

**New Perspectives
in Gender Studies**

Agency in Action, Discourse and Decision Making



CALL FOR PAPER

**18-19 December
2025**

Palazzo Manzoni
Sala delle Adunanze
Perugia

The PhD Program in History, Arts, and Languages in Ancient and Modern Europe at the University of Perugia is pleased to announce an interdisciplinary conference titled "Agency in Action, Discourse and Decision Making". This conference is organized by PhD candidates from the XXXVIII and XXXIX cycles of the "History and Civilizations of the Ancient World" and "History and Arts from the Middle Ages to the Contemporary Age" curricula.

The conference aims to foster an interdisciplinary discussion on gender studies from antiquity to the contemporary age, open to both doctoral candidates and PhDs. The event will take place on 18-19 December 2025, at Palazzo Manzoni, home to the Department of Humanities - Languages, Literatures and Ancient and Modern Civilizations at the University of Perugia, in the Sala delle Adunanze. To accommodate scholars conducting research abroad, the organizers may, at their discretion, allow for online participation via Microsoft Teams.

Topic

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, alongside the second wave of the feminist movement, the study of women's history emerged as a dynamic and continuously evolving field of inquiry. This development was driven by a desire to innovate and redefine our understanding of the female figure across historical epochs, deconstructing the gender biases deeply rooted in historical narratives and traditional, intrinsically patriarchal approaches to scholarship. As early as the epistemological critiques that developed particularly during the third feminist wave between the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was asserted that the very way knowledge is constructed, and the implicit processes of its production, are themselves influenced by a gendered perspective.

This conference, featuring presentations based on ongoing doctoral and research projects, aims to examine and expand upon these themes. We will focus on new research perspectives, applying a cross-cutting vision and a multidisciplinary methodology to embrace diverse areas of inquiry. This will foster a debate that highlights the female presence in historical, literary, archaeological, and art-historical contexts, and deepens our understanding of women's roles and their social constructs.

The conference will be organized into three study sessions, structured around three thematic macro-areas, reflecting its distinctly multidisciplinary and methodological approach. We encourage submissions that engage critically with these themes and contribute to a richer, more nuanced understanding of gender across historical periods:

- **Agency in action:** This panel aims to re-examine the concept of resources through a gendered lens. Resources are understood not only as economic opportunities but also as the configuration of social, cultural, and political elements that have shaped and influenced productive dynamics across various historical epochs. This reflection will facilitate a general analysis and in-depth case studies of women's economic roles, highlighting the specificities of female labor and its impact on household economies and productive sectors (agriculture, industry, services) from antiquity to the contemporary era.
- **Agency in discourse:** This panel seeks to explore the ways and outcomes of women's narratives and self-narration – encompassing art, writing, participation in public life, and the self-determination of their identity and figure. This theme implies a liberation of voice, creative gesture, and self-narration, both within the intimate sphere of interiority and as embedded within broader social dynamics. Furthermore, this macro-area invites a deeper analysis not only of the concrete modes of expression adopted by women but also of how women narrated and perceived themselves in communion with or opposition to the traditional views of the societies in which they operated.
- **Agency in decision making:** From antiquity, women have frequently encountered specific difficulties in asserting their decisional autonomy, often subjected to limits and prohibitions imposed by male authority in both political, social, private, and familial contexts. The concept of "deciding" encompasses a wide range of areas, spanning from the private to the public, including themes such as the definition of family, educational typologies, choice of partner, administrative activity, and, crucially, the degree of participation in legislative, executive, and decision-making power. This panel, therefore, intends to open a discussion on the capacity – and possibilities – for the female sphere to make decisions throughout history, exploring the various aspects in which this faculty has, or has not, manifested, and relating it to different temporal and social contexts.

Submission guidelines

The conference will feature **three study sessions**, each commencing with a keynote lecture (*lectio magistralis*), led by a moderator, and concluding with a dedicated discussion period. Presentations will be distributed within their respective panels across the three sessions and can be delivered in **Italian** or **English**. Each presentation should not exceed **20 minutes** and may be supported by multimedia.

This call for papers is open to PhD candidates from the scientific-disciplinary sectors of **Area 10** (Sciences of Antiquity, Philological-Literary and Art-Historical), **Area 11** (Historical, Philosophical, Pedagogical and Psychological Sciences), and **Area 13** (Economic History), given the conference's distinctly multi and interdisciplinary approach. We also welcome submissions from postdoctoral researchers who have obtained their PhD within the last three years.

Abstract Submission Guidelines

Interested scholars can request further information and submit their proposals in Italian or English by **21 September 2025**, to the following email address: **convegno.phd@unipg.it**.

Contributions will be evaluated by the Scientific Committee and the Organizing Committee, comprising PhD candidates, doctoral students, and faculty members from the Department of Humanities – Languages, Literatures and Ancient and Modern Civilizations. Notification of selection results will be sent by **10 October 2025**, via email to the address used for proposal submission. Selected doctoral candidates and researchers are required to confirm their participation by **15 October 2025**.

Proposals must be attached to the email with the subject line "**Abstract_[Candidate's Last Name]_UniPg**". The proposal should be in **.pdf** format and include the following:

- Full Name.
- University or Institutional Affiliation.
- Scientific-disciplinary sector of the proposal.
- Proposed session for the presentation.
- Title.
- Abstract (max. 300 words).
- Keywords (max. 5).
- Brief bibliography (max. 5 titles).
- Brief academic curriculum vitae et studiorum.

We anticipate publishing the conference proceedings, which will include a selection of contributions subjected to a peer-review process. The selection process for contributions will begin after the conference, on a date to be determined.

Conference Organizing Committee

*Sebastiano Fortugno, Lorenzo Francisci
Gianluca Lorenzetti, Francesca Palumbo
Sara Ronchetti*