

**Carleton University**  
**Fall 2023**  
**Feminist Institute of Social Transformation**

**WGST 3001A**  
***Theory and Research in Feminist Social Transformation***

**Wednesdays 2:35-5:25**  
**Location: *Course will be delivered IN PERSON***

**Instructor: Ann Cvetkovich**  
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### **Course Description**

This new course is designed to provide foundations in both theory and method especially for Women's and Gender Studies majors but it would also be useful for students with related interests. Students will be introduced to key theoretical issues that structure the field with particular emphasis on intersectional connections with the other areas of study that are also housed within the Institute: Critical Race Studies, Sexuality Studies, and Disability Studies. (Students who are completing Minors in those areas are also welcome to take the course.). Our interdisciplinary critical tools will also include Indigenous, decolonial, and transnational approaches as we seek to explore how feminist approaches to knowledge can facilitate institutional and social transformation. Topics to be covered include: Indigenous ways of knowing, queer and trans studies; African diaspora and Black mourning; disability, mad, and crip studies.

In our focus on methods of inquiry, students will consider how research practices, both quantitative and qualitative, are transformed by critical feminist theory. How can critical theory inform the questions we ask and the ways we answer them? What are feminist research ethics? Our work will include exercises in experiential learning – such as ethnographic observation, archival research, interviews, and reports on personal experience – that will build practical research skills.

The course is also designed to encourage the formation of a cohort amongst our majors; finding ways to connect with each other and build community in the classroom will be priority at this time hence the emphasis on in-person class sessions.

### **Assignments**

#### 30%: Class Participation

Class participation and regular (weekly) discussion posts to Brightspace  
Class participation including weekly discussion forum posts via Brightspace: 35%

#### 35%: Short Essays/Written Exercises

Three brief (500-750 word) and relatively informal writing assignments/exercises, including a personal/theoretical essay (due **Week 3**); an observational/descriptive essay based on field work of some kind (due **Week 6**); a report on an interview or archival research (due **Week 9**). These exercises in method and their accompanying essays/reports will provide opportunities to generate ideas and tools for the final project.

35%: Final Project: Research Proposal (including preliminary proposal and bibliography, class presentation, and final self-assessment)

The final project for the class will take the form of a proposal for a longer research project that includes the following components: a discussion of your research question, your position as a researcher, and proposed final format and outcomes (which could include research creation); an annotated bibliography that includes the theoretical foundations for your project; and a discussion of your research methods (which can include interviews, archival research, ethnography, and/or art practice). A preliminary proposal (with bibliography) will be due in **Week 8**). In **Weeks 11 and 12**, working in small groups, you will have time to workshop drafts of your project, and you will also make a brief class presentation. Your final submission will also include a final self-assessment of your work for the course. Other formats for the final project can be arranged if more suitable to your current and future goals; please consult with me early if you'd like to propose an alternative.

### **Readings and Books to Purchase**

Most reading materials and other resources will be available online through ARES and our Brightspace course site. However, budget permitting, you may wish to purchase certain key texts from which we will be reading excerpts, and/or others relevant to your research interests.

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### **Note for Majors:**

This single-term course replaces the WGST 3809/3810 sequence previously required for the WGST major. For students completing their degrees under the old calendar, WGST 3001 plus another 3000-level course will complete the requirement.