

# EDS of Gender and memory in high education curricula

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## EDS of Gender and memory in high education curricula <sup>(1)</sup>

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## Introduction

This report provides a brief overview of the presence of the topics addressed by the WIRE Women in Resistance project in the academic curricula of the Universities in the four countries participating in WIRE: Spain, Italy, Greece and Poland.

Moreover, basing on the experience of students participating in WIRE and their identification of educational and research needs, it highlights the innovative aspects of the project with respect to academic curricula, both from the point of view of content and proposed methodology, and makes some suggestions for implementing the positive elements that emerged during the project within university curricula.

## Methodology

To assess the presence of the WIRE project's core topics in the university curricula of the Universities of Spain, Italy, Poland and Greece, we examined the curricula and course offerings of the four universities participating in the project. The focus of the analysis was on master's and bachelor's degrees and teaching courses in women's and gender studies, but we also paid attention to the presence in the university educational offerings of the other topics covered by the WIRE program. This examination was complemented by an additional survey of academic pathways offered by other major universities present in the four WIRE countries.

In order to relate the presence of WIRE topics in academic curricula to the experience within the WIRE project of participating students, we conducted a series of activities on WIRE participation: two meetings with focus groups, a general survey and a final discussion. Students were asked to answer questions about their prior knowledge and expectations, the knowledge and skills acquired, the project results and dissemination products, and the specificity of the methodology proposed by the program.

## Women's and Gender Studies in University Educational Curricula in WIRE Countries

Women's and Gender Studies are nowadays a quite consolidated subject at Universities across Europe. Since 1995 networks of scholars, University Departments and Research Centres have been working to define the field of study and the subjects it encompasses, to develop women's and gender studies, to establish them as an academic field, to foster the opening of courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level and to set the standards of the discipline. The most important network in this sense was the Socrates thematic network ATHENA<sup>(2)</sup>, coordinated by the University of Utrecht and funded by the EU, which involved over 100 partners across Europe. The European Association for Gender Research, Education and Documentation ATGENDER continues many of the activities carried out by ATHENA<sup>(2)</sup>.

Universities in northern European countries, such as the Netherlands, Finland and the UK, host the main research centres in the field and offer different undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programs in Women's and Gender Studies. But the situation

has evolved and is still evolving and more and more Universities include in their curricula degrees and courses about women and gender topics.

To mention just some of the best practices, we recall the GEMMA master's degree and the MATILDA master's degree.

GEMMA (<https://gemmaerasmusmundus.eu/>) is an Erasmus Mundus master's degree coordinated by the University of Granada (Spain) and involving the Universities of Bologna (Italy), Utrecht (The Netherlands), Oviedo (Spain), Paris Nanterre (France), Lodz (Poland), York (UK) and the Central European University (Austria). Each University offers a curriculum in women's and gender studies in its postgraduate programs. Founded in 2006, GEMMA is the first Erasmus Mundus master in women's and gender studies in Europe and is co-funded by the EU Commission. The program is interdisciplinary and it aims at training experts and scholars in gender studies, gender equality, women's studies, paying attention to intersectionality. The program offers a double-master title to be obtained studying at two Universities of the GEMMA consortium, settled in two different European countries. The program is articulated in four semesters. It is based on a core cluster of compulsory subjects (Feminist Theory, Feminist History and Feminist Methodology), which is the same at all Universities involved in GEMMA, and on specific clusters of elective subjects for each of the participating institutions. Each University offers a specialized path in women's and gender studies. A period of mobility is compulsory: Students study two semesters at their home University and are requested to spend one semester abroad at a partner institution. The final semester is dedicated to the preparation and writing of the master's thesis and each student may choose to write his/her final work either at the home University or at the partner University abroad.

MATILDA (<https://www.univ-lyon2.fr/master-matilda-histoire-europeenne-des-femmes-et-du-genre>) is a master's degree in European Women's and Gender History from the Middle Ages to the Contemporary Age, coordinated by the University Lumière Lyon 2 (France) and involving the Central European University in Vienna and the University of Vienna (Austria), the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria), the University of Padua (Italy) and the Ruhr University Bochum (Germany). As GEMMA, MATILDA's program includes mandatory courses in theories, methodologies and practices of women's history and gender studies and specialized paths at each University. A period of mobility is mandatory.

The Trinity College Dublin is another example of best practice in the field of gender studies in Europe. Its Centre for Women's Studies at the School of History and Humanities was established in 1988 and in 1999 the Centre changed its title in Centre for Gender and Women's Studies, expanding its research topics to sexuality, masculinity and gender (<https://www.tcd.ie/cgws/>). The Centre offers a postgraduate program and a PhD program. The master's degree program examines the position and representation of gender in society, in past and present times. The course is interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary oriented, drawing on research from across the Humanities: Classics, History, Art and Architecture. The program is articulated in compulsory and elective modules. The compulsory modules include Gender Theories; Gender: Skills, approaches and research (devoted to present tools and techniques of analysis and research in the field of Gender Studies such as data collections and oral history); and the final dissertation. The elective ones include courses in classics, art, history and discourse

analysis based on a gender perspective. The elective module Gender, War and Peace discussing and criticising some common gendered assumption about war, peace, masculinity and femininity appears particularly interesting for the topics at the centre of the WIRE project.

This report aims to ascertain the presence of women's and gender studies at universities in the four countries participating in the WIRE project, starting with the university coordinating the project, the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and the three other universities where participating students are enrolled: the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), the University of Bologna (Italy), and the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (Poland).

For these four universities, both bachelor's degrees and master's degrees were examined, trying to identify which university programs offer women's and gender studies courses. The focus was on faculties and departments of Humanities, Social Sciences, Law and Education; however, it should be noted that some universities offer courses with gender slant and content in Psychology curricula and also in some science curricula such as Medicine. The tables show for each course the credits according to European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), if available, and whether the course is compulsory (C) or elective (E).

To get a more nuanced view of the academic curricula in the four WIRE countries, we extended the search to other universities for each country, selecting them according to their position in the QS World University Rankings, through the channels of the main research networks dealing with women's and gender studies and discussing with scholars and faculty who are part of the WIRE team and active in the four countries.

