

**Carleton University
Fall 2019**

Pauline Jewett Institute of Women's and Gender Studies

WGST 3810: Feminist Research Methods

Tuesdays 2:35-5:25pm

Location: Canal Building 3400 - *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

Instructor: Dr. Manjeet Birk

Email: manjeet.birk@cunet.carleton.ca

Office: Dunton Tower, Room 1410

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-11am or by appointment

- *This outline is preliminary and subject to change*

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation.

This is an interdisciplinary course that examines approaches to feminist methodologies and research methods, and the accompanying challenges and ethical considerations for conducting research with diverse communities. Central to the course is a reflection on our own social locations as researchers, and bringing an awareness of social and political hierarchies and global inequalities to the development and execution of qualitative research. Over the course of this semester, we will examine questions such as: What counts as a feminist method? What is a feminist research question? How does feminist research compare to other modes of research? What does it mean to conduct research on a community we are not part of? How do we research communities that we belong to? How do we evaluate ethics in our research practices? What does responsible research look like?

Learning Objectives

Within this course, at a minimum students will be able to:

1. Challenge dominant assumptions about social inequality in gender relations and feminism
2. Enhance critical thinking skills and apply theoretical foundations to current day events and situations.
3. Reflect on ones own social location, especially in relation to unceded Indigenous territories.
4. Develop public speaking and reasoning skills through in class presentations and discussions.
5. Develop an understanding of how power relations operate in Canadian society.
6. Articulate well reasoned understanding on a range of feminist methods.

Course Evaluation:

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|---|-----|
| Attendance and Participation | 15% |
| Critical Reflection | 10% |
| Positionality and Research Assignment | 15% |
| In Class Activities | |
| In class facilitation | 15% |
| Interview Practice and Reflection | 15% |
| Participant Observation | 15% |
| Performative Anti-Oppression Methodologies Reflection | 15% |

Policies for Written Assignments

- Written assignments should be handed in via CU Learn or in class. If this poses an access issue please see the instructor.
- All assignments should be in 12 point of a plain style font (ie. Times New Roman, Helvetica) and use a recognizable citation style.
- Please include page numbers and your name/student number on each page.
- All assignments should be submitted by 6pm on their due date. After 6pm an assignment will be considered late.
- Unless prior arrangements have been made, **late assignments will be subject to a late 3% per day penalty**. For example, if your paper is submitted two days after the due date there will be an automatic penalty of 6%. Students are encouraged to access the support of Academic Accommodations should they anticipate not meeting a deadline.

Attendance and Participation- 15% (Ongoing)

Regular attendance is a mandatory part of this course. Students will be expected to attend class prepared and ready for engaged and critical reflection. Class attendance will be taken. Participation in class will include active listening, engagement and a respectful dialogue that is supportive to meet all students where they are in their learning. All students, especially those who do not feel comfortable speaking up in class are advised to participate online by posting relevant issues, commenting on others posts/projects and engaging/encouraging respectful dialogue.

Critical Reflection- 10% (Ongoing)

On weeks that we have an in class facilitation, students are asked to write a short (250 - 400 word) critical reflection on EACH article. This reflection will support your fellow classmates who will be facilitating a class discussion on the article. Within this reflection you are asked to consider the reading and some of the questions it made you consider. As we progress through the term you will also be asked to make connections between and amongst the readings. These critical reflections should be submitted via CU Learn the **Sunday before class by 6pm**.

Positionality and reflexivity in Research assignment- 15% (Due January 28th)

This positionality paper asks that students introduce themselves in relation to research. Using a feminist analysis students are asked to think through their positionality in relation to the research they are hoping to conduct. Even if students do not have an expressed research interest, they are

asked to imagine what type of research they might want to do and how they think about their positionality in relation to this research. In class, we will be discussing alternative methodologies for doing this positionality statement. And alternative method (like a poem, story or creative non fiction) will be accepted for this assignment. More details will be provided in class.

IN CLASS ACTIVITIES

Seminar facilitation - 15% (Assigned in class, Ongoing)

Each week, individually or in pairs students will be responsible for facilitating our class discussion for at least 30 minutes. A facilitation is *not* a presentation, but is instead an invitation to open up the space for critical reflection and thoughtful conversation about the research methods we encounter. Groups will not be permitted to create power point presentations, rather this will be an opportunity to lead the discussion with your peers. As a group, you should prepare a minimum of two to three questions about the week's readings to share with the class.

When addressing the readings, your facilitation should ask:

1. What is the thesis of the text(s)?
2. How does the text address feminist methodological concerns?
3. What sources or evidence is mobilized by the author(s) to make their claims?
4. What new concepts are introduced, and how are they useful in advancing our understanding of feminist methods?
5. What critiques do you have of the text(s)? Does it succeed in its argument? Is its methodological approach fitting and/or useful?

