

**FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS
WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES 392
FALL 2007**

Professor: Mona Lena Krook
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Course Time: Mondays/Wednesdays, 1-2.30PM
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 4-6 PM,
or by appointment

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 a combination of 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 and Gender Studies majors. As such, it will differ from – but also build substantially upon – other courses in the Women and Gender Studies Program. Its main purpose is to *synthesize what students have already learned* in other Women and Gender Studies courses in order to enable them to *theorize and engage in practical applications* of this knowledge on projects related to their own interests in Women and Gender Studies. In this sense, it aims to encourage active reflection on the nature and shape of Women and Gender Studies as an academic discipline and/or field of interdisciplinary inquiry.

Course Requirements

This course seeks 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.

- 1) **Class participation** (25%) You will be 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.
- 2) **Short research memos** (25%) Following each workshop, 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.
- 3) **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 19, a first section on October 10, a second section on November 14, and the final paper on December 12. 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 foster 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 and gender studies is fundamentally concerned with rethinking how and what we ‘know’ about the world. To benefit most from this course, it is therefore crucial that students **actively seek to make connections** between this and other courses in the Women and Gender Studies Program, as well as **raise questions** when these links may be hard to see.
- **Making appointments** to meet with me 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 me is **via email** or **before or after each class session**.

Required Texts

All of the readings will be available on ERes (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. 2007. *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 29: Course Introduction

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

September 3: NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

September 5: NO CLASS

September 10: The Enlightenment and the Scientific Method

Caroline Ramazanoğlu with Janet Holland. 2002. "Reason, Science and Progress: Feminism's Enlightenment Inheritance." Pp. 23-40 in Ramazanoğlu with Holland.

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

FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGIES

September 12: Feminist Approaches to Theories of Knowledge

Abigail Brooks and Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. 2007. "An Invitation to Feminist Research." Pp. 1-24 in Hesse-Biber and Leavy.

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

Alison M. Jaggar. 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.

September 17: Gender as an Analytic Category

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

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

September 19: Workshop on Researching 'Sex' and 'Gender'

**Research question due.*

Sevcik, Kimberley. 2007. "Dateline Mexico: Where It Pays to Be a Girl." *Marie Claire* 14, no. 3: 120-127.

Memo due on September 24: How do you employ sex/gender as an analytic category in your research project?

September 24: Feminist Standpoint Theory

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

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

September 26: Workshop on *Kitchen Stories*

*Memo due on October 1: What does *Kitchen Stories* share with feminist critiques of the 'scientific method'?*

October 1: Essentialism and Intersectionality

Hancock, Ange-Marie. 2007. "When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm." *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 1: 63-79.

Jane Roland Martin. 1994. "Methodological Essentialism, False Difference, and Other Dangerous Traps." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19, no. 3: 630-657.

October 3: Workshop on Essentialism and Psychoanalytic Theory

Guest: Susan Stiritz, Women and Gender Studies Program

Lorde, Audre. 2001. "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power." Pp. 285-290 in *Black Feminist Criticism*, ed. Jacqueline Bobo. Oxford: Blackwell Press.

Showalter, Elaine. 1985. "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." Pp. 243-271 in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, ed. Elaine Showalter. New York: Pantheon.

Lerner, H. E. 1976. "Parental Mislabeling of Female Genitals as a Determinant of Penis Envy and Learning Inhibitions in Women." *Journal of the American Psychoanalysis Association* 24: 269-283.

Person, Ethel Spector. 2004. "Personal Power and the Cultural Unconscious: Implications for Psychoanalytic Theories of Sex and Gender." *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry* 32, no. 1: 59-75.

Memo due on October 8: How do you address issues of essentialism and intersectionality in your research project?

October 8: Postmodern Challenges to (Feminist) Epistemology

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

Patricia Lina Leavy. 2007. "Feminist Postmodernism and Poststructuralism." Pp. 83-108 in Hesse-Biber and Leavy.

