

FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS
WOMEN, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES 392
FALL 2009

Professor: Mona Lena Krook
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Course Time: Monday/Wednesday, 4-5.30 PM
Office Hours: Tuesday, 12-3 PM,
or by appointment

Teaching Assistant:
Rachel Rosner, rgrosner@wulaw.wustl.edu
Office Hours: Wed., 2-4 PM, 212 McMillan Hall

Responsibilities:
-reading and offering feedback on weekly memos
-additional support for week-to-week concerns

Course Description

This course explores feminist epistemologies and research methods. We will focus on how feminist scholars challenge dominant theories of knowledge and the major methodologies employed in the social sciences and humanities. Through lectures and workshops, we will ask how gender theory and feminist politics shape the kinds of research questions we ask, the types of materials we use, and how we define our relationships with our subjects. To reflect on and engage with feminist methods, students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, write memos reflecting on workshop topics, and draft a research proposal in stages over the course of the semester.

Course Rationale

This course is designed as a capstone course for junior and senior Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) majors. As such, it will differ from – but also build substantially upon – other courses in the WGSS Program. Its main purpose is to *synthesize what students have already learned* in other WGSS courses in order to enable them to *theorize and engage in practical applications* of this knowledge on projects related to their own interests in WGSS. In this sense, it aims to encourage active reflection on the nature and shape of women's/gender/sexuality/feminist studies as an academic discipline and/or field of interdisciplinary inquiry.

Course Requirements

This course aims to achieve these aims through three sets of course assignments, which are intended to complement one another in helping students gain familiarity with basic concepts, debates, and applications in feminist research. Because the learning curve may be steep, grades will be weighted more heavily as the semester progresses. All students are welcome to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding any of these assignments, but are encouraged to do so well in advance of the due dates either in person or via email.

- **Class participation (25%)** You are expected to come to class prepared and to participate actively in all class discussions, whether lecture- or workshop-based. This grade will be based on both attendance and contributions to class discussions.
- **Short research memos (25%)** Following each workshop (with the exception of the first), you will write a short 1-2 page memo. The goal of these memos is to help you brainstorm and develop various ideas for your research proposal. Specific memo assignments and their due dates are included in the syllabus. Lateness policy: *If you are absent from a workshop, you are still responsible for handing in a memo on the day that it is due.* Memos that are overdue will receive a grade of zero, unless a valid reason for the delay is provided. In order to receive an extension, you must contact me *at least the day before* the memo is due.

- **Research proposal (50%)** You will draft a research proposal in stages over the course of the semester. I will distribute guidelines for the proposal on the first day of class. Throughout the semester, you should treat the research proposal as a “work in progress,” to be revised and further developed as the course goes on. Deadlines: a research question on September 21, a first section on October 7, a second section on November 16, and the final paper on December 14. Lateness policy: Late papers *will not be accepted*, unless a valid reason for the delay is provided. In order to receive an extension, you must contact me *at least the day before* the paper is due.

Course Policies

This course seeks to promote active learning and a positive classroom environment. To help accomplish these goals, students should take note of the following course policies:

- **Attendance** is required. The readings serve as a background, not as a substitute, for the lectures and workshops. Missing or not participating in class discussions will result in a deduction in your class participation grade and will affect your ability to produce the best research proposal.
- **Late papers** and **email submissions** will not be accepted. Any requests for exceptions to these rules must be made in advance of the due date (i.e., at least the day before).
- The field of women, gender, and sexuality studies is fundamentally concerned with rethinking how and what we “know” about the world. To benefit most from this course, it is crucial that students **actively seek to make connections** between this and other courses in the WGSS Program, as well as **raise questions** when these links may be hard to see.
- **Making appointments** to meet with me or the teaching assistant is strongly encouraged at all points in the semester, especially – but not exclusively – when students do not understand content covered in the course, or have questions about the assignments. The best way to reach both of us is **via email** or **before or after each class session**.

Required Texts

All of the readings will be available on ARes (password “feminist”), with the exception of two books that are available for purchase at the campus bookstore:

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy and Patricia Lina Leavy, eds. 2007. *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Ramazanoğlu, Caroline with Janet Holland. 2002. *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 26: Course Introduction

No assigned reading – discussion of course aims and introduction to feminist epistemology and research methods.

August 31: The Enlightenment and the Scientific Method

Ramazanoğlu, Caroline with Janet Holland. 2002. “Reason, Science and Progress: Feminism’s Enlightenment Inheritance.” In Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 23-40.