In addition to bachelor's and master's degrees and courses, we have also pointed out some research centres that offer students the opportunity for in-depth study, and the presence of some PhD programs in Women's and Gender Studies.

### *Spain*

The Autonomous University of Barcelona (<https://www.uab.cat/>), coordinator of the WIRE project, has a bachelor's degree in Socio-Cultural Gender Studies. Besides some compulsory general courses in Anthropology, Sociology, Social Analysis, Law, most of the mandatory courses of this program deal with gender topics in different fields of study and in different contexts. Among the compulsory courses there are Education and Gender; Language and Gender; Gender and Law; Gender, Families and Educational Institutions; Gender and Social Structure; Gender and Mass Media; Sociology of Gender; Feminist Theory; Patriarchal Violence; International and European Protection of Women's and LGTBIQ+ Rights; Culture Studies from a Gender Perspective. In addition students may choose among a range of elective gender courses such as Modern History of Women; Socio-cultural Representation of Masculinities; Globalisation and Gender; Audiovisual Narrative with a Gender Perspective; Crime and Women, etc.

The University is furthermore partner of an inter-university master's degree program in Women, Gender and Citizenship Studies which includes compulsory courses such as Feminist Analysis of Law; Feminist Theory; History of Feminism; Welfare, Families and Gender, and elective courses such as Construction of Bodies, Feminist Research Methodology, Gay, Lesbian and Queer Studies, History of Women, Inequalities,

Globalization and Gender, Language, Gender and the Media. The program is coordinated by the University of Barcelona

Gender Studies are present also in other bachelor's or master's degrees of the University.

### **Bachelor's Degrees**

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Type</i>
Philosophy	Philosophy and Gender	6	E
History	Archaeology of Women	6	E
	History and Gender in Ancient Times	6	E
	History of Women in the Middle Ages	6	E
	History and Gender in the Early Modern Age	6	E
	History and Gender in the Modern Age	6	E
Art History	Art and Gender	6	E
Social and Cultural Anthropology	Anthropology of Gender	6	C
Primary Education	Teaching the Social Science from a Gender Perspective	6	E
Contemporary History, Politics and Economics	The Perspective of Gender in the Contemporary World	6	C
Journalism	Communication and Gender Studies	6	E
Sociology	Gender and Ethnicity	6	C
	Sociology of Gender	6	E
	Sociology of Identity	6	E

Beside its master's degree programs, the Autonomous University of Barcelona offers several inter-university master's degree programs, with the possibility to attend elective courses at one of the partner Universities.



**Master's Degrees**

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Type</i>
Social Policy, Employment and Welfare	Employment, Gender and the Social Organisation of Care	6	C
	Policies for Equality between Men and Women in Europe	6	E
Care Philosophies (inter-university)	Care and Gender	6	C
Contemporary History (inter-university)	Women, Gender and History in Contemporary Spain	5	E
	Femininity and Masculinity in the Contemporary Age	5	E
	Women in Contemporary Spain	5	E
	Women, Rural and Urban World	5	E
	Gender and Historical Research	5	E
	History of Gender Relations in Contemporary Societies	5	E
	History of Sexuality in Latin America	5	E
	Gender Relations and Identities in Contemporary History	5	E
International Development (inter-university)	Gender, Security and Development (in English)	4	E
	Gender Regimes in the Aftermath of the 'Arab Spring' (in English)	4	E
	Gender, Security and Peace (in English)	4	E
Youth and Society (inter-university)	Women and Space	5	E
	Contemporary Perspectives on Communication, Gender and Sexuality	5	E
	Gender, Sexuality and Love in the Urban Globalized Society	6	E
Comparative Literature: Literary and Cultural Studies	Gender and Sexuality Studies	10	E

English Studies: Linguistic, Literary and Sociocultural Perspectives	Gender and the Body in Narrative Discourse	5	E
Research in Education	Gender Mapping: Transitions and Identities in Research	6	E
	Critical Education and Diversity through the Arts and the Body	6	E
Media, Communication and Culture	Identities, Diversity and Intercultural Coexistence	6	E
	Gender, Communication and Social Change	6	E

The Autonomous University of Barcelona offers also courses about other WIRE's topics: for instance Modern History of Spain: Franco and Democracy; Fascism, Populism and National Populism in the 20th Century; 20<sup>th</sup>-century Dictatorships and Democracies in the undergraduate degree in History; Theory of Democracy; From Fascism to National-populism; Contemporary History of Spain (from the Civil War to Democracy) in the undergraduate program in Contemporary History, Politics and Economics. In the interuniversity master's degree in Contemporary History at the Autonomous University of Barcelona the offering includes Dictatorship, Society and Politics; Transitions to Democracy in the 20th Century; Contemporary War and Political Violence; WW2 and the New European Order, History, Historiography, Memory: the Spanish Civil War.

In Spain, the University of Granada (<https://www.ugr.es>) coordinates the aforementioned Erasmus Mundus GEMMA master's degree program, offering courses in the compulsory track in feminist and gender history methodology and theory, and in its specific curriculum elective courses in Gender, Art and Literature: the Representation of Women in Literary and Visual; Women's Education in Contemporary World; Gender, Body and Women in Western History; Gender and Peace; Social Work and Social Intervention with a Gender Perspective; Documentary and Bibliographic Sources for Women's Studies.

Also the University of Oviedo (<https://www.uniovi.es/>) is a member of the GEMMA consortium. At Oviedo students follow the compulsory courses and may choose among optional courses focusing on Nation and Gender; Post-colonialism, Diasporas and Representations; Space, Body, Gender; Women, Film and the Visual Arts; Violence against Women: Psychological and Social Analysis; Cultural Diversity, Diasporas and Globalization.

Two additional master's degree programs in gender studies are offered by the Complutense University of Madrid (<https://www.ucm.es/>): Gender Studies and LGBTIQ+ Studies.

