

Feminist Practices, Writing and Research

WGSS 200-01

Fall 2019, TR 10:30 am

DENNY 103

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Office hours: Monday/Wednesday: 10:30-noon,

Tuesday 1:15-3 pm; and by appointment

Office: Denny 04

Feminist inquiry is about understanding how things work, who is in the action, what might be possible and how worldly actors might somehow be accountable to and love each other less violently.

—Donna Haraway, [Companion Species Manifesto](#)

Course Description:

Building upon the key concepts and modes of inquire introduced in the WGSS Introductory course, WGSS 200 deepens students understanding of how feminist perspectives on power, experience, and inequality uniquely shape how scholars approach research questions, writing practices, methods and knowledge production. Approaches may include feminist approaches to memoir, oral histories, grassroots and online activism, blogging, visual culture, ethnography, archival research, space, art, literary analysis, and policy studies. Prerequisite: 100, which can be taken concurrently. Building upon the key concepts and modes of inquire introduced in the WGSS Introductory course, WGSS 200 deepens students understanding of how feminist perspectives on power, experience, and inequality uniquely shape how scholars approach research questions, writing practices, methods and knowledge production.

Please visit me during my office hours, as I would love to learn more about what you are thinking and learning, as well as how your work is progressing. Be sure to let me know during office hours or after class if you need any help, or any special accommodations, the sooner the better. Students with disabilities or who need time from class to observe religious holidays, please contact me ASAP to make any arrangements necessary.

Required Readings:

Feminist Research Practice: A Primer. Second edition. (2013) Edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. ISBN: 978-1412994972.

You do not need to buy this book, but you do need to read the material. You can borrow a copy from the library, or share the text with a friend. If you are borrowing, please team-up with a classmate during close readings of the text during class-time.

Any additional readings will be included on Moodle.

How the course will be organized

We will meet twice a week for a discussion and skill-building class. In order to have a productive learning environment students need to come to class having read the material, and be prepared to talk and share with others. It is important for you to bring class readings with you to support discussion. If this is not possible (because you are borrowing a copy of the book for example) please come talk with me about accessing a copy from me, or about sharing with classmates.

Creating a community of learning means that we must be respectful of each other and create a space where each member of the class feels comfortable about sharing their thoughts. This does not mean that we will always agree, and in fact we may often disagree with each other, but we must always be open to hearing each other and treating each other kindly and with respect. Together we can have a classroom where dialogue is encouraged, we know that mistakes happen, and that communication and understanding can be difficult across differences. Learning means taking risks, trying new things, putting forward our best guess, and recognizing that we won't always get it right the first time.

Communication for the Course

For any immediate concerns, I am available after class and during my office hours. For something less urgent, or which occurs to you at a later date, you can email me at voorisj@dickinson.edu.

Moodle: An updated syllabus, and course assignments will be kept on Moodle. Readings will be from your textbook and as PDFs on Moodle.

Email: Please send email to voorisj@dickinson.edu if you have questions/comments about the course, readings, or want to make an appointment with me. Please use your Dickinson email only. It will be helpful if you include the course number and a relevant subject heading with your email. **Example:** WGSS 200, question about Standpoint Theory

Note that email sent after 7 pm may not be responded to until the morning, and I will not be checking email frequently on the weekends. Please give me at least 24 hours to respond, however, **if you don't hear from me in 48 hours, do send a reminder email!** (Note: if you email after 7 pm on Friday, I may not reply until Monday morning).

Electronic Policy—Let's Have a Conversation About It

Laptops/phones/tablets can be useful for taking notes, especially for students that have difficulties writing by hand. They can also be used to look up information on google during class discussions. However, they are also a source of distraction, and it is worth noting that some studies (<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>) show that many students learn more when taking notes by hand, rather than through electronic means. Other studies have shown that a student who chooses to dis-engage with class via facebook, etc, will distract and affect the learning of other students.

