

# New interdisciplinary courses



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**UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN**

## Spring semester 2026

### Where and when?

#### Using Praat to explore human and animal vocal communication

Start date: 16/02/2026

Time: 16:15 – 18:00 (weekly)

ECTS: 6

Registrations via KSL

Registration Period: 01/02/2026 – 31/03/2026

#### Methods and Power: Social Science in the Age of Epistemic Sabotage

Start date: 16/02/2026

Time: 14:15 – 17:00 (every second week)

ECTS: 5

Registrations via KSL

Registration Period: 05/01/2026 – 13/03/2026

#### Using Praat to explore human and animal vocal communication (KSL: 531337)

Lecturer: PD Dr. Sandra Schwab, Institut de langue et de littérature françaises

This seminar provides a comprehensive introduction to Praat software a powerful tool for visualizing, analyzing, and manipulating vocal data. Analyzing fine-grained aspects of speech or vocalizations with high precision is crucial for fields such as phonetics, forensic linguistics, speech pathology, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and animal communication research. Manipulating speech signals is also important, particularly for designing perception experiments where the effects of specific changes can be empirically tested—for example, adjusting speech rate to examine whether faster speech makes a speaker sound more confident. The seminar combines theoretical background with a highly interactive, hands-on approach. Students will complete practical exercises in each session, discuss insights, and receive feedback from the lecturer and peers. Unlike self-directed online learning, this collaborative format fosters deeper understanding and practical skills in vocal communication research.

#### Methods and Power: Social Science in the Age of Epistemic Sabotage (KSL: 518061)

Lecturer: Dr. Valentina Nerino, Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies (ICFG)

In today's polarized, "post-truth" world, social scientists face new challenges in how knowledge is produced and used. This course examines how research methods can both challenge and reinforce power, highlighting the politics behind methodological choices. Students explore how design, data collection, analysis, and communication shape knowledge and its role in policy and society. The course has three parts: first, key debates on objectivity, neutrality, epistemic injustice, and positionality; second, critical engagement with methods—from big data and surveys to interviews and discourse analysis—using case studies on far-right and anti-gender movements; and finally, a hands-on workshop where students develop research designs, navigate ethical challenges, and learn to communicate findings effectively in a contested political environment.