PhD program in gender studies are offered by the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Gender Studies: Cultures, Societies and Politics), the University of Oviedo (Gender and Diversity), the Autonomous University of Madrid (<https://www.uam.es/>) with other

seven Spanish Universities (Interdisciplinary Gender Studies), the University of Valencia (<https://www.uv.es/>) (Gender-based Studies and Equality Policies), the University of Granada (Women’s Studies, Gender Discourses and Practices), the Complutense University of Madrid (Feminist and Gender Studies).

Research centres on women’s, gender and feminist studies are active at several Spanish universities, e.g. the University of Granada (<https://www.ugr.es/en/research/facilitites/the-institute-of-womens-and-gender-studies>), the University of Valencia (<https://www.uv.es/uvweb/university-institute-women-studies/en/university-institute-women-studies-1285942729174.html>); seven Catalan universities, including the Autonomous University of Barcelona, have established the Inter-University Women’s and Gender Studies Institute (<https://www.iedg.org>), which supports the inter-university master’s degree program in Women, Gender and Citizenship Studies.

Regarding other topics touched upon by WIRE we point out that the Autonomous University of Barcelona hosts the Study Centre on Dictatorships and Democracies and that several Spanish universities conduct research and offer courses on the relationship between history and memory, the Spanish Republic, the Spanish Civil War, Francoism and the transition to democracy. For example, the already mentioned inter-university course in Contemporary History offers, among others, the following courses: Authoritarianism, Resistances and Democracies; Social and Cultural History of Dictatorships: Francoism and Fascisms; Narratives and Perspectives on the Spanish Civil War; Violence, Trauma and Historical Truth; Dictatorship and Memory in the 20th Century.

### Greece

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (<https://en.uoa.gr>) has no specific degree programs in women’s and gender studies, but it does offer courses on these topics in its undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

### Bachelor’s Degrees

Degree	Course	ECTS	Type
History	Hunting Witches in the West, 1550-1750		E
	Family and gender in the early modern Greek world (15th-19th c.)		E
Law	Family Law	6	C
	Feminism and Law	4	E
Sociology	Theories of Gender and Gender Discrimination		C
	Thematic Unit: Gender, Body, Sexuality: Social Policy for Gender Equality; Gender-based		E

	Violence; Sociology of the Body; Sexuality and Power		
	Gender and Sports		E
Political Science	Gender, Society and Politics		E
	Sociology of Family		E
Philosophy and History of Science	Gender, Society, Technology (in English)	5.5	
Early Childhood Education	Sociology of the Body	5	E
	Gender Theories	5	E
	Gender and Cultural Practises	5	E
	Gender, body, otherness	5	E
	Occupation and Employment Gender	8	E

### Master's Degrees

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Type</i>
Political Science and Sociology	Equality and Its Interpretations		E
	Issues in the Sociology of the Body		E
Science, Technology, Society	Gender, Society, Technology	6	E
Education and Human Rights	Social Inequalities, Human Rights and Education		C
	Femininities and Masculinities in the 21st Century		E
Modern and Contemporary History and History of Art	Gender and Society in 19th and 20th Century Europe		E
	Women's History in Twentieth-Century Greece		E
History of Philosophy and Ideas (in English)	Greek Philosophy and Gender	10	C
Political Philosophy	Politics and Gender	10	E

National and Kapodistrian University also offers some courses related to the history of World War II and the Resistance, or totalitarianism (Greece in the Second World War:

Occupation, Resistance, Liberation in the undergraduate program in History; Racism, Fundamentalism, Totalitarianism in the postgraduate program in Political Philosophy).

In Greece we find a master's degree program in Gender Studies at the University of the Aegean (<https://www.aegean.edu/>), entirely focused on gender studies with courses ranging from Gender Theories to History of Crime and Violence; Language, gender and sexuality; Historical approaches to Gender; Gender and Material Cultures. Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences of Athens (<https://www.panteion.gr>) offers an inter-department master's degree in Gender, Society, Policy, involving the departments of Sociology, Social Anthropology, Communication, International, European and Area Studies, Social Policy, and Public Administration. Panteion University hosts also a Centre for Gender Studies (<https://www.genderstudies.panteion.gr/en/>).

As in other examined countries, at Greek Universities, a part from specific master's degrees, other courses on women's and gender studies are offered in general degree programs in the Humanities and Social Sciences, without a specific expertise in the field: for example we find History of Sexuality: European and Greek Perceptions, 19th-20th Century or Anthropology of Gender in the undergraduate program in Social Anthropology and History at the University of the Aegean, Gender and Multicultural Studies in the undergraduate program in Sociology at the Athens State University (<https://www.athens.edu/>), Gender and Education in the undergraduate program in Philosophy and Education at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (<https://www.auth.gr>).

Among the research centres, mention should be made of the Gender Lab at the University of Crete (<https://www.eif.uoc.gr>), which collaborates with the departments of Sociology, Philosophy and Social Science, History and Archaeology.

### *Italy*

The University of Bologna (<https://www.unibo.it>) is part of the GEMMA consortium and offers an international curriculum in Women's and Gender Studies in the context of the master's degree in Modern, Post-Colonial and Comparative Literatures. To the compulsory subjects of the core cluster, which are Feminist Theory, Feminist Methodology and Feminist History (articulated in Women's Movements Worldwide and Feminist Historiography), the curriculum at Bologna University adds elective subjects in the field of Gender and Literature such as Women's Literature in different countries, including Italy and Spain; Women's Travel Literature; Women and Science; Women Painters; Methods, Sources, Research and Documentation for Women's Studies; Women and Social Sciences.