Participant Observation- 15%

(In Class Activity February 11th, Written Report Due March 3rd)

DURING CLASS (February 11th):

- In class we will conduct a practice observation, as a group choose a public place to conduct participant observation for 30 minutes. In class we will write a short write up (300 words) and discuss what we observed, and what others observed.

AFTER CLASS:

- Students will be asked to repeat this activity on their own. Choose a public place to conduct participant observation. You must commit minimum an hour at this place. You will write field notes and a report on your observations.
- Based on these observations you will write a short, four page, ethnography. You must reference at least two article from the week on ethnography.

Interview Practice- 15%

(In Class Activity March 10th, Reflection Due March 17th)

BEFORE CLASS:

- Take a digital photograph of a place where you spend a lot of time or are happiest in. Bring your image to class on either your laptop or phone.

DURING CLASS on March 10th:

- In class, we will spend some time constructing questions to use in these interviews.
- In pairs, you will spend 10 minutes each interviewing each other about these images.

AFTER CLASS: (Due March 17th)

- After the interview is complete, you will each write a 2-3 page reflection about the interview process based on the readings and materials we have covered in class thus far. How did the interview go? What parts of the interview process went well? What questions didn't work? What questions do you wish you had asked in retrospect? This assignment should reference at least two articles from the course.

Performative Anti-oppression participation reflection- 15%
(In Class Activity March 31st, Reflection Due April 07)

In this 2 page reflection students are asked to consider the process and perspective of using alternative pedagogies. What can alternative pedagogies offer, what do they limit? How can this be thought in reference to the other aspects of the course we have considered? Take this time to reflect on how your understanding of methodologies have changed, been impacted, enhanced and how might they be useful to the projects you will take up in the future. This assignment should reference at least three articles from the course.

Carleton Grading Policy

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|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|
| 90-100 | A+ | 73-76 | B | 60-63 | C- |
| 85-89 | A | 70-72 | B- | 57-59 | D+ |
| 80-84 | A- | 67-69 | C+ | 53-56 | D |
| 77-79 | B+ | 63-66 | C | 50-52 | D- |

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/> for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence, which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

Read more about academic integrity here: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Helpful Resources

The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) offers peer-led learning assistance designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning both inside and outside the classroom. CSAS services include:

- Writing services: drop-in appointments for students to receive feedback about their written work at any point in the writing process. Students need to bring their written assignment in hardcopy and the assignment instructions.
- Peer assisted study sessions (PASS): weekly workshops, drop-in office hours and mock midterms/exams to help students learn course content and transferable study skills. (tutors do not edit papers; only one appointment per student per day).
- Subject coaching (PASC): drop-in subject coaching for 1000 and 2000-level courses in select subjects to help clarify introductory course content and provide study strategies
- Study skills development: Individual appointments and workshop topics include: Academic Reading, Balancing Work & School, Critical Thinking, Effective Presentations, Time Management, Memory & Concentration, Working in Groups, and more. No registration required, drop-in in person or accessible 24/7 through cuLearn, links and info here <https://carleton.ca/csas/online-support/online-workshop-series/>
- English conversation sessions: a safe place for students to practice conversational English while gaining a better understanding of the skills needed to be a successful student.

Health and Counselling Support Services

The topics in this class by nature can be sensitive and challenging. Carleton offers a variety of support services. Please go to <https://carleton.ca/health/> for more information.

Emails

I am normally very regular about checking and returning my emails. As a general rule I respond to emails Monday to Friday 9am-6pm. If I have not replied within 48 hours, please email me again.

Lectures/Tutorials

Attendance is mandatory. I understand that sometimes life gets in the way. It is student responsibility to make up missed classes. I do not post my lectures anywhere. Please do not email the instructor asking: “I couldn’t make it to class. Did I miss something?” The answer is YES. If you are unable to attend a class please contact a classmate to go over what you missed and access notes and videos from class. It is best to make these arrangements as soon as possible.

Respectful Course Environments

The course material will be controversial and at times difficult. Students are expected to remain responsible, support one another and maintain a professionalism during these difficult themes. The instructor and all students are expected to be treated with kindness and respect at all times.

CONTENT WARNING- Gender studies in general and this course more specifically can and will be challenging and often deals with potentially difficult material. The instructor is always available to discuss personal challenges students may have with course material. Some weeks will be more difficult than others and the instructor will do their best to manage difficulties that arise over the course of the term. Students are encouraged to seek out support services in advance if they expect this material will require special attention.

Required Course Materials:

All readings are available online through the ARES library system.

