are plenty of strong and constructive ideas and strategies to promote gender as legitimate focus in and of teaching; the question of how and why to implement them hence remains mainly a political one. Unfortunately, in the current situation of Higher Education funding cuts, the overall climate within the university system points towards further specialization and professionalization of study programmes. As a broad, intersecting social category, gender is often not perceived as ‘applied’ enough to be relevant, rendering it even more difficult to argue for its inclusion. The challenges are hence even more formidable – all the more important to keep thinking, discussing and advocating for the importance of gender in our teaching.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### NOTES

1. As one of the reviewers has pointed out, given this article’s focus also on gender in the classroom setting, it would be interesting to disaggregate statements like this one according to the gender of the participant. Unfortunately, the format of the online evaluation system for the course does not allow for this.
2. See the exchange between Juergensmeyer, Norderveen Pieterse and others in the Global Studies community about ‘What is Global Studies?’ in *Globalizations* 2013, volumes 10(4) and 10(6).
3. See <http://globalstudiesconsortium.org>.
4. Within the overall group of the Global Studies Consortium, there are many examples of programmes that include particular focus on gender in courses, or even courses with a specific gender focus.
5. E.g. *Global Gender Studies* at Aalborg University, <http://www.aau.dk/uddannelser/kandidat/european-studies/specialisering/global-gender-studies>.
6. Email communication with International Politics course coordinator, 3 October 2014.
7. All quotes in this section are from the curriculum, unless otherwise stated. I would be very happy to send a copy of the 2014 curriculum, or the revised 2015 version, to interested colleagues.
8. See [www.heforshe.org](http://www.heforshe.org). I also introduced the students to the rather wonderful Feminist Ryan Gosling <http://feministryangosling.tumblr.com/> (see below for a discussion of how the ‘gender of the messenger’ has an impact...), as well as the ‘What about the Menz’ discussions on various blogs, particularly in the US.
9. This self-evaluation document for gender-sensitive teaching, developed by the Project e-equal group at the University Fribourg, is a very helpful resource for reflection and evaluation of one’s own teaching in this regard: [https://www.unifr.ch/didactic/assets/files/didactic/Eval\\_course\\_gender\\_en.pdf](https://www.unifr.ch/didactic/assets/files/didactic/Eval_course_gender_en.pdf)
10. See e.g. the Gender Certificate at Copenhagen University, <http://koensforskning.soc.ku.dk/english/gendercertificate/>

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