With the exception of the Master GEMMA, courses in women's and gender studies are present in more than one address, but the offerings are fragmented across several undergraduate and postgraduate programs, which nonetheless allow students to choose pathways with an approach to gender issues and studies and offer insights into women's history in different contexts and time periods. Below are the courses in women's and gender studies found in different undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

## Bachelor's Degrees

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Type</i>
History	History of Women's Political thought	6	E
	History of Women	6	E
	Women's History in the Classical World	6	E
	History, Society and Family	6	E
Philosophy	Gender and Social Studies of Science	12	E
Drama, Art and Music Studies	Gender Studies	12	E
Anthropology, Religions, Oriental Civilizations	History, Society and Family	6/12	E
Sociology	Gender Studies	10	E
Social Work	Sociology of Family and Gender Differences	6/12	E
	Laboratory on gender violence	3	E
Expert in Social and Cultural Education	Sociology of Family and Gender Differences	8	C
	Gender studies in Education	4	E
	Education in Affectivity and Sexual Relations	8	E
	Gender and Science Cultures	8	E
Educator in Childhood Social Services	Pedagogy of Families and Gender Differences	8	E
European Studies (in English)	Minor in Gender Studies:	18	E
	Gender and Communication; Intercultural Gender Studies; Gender and Sociology		

## Master's Degrees

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Type</i>
Legal Studies	Gender and the Law (in English)	6	E
Modern, Post-Colonial and Comparative Literatures	Women's History in the Contemporary Age	6	E
Global Cultures	Feminist Critiques of Political and Social Thoughts	6	E
Italian Culture and Language for Foreigners	Women's History in the Contemporary Age	6	E
East European and Eurasian Studies (in English)	Gender and Social Movements in Eurasia	4	E
Sociology and Social Work	Applied Gender Studies (in English)	6	E
	Gender and Governance	6	E
	Laboratory on gender violence	3	E

With respect to the other topics addressed by WIRE, the University of Bologna has a master's degree program in International Cooperation on Human Rights and Intercultural Heritage that offers courses such as Memory and Heritage in an Intercultural Perspective or Elements of Urban Space: Memory, Myth, Identity, as well as a master's degree program in East European and Eurasian Studies with courses on Post-socialist Transition and EU Enlargement Eastwards, Memory, Movements and Identity, and Remapping the Post-Soviet Space.

The TRAME Research Centre on Memory Studies and Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage at the University of Bologna is worth mentioning (<https://centri.unibo.it/trame>). The Centre studies memory through the analysis of practices of codification, transmission, preservation, representation and communication of the past. Special attention is paid to individual and collective memory in conflict and post-conflict contexts, and to memory of political violence and cultural trauma.

The other topics central to WIRE such as World War II, fascist regimes, and Resistance movements are not covered in stand-alone courses, but generally find space within contemporary history courses.

Other universities in Italy offer courses in gender studies in their curricula. The University of Padua (<https://www.unipd.it/>) is a member of the MATILDA master's degree consortium. La Sapienza University of Rome (<https://www.uniroma1.it/it/pagina-strutturale/home>) offers a master's degree in Gender Studies, Cultures and Policies for Media and Communication with mandatory courses in Gender and Language, Gender and Media, Sociology of Gender, and optional

courses in Literature from a Gender Perspective; New Rights, Difference and Gender; Victimological Perspectives in Gender-based Violence; Groups Interactions and Social Construction of Identities. It offers as well a master's degree in Social planning for sustainability, innovation, and gender inclusion.

However, except for these specialized masters, the situation is similar to that seen for the University of Bologna, with single courses in gender studies and women's history in different undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs: for example we find an elective course in Gender History in the master's degree in History, an elective course in Gender Studies in the master's degree in Linguistic, Literary and Translation Studies, an elective course in Feminism Philosophies and Gender Studies in the master's degree in Philosophy, an elective course titled The Toolbox against gender Violence in the bachelor's degree in Sociology.

A similar situation is found at the University of Turin (<https://www.unito.it>) where, however, there is the Interdisciplinary Centre for Research on Women's and Gender Studies (<https://www.cirsde.unito.it>), which since the 2000s has been publishing a catalogue in which it brings together all of the University's courses that deal with gender issues or have a gender-based approach in order to offer students the possibility of navigating the educational offerings on these topics, beyond their chosen curriculum. The Centre also offers Gender and Violence Studies workshops for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from the University of Turin and an online course, built through video lectures by faculty from the University of Turin or other universities.

Gender research centres are present in other Italian universities, such as in Catania (<https://www.unict.it>; <https://www.genus.unict.it/>) or Trento (<https://www.unitn.it>; <https://www.unitn.it/csg/>). In Milan, six universities (University of Milan-Bicocca, University of Milan, Polytechnical University Milan, University of Commerce Bocconi, IULM University, University Vita-San Raffaele) have established the Inter-University Research Center Cultures of Gender to support studies, research, initiatives and projects on gender issues (<https://www.culturedigenere.it/>).

As for PhD programs in gender studies, we recall that of the Aldo Moro University of Bari (<https://www.uniba.it>) in Gender Studies and that of the University of Naples Federico II (<https://www.unina.it>) in Mind, Gender, Languages.

The field of memory studies is also developing in Italian universities. In addition to the aforementioned TRAME Centre at the University of Bologna, mention should be made of the Laboratory on Memory Studies LIMS at the University of Trento (<https://lims.unitn.it/it/home-it>). Both Centres are part of the International Association of Memory Studies and participate in research activities both nationally and internationally, collaborating with other University centres active in this field.

### **Poland**

Jagiellonian University in Krakow (<https://en.uj.edu.pl>) does not present undergraduate and postgraduate programs entirely devoted to women's and gender studies, however, it does offer several courses dedicated to these topics.



