

**HIED 66595: Special Topics
Feminist Methodologies
Spring, 2010**

WebCT VISTA: Asynchronous online course

Instructor:

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Office hours are Tuesdays 4:30-5:30 pm and Wednesdays 1:00-2:00 pm, and by appointments at other times. Appointments can be made by contacting me via email.

Syllabus

Course Description

The goal is to provide an introductory framework for thinking about research from feminist perspectives. With an interdisciplinary orientation, the course will address critiques of, and alternative models to “traditional” research. Students will learn how feminist scholars have re-thought analytic paradigms and created new conceptual models to guide their research. Further, this course explores the implications of feminist theorizing across disciplinary and cultural contexts for both methodology (theories about the research process) and epistemology (theories of knowledge). We will examine how knowledge and power intersect, how the knower is implicated in the knowledge produced, and how social location shapes inquiry. We will also consider implications of intersectional approaches to re/presenting knowledge and identity. By studying early feminist analyses as well as more recent critiques we will identify fundamental feminist approaches to research and explore controversial issues in the field.

Learning Objectives. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Articulate why feminists have sought to re-define the parameters of knowledge and who can be considered a knower;
 - Describe and critically engage some key methodological debates about traditional definitions of knowledge and conventional assumptions about good research;
 - Demonstrate, in writing, critical, reflexive approaches to research;
 - Describe some of the debates and critiques about the definitions and understandings of "feminist methodologies"; and
 - Articulate methodological issues of power, identity, and difference.
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Required Texts:

Fonow, Mary Margaret, & Cook, Judith A. (1991). *Beyond methodology: Feminist scholarship as lived research*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. ISBN: 0-253-20629-4 (paperback)

hooks, bell (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. ISBN: 9780896086289 (paperback)

Kirsch, Gesa E. (1999). *Ethical dilemmas in feminist research*. Albany: State University of New York Press. ISBN: 0-7914-4210-1 (paperback)

Reinharz, Shulamit. (1992). *Feminist methods in social research*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0-19-507386-X (paperback)

Recommended:

Alcoff, Linda & Elizabeth Potter. (Eds.) (1993). *Feminist epistemologies*. New York: Routledge.

Allan, Elizabeth J., Iverson, Susan V., & Ropers-Huilman, Rebecca. (Eds.) (2010). [Reconstructing policy analysis in higher education: Feminist poststructural perspectives](#). New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-415-99777-5 (paperback)

Allen, A. (1999). *The power of feminist theory: Domination, resistance, solidarity*. Westview Press.

Bloom, Leslie Rebecca. (1998). *Under the sign of hope: Feminist methodology and narrative interpretation*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Burt, Sandra & Lorraine Code (Eds.) (1995). *Changing methods: Feminists transforming practice*. Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press.

Code, Lorraine. (1991). *What can she know: Feminist theory and the construction of knowledge*. Cornell University Press.

Collins, Patricia H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Gottfried, Heidi. (Ed.) (1996). *Feminism and Social Change: Bridging Theory and Practice*. Urbana and Chicago, IL: U of Illinois P.

Harding, Sandra (Ed.) (1987). *Feminism and methodology*. Indiana University Press.

Hartsock, Nancy. *Feminist standpoint revisited*. Westview Press.

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene, Gilmartin, Christina, & Lydenberg, Robin (Eds.) (1999). *Feminist approaches to theory and methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Jaggar, Alison M. and Susan R. Bordo. (Eds.) (1989). *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP.
- Johnson, Allan (1997). *The gender knot: Unraveling our patriarchal legacy*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Keller, Evelyn Fox & Helen Longino (Eds.) (1996). *Feminism and Science*. Oxford University Press).
- Lather, Patti. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. Routledge.
- Merriam, S. (Ed.). (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mohanty, Talpade C. (2006). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Duke University Press.
- Nielsen, J.M. (ed.) (1990). *Feminist research methods*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Ribbens, Jane & Rosalind Edwards (Eds.) (1998). *Feminist dilemmas in qualitative research: Public knowledge and private lives*. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- St. Pierre, Elizabeth A. & Pillow, Wanda S. (Eds.) (2000). *Working the ruins: Feminist poststructural theory and methods in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Sedgwick, Eve K. (1992). *Epistemology of the closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tanesini, Alessandra. 1999. *An introduction to feminist epistemologies*. London: Basil Blackwell.
- Wolf, Diane L. (Ed.) (1996). *Feminist dilemmas in fieldwork*. Westview Press.
- Wolf, Margery. (1992). *A thrice told tale: Feminism, postmodernism, and ethnographic responsibility*. Stanford University Press.
- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. (2010). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. [2nd printing, October 2009. ISBN-10: 1-4338-0561-8]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

“Knowledge does not arrive unmediated; rather, knowledge gets constructed by interaction between the questioner and the world.”

