

**Carleton University**  
**WGST 3812A**  
**Winter 2021**  
**Feminist Activism, Social Movements, and Social Media:**  
**Considering the #MeToo Movement.**

Instructor: Katharine Kelly

Office Hours: Online, by appointment

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Course Delivery: **Synchronous – this means you must attend class each week at 11:35.**

**Attendance will be taken automatically by the computer system. For more information please review the video on CULearn which discusses the expectations for synchronous courses.**

Class Meets **EVERY** Wednesdays 11:35 – 14:25

Includes: Experiential Learning Activity

Prerequisite(s): Third year standing and 1.0 credit in WGST

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This course examines digital feminist social movements using the example of the #MeToo movement. On a variety of social networking sites (SNSs), #MeToo is being used by survivors of sexual harassment and sexual violence a space where they can speak about their experiences. While #MeToo is not the first online campaign to address experiences of sexual violence (ex. #BeenRapedNeverReported), the MeToo hashtag has spread globally and the issue clearly resonates with many people. It is active in more than 85 countries and has generated more than 1.7 million tweets.<sup>1</sup> Over the next 12 weeks we will use examples of online activism and the #MeToo movement to consider questions related to feminist activism, social movements, intersectionality, and using social media, including:

1. What are the potentials and challenges of online activism for feminism(s)?
2. Whose voices are included and excluded?
3. Is hashtag activism effective?
4. Where do we go from here?

In addressing these questions context matters. The impact of feminist activism (such as #MeToo) is likely to vary from country to country and by race, sexuality, class, gender, [dis]ability, among other factors. So, as we consider the questions outlined above, we have to remain sensitive to intersectional realities.

The course is designed to limit the amount of time spent listening to lectures and to have students actively engage with the readings, topics, and issues. It is organised around readings and preparatory exercises and integrates reflections on the lectures, readings and the in-class work into the learning process. It is imperative that attend class. We will be doing work in break out groups most weeks and to make the most of the discussions it is important to be prepared and to be able to either access sites before or during the group discussions.

Assessment for the course involves: reflection papers (3 – 5 pages in length), journal entries which integrate course readings, the lectures, and in-class activities, and a group

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<sup>1</sup> (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/metoo-reaches-85-countries-with-1-7-million-tweets/>)

project which asks you to design an online activism project and to do individual notes on your contributions to that project.

The journals require you to integrate the readings, in-class activities, and the lectures into a review on the topics. So, missing classes can impact on your ability to complete the course work. It is essential to attend class and to plan your time accordingly. While the classes will be recorded, I cannot guarantee that all the classes will be recorded and the in-class activities will not be recorded.

The topics covered in this course and the online material examine difficult issues. This may be triggering for some students. Please consider this in planning your participation in the course. Health and Counselling Services (<https://carleton.ca/health/counselling-services/>) provides support for students. You can self-refer to these services. There are also community resources such as the Distress Centre (Distress Centre: 613-238-3311).

### Learning Goals:

1. Students will understand the role of social media in contemporary feminist social movements.
2. Students will understand the risks and benefits of online activism.
3. Students will further develop their critical reading skills.
4. Students will further develop their presentation skills.

### Course Text:

Fileborn, Bianca & Rachel Loney-Howes, eds. (2019). *#MeToo & the Politics of Social Change*. Palgrave-MacMillan.

### Readings:

Selected readings are listed for each week – they are on reserve in the Library. Most are form journal articles but some are book chapters.

### Assessment:

**For information on the journaling assignment, please go to the course CULearn page. A detailed description of the assignment is posted under Week #1. The Group presentation is a project on developing an online feminist campaign on a topic you're your group identifies as important.**

Due Date	Assignment	Weight
Week #4 – Feb 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Journal #1 (3 entries)	10%
Week #5 – Feb 10 <sup>th</sup>	Test #1	20%
Week #10 – Mar 10 <sup>th</sup>	Test #2	20%
Week #11 – Mar 31 <sup>st</sup>	Group Presentations & Individual Notes	20%
Week #12 – Apr 7 <sup>th</sup>	Final Journal (minimum of 6 entries)	20%
Ongoing	Participation	10%

**All assignments must be submitted in WORD format through CULearn at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will be penalised 10% per day - this will include each day of the weekends. If you are unable to complete any assignments due to illness or other issues, contact the Instructor before the due date. Always retain a copy of your work.**

### **Week by Week:**

#### **Week #1 (Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>)- Course Overview:**

- Review syllabus & discussion of course Learning Goals
- Difficult conversations & tough topics - Building a safer learning environment
- Discussion of Journaling

#### **Preparation for Week #2:**

- The readings for Week #2 are listed below. Your notes on the readings will provide the basis for the breakout group discussions and for a journal entry.

