

**FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS
WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES 392
FALL 2006**

Professor: Mona Lena Krook
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Course Time: Mondays/Wednesdays, 1-2.30PM
Office Hours: Tuesdays/Wednesdays, 3-5 PM,
or by appointment

Course Description

This course explores feminist epistemologies and research methods. We will focus on how feminist scholars challenge dominant theories of knowledge and the major methodologies employed in the social sciences and humanities. Through a combination of lectures and workshops, we will ask how gender theory and feminist politics shape the kinds of research questions we ask, the types of materials we use, and how we define our relationships with our subjects. To reflect on and engage with feminist methods, students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, write memos reflecting on workshop topics, and draft a research proposal in stages over the course of the semester.

Course Requirements

This course aims to introduce students to basic concepts and debates in feminist research through three sets of course assignments:

- 1) **Class participation** (25%) You must come to class prepared and to participate actively in all class discussions. *If you are absent from class – or must leave early – for any reason you are expected to write a short 3-5 page memo on the readings and hand it in at the beginning of the next class.*
- 2) **Short research memos** (25%) Following each faculty workshop (including the ones led by me), you will write a short 1-2 page memo on ways that you might apply – or why you would not apply – that particular method or methodology to your own research project. After each film workshop, you will write a short 1-2 page memo addressing the question asked in the syllabus. These will be due at the beginning of the next class, which will usually – but not always – be on Mondays.
- 3) **Research proposal** (50%) You will draft a research proposal in stages over the course of the semester. I will distribute guidelines for the proposal during the second week of class. Deadlines: a research question on September 20, a first section on October 11, a second section on November 15, and the final paper on December 15. These will always be due on Wednesdays, except for the final version which is due on a Friday.

Required Texts

All of the readings will be available on ERes (password “feminist”), with the exception of three books that are available for purchase at the campus bookstore:

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser. 2004. *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Caroline Ramazanoğlu with Janet Holland. 2002. *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Shulamit Reinharz. 1992. *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 30: Course Introduction

No assigned reading – discussion of course aims and introduction to feminist epistemology and research methods.

September 4: NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

September 6: The Enlightenment and the Scientific Method

Guest: Andrew Rehfeld, Department of Political Science

Caroline Ramazanoğlu with Janet Holland. 2002. "Reason, Science and Progress: Feminism's Enlightenment Inheritance." Pp. 23-40 in Ramazanoğlu with Holland.

Caroline Ramazanoğlu with Janet Holland. 2002. "Can Feminists Tell the Truth? Challenges of Scientific Method." Pp. 41-59 in Ramazanoğlu with Holland.

FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGIES

September 11: Feminist Approaches to Theories of Knowledge

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, Patricia Leavy, and Michelle L. Yaiser. 2004. "Feminist Approaches to Research as *Process*: Reconceptualizing Epistemology, Methodology, and Method." Pp. 3-26 in Hesse-Biber and Yaiser.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Denise Leckenby. 2004. "How Feminists Practice Social Research." Pp. 209-226 in Hesse-Biber and Yaiser.

September 13: Workshop on Alternative Feminist Methodologies

Hélène Cixous. 2000. "Feminine Writing and Women's Difference." Pp. 253-275 in *French Feminism Reader*, ed. Kelly Oliver. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Alison M. Jaggar. 1989. "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology." In *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

María C. Lugones and Elizabeth V. Spelman. 1983. "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice.'" *Women's Studies International Forum* 6, no. 6: 573-581.

September 18: Gender as an Analytic Category

Joan Wallach Scott. 1988. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." Pp. 28-50 in *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mary Hawkesworth. 2006. "Gender as an Analytic Category." Pp. 145-175 in *Feminist Inquiry: From Political Conviction to Methodological Innovation*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

September 20: Workshop on Researching Masculinities

Carrigan, Tim, Bob Connell, and John Lee. 1985. "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity." *Theory and Society* 14, no. 5: 551-604.