(Takacs, 2003, p. 31)

1. Participation

Active participation is vital to the successful completion of this course. Participation is expected to include contributing to the creation of a learning community on VISTA. Students’ thoughts and

reactions to the readings and your engagement in virtual discussion about the readings with other class members are valued and required. Two reading modules will be assigned each week (M/Th). Students are expected to engage in and initiate discussion via VISTA. Students will need to check their VISTA account regularly.

Discussion Board: In order to engage an interactive discussion via VISTA, each student will **post (for each module) a reading reaction** and participate in a virtual discussion thread by commenting/responding to **at least two classmates'** postings by dates provided.

More specifically, each student must complete the assigned reading for the module. Then, by the date specified in VISTA discussion folder (i.e. by 10pm on Tuesday), each student must post a reading reaction (250 - 400 words) in response to one or more of the following points:

- o Identify a key theme or issue you found to be significant and elaborate on why.
- o Articulate your position on a key concept(s) and/or issue(s), along with your dis/agreement or critique.
- o Describe a "muddy point" that remains for you after completing the reading

Within 48 hours of one's reading response (again, by the date specified in VISTA discussion folder, i.e. by 10pm on Thursday), each student will respond to at least two peers' postings. This virtual interaction should foster deep and critical discussion threads. In this way, students should not respond to peers with simply "I agree." Rather, students should extend the thinking and the conversation; student, in their replies, are encouraged to point us back to the readings (i.e. with a quote from a text/article), to pose provocative questions, and model a critical stance.

Glossary: Students will contribute to the collaborative compilation of a glossary of terms. As we read, we are likely to come across words that are unfamiliar, either wholly in their definition, or more narrowly in their usage in the selected reading/context. Thus, we can aid each other in 'learning the language' by keeping a 'notepad' of terms and their usage in course readings (meaning, note the passage, with author, pg #), to inform our understanding of knowledge production, epistemology, and/or feminist methodology. While no limit to the number of words you submit, each student is expected to contribute at least 4 words during the semester. Reminder: provide reference/source citations for each glossary entry. [An example has been posted.] Glossary words must be posted **by April 24.**

Meeting with instructor: Each student is expected to meet once with the instructor (in person, by phone, via skype, other) **by week 7.** The primary focus of this meeting is to discuss thinking-in-progress regarding the final project, and in preparation students should bring notes, ideas, questions to this meeting. Further, this meeting is an occasion to review expectations and preparation for facilitating class discussion. However, it is also an opportunity to connect regarding progress and understanding in the course. The instructor welcomes additional meetings, feedback, and conversation; however, one meeting per student is expected.

2. Facilitating Class Discussion: Each student must sign up for a week where s/he will take responsibility for (co)facilitating the class discussion related to assigned readings. More specifically, facilitators will:

- Post (one week in advance of assigned date) 2-3 reading/discussion questions pertaining to assigned readings
- Review all students' postings for the week, looking for themes and patterns, and then summarize/ post integrative points, follow-up questions, and alternative perspectives. The

goal is to simulate a conversation. The (co)facilitator will have ‘heard’ all peers’ contributions to the virtual dialogue, and will amplify important points, identify differences or gaps, and add new details and insights. Note, the (co)facilitators, on their assigned week, are exempt from the usual discussion board postings (described above).

- 3. Final project.** Students will identify and critically engage one or more of the methodological issues raised in the course. Identify a social problem, articulate how traditional research might investigate this issue, what critique a feminist perspective might bring to the traditional approach, and what an alternative methodological approach, informed by a feminist perspective, might look like. This project *can* be an academic exercise; however, I highly encourage students to use this assignment as an opportunity to take an action research orientation, with a goal of consciousness raising and bridging theory to practice. Use this course, and push yourself, to ‘test’ the relevance and applicability of the theorizing and methodology. For instance, is there a social issue/problem within your arena that seems intractable? How might a feminist perspective offer a different view of this problem?