#### **Week #2 (Jan 20<sup>th</sup>) - Online Feminist Activism**

##### **Required Readings:**

1. Fileborn & Loney-Howes (2019) – Introduction
2. Jackson (2016). (Re)Imagining Intersectional Democracy from Black Feminism to Hashtag Activism

**Lecture** – Hashtag Activism – An Introduction

##### **In-class Activity:**

- Reflecting on hashtag activism. The goal is to discuss the dreading in breakout groups as a way of increasing your insights into and engagement with developing an online feminist activism campaign.
- What do you think about the potential for hashtag activism to lead to lasting change in the world?
- What kinds of impacts do you see hashtag activism as having?
- What do you think is the relationship between online activism and the mainstream media and other social institutions?

**Presentation** – Creating an Online Campaign – The dragonfly effect.

##### **Preparation for week #3:**

- Submit topic ideas for the group project on developing an online campaign. I will post the possible topics on CULearn discussion board. Please review them and let me know if there are any topics you would like to participate in. I will then try to assign each of you to a group.

## **Week #3 (Jan 27<sup>th</sup>) - Online Feminist Activism – Examples, Ideas, Issues**

### **Required Readings:**

1. Jane (2017). "Feminist Digilante Responses to a Slut-Shaming on Facebook."  
[OPTIONAL: For some interesting follow-up see:  
<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/tinder-troll-cops-12-month-good-behaviour-bond/news-story/a055ca92fbb17d8228d77f4ef3021715>]
2. Nyabola, Nanjala (2018). "Kenyan Feminisms in the Digital Age."
3. Higgs (2015). "#JusticeforLiz: Power and Privilege in Digital Transnational Women's Rights Activism."

**Lecture** - # Activism Examples, Ideas, Issues

### **In-class Activity:**

- What makes # Activism campaigns successful? This week in the breakout groups you will explore what you believe makes an online feminist campaign successful. The readings provide insights into some of the promises and pitfalls of online activism. You can supplement this with your own experiences with online activism.

**Presentation** – Developing your Online Campaign Presentation

### **Preparation for Week #4**

Your first journal submission is due next week – at the beginning of class. I will provide feedback on your submission so that you can build that into your subsequent entries.

The readings for next week provide a general introduction to digital feminist activism. The in-class work will be an opportunity for you to begin to develop your plan for your group presentations.

## **Week #4 (Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>) – Doing Digital Feminist Activism**

**Journal Submission #1 (minimum of 3 entries required) - in WORD format - at the beginning of class (10%).**

### **Required Readings:**

1. Fileborn & Loney-Howes (2019) – Chapter 3 – "Digital Feminist Activism"
2. Fileborn & Loney-Howes (2019) – Chapter 4 – "Online Feminist Activism as Consciousness Raising"
3. Flores, Pamela, Nancy Regina Gómez, Alana Farrah Roa & Risa Whitson (2020) Reviving feminism through social media: from the classroom to online and offline public spaces, *Gender and Education*, 32:6, 751-766, DOI: 10.1080/09540253.2018.1513454 . To link to this article:  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1513454>

**Lecture** – Doing Digital Feminist Activism

### **In-class Activity:**

- Group Project Planning – Designing an Online Activism Campaign  
Preparatory Work - brainstorming topics & processes.

**Presentation** – Preparing to Test #1 – What to expect.

### **Preparation for Week #6**

- Collect information - facts, statistics (if appropriate), and research for your presentation. The required and the supplemental course readings are a starting point. These will provide you with information and key words that you can use to further develop your search for articles.

**Week #5 (Feb 10<sup>th</sup>) – Test #1 – No Class**

**BREAK – FEB. 15<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> – No Classes**

**Week #6 (Feb 24<sup>th</sup>) – Offline Social context**

### **Required Readings**

Baer (2016) – Digital Activism & Neoliberalism

Loza (2014) – Hashtag Feminist - #SolidarityIsForWhite Women

Titus (2018) – From Online to Offline - #IWillGoOut

**Lecture** – Considering how the social context impacts on the construction of activism – Neoliberalism, Intersectional Identities, & International contexts.

**In-class Activity** – Group work on Online Activism Campaigns

**Week #7 (Mar 3<sup>rd</sup>) - MeToo – Global Perspectives**

### **Required Readings:**

1. Zeng, Jing (2019). “‘You Say #MeToo, I Say #MiTu’: China’s Online Campaigns Against Sexual Abuse.” Chapter 5 in Filborn & Loney-Howes.
2. Philipose, Pamela (2019). “When the #MeToo Moment became the #MeToo Movement.” *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 26 (1&2): 208 - 211.
3. Garibotti, M & C.M. Hopp (2019). “Substitution Activism: The Impact of #MeToo in Argentina – chapter 12 in Filborn & Loney-Howes.

**Lecture** - #MeToo: Global Spread – Local Reach.

### **In-class Activity #1**

- #MeToo across the globe. This week in the breakout groups you will discuss the experiences of #MeToo across the globe. What surprised or interested you about how the hashtag ‘rolled out’ in different countries.