Ramazanoğlu, Caroline with Janet Holland. 2002. "Can Feminists Tell the Truth? Challenges of Scientific Method." In Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 41-59.

September 2: NO CLASS

September 7: NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGIES

September 9: Feminist Approaches to Theories of Knowledge

Tuana, Nancy. 1996. "Revaluing Science: Starting from the Practices of Women." In *Feminism, Science, and the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Lynn Hankinson Nelson and Jack Nelson. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 17-35.

Cixous, Hélène. 2000. "Feminine Writing and Women's Difference." In *French Feminism Reader*, ed. Kelly Oliver. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 253-275.

Jaggar, Alison M. 1989. "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology." In *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 145-171.

September 14: Workshop on Feminist Methodologies

Herndl, Diane Price. 2006. "Our Breasts, Our Selves: Identity, Community, and Ethics in Cancer Biographies." *Signs* 32 (1): 221-245.

Goodwin, Jan. 2007. "When the Suicide Bomber Is a Woman." *Marie Claire*, August.

September 16: Gender as an Analytic Category

Scott, Joan Wallach. 1988. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." In *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 28-50.

Hawkesworth, Mary. 2006. "Gender as an Analytic Category." In *Feminist Inquiry: From Political Conviction to Methodological Innovation*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 145-175.

September 21: Workshop on Researching "Sex" and "Gender"

**Research question due.*

Guest: Rachel Rosner, Washington University School of Law

Supreme Court cases: *Weinberger v. Wiesenfeld* (1975) and *Tuan Anh Nguyen v. Immigration and Naturalization Services* (2001)

Interviews: Ruth Bader Ginsburg in *Clinical Legal Education Oral History Interview* (2007) and *New York Times* (2009)

Memo due on September 23: How do you employ sex/gender as an analytic category in your research project?

September 23: Feminist Standpoint Theory

Ramazanoğlu, Caroline with Janet Holland. 2002. "From Truth/Reality to Knowledge/Power: Taking a Feminist Standpoint." In Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 60-79.

Brooks, Abigail. 2007. "Feminist Standpoint Epistemology: Building Knowledge and Empowerment Through Women's Lived Experiences." In Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 53-82.

September 28: Workshop on *Kitchen Stories* (*Early screening on September 25 due to Yom Kippur)

*Memo due September 30: What does *Kitchen Stories* share with feminist critiques of the "scientific method"?*

September 30: Essentialism and Intersectionality

Spelman, Elizabeth V. 1989. "Gender & Race: The Ampersand Problem in Feminist Thought." In *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. Boston: Beacon, 114-132.

McCall, Leslie. 2005. "The Complexity of Intersectionality." *Signs* 30 (3): 1771-1800.

October 5: Postmodern Challenges to (Feminist) Epistemology

Ramazanoğlu, Caroline with Janet Holland. 2002. "Escape from Epistemology? The Impact of Postmodern Thought on Feminist Methodology." In Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 83-104.

Canning, Kathleen. 1994. "Feminist History after the Linguistic Turn: Historicizing Discourse and Experience." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19 (2): 368-404.

DOING FEMINIST RESEARCH

October 7: Workshop on Beginning a Feminist Research Project

**First section due.*

Ramazanoğlu, Caroline with Janet Holland. 2002. "Choices and Decisions: Doing A Feminist Research Project." In Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 145-164.

Hart, Chris. 1998. *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1-43.

Memo due October 12: Using the template provided, what is your approach – and general plan – for your research project?

October 12: Feminist Interviewing

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy. 2007. "The Practice of Feminist In-Depth Interviewing." In Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 11-148.

Puwar, N. 1997. "Reflections on Interviewing Women MP's." *Sociological Research Online* 2 (1).

Kirsch, Gesa E. 2005. "Friendship, Friendliness, and Feminist Fieldwork." *Signs* 30 (4): 2163-2172.

October 14: Workshop on Conducting Interviews

Presser, Lois. 2005. "Negotiating Power and Narrative in Research: Implications for Feminist Methodology." *Signs* 30 (4): 2067-2090.

Luff, Donna. 1999. "Dialogue Across the Divides: 'Moments of Rapport' and Power in Feminist Research with Anti-Feminist Women." *Sociology* 33 (4): 687-703.

Memo due October 19: How and why might you apply – or not apply – interviews in your research project?

October 19: Feminist Action Research

Gatenby, Bev and Maria Humphries. 2000. "Feminist Participatory Action Research: Methodological and Ethical Issues." *Women's Studies International Forum* 23 (1): 89-105.