**Bachelor's Degrees**

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Type</i>
History	History of Family in the 19th and 20th Century	3	E
Sociology	Local and Global (De)Constructions of Sexuality	3	E
	Sociology of Gender	3	E
	Feminism: Local and Global Perspectives	3	E
	Women in the Roman Catholic Church	4	E
	Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Society	4	E
	Equality Policies	4	E
	Introduction to Feminist Theories	3	E
	Gender and Democracy in Poland (in English)	5	E
	Gender and Law (in English)	5	E
	Gender Equality in Higher Education and Science	3	E
European Studies (in English)	HerStory: Women's Rights and Feminist Movements in the Different Countries of the European Union	5	E

**Master's Degrees**

<i>Degree</i>	<i>Course</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Type</i>
History	The Category of Gender in Historical Research	3	C
Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology	Feminist and Gender Anthropology	3	E
Sociology	Feminist Reconfigurations	3	E
	Sociology of Sex Work	4	E
European Studies (in English)	Gender, Democracy and Citizenship in CEE	5	E
Social Change Management	Gender Studies	2	E

In addition to these, we find courses related to the other topics of interest to WIRE, such as courses on memory studies and those on totalitarianism and the two world wars, within which the topics of everyday life and the phenomena of opposition and resistance, including in relation to women, are also covered. In the undergraduate program in History students find among the elective courses: In the shadow of Totalitarianism. History of Europe between the two World Wars; Poland 1918-1945. State and Society; History of Poland in the 20th Century; Experience of Life in a Totalitarian System; History and Memory; while in the postgraduate program in History they may choose The Doctrine of Totalitarianism on the Example of Italian Fascism and German National Socialism; Memory and Cultural Heritage Studies. The undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Sociology offer elective courses in Rebellions, Protests, Revolutions: grassroots mobilizations for change and Sociology of change and social movements.

Regarding other Polish Universities, we would like to mention that the University of Lodz (<https://www.uni.lodz.pl>) is part of the GEMMA consortium. The specific optional curriculum offered at Lodz includes Gender and Welfare State; Human Rights and Gender; Introduction to Gender in Postmodern Visual Culture; War and Imperialism: Feminist and Postcolonial Perspectives on Nationalism; Gender Representations in Advertising; The Body in the Feminist Theory and Practice.

In addition, the University of Warsaw (<https://en.uw.edu.pl/>) in its curricula offers several elective courses in Gender and Women's Studies: for example Gender and the Media; Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies; Introduction to Gender Linguistics; Sexuality, Gender and the Cold War; Nation and Gender; Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality; Gender and Work; Gender and Social Theory; Women's Rights; History of Women's Emancipation in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Poland; Women Art and Society in the European Socialist States.

As for the Research Centres, we recall the Centre of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies at the University of Warsaw (<http://iss.uw.edu.pl/en/osrodek-badan-nad-spoiecznymi-problemami-plci/>), and the Centre for Research on Women Participation in Public Space at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (<https://amu.edu.pl>; <https://amu.edu.pl/en/research/research-centres-and-labs>).

Regarding the other topics of interest to WIRE, at the Faculty of Polish Studies at Jagiellonian University there is the Research Centre for Memory Cultures (<https://kulturympamieci.polonistyka.uj.edu.pl/>), an educational, teaching and research unit that deals with individual and collective memory and cultural studies, focusing especially on Central and Eastern Europe. The University of Warsaw hosts the Centre for Research on Social Memory (<https://crsm.uw.edu.pl>) which has an expertise in the Eastern and Central European context and researches on how groups and societies make sense of their pasts, dealing with the memories of wars and socio-political transformations, as well as with memory politics, transmission of history and memory, and use of history and memory in the public space and discourse. The Centre is partner of the network Plurality of Memories in Europe in a Global Perspective ([https://www.europeanpluralities.uw.edu.pl/projects/project\\_memory/](https://www.europeanpluralities.uw.edu.pl/projects/project_memory/)) which involves scholars from six European Universities: Warsaw, Paris Sorbonne (France), Heidelberg (Germany), Charles University (Czech Republic), Copenhagen (Denmark) and Milan (Italy). Another research centre for memory studies is active at the University

of Social Sciences and Humanities of Warsaw: The Centre for Comparative Research on Memory Cultures focuses on memory studies, visual culture studies, historical trauma contexts, nationalism and memory (<https://english.swps.pl>).

### **General Remarks**

Educational offerings in Women's and Gender Studies appear to be present in the universities of the four countries participating in WIRE and specifically in the four universities participating in the program. However, except for a few bachelor's and master's degrees, including those of the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Bologna among the WIRE participating universities, it appears uneven and fragmented. Most of the offerings in Gender Studies are represented by single courses within the different curricula of study, especially in History, Humanities and Social Sciences. It should also be mentioned that, compared to the total number of courses offered by the different universities, women's and gender studies courses are a rather small percentage.

In addition, almost all the courses are electives, so students must choose to include them in their curriculum. Curricula, however seem to be not really flexible and this means that generally a student enrolled in a specific degree may choose among the courses offered by the degree program or by the school or faculty which hosts the degree but not among all courses.

The result is a situation in which women's and gender studies remain confined to a minority position within the educational offerings of universities; a situation in which only some students, probably moved by personal interest in this field of study, encounter women's and gender studies courses in their university career; and a situation in which knowledge in this area risks remaining limited to the content of one or two courses, without allowing students to acquire real expertise and become scholars in the field.

Another consideration with respect to the WIRE project's core topics concerns the slant and content of several courses in women's and gender studies offered by the universities under consideration, in which the interweaving of women's history, memory studies, and historical context related to 20<sup>th</sup>-century dictatorships and anti-totalitarian opposition phenomena with a focus on women's participation and role in resistance movements is generally missing.

### **WIRE: An Innovative Project for Learning and Teaching (Gender) History**

Forty university students, 10 from Greece, 10 from Italy, 10 from Poland and 10 from Spain, took part in the WIRE Women in Resistance project. 23 reported identifying with the female gender, 15 with the male gender, 1 reported identifying with other gender, and 1 preferred not to declare. The participants' ages ranged from 20 to 26. The students are enrolled at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, at the University of Bologna, at the Jagiellonian University of Krakow, and at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, with the majority in the first cycle of undergraduate studies and some in the secondary cycle. The bachelor's and master's degree programs are those in History (in majority), Humanities and Social Sciences.