For these reasons, I ask that students think carefully about their use of laptops/electronics in class. It is easier for us all to be present in the room with each other if we do not have screens distracting us. However, I understand that laptops can be a necessary, even vital, part of learning for some students, and I am open to their presence. If you plan to use a laptop or tablet in class, please come talk to me about how to incorporate them into the classroom space. (This

does not mean that you need to have a documented disability or diagnosis, but you do need to have a conversation with me about your computer use).

Graded Assignments

15 % Class Participation/Attendance
25% Methods Activity Log
10% -Annotated Bibliography
10 % -Research Proposal
5% Research Presentation
30 % -Research Paper

Grades:

A work is excellent, unusually creative and/or analytically striking
B is fine work of high quality, though not as skilled, ambitious, or carefully presented as A
C is average or usual work fulfilling the assignment; should not be hasty, or insufficiently collaborated
D work is below average or incomplete; shows many difficulties or cannot follow instructions
F work is not sufficient to pass; unwillingness to do the work, or so many difficulties unable to complete

I will explain in more detail what the expectations are for each assignment in the handouts and on Moodle.

Graded Assignments

15 % Class Participation: This is a discussion-based course, and your participation is important. You are expected to come to class having read and taken notes on the material, and to be ready to discuss the material. The success of the class will depend on everyone sharing their ideas and perspectives. If you are someone who has a hard time speaking up in class, note that you can show that you are actively participating through your listening, your reactions to what your classmates are saying, and through note-taking. Please visit me in my office hours if you are concerned about your participation due to anxiety, neurodivergence, or any other reason. If you are not in class, you cannot receive participation points. Likewise, if you are in class, but are asleep or otherwise not paying attention, you will not receive participation points. I understand that people get sick, family emergencies happen, or you have an unforeseen circumstance that prevents your attendance. You may have one unexcused absence during the course of the semester, meaning you do not have to even let me know why you have missed and it will not affect your participation grade. Otherwise, please let me know in writing why you are missing class (sickness, family emergency, and religious holidays are excused). If you miss three or more classes, you must set up a meeting with me to discuss how you will catch up. If you miss 5 or more classes you will be at risk of failing the class. In case of any absence you are responsible for the work that you have missed. Check your syllabus and connect up with classmates for notes and any information you need to know. Please do not email me asking what you missed unless you have already talked to a classmate and still have questions.

25 % Methods Activity Log: An important part of the research process is writing, as writing is a form of thinking and processing. This course is also meant to give you the experience of trying out a variety of methods. Most weeks you are expected to write 400-500 words on a particular method and/or your research project. Some weeks I will supply a prompt/activity to

complete for your Log, other times it will be more of a free-write. This journal can be typed or handwritten. If handwritten, please submit photos on Moodle of your pages. You will not receive a final grade until the end of the semester when you will turn in your completed Activity Log. However, your writing is due **each week by Sunday at midnight** so that I can provide on-going written feedback. You cannot turn in an Activity Log after the week it is due, unless you have permission to do so.

10% Annotated Bibliography: A minimum of 5 annotated sources that are related to your research project. See moodle for full assignment description. Due **Sunday, October 28th** at midnight.

10% Research Proposal: This will outline and describe your project, including your research questions, methods, and site of research. See moodle for full assignment description. Due **Sunday, November 3rd** at midnight.

5% Research Presentation: The last week of classes you will share with each other your research projects, including research question, key findings, and next steps in a ten minute presentation. See moodle for full assignment description. Due **December 10th and 12th** in class.

30% Research Paper: Due on the day of our final exam, your final research paper will outline your research question, background literature, and include your key findings from two different methods used to answer your question. See Moodle for more details. Due Wednesday, **December 18th** at 4 pm.