September 25: Workshop on *Kitchen Stories*

Question: What does *Kitchen Stories* share with feminist critiques of the 'scientific method'?

September 27: Feminist Standpoint Theory

Sandra Harding. 2004. "Introduction: Standpoint Theory as a Site of Political, Philosophic, and Scientific Debate." Pp. 1-15 in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual & Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra Harding. New York: Routledge.

Annica Kronsell. 2005. "Gendered Practices in Institutions of Hegemonic Masculinity: Reflections from Feminist Standpoint Theory." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 7, no. 2: 280-298.

Patricia Yancey Martin, John R. Reynolds, and Shelley Keith. 2002. "Gender Bias and Feminist Consciousness among Judges and Attorneys: A Standpoint Theory Analysis." *Signs* 27, no. 3: 665-701. (*Skim to page 674, then read pages 675-701*).

October 2: Essentialism and Intersectionality

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser. 2004. "Difference Matters: Studying Across Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality." Pp. 101-120 in Hesse-Biber and Yaiser.

Lynn Weber. 2004. "A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality." Pp. 121-139 in Hesse-Biber and Yaiser.

Jane Roland Martin. 1994. "Methodological Essentialism, False Difference, and Other Dangerous Traps." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19, no. 3: 630-657.

October 4: Workshop on Essentialism and Psychoanalytic Theory

Guest: Susan Stiritz, Women and Gender Studies Program

Lorde, Audre. 2001. "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power." Pp. 285-290 in *Black Feminist Criticism*, ed. Jacqueline Bobo. Oxford: Blackwell Press.

Showalter, Elaine. 1985. "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness." Pp. 243-271 in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, ed. Elaine Showalter. New York: Pantheon.

Lerner, H. E. 1976. "Parental Mislabeling of Female Genitals as a Determinant of Penis Envy and Learning Inhibitions in Women." *Journal of the American Psychoanalysis Association* 24: 269-283.

Person, Ethel Spector. 2004. "Personal Power and the Cultural Unconscious: Implications for Psychoanalytic Theories of Sex and Gender." *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry* 32, no. 1: 59-75.

October 9: Postmodern Challenges to (Feminist) Epistemology

Caroline Ramazanoğlu with Janet Holland. 2002. "Escape from Epistemology? The Impact of Postmodern Thought on Feminist Methodology." Pp. 83-104 in Ramazanoğlu with Holland.

Kathleen Canning. 1994. "Feminist History after the Linguistic Turn: Historicizing Discourse and Experience." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19, no. 2: 368-404.

DOING FEMINIST RESEARCH

October 11: Workshop on Beginning a Feminist Research Project

Caroline Ramazanoğlu with Janet Holland. 2002. "Choices and Decisions: Doing A Feminist Research Project." Pp. 145-164 in Ramazanoğlu with Holland.

October 16: Feminist Interviewing

Shulamit Reinharz. 1992. "Feminist Interview Research." Pp. 18-45 in Reinharz.

N. Puwar. 1997. "Reflections on Interviewing Women MP's." *Sociological Research Online* 2, no. 1.

Gesa E. Kirsch. 2005. "Friendship, Friendliness, and Feminist Fieldwork." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 4: 2163-2172.

October 18: Workshop on Conducting Interviews

Lois Presser. 2005. "Negotiating Power and Narrative in Research: Implications for Feminist Methodology." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 4: 2067-2090.

Donna Luff. 1999. "Dialogue Across the Divides: 'Moments of Rapport' and Power in Feminist Research with Anti-Feminist Women." *Sociology* 33, no. 4: 687-703.

October 23: Feminist Text and Content Analysis

Shulamit Reinharz. 1992. "Feminist Content Analysis." Pp. 145-163 in Reinharz.

Michael Messner and Jeffrey Montez de Oca. 2005. "The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Events." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 3: 1879-1909.