Course Outline

Jan 07- Introduction and Feminist Research Methods

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene J.N. (2014). "Chapter 1: A re-invitation to feminist research." In *Feminist Research Practice*. Ed. Hesse-Biber, S.N. Sage Publishing. pgs 1-10.

Jaggar, Alison M. 2014. "Introduction: The Project of Feminist Methodology." In *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Taylor and Francis. vii-xiv.

Jan 14- Qualitative Inquiry/ Writing as Method

Denzin, N. K. (2017). Critical qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 8-16. doi: 10.1177/1077800416681864

Richardson, L. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 516-529). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Jan 21- Reflexivity and Researcher

Smith, E. B. (2019). Poetry as reflexivity: (post) reflexive poetic composition. *Qualitative Inquiry*, , 107780041987920. doi:10.1177/1077800419879202

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 175-196. doi:10.1080/0951839032000060635

Suggested Reading:

Davies, B., Browne, J., Gannon, S., Honan, E., Laws, C., Mueller-Rockstroh, B., & Petersen, E. B. (2004). The ambivalent practices of reflexivity. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(3), 360-389. doi:10.1177/1077800403257638

Jan 28- Participatory Action Research (Positionality and Research statement due)

St. Denis, Verna. "Community-Based Participatory Research: Aspects of the Concept Relevant for Practice" *Native Studies Review* 8, No. 2 (1992): 52-74

Tuck, Eve. 2009. "Re-visioning action: Participatory action research and Indigenous theories of change." *The Urban Review* 41.1: 47-65.

Feb 04- Ethics

Guest Lecture Martha Attridge Bufton- Library- How does research inform product and why is it important?

In-class screening: TEDx Talk: Boghuma Kabisen Titanji, "Ethical Riddles in HIV/AIDS research" https://www.ted.com/talks/boghuma_kabisen_titanji_ethical_riddles_in_hiv_research

Feb 11- Feminist Ethnography

Davis, D., 1958, & Craven, C. (2013). Introduction. *Feminist activist ethnography: Counterpoints to neoliberalism in north america*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books. p. 14-31

Morgensen, S. L. (2013) "Reflection: Fearlessly Engaging Complicity." In Davis, D., 1958, & Craven, C. (Eds). *Feminist activist ethnography: Counterpoints to neoliberalism in north america*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

In Class Activity- Participation Observation Activity

Feb 18- No Class Reading Week

Feb 25- Decolonizing Research

Grande, S. *Red pedagogy: The un-methodology*. (2008). (pp. 233). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781483385686.n12

Simpson, L. B. (2017). *land as pedagogy*. (pp. 145) University of Minnesota Press. doi:10.5749/j.ctt1pwt77c.12

Mar 03- Insider/Outsider Research

Villenas, S. (1996). The Colonizer/Colonized chicana ethnographer: Identity, marginalization, and co-optation in the field. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(4), 711-732. doi:10.17763/haer.66.4.3483672630865482

Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(3), 409-428. doi:10.17763/haer.79.3.n0016675661t3n15

March 10- Interviews

Best, A. L. (2003). Doing race in the context of feminist interviewing: Constructing whiteness through talk. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(6), 895-914. doi:10.1177/1077800403254891

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene. 2014. "Chapter 7: Feminist Approaches to In-Depth Interviewing." In *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc. pgs 182-232

In Class Assignment- Interview Practice

March 17- Florence Bird Lecture- Jennifer Nash

Nash, J. C. (2008). re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, 89(89), 1-15. doi:10.1057/fr.2008.4

Nash, J. C. (2019). Writing black beauty. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 45(1), 101-122. doi:10.1086/703497

Mar 24- Auto-ethnography

Griffin, R. A. (2012). I AM an angry black woman: Black feminist autoethnography, voice, and resistance. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 35(2), 138-157. doi:10.1080/07491409.2012.724524

Castrodale, M. A., & Zingaro, D. (2015). "You're such a good friend": A woven autoethnographic narrative discussion of disability and friendship in higher education. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 35(1) doi:10.18061/dsq.v35i1.3762

Mar 31- Performative Anti-oppressive methodologies

Fox, H., & Leeder, A. (2018). Combining theatre of the oppressed, playback theatre, and autobiographical theatre for social action in higher education. *Theatre Topics*, 28(2), 101-111. doi:10.1353/tt.2018.0019

In Class Activity- Performative Participation

April 07- Virtual Methods

Hine, Christine. (2013) "Internet Research as Emergent Practice." In *Handbook of Emergent Methods*. Ed. Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy et al., The Guilford Press. Pgs. 525-541.

Morrow, Oona, Roberta Hawkins, and Leslie Kern. (2015) "Feminist research in online spaces." *Gender, Place & Culture* 22.4: 526-543.