

# Ad Hoc 1: The Genealogy Of Normalcy And Experienced Ambiguity



Winter Symposium: 20.–21.04.2023, Riga, University of Latvia

Encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration, the Nordic Summer University (NSU) ad hoc symposium organizers are glad to invite academics and students from various social and humanitarian fields to participate in the winter symposium “Genealogy of Normalcy and Experienced Ambiguity”. The symposium will be held at the University of Latvia in Riga from **April 20 to April 21, 2023**. We welcome abstract submissions and presentations about ambiguity in the context of feminist philosophy, exploring how social concepts (such as gender norms, race, or sex) are affected by genealogies of knowledge and the body, as well as lived spaces, the environment, and culture.

## **Theme of the symposium:**

Normality and ambiguity appear to be opposing concepts. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that what is considered a norm and normal is subject to change when concepts, theories, or even individual opinions or beliefs are contrasted with the notion of norms and normalcy. As a result, the differences and experienced ambiguities become crucial for defining normalcy.

In the field of feminist philosophy, nevertheless, such cases are discussed in various studies regarding gender, sex, and race, where it has been observed that it affects both the lived-body and society as well as the formation of new normalities. It could be attributed to the idea of “throwing like a girl” (Iris Marion Young, 1980) and what it means to be expected to act a certain way, “being the embodied other” (Sarah Ahmed, 2000) and the question of being estranged based on already pre-existing notions of selfhood and belonging, or even talking about ambiguity as a necessity. For example, in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* Simone de Beauvoir pointed out “the notion of ambiguity must not be confused with that of absurdity. To declare that existence is absurd is to deny that it can ever be given a meaning; to say that it is ambiguous is to assert that its meaning I never fixed, that it must be constantly won.” (1964, 129)

Nevertheless, new explanations, stories, and narratives of the past are forming in response to various events happening now around the world; therefore, previously established genealogies are shifting, establishing new societal and individual understandings of normalcy. Capturing these transformations in the stories, narratives and experiences of the lived-body can help us to understand

better how normalcy in various contexts has changed, how experienced ambiguity can help our understanding of the world and whether we should endeavour in societal changes.

The study circle provides a space for theoretical experimentation and the cross-fertilization of methodologies. It aims to develop insights that could be used in further research.

### **Format of the presentation:**

Participants will be able to present their research papers or ongoing projects related to the symposium theme during paper sessions at the conference. The presentation will last 15 minutes for each participant, after which there will be time for questions and discussion.

The symposium will include community-building activities to help create new connections and facilitate the necessary idea exchange for future research partnerships and concepts.

### **To apply:**

Please fill out google form by the **February 10, 2023**: <https://forms.gle/6PP6X9MXSeF14utz5>

In your application, please indicate the following:

- Short biographical statement and your interest in the topic;
- Whether you would like to participate with a paper presentation or as a listener without paper;
- If you will present a paper, please provide a written proposal (max. 350 words) with a title and descriptive subtitle;
- What do you hope to get out of (and contribute with) at the symposium?

The programme will be announced by **February 15, 2023**, for the WS on the NSU website and in emails to all the applicants.

### **Participation costs:**

Every participant will need to pay NSU membership fee (€25, €10 or €0) and an extra on-site participation fee (not exceeding €40).

The annual NSU membership fee facilitates the existence of NSU, which is a volunteer-based organization. As a member you can sign up for all events organized by NSU, take part in the democratic decision-making process on which NSU is based, and become part of the extensive network of NSU.

To pay participation and NSU membership fee, visit: <https://www.nsuweb.org/shop/> .

Travel and accommodation costs are covered by participants, however participants from Baltic and Nordic countries are eligible for reimbursements thanks to NordPlus grant.

**Circle coordinators:**

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**About NSU**

The Nordic Summer University (NSU) is a Nordic network for research and interdisciplinary studies.

NSU is a nomadic, academic institution, which organises workshop-seminars across disciplinary and national borders. Since it was established in 1950, Nordic Summer University has organised forums for cultural and intellectual debate in the Nordic and Baltic region, involving students, academics, politicians, and intellectuals from this region and beyond.

Decisions about the content and the organisational form of the NSU lay with its participants. The backbone of the activities in the NSU consists of its thematic study circles. In the study circles researchers, students and professionals from different backgrounds collaborate in scholarly investigations distributed regularly in summer and winter symposia during a three-year period.

For more information [www.nordic.university](http://www.nordic.university)

Link to our page: <https://www.nsuweb.org/study-circles/the-genealogy-of-normalcy-and-experienced-ambiguity-ad-hoc/>