October 25: Workshop on Textual Analysis and Literary Theory

Guest: Barbara Baumgartner, Women and Gender Studies Program

Readings to be announced.

October 30: Feminist Ethnography

Shulamit Reinharz. 1992. "Feminist Cross-Cultural Research." Pp. 109-124 in Reinharz.

Steven L. Rubinstein. 2004. "Fieldwork and the Erotic Economy on the Colonial Frontier." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29, no. 4: 1041-1071.

Schwedler, Jillian. 2006. "The Third Gender: Western Female Researchers in the Middle East." *PS* 39, no. 3: 425-428.

Judith Stacey. 1996. "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" Pp. 88-103 in *Feminism and Social Change: Bridging Theory and Practice*, ed. Heidi Gottfried. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

November 1: Workshop on *Born into Brothels*

Question: In what ways is *Born into Brothels* a feminist ethnography?

November 6: Feminist Archive and Internet Research

Leila J. Rupp. 1997. "How Wide the Circle of the Feminist 'We.'" Pp. 130-155 and 268-276 in *Worlds of Women: The Making of An International Women's Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bettina Aptheker. 2002-2003. "Red Feminism: A Personal and Historical Reflection." *Science & Society* 66, no. 4: 519-526.

Clare Madge and Henrietta O'Connor. 2002. "On-line with E-mums: Exploring the Internet as a Medium for Research." *Area* 34, no. 1: 92-102.

Tetyana Pudrovska and Myra Marx Ferree. 2004. "Global Activism in 'Virtual Space': The European Women's Lobby in the Network of Transnational Women's NGO's on the Web." *Social Politics* 11, no. 1: 117-143 (*Skim*).

November 8: Workshop on Archival Research

Guest: Andrea Friedman, Department of History

Freedman, Estelle B. 1998. "'The Burning of Letters Continues': Elusive Identities and the Historical Construction of Sexuality." *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 4: 1-11.

Scott, Joan and Linda Gordon. 1990. "Book Reviews: Heroes of the Own Lives, Gender and the Politics of History." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 15, no. 4: 848-860.

November 13: NO CLASS

November 15: Feminist Surveys and Statistical Analyses

Lead by Amanda Driscoll, Teaching Assistant

Shulamit Reinharz. 1992. "Feminist Survey Research and Other Statistical Research Formats." Pp. 76-94 in Reinharz.

Joyce McCarl Nielsen, Robyn Marschke, Elisabeth Sheff, and Patricia Rankin. 2005. "Vital Variables and Gender Equity in Academe: Confessions from a Feminist Empiricist Project." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, no. 1: 1-28.

November 20: Workshop on *Kinsey*

Question: What does *Kinsey* suggest about the use of surveys for analyzing human sexuality?

November 22: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK

November 27: Feminist Action Research

Shulamit Reinharz. 1992. "Feminist Action Research." Pp. 175-196 in Reinharz.

Francesca M. Cancian. 1996. "Participatory Research and Alternative Strategies for Activist Sociology." Pp. 187-205 in *Feminism and Social Change*, ed. Heidi Gottfried. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

November 29: Workshop on Participatory Action Research

Guest: Shanti Parikh, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

Readings to be announced.

December 4: Original Feminist Research Methods

Shulamit Reinharz. 1992. "Original Feminist Research Methods." Pp. 214-239 in Reinharz.

Sue Wilkinson. 2004. "Focus Groups: A Feminist Method." Pp. 271-295 in Hesse-Biber and Yaiser.

December 6: Workshop on (Original) Feminist Research Methods

Shulamit Reinharz. 1992. "Conclusions." Pp. 240-269 in Reinharz.

Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook. 2005. "Feminist Methodology: New Applications in the Academy and Public Policy." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 4: 2211-2236.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz. 2004. "Some Thoughts by an Unrepentant 'Positivist' Who Considers Herself a Feminist Nonetheless." Pp. 320-329 in Hesse-Biber and Yaiser.