The project's objectives were to analyse and disseminate the importance of anti-totalitarian resistance movements in Europe, focusing on the participation of women in the opposition and resistance, in order to establish a link between academic knowledge of the role of women in resistance movements and the promotion of historical awareness among the students participating in the program and among the general public. The program is multidisciplinary, it intertwines Women's and Gender Studies with Memory Studies and it has developed a specific methodology based on a variety of educational activities to be carried out by the participants in four stages of a Memory Route. Each stage has taken place in one of the participant countries and during each stage students have been involved in memory walks, seminars and laboratories, production of podcasts and historical games, etc., having a direct contact to history and learning it through innovative methods. The activities have been prepared and conducted by experts and educators working at WIRE's partner institutions with the collaboration of scholars in women's, memory and resistance studies and university professors working at the four Universities involved.

WIRE's goals were:

- to give the participants insights into women's and gender studies in the specific context of anti-totalitarian resistance in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe,
- to train students in new methods and tools in order to help them in their future path at the University,
- and to empower them to become mediators of WIRE's content and results towards a wider public.

The experience within the WIRE program is thus different from the usual university study, and therefore it is interesting to examine the main elements of distance and proximity between the content and methodologies present in the university setting and those present in the project.

### **Focus Groups**

In order to assess the experience within the WIRE project of the participating students and relate it to the presence of WIRE topics in the academic curricula, online meetings with two focus groups were organized in the initial stages of the project, after the first two stages of the Memory Route in Poland and Greece. The first focus group was attended by eight students and the second by six students from the four project countries.

The meeting with the first focus group focused on motivations for participating in WIRE and expectations with respect to the project.

Students indicated interest in history in general and specific interest in women's history as motivations behind their decision to take part in WIRE. Some students referred to prior knowledge of women's history or women's participation in resistance in their home countries and motivated their joining WIRE with a desire to broaden their gaze to other national realities in order to increase their knowledge from a comparative and transnational perspective. The international character and multicultural perspective of the project played an attractive function toward the students, who were interested in confronting other realities and learning about their national histories.

The gender-based perspective of the project with its focus on women in the resistance movements of the four WIRE countries was seen by participants as a means to look at history from a different perspective than the usual male-centred one, and to challenge established national historical narratives by testing the impact on such narratives of a history that includes women as protagonists. Finally, students found the opportunity to learn about history outside the university setting and through the use of new methodologies, tools and techniques stimulating.

Regarding expectations with respect to the project, students indicated broadening their knowledge about the history of their home country, the history of other countries, the history of women, and the history of various resistance movements against totalitarianism during World War II and in the post-war period. Participants also said they expected to be able to participate in research and in-depth study, debates, and meetings with experts and witnesses, and to be able to increase their skills in the use of innovative tools and practices in the study and communication of history. Some students emphasized their interest in making their country's women's history known beyond national borders, and, more generally, in increasing attention to the role of women in history, contributing to reformulate the historical narrative.

The innovative nature of the products to be produced in the course of the project (podcasts, historical games, online exhibition) and the public history aspects of WIRE were indicated as useful elements in reaching a wide audience, including non-specialists, with positive spin-offs in terms of dissemination of the project's results and general knowledge about the history of anti-totalitarian resistance movements in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe and the history of women in these movements specifically.

In the meeting with the second focus group, we asked the students what prior knowledge they had on the topics covered by WIRE and whether they had learned such knowledge at the university; we also asked them how participation in the WIRE project could enrich their knowledge and influence their university course.

Most of the students had no knowledge about topics at the core of WIRE or had only general knowledge. Only a few students had prior knowledge about the topics covered by WIRE, learned partly through participation in university courses, partly outside the academic sphere, for example through participation in associations (e.g., scouts) or cultural initiatives, or through their schooling prior to enrolling in the university.

Those of them who had knowledge acquired in university had taken general courses on feminism and feminist theories, courses in gender studies, courses with a focus on the biographical paths of the protagonists of historical events, and courses on totalitarianisms in Europe, dictatorships, and resistance movements in their countries; however, these courses did not offer a specific focus on the role of women in anti-totalitarian resistance movements in Europe.

Students stated that they expected participation in WIRE to broaden their knowledge of gender issues, the role and agency of women in history, the motivations and dynamics of resistance movements, and to deepen their understanding of women's participation in opposition against totalitarianism. The transnational perspective adopted by the project was valued for comparing different historical narratives and representations on totalitarianism, resistance movements, and women's history. The students did, however, note the differences between the situation in the Mediterranean

European countries, Greece, Spain, and Italy, and that of Poland, the only Eastern European country involved in the project, with respect to the concepts of totalitarianism and resistance and with respect to the periodization to be adopted to study specific national cases.

Participants also showed expectations in relation to comparing different methodological and curricular approaches in the study of history in the four WIRE member countries. In addition, students said they were confident that they would be able to learn new skills and competencies in the use of digital tools and new technologies, as well as in the realization of various types of historical content-based products (e.g., games or podcasts), public history activities, and in the communication of history. The enrichment in terms of knowledge and the acquisition of new skills were defined as expendable in the completion and continuation of university studies, in teaching application, and in teaching, and were considered useful in bringing non-specialist audiences closer to history, assuming that WIRE would disseminate its results outside the project context and the academic sphere.

### Survey

After the third stage of the Memory Route in Italy, all 40 participants were asked to answer to an anonymous questionnaire.

Students were asked to compare their experience within the WIRE project with that of their studies at university and to highlight the innovative aspects of the methodology applied in the project.

Through the same questionnaire, the degree of satisfaction of the participants, the strengths and main positive aspects of the project, any negative aspects and critical elements identified by the students were also surveyed.

Students were also asked what the spin-offs of WIRE might be in terms of dissemination and on future prospects for their careers and for women's and resistance studies.

Participation in the questionnaire was voluntary, and 27 students responded, from all four countries involved in WIRE, accounting for 68% of the total participants. 70% of the questionnaire respondents identified with the female gender, 30% with the male gender. 85% of the questionnaire respondents are enrolled in a bachelor's degree program; the most prevalent field of study is History.

All participants in the questionnaire learned about WIRE and the possibility of participating in the project through university channels: the majority directly from a professor involved in the project or willing to present it within his or her classes; a minority learned about WIRE through other students who had decided to participate in the program. However, the encounter with WIRE took place within general courses in contemporary history, anthropology, methodology of history, and only in some cases within specific university courses on the topics covered by WIRE. Among these we can mention the courses taken by students at the University of Athens on the Nazi occupation in Greece and the period of the military dictatorship and the forms of opposition and resistance against it, including those developed by students and women.