## **In-class Activity #2**

- Time to Work on Group Presentations

## **Week #8 (Mar 10<sup>th</sup>) – Whose Bodies Matter?**

### **Required Readings:**

1. Fileborn & Loney-Howes – Chapter 8 – “This Black Body is Not Yours for the Taking”
2. Fileborn & Loney-Howes – Chapter 9 – “Beyond the Bright Lights: Are Minoritized Women Outside the Spotlight Able to Say #MeToo?”
3. Fileborn & Loney-Howes – Chapter 10 – “It’s Not Just ‘Men and Women’: LGBTQIA People and #MeToo

## **Lecture – Whose Bodies Matter?**

### **In-class Activity**

- Intersectionality & #MeToo – This week we confront the issue that only some bodies seem to matter in the online campaigns – just as only some seem to matter in the nonvirtual world. We consider how people are constrained in what they can do and say online. Finally, we consider how the offline world with its complex and intersectional constructs of whose lives matter is often replicated in the online world.

## **Week #9 (Mar. 17<sup>th</sup>) - #MeToo - Promises & Pitfalls**

### **Required Readings:**

1. Fileborn & Loney-Howes – Chapter 7 “From ‘Me Too’ to ‘Too Far’.”
2. Fileborn & Loney-Howes – Chapter 12 “#MeToo as Sex Panic”
3. Salter, Michael (2013). “Justice and revenge in online counter-publics: Emerging responses to sexual violence in the age of social media.”
4. Snider, Naomi (2018). “Why Didn’t She Walk Away?” Silence, Complicity, and the Subtle Force of Toxic Femininity.”

### **In-class Exercise:**

- **Has #MeToo Been Successful?** Review the news feed relating to the impact of #MeToo. Consider what happened in the short term (e.g., people losing their jobs) and find out/explore what happened in the longer term (e.g.: did the people who were fired get new employment? Were women punished for calling these men out?).

## **Week #10 (Mar. 24<sup>th</sup>) – Test #2**

## **Week # 11 (Mar. 31<sup>st</sup>) – Group Presentations - Individual Notes due (20%)**

**Week #12 (April 7<sup>th</sup>) – What Happens Next? – If necessary, we will do Group Presentations this week as well.**

**Final Journals submitted (6 entries required) - in WORD format on CULearn - at the beginning of class (20%).**

### **Required Readings**

1. Fileborn & Loney-Howes – Chapter 21 - “Conclusion: ‘A New Day Is on the Horizon’?”
2. Monroe, Kristen Renwick (2019). “Ending Sexual Harassment: Protecting the Progress of #MeToo.”

### **Course Regulations:**

1. **Grading** -- In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50	WDN = Withdrawn from the course		
DEF = Deferred (See above)			

### **2. Academic Regulations, Accommodations, Plagiarism, Etc.**

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university’s website, here:

[www.calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/](http://www.calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/)

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

#### **(a) 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](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send 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*).

\*The deadline for contacting the Paul Menton Centre regarding accommodation for final exams for **Fall 2019** exam period is **November 8, 2019**.

#### **(b) For Religious Obligations**

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: [www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

**(c) For Pregnancy**

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: [www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

**(d) For Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](http://www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

**(e) Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

**(f) Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as your own and is a serious academic offence. For the details of what constitutes plagiarism, the potential penalties and the procedures refer to the section on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy (See <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>). The Policy is strictly enforced and is binding on all students. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Students who infringe the Policy may be subject to one of several penalties.

**What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?**

A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including but not limited to: a grade of zero, a failure or a reduced grade for the piece of academic work; reduction of final grade in the course; completion of a remediation process; resubmission of academic work; withdrawal from course(s); suspension from a program of study; a letter of reprimand.

**What are the Procedures?**

All allegations of plagiarism are reported to the faculty of Dean of FASS and Management. Documentation is prepared by instructors and departmental chairs. The Dean writes to the student and the University Ombudsperson about the alleged plagiarism. The Dean reviews the allegation. If it is not resolved at this level then it is referred to a tribunal appointed by the Senate.

**(g) Assistance for Students:**

Academic and Career Development Services: <http://carleton.ca/sacds/>

Writing Services: <http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/group-support/pass/>

**Important Information:**

- Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).
- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.
- Carleton University is committed to protecting the privacy of those who study or work here (currently and formerly). To that end, Carleton's Privacy Office seeks to encourage the implementation of the privacy provisions of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) within the university.
- In accordance with FIPPA, please ensure all communication with staff/faculty is via your Carleton email account. To get your Carleton Email you will need to activate your [MyCarletonOne account](#) through Carleton Central. Once you have activated your MyCarletonOne account, log into the [MyCarleton Portal](#).
- Please note that you will be able to link your MyCarletonOne account to other non-MyCarletonOne accounts and receive emails from us. However, for us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid MyCarletonOne address. Therefore, it would be easier to respond to your inquiries if you would send all email from your connect account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <https://students.carleton.ca/>