DOING FEMINIST RESEARCH

October 10: Workshop on Beginning a Feminist Research Project

**First section due.*

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

Memo due on October 15: What is your approach – and general plan – for your research project?

October 15: Feminist Action Research

Bev Gatenby and Maria Humphries. 2000. "Feminist Participatory Action Research: Methodological and Ethical Issues." *Women's Studies International Forum* 23, no. 1: 89-105.

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

October 17: Workshop on Participatory Action Research

Guest: Shanti Parikh, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

Readings to be announced.

Memo due on October 22: How and why might you apply – or not apply – action work in your research project?

October 22: Feminist Interviewing

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. 2007. "The Practice of Feminist In-Depth Interviewing." Pp. 111-148 in Hesse-Biber and Leavy.

N. Puwar. 1997. "Reflections on Interviewing Women MP's." *Sociological Research Online* 2, no. 1.

Gesa E. Kirsch. 2005. "Friendship, Friendliness, and Feminist Fieldwork." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 4: 2163-2172.

October 24: Workshop on Conducting Interviews

Lois Presser. 2005. "Negotiating Power and Narrative in Research: Implications for Feminist Methodology." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 4: 2067-2090.

Donna Luff. 1999. "Dialogue Across the Divides: 'Moments of Rapport' and Power in Feminist Research with Anti-Feminist Women." *Sociology* 33, no. 4: 687-703.

Memo due on October 29: How and why might you apply – or not apply – interviews in your research project?

October 29: Feminist Ethnography

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

Schwedler, Jillian. 2006. "The Third Gender: Western Female Researchers in the Middle East." *PS* 39, no. 3: 425-428.

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

October 31: Workshop on *Born into Brothels*

*Memo due November 5: In what ways is *Born into Brothels* a feminist ethnography – or not?*

November 5: Feminist Archive and Internet Research

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

Bettina Aptheker. 2002-2003. "Red Feminism: A Personal and Historical Reflection." *Science & Society* 66, no. 4: 519-526.

Clare Madge and Henrietta O'Connor. 2002. "On-line with E-mums: Exploring the Internet as a Medium for Research." *Area* 34, no. 1: 92-102.

November 7: 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, no. 4: 1-11.

Scott, Joan and Linda Gordon. 1990. "Book Reviews: Heroes of the Own Lives, Gender and the Politics of History." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 15, no. 4: 848-860.

Memo due on November 12: How and why might you employ – or not employ – archives in your research project?

November 12: Feminist Surveys and Statistical Analyses

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

Joyce McCarl Nielsen, Robyn Marschke, Elisabeth Sheff, and Patricia Rankin. 2005. "Vital Variables and Gender Equity in Academe: Confessions from a Feminist Empiricist Project." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, no. 1: 1-28.

November 14: Workshop on Quantitative Techniques

**Second section due.*

Davis, Lisa. 2007. "Best and Worst Drugs for Women." *Prevention* 59, no. 3: 166-173, 198-200.

Rosser, Phyllis. 2005. "Too Many Women in College?" *Ms. Magazine* 15, no. 3: 42-45.

Memo due on November 26: How and why might you employ – or not employ – quantitative methods in your research project?

November 19: Workshop on Kinsey

Memo due on November 26: What does Kinsey suggest about the use of surveys for analyzing human sexuality?

November 21: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 26: Feminist Text and Content Analysis

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

Michael Messner and Jeffrey Montez de Oca. 2005. "The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Events." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 3: 1879-1909.

November 28: Workshop on Textual Analysis and Literary Theory

Guest: Barbara Baumgartner, Women and Gender Studies Program

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

Memo due on December 3: How and why might you apply – or not apply – text analysis in your research project?

December 3: Original Feminist Research Methods

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

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

December 5: Workshop on (Original) Feminist Research Methods

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

Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook. 2005. "Feminist Methodology: New Applications in the Academy and Public Policy." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 4: 2211-2236.

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

FINAL PAPER DUE ON DECEMBER 12 BY 2 PM TO MY MAILBOX IN ELIOT 219.