Regarding the specific content of WIRE:

- more than half of the survey participants had not had the opportunity to take university courses in gender studies, women's history, women's role in resistance movements before entering the program;
- just over a quarter had taken undergraduate courses in gender studies with a historical slant or related to other university curricula (e.g. social sciences). The focus was however on history of women in contemporary times, without specific reference to war or resistance; on the other hand courses on the history of resistance movements made no mention of women's participation; other courses addressed women's history in historical periods other than WW2 and the post-war period;
- fewer than a quarter had taken college courses on the topics developed by the WIRE project.

The questions regarding the methodology adopted by WIRE returned interesting responses in terms of comparison with academic curricula and the teaching of history at the university.

Most respondents to the questionnaire had no prior experience of the methods and practices of studying history through workshops and group work, nor of developing digital or educational products with historical content. The few students who did have such experiences had acquired them in extra-university activities: one in associations, two in the development of board and mobile games, and one had used testimonials and memorial sources during her schooling prior to college. Only one student had attended a university course in Innovative Didactics for School and Out-of-School by participating in group work and contributing to the construction of teaching units.

The activities proposed to the project participants during the Memory Route stages and in the periods between the stages were diversified and aimed at providing an innovative approach to the study of history through

- direct contact with history, places, sources and protagonists;
- the use of different types of sources and historical traces;
- the participation of students in the implementation of the activities;
- the stimulation of reasoning, discussion and expression;
- the creation of concrete and usable products
- and the involvement of the participants on an emotional level as well.

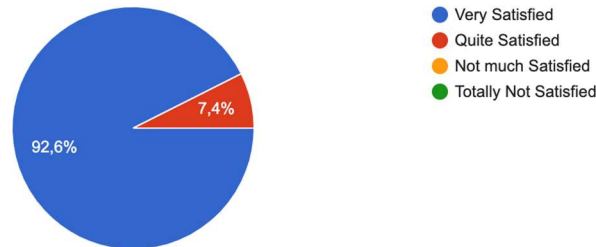
In this sense, WIRE was proposed as a program capable not only of conveying historical content and knowledge and developing skills in participants, but also of enriching students on the level of personal experience.

The overall degree of satisfaction with the project was very high: as can be seen from the graph below, almost 93% of survey participants said they were very satisfied and more than 7% quite satisfied. The absence of negative or partially negative ratings is striking.

If you were to rate your overall WIRE experience on a scale from "A lot" to "Not at all," where would you land?

 Copia grafico

27 risposte



The positive aspects emphasized by most of the students who responded to the questionnaire are:

- the possibility of exchanging opinions and confronting different perspectives and points of view on history and on certain concepts such as dictatorship, freedom, totalitarianism, violence, resistance, liberation, solidarity, which may change according to individual and collective perceptions related to historical experience and to the placement of a particular theme or concept in different national narratives;
- group work and cooperation;
- the laboratory character;
- the interdisciplinary slant;
- the variety of methodology and products produced during the program;
- the direct contact with the places of history and memory;
- the use of archival sources and testimonies;
- the approach to history through biography;
- the practical implications of the activities carried out directly by the students and others connected with the project with the creation of biographies, online exhibitions, podcasts, historical-educational games, videos, theatrical products, publications, educational and popular products.

If we look at university curricula set on the transmission and acquisition of knowledge in terms of theory and content, and the still-prevalent methodology of the frontal lecture, we notice how the approach taken by WIRE is highly innovative. Some of the definitions of the project given by the students participating in the survey were significantly: "a journey into the past"; "history made interesting and accessible"; "a project that opens our eyes to otherness"; "a community reflecting on the past"; "a new way of presenting history"; and "new methods for learning history."

In terms of methodology and teaching of history, fieldwork, group and laboratory work, horizontal teaching and learning, inclusion, learning by doing, immersive contact with history, and the maieutic approach that enables participants to reflect and work on the past without necessarily having prior knowledge should definitely be emphasized.

Among the critical elements, students participating in the survey highlighted the lack of time to complete some complex activities that would have required more initial preparation; the lack of dynamism of some activities of a more academic nature such

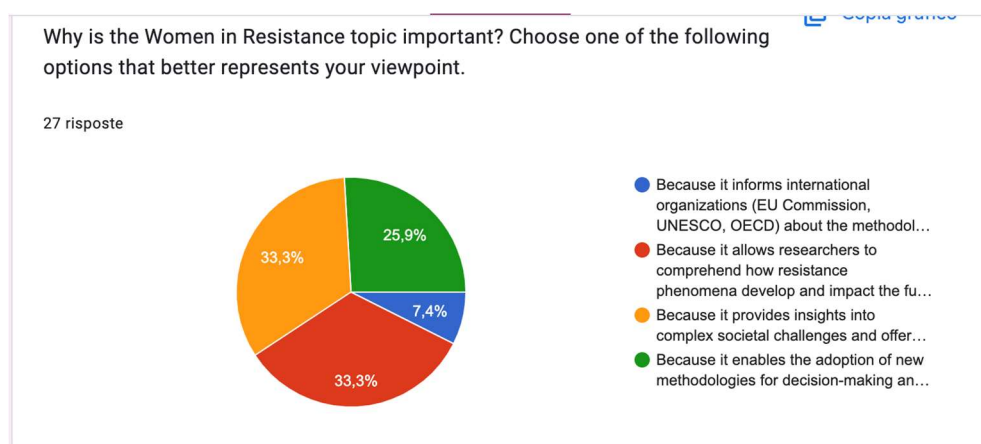


as lectures; and the not always clear connection between the activities and the theoretical and knowledge content of the topics covered in the project.

One aspect that was seen as a challenge but also as a possible source of friction among participants is related to the difficulties that can arise in group work in terms of communication, balancing roles and tasks, and ensuring that everyone can participate effectively by expressing his or her opinion. Prominent among the critical issues is the emphasis on the need to spread out the project time in the different stages of the Memory Route, in order to avoid the concentration of many activities in a relatively short time and to be able to facilitate full participation and enhancement of the positive elements of the program.