Course Schedule:

Week One: Introduction to Feminist Research

Tuesday, September 3rd

- Intro to class
- review of key feminist concepts
- Feminist Research Web

Thursday, September 5th

FRP, Chapter 1 “A Re-Invitation to Feminist Research” (1-13)
Reading on “Interdisciplinarity”
Natalie Goldberg, “Beginner’s Mind, Pen, and Paper”

Activity Log Entry 1 (due Sunday 9/8 @ midnight): Free-write: 1)What are you curious about? What do you want to know? 2) What comes to mind when you think about doing research? Doing feminist research?

Week Two: Feminist Epistemology, Standpoint Theory and Postmodernism

Tuesday, September 10th

FRP, Chapter Two “Feminist Empiricism and Standpoint Theory” (14-41)

Collins, "Black Feminist Epistemology"
Natalie Goldberg, "Writing as Practice"

Thursday, September 12th

FRP, Ch 3, "Feminist Post-modernism, Post-Structuralism, and Critical Theory" (42-72)
Gloria Anzaldua, "Conciencia de la Mestiza"

Activity Log 2 (due Sun. 9/15): Free-write reflection: Who are you as a researcher? What identity positions do you hold (gender, race, class, sexuality, nationality, religion)? Where are you from? What family experiences have you had? How might your identity impact your position as a research and knowledge producer?

Week Three: Feminist Ethics

Tuesday, September 17th

FRP, Chapter 4, "Ethics and Feminist Research" (73-106)
Irvine, J M. "Can't Ask, Can't Tell: How Institutional Review Boards Keep Sex in the Closet." *Contexts*. 11.2 (2012): 28-33.

Thursday, September 19th

FRP, Conclusion: Putting Together Your Research Project (389-413)
Adrienne Marie Brown, "Principles of Emergent Strategy" (41-50)

Activity Log 3 (due 9/22): Preliminary Research Topic due.

Week Four: Feminist Ethnography

Tuesday, September 24th

What is Feminist Ethnography? (FRP, Chapter 5)-Buch and Staller
Feminist Approaches to In-Depth Interviews (FRP, Chapter 6)-Hesse-Biber

Thursday, September 26th

Intro, *Gender Play* by Barrie Thorne
Intro, *Semi Queer: Gay, Black and Trans Truck-Drivers* by Anne Balay

Activity Log 4 (9/29): Pick a location on campus or in Carlisle to conduct participant observation for at least 30 minutes. Take field-notes about the location, people, and interactions you observe, especially in relation to gender dynamics. Write a research question based on this short observation that could potentially be answered by a more in-depth ethnography.

Week Five: Focus Groups

Tuesday, October 1st:

-FRP, Chapter 8

Thursday, October 3rd:

-"Understanding Sorority Women's Privacy Management About Condom Use" by Rachel Hernandez (moodle)

Activity Log 5: Imagine you are creating a focus group for your research topic. 1) Who would the participants be? Write a short description of the group and the identity of the participants. 2) Create a topic guide for your focus group with 3-5 questions that you would use to guide the conversation.

Week Six: Archives and Historical Research

Tuesday, October 8th

Society of American Archivists. [What are Archives?](#)

Society of American Archivists. [Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research](#)

Scott, Joan Wallach. "Gender as a useful category of historical analysis." In *Culture, Society and Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 2007. 77-97

Thursday, October 10th

Please choose one of the following, and prepare to teach it to your fellow students:

Emily Skidmore, *True Sex*, (Intro: you only need to read pgs 1-11 of the intro; Chapter 2: "Beyond Community": 43-67)

Jo Paoletti, *Pink and Blue* (Intro, and Chapter 2: XIII-XIX; 19-41)

Activity Log 6 (10/13): Find 1 source related to your research topic

Week Seven: Survey Research

Tuesday, October 15th

Library Research Workshop

Thursday, October 17th

FRP, "Feminist Survey Research" (296-329)

Lisa Littman, "Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria" and Correction to Original article (Moodle)

Recommended: Khan and Fisher, "Survey Research" *The Practice of Research* (50-70)

Activity Log 7: Self-care is an important part of feminist practice. As Audre Lorde says, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." Please take some time, at least 15 minutes, for yourself during Fall Pause to intentionally reflect/breathe/move/create/focus/take care of the self. You do not have to write about it unless you want to; but we will talk about it briefly during check-ins when we come back to class on Thursday, October 24th.