Following the ‘traditional’ final project format, students will submit (**by May 9** at 11:59pm) a final paper: 8-10 pages,¹ double-spaced (additional guidelines to be provided in class). Students are encouraged, however, to think creatively and propose alternative parameters (i.e. pilot feminist methods and post results of project on a webpage). Project must draw upon at least 6 references from the course (articles, chapters).

Students are required (as noted above) to meet with the instructor by week 7 to discuss thinking-in-progress related to this project. The instructor recognizes that students are at various points in their coursework and in their thinking related to a research topic. Thus, students may want (and are encouraged) to further advance a project on which work has already been initiated, in order to pilot methods, draft a methodology chapter, articulate epistemological issues.

Evaluation

The components of the course will be weighted as follows:

Participation	180 pts
15 postings to discussion board @ 10 pts each	
1 meeting with instructor	10 pts
4 glossary words	20 pts
Class Facilitation	30 pts
<u>Final Project</u>	<u>90 pts</u>
Total	300

All students are expected to produce work that reflects graduate level quality in form and substance. Grades will be based upon the quality and completion of all work. An "A" represents work (including class participation) that is of exceptionally high quality and demonstrates superb understanding of course content and its complexity. A "B" represents work (including class participation) that is of good quality and demonstrates a sound understanding of course content and

¹ Page length is exclusive of references and cover page.

its complexity. A "C" represents a minimally adequate completion of assignments and participation demonstrating a limited understanding of course content and its complexity.

More specifically, the grading scale for the course is:

A	(93-100%)	A-	(90-92%)	B+	(87-89%)
B	(83-86%)	B-	(80-82%)	C+	(77-79%)
C	(73-76%)	C-	(70-72%)	D+	(67-69%)
D	(63-66%)	D-	(60-62%)	F	(below 60%)

Late Work: It is expected that work will be submitted on/by the date due. Late submission will result in one-third grade reduction per 24 hours. Meaning, if the assignment is due by noon on January 19, and is submitted at 6am on January 20, and if the submission would have earned an A-, the grade with late penalty would be B+. If the same assignment was submitted 2pm on January 20, it would be awarded B; if received 6am on January 21, it would receive B-, and so on... Any student with extenuating or emergency circumstances that prevent submission on the due date should discuss his/her situation individually with the instructor and make necessary arrangements.

General Information

Accommodation: University policy 3342-3-18 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for academic accommodation through Student Accessibility Services; they can be reached at 330-672-3391 and are located on the ground floor of the DeWeese Center. FMI about your rights and responsibilities, see <http://www.registrars.kent.edu/disability/Current/StudentHandbook/RightsReas.htm>

Statement of Inclusion: Kent State University, as an equal opportunity educational institution, encourages an atmosphere in which the diversity of its members is understood and appreciated; an atmosphere that is free of discrimination and harassment based on identity categories. Thus, all members of the university are expected to join in creating a positive atmosphere in which individuals can learn and work, an environment that is sympathetic, respectful and supportive. (See "University Policy Register")

The instructor of this course is committed to teaching equitably and inclusively, addressing the needs, concerns, and interests of each and every student, regardless of age, gender/sexual identity, race/ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, religion, English language experience, or disability.

Academic Integrity: As members of the community of higher education, we are all subject to the standards of academic integrity. As a student, you are subject to the Code of Student Conduct. Using another person's words, thoughts or ideas without proper attribution is plagiarism and a form of academic dishonesty, which is a violation of University policy. All students must become familiar with and abide by the University's policy on academic integrity, which prohibits cheating and plagiarism. You should review the Code as ignorance is not a defense should you face charges of academic dishonesty. For more information about University policy see The University Policy

Register at <http://imagine.kent.edu/policyreg/> or download the Digest of Rules and Regulations from <http://www.kent.edu/CurrentStudents/>

Further, I direct your attention to the APA style manual, pp. 15-16 for a statement on plagiarism and ch.6 for how to credit sources. Finally, Indiana University offers a useful guide regarding plagiarism: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

This is a working calendar and is subject to change.