We also asked the respondents to the questionnaire some questions about the possible dissemination results of WIRE. The following graph illustrates the responses to the question regarding the importance students attach to the central theme of the project: Women in Resistance:

- more than one-third of survey participants think the theme is relevant because it provides insights into complex societal challenges and offers innovative approaches for addressing these issues;
- an equal percentage of students think it is important to allow researchers to comprehend how resistance phenomena develop and impact the future, facilitating the development of better strategies and solutions to crisis, all from a gender-based perspective;
- just under one-third think the topic can enable the adoption of new methodologies for decision-making and goal-setting, benefiting both local communities and global initiatives;
- the remaining sample believes that WIRE can provide information about the methodologies and approaches used in studying resistance movements to supranational bodies such as European Union institutions or UNESCO.



On a more concrete and immediate level, among the possible spin-offs of the project that have been indicated are:

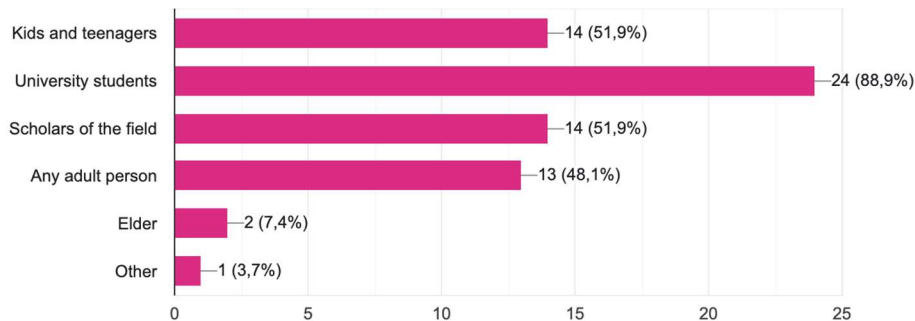
- increased awareness of the role of women in anti-totalitarian resistance movements and, more generally in history, along with increased attention to the presence and role of women as active players in history and society in the past and present;
- dissemination of the results outside WIRE to a broader, non-specialist audience through the multimedia products that have been produced during the course of the program.

Survey participants identified university students as the main target audience for WIRE project products, followed by Women’s and Gender Studies scholars and a general audience of both youth and adults.

For which public will it have an impact? (Choose up to 3)

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27 risposte



From the point of view of the methods and content offered by the program to participants, students said that WIRE enabled them to learn new skills, gain experience and increase their research knowledge and methodologies. These are elements that can be used in the academic path and in working life, for example as teachers or researchers. Some decided to specialize in Women's and Gender Studies, starting with the inclusion in their future curricula of courses on these topics and the writing of their final thesis work on women’s history and gender topics for their academic degrees.

On a more personal level, participation in WIRE provided an opportunity to expand their horizons in encountering other cultures, viewpoints, academic settings and historical narratives, fostering experimentation with ways of working in groups, horizontal and peer-to-peer learning, and improving skills of expression and communication within a team and in public.

### **Final discussion**

The results of the questionnaire showed that participation in WIRE was a very different experience from university life. Therefore, the final discussion on the project was about comparing WIRE’s methodology with the students’ academic experience.

Discussion took place during an online meeting to which all students involved in the program were invited to participate. The participation rate was about 50%.



- incorporating more opportunities for direct student participation in lectures and debate;
- integrating public history practices into university courses;
- and enabling collaborations with institutions, associations, organizations, and society outside of academia.

## Conclusion

Women's and Gender Studies are an established academic discipline and well present in the curricula of European universities and Universities in the four WIRE member countries, Spain, Greece, Italy, and Poland, fit into the European picture by offering courses on gender issues to their students.

Positive is the variety of approaches, themes and contexts addressed by the different courses that are offered in different fields of study with a greater presence in the Humanities and Social Sciences. However, the number of undergraduate and postgraduate programs that train experts and scholars specializing in these disciplines is still relatively small and above all, compared to the totality of courses offered, specific exams in women's and gender studies remain a minority. Moreover, the educational offerings on these topics appear to be mostly uneven and fragmented, as well as based on elective courses.

This situation is confirmed by the fact that only some of the 40 students participating in the WIRE project had courses in these subjects in their university curriculum.

WIRE is not proposed as an academic curriculum but it aims at establishing a connection between academic knowledge of the role of women in resistance movements and the promotion of historical awareness among the students participating in the program and among a wider public.

Establishing such a connection is important to foster a greater integration of the themes proposed by WIRE within university curricula. On the one hand this would fill a gap in the curricula, by relating more closely elements of gender studies theory and methodology to the specific context of resistance to totalitarian regimes in 20th-century Europe. On the other hand it would help address the deficit noted by some participating students regarding the lack of initial knowledge on the topics dealt with by the project.

As for methodologies WIRE has developed a range of activities, tools and methods that have proven to be appreciated by students and to be effective in learning and teaching processes, as well in the realization of tangible and usable products with historical content, and in the development of public history and history communication activities and events. Inclusion of some of these methodologies within the university course of study and opportunities for more direct student participation within lectures, for instance through specific projects and realization of objectives and products, could enrich the experience of university study, by fostering learning and consolidation of knowledge and acquisition of new skills.

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Last access to the weblinks provided in the report: 23 November 2024.

<sup>2</sup> See SIGMA, *European Subject Area Evaluation of Women's Studies. A Synthesis Report*, 2000; Tuning Educational Structures in Europe, *Reference Points for the Design and Delivery of Degree Programmes in Gender Studies*, 2010; the book series of ATHENA (Socrates thematic network), *The Making of European Women's Studies. A Work in Progress Report on Curriculum Development and Related Issues in Gender Education and Research*, 2000-2009; the book series of ATGENDER, *Teaching with Gender*, 2009-2020 and ATGENDER's website: <https://atgender.eu>.