Week Eight: Feminist Media Analysis

Tuesday: Fall Pause

Thursday, October 24th

McIntosh and Cuklanz "Feminist Media Research" FRP (pg 264-291)
J. Halberstam, "Animating Revolt and Revolting Animation"

Activity Log : none because your **Annotated Bibliography is due**

Week Nine: Oral History

Tuesday, October 29th

Required: Kim, Soon Nam. (2008) "Whose voice is it anyway? Rethinking the oral history method in accounting research on race, ethnicity and gender." *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 19(8), 1346-1369.

For in class discussion Question: If you could conduct an oral history with someone, who would it be? Why? What questions would you want to ask them?

Thursday, October 31st

Meet in the Library archives!

Recommended: Franklin, Michael David. "Calculating Risk." *Queer Twin Cities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. p. 20-39

Choose one LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania Oral History Transcript
o Amy Skillman
o Tony Silvestre

In-class: LGBTQ Center of Central Pennsylvania's Oral History project with Dickinson Archivist Malinda Triller.

Activity Log: None. Research Paper Proposals Due

Sunday, November 3rd: **Final Research Proposals Due**

Week Ten: Social Media and Technology

Tuesday, November 5th:

María Elena Meneses “#TrumpenMéxico. Transnational connective action in Twitter and the dispute on the border wall”

Leo Han et. al “Tweeting PP: An Analysis of the 2015-2016 Planned Parenthood Controversy on Twitter”

Ashwini Tambe “Reckoning with the Silences of #MeToo”

Thursday, November 7th:

Dame-Griff, Avery. “Algorithms are a Feminist Issue.” In *Advanced Undergraduate Theory Reader in Women's, Gender, Feminist, and Sexuality Studies*, edited by L. Ayu Saraswati and Barbara Shaw. Oxford University Press. Forthcoming.

Guest Appearance via Skype: Avery Dame at 11 am.

Activity Log 8: Free-Write. How are you feeling about the research process and your research? What have you done to move your research forward this past week (after submitting your research proposal?) What steps do you need to make next week to push the research forward? [Set a timer for 2-4 minutes per question, and just write! Remember to write a few summarizing sentences at the end of your free-write]

Week Eleven: Community Action Research

Tuesday, November 12th

FRP, Chapter 6 “Feminist Practice of Action and Community Research”

Thursday, November 14th

NWSA

Activity Log 9: Research Check in

Week Twelve:

Tuesday, November 19th

Stone-Mediator “Storytelling and Global Politics” (125-169)
Natalie Goldberg, “Listening”

Thursday, November 21st

excerpts: Eli Clare’s *The Marrow’s Telling* (20 pages--mostly short poems)
excerpts: Cornelius Eady *Brutal Imagination* (p. 1-22) (content note: these poems deal with racism and the deaths of two kids at the hand of their mother)

Activity Log 10: Creative Writing Prompt.

Week Thirteen: Researchers as Writers

Tuesday, November 26th

Anne Lamott, "Shitty First Drafts" (1-2)
Natalie Goldberg, "Writing is a Communal Act"
"Be Specific," "The Action of a Sentence," "Rereading and Rewriting"

Thursday, November 28th: Thanksgiving

Activity Log 11: About Writing

Week Fourteen: Peer Review and Individual Meetings

Tuesday, December 3rd

Peer Review Exercises

Thursday, December 5th

Individual Meetings with Professor

Activity Log 12: Peer Review Memo

Week Fifteen: Presentations

Tuesday, December 10th

Thursday, December 12th

Last day of Classes: Friday, December 13th

Reading Days: December 14 and 15th

Exams: December 16-21st.

Final Research Paper Due: December 18th at 4 pm.