DATE	TENTATIVE SCHEDULE	READING DUE:
Week 1: Jan. 19	1. Introductions and Course Overview 2. Review Syllabus and use of vista 3. Feminism(s) overview	hooks' <i>feminism is for everybody</i>
Week 2: Jan. 26	What makes research feminist?	Cook & Fonow, ch 1, 4; Harding "is there a feminist method?"
Week 3: Feb. 2	Feminist methodology and epistemological considerations	Fonow & Cook; and Campbell & Wasco
Week 4: Feb. 9	Is the sex/identity of the knower epistemologically significant?	Kirsch, ch1; Cook & Fonow, ch3; Choose one: Code (ch1); or Takacs; or Dillard; or Pallas; or Maher et al; or Siegel; or Scheurich & Young; or Pizarro
Week 5: Feb. 16	Knowledge and subjectivity	Cook & Fonow, ch2; Choose one: Allen; or Code (ch2); or David et al; or Rose
Week 6: Feb. 23	Science and truth	Choose one: Cook & Fonow, ch5 or 8; Choose two: Cancian; Erickson & Gutierrez; Litfin (gendered eye); Martin (egg & sperm); Sprague & Zimmerman; Stromquist
Week 7: March 2	Regimes of truth— power and knowledge; Challenges to Eurocentrism	Read Lather ; and Choose one: Allan (feminist poststructuralism); Allen (rethinking power); or Deer; or Narayan (cultural essentialism); or St. Pierre

Week 8: March 9	Indigenous knowledge(s); global perspectives	Choose two: Reinharz, ch6; Mohanty (under western eyes); Jackson; Minh-Ha; Shahidian; Tickner (2005)
Week 9: March 16	Feminist methods, part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey research (R4) - Experimental (R5) - Multiple methods (R11) 	Choose one : Cook & Fonow, ch 9-12 Choose one chapter in Reinharz and one article: Reinharz, ch. 4; Kim; Smith Reinharz, ch. 5; Tickner (2003) Reinharz, ch. 11; Clift & Freimuth
Week 10: Mar. 23	Feminist Methods, part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview (R2) - Oral history (R7) - Narrative 	Choose one chapter in Reinharz and two articles: Reinharz, ch 2; Montell Reinharz, ch. 7; Anderson et al; Andrade; Sangster Davids; Ismail et al; Peters et al; Presser; Reid et al
March 30	Spring Break – no classes	
Week 11: Apr. 6	Feminist Methods, part 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis (R8) - Discourse analysis - Poststructural analysis 	Choose two selections: Reinharz, ch 8; Baxter; Iverson; Gordon et al; Nidiffer; Talburt; Pillow; Speer; Suspitsnya
Week 12: Apr. 13	Feminist Methods, part 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethnography (R3) - Case studies (R9) - Action research (R10) 	Choose one chapter in Reinharz and two articles: Reinharz, ch 3; Lather; Lenge; Levinson Reinharz, ch. 9; Alvesson; Graham; Johnston & Taylor Reinharz, ch. 10; Gatengy & Humphries
Week 13: Apr. 20	Feminist Methods, part 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Original (R12), other, new, emerging 	Reinharz, ch 12; Choose one: Cook & Fonow, ch14; Anderson & McCann; Kelly et al; Dilley

Week 14: Apr. 27	Ethics	Choose two: Kirsch, ch 2, 3, 5
Week 15: May 4	Writing; collaboration and co-authorship	Choose two: Cook & Fonow, ch13, 15; Kirsch, ch4; Borland; Karach & Roach; Richardson; Winkelman
Exam week: May 11	Concluding thoughts and reflections	Reinharz, ch 13

1-16-10

Acknowledgment: Aspects of the design of this course and/or content for this syllabus was inspired by and/or adapted from syllabi prepared by Dr. Elizabeth J. Allan, Associate Professor, University of Maine; Dr. Joseph Boles, Northern Arizona University; Dr. Ann Ferguson, UMass Amherst; Dr. Kathleen Fitzgerald, Columbia College; Drs. Renate Klein and Mazie Hough, University of Maine; Dr. Kristen Myers, Northern Illinois University; Vivian May, William Patterson University.

My thinking about the design of this course was also informed by:

Chick, Nancy, & Holly Hassel. (2009). "Don't hate me because I'm virtual": Feminist pedagogy in the online classroom. *Feminist Teacher*, 19(3), 195- 215.