Cancian, Francesca M. 1996. "Participatory Research and Alternative Strategies for Activist Sociology." In *Feminism and Social Change*, ed. Heidi Gottfried. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 187-205.

October 21: Workshop on Participatory Action Research

Guest: Shanti Parikh, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

Parikh, Shanti. Forthcoming. "Going Public: Modern Wives, Men's Infidelity, and Marriage in Eastern-Central Uganda."

Parikh, Shanti. 2007. "The Political Economy of Marriage and HIV: The ABC Approach, 'Safe' Infidelity, and Managing Moral Risk in Uganda." *American Journal of Public Health* 97 (7): 1198-1208.

Memo due October 26: How and why might you apply – or not apply – action work in your research project?

October 26: Feminist Ethnography

Buch, Elana D. and Karen M. Staller. 2007. "The Feminist Practice of Ethnography." In Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 187-221.

Stacey, Judith. 1996. "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" In *Feminism and Social Change: Bridging Theory and Practice*, ed. Heidi Gottfried. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 88-103.

October 28: Workshop on *Born into Brothels*

*Memo due November 2: In what ways is *Born into Brothels* a feminist ethnography – or not?*

November 2: Feminist Archive and Internet Research

Rupp, Leila J. 1997. "How Wide the Circle of the Feminist 'We.'" In *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 130-155 and 268-276.

Aptheker, Bettina. 2002-2003. "Red Feminism: A Personal and Historical Reflection." *Science & Society* 66 (4): 519-526.

Madge, Clare and Henrietta O'Connor. 2002. "On-line with E-mums: Exploring the Internet as a Medium for Research." *Area* 34 (1): 92-102.

November 4: Workshop on Archival Research

Guest: Andrea Friedman, Department of History

Freedman, Estelle B. 1998. "'The Burning of Letters Continues': Elusive Identities and the Historical Construction of Sexuality." *Journal of Women's History* 9 (4): 1-11.

Scott, Joan and Linda Gordon. 1990. "Book Reviews: Heroes of the Own Lives, Gender and the Politics of History." *Signs* 15 (4): 848-860.

Memo due November 9: How and why might you employ – or not employ – archives or the internet in your research project?

November 9: Feminist Text and Content Analysis

Leavy, Patricia Lina. 2007. "The Feminist Practice of Content Analysis." In Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 223-248.

Messner, Michael and Jeffrey Montez de Oca. 2005. "The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Events." *Signs* 30 (3): 1879-1909.

November 11: Workshop on Textual Analysis and Literary Theory

Guest: Barbara Baumgartner, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. 1974. "The Birth-mark." In *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 36-56.

Memo due November 16: How and why might you apply – or not apply – text analysis in your research project?

November 16: Feminist Surveys and Statistical Analyses

**Second section due.*

Miner-Rubino, Kathi and Toby Epstein Jayaratne. 2007. "Feminist Survey Research." In Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 293-325.

Rogers, W. A. 2004. "Evidence Based Medicine and Justice: A Framework for Looking at the Impact of EBM Upon Vulnerable or Disadvantaged Groups." *Journal of Medical Ethics* 30 (2): 141-145.

November 18: Workshop on Quantitative Techniques

Guest: Kristen Kling, Department of Psychology

Readings to be decided.

Memo due November 30: How and why might you employ – or not employ – quantitative methods in your research project?

November 23 and 25: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 30: Workshop on Kinsey

Question to prepare for discussion on December 2: What does Kinsey suggest about the use of surveys for analyzing human sexuality?

December 2: Original Feminist Research Methods

Reinharz, Shulamit. 1992. "Original Feminist Research Methods." In *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 214-239.

Wilkinson, Sue. 2004. "Focus Groups: A Feminist Method." In *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser. New York: Oxford University Press, 271-295.

December 7: Workshop on (Original) Feminist Research Methods

Reinharz, Shulamit. 1992. "Conclusions." In *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 240-269.

Fonow, Mary Margaret and Judith A. Cook. 2005. "Feminist Methodology: New Applications in the Academy and Public Policy." *Signs* 30 (4): 2211-2236.

Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. 2004. "Some Thoughts by an Unrepentant 'Positivist' Who Considers Herself a Feminist Nonetheless." In *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser. New York: Oxford University Press, 320-329.

FINAL PAPER DUE ON DECEMBER 14 BY 2 PM TO MY MAILBOX IN 207 SEIGLE HALL.