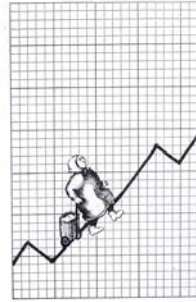


Women's Studies 602
Methods of Inquiry in Women's Studies

Spring 2009
Wednesday, 4:00- 6:40
HH 122

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Office Hours: Wed 9:30-11:30 a.m.





This course will familiarize students with a variety of research methods for giving voice to women's experience and making visible the frequently invisible and undercounted aspects of women's lives. Students will become acquainted with current discussions of feminist epistemology, including feminist critiques of traditional research methods. We will focus on ways of incorporating and analyzing literary works, historical archives, ethnography, quantitative surveys, media discourse, and feminist participatory research. We will also discuss issues such as: How and by whom is knowledge produced and validated? Do distinctively feminist methods exist? What is the relationship of the researcher to the researched? How does the social location (race, class, sexual identity, etc.) of the researcher impact on research? What are the issues (ethical, political, epistemological, methodological) that arise in studying "others"? How is feminist theory related to research? How can research relate to efforts for social change?

The course will provide students with hands-on experience about some of the joys and dilemmas of doing research, and students will conceptualize and design their own research project and write a research proposal. The assignments are aimed at familiarizing students with a number of methods that they can apply to their own thesis project. The course ends with students completing their own thesis proposal, but the course is also applicable for students who have already proposed their thesis and are working on the thesis itself.

Several professors will visit the class with expertise on particular topics. Classes will also be interactive with open discussions on all readings, as well as discussion on the development of individual research proposals.

Readings

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy and Yaiser, Michelle L. (2004). *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*. NY: Oxford University Press (Called *Feminist Perspectives* below).

Locke, Lawrence F., Spirduso, Waneen Wyrick, and Silverman, Stephen J. 2007. *Proposals that Work: A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals*, (5th edition) Sage Publications. (Called *Proposals* below).

Articles on electronic reserve



Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the differences between feminist and traditional epistemologies and methodologies.
2. Use quantitative and qualitative research, archival research, participatory research, literary analysis, and discourse analysis in their own thesis.
3. Become careful and critical consumers of research presented in the media and in academic texts.
4. Complete the SDSU Institutional Review Board criteria for research.
5. Design research projects.
6. Use the internet and electronic databases for research.
7. Interpret and write up research results.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Class Participation (15%)

Students are expected to attend class and participate actively in discussion each week. Come prepared and demonstrate that you have read and thought about the readings.

Students are expected to raise discussion questions in class as well as answer discussion questions raised by others. Good discussion questions:

1. are open-ended (that is, do not ask a question that can be answered yes or no)
2. refer to major themes of the reading (not minor or trivial points)
3. bring up critiques of the readings
4. relate the readings to other sources
5. result in class discussion and debate.



Weekly Research Assignments (5% each, for a total of 55%)

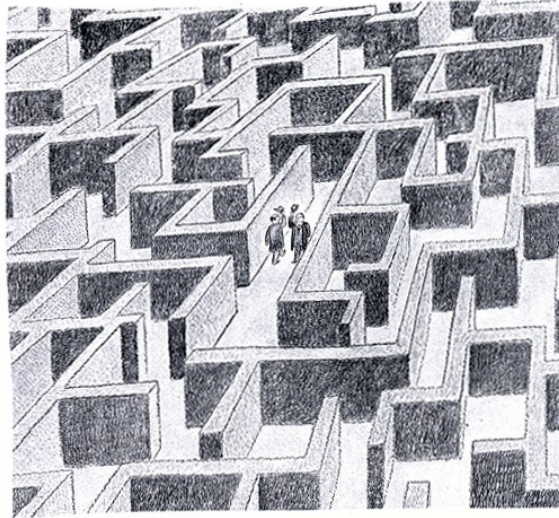
There is an assignment each week (11 assignments in all) that relates to the topic and readings of the prior week. The assignments have been constructed to provide hands-on experiences for students so they can apply various research methods and theoretical discussions directly to their proposed thesis. These assignments include:

1. Significance of topic
2. Position of researcher
3. Literature review
4. Historical archives
5. How to make a thesis proposal compelling
6. Quantitative surveys
7. Qualitative methods/ethnography
8. Close reading of literature
9. Media discourse
10. Making sense of data
11. The IRB Tutorial

Research Proposal (30%)

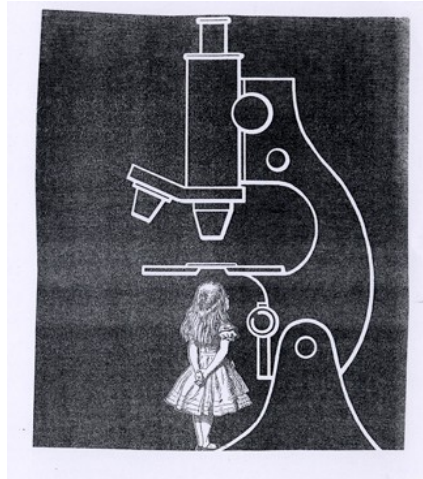
Throughout the semester you will be writing a research proposal that will ideally serve as your thesis proposal. Several of the readings and assignments will help you to build toward the final proposal.

Due dates will be rigidly enforced—I will deduct HALF A GRADE FOR EACH DAY THAT AN ASSIGNMENT IS LATE.



Instructions for accessing course readings electronically

- Get on the website ecr.sdsu.edu
- Click on “electronic reserves and reserve pages”
- You can then search for this course under instructor name or course number
- Click on “Course reserve pages by instructor”
- Scroll down to “Rothblum” and click “search”
- Click on this course number, which is WMNST 602
- It will ask for the password, which is “feminq”
- Enter the password and then click on “accept”
- You will get a list of all course readings
- For most of the readings, you can just click on the symbol to the left and then click again, and you will be in the adobe acrobat version of the article. You can read it on line, print it out, etc.
- A few of the articles have a funny symbol of a globe to the left. When you click on those articles, you first get a page called “document info.” Click on the place that says “click here for more information.” When you get the next page, wait a few seconds, and the article will appear. If it doesn’t, look for a place that says “pdf full text” and click on that.
- Some students have found that articles with the globe symbol can only be accessed while on campus, not off campus, so be sure to plan ahead.
- Let me know if you find any missing pages or have difficulty reading the articles.



Schedule

January 28

**Introduction: What makes something “research”?
How do researchers select a research topic?**

February 4

What is a feminist epistemology?

Carol Gilligan (1987). Remapping Development: The Power of Divergent Data. In Christie Farnham (Eds.) *The Impact of Feminist Research in the Academy* (pp. 77-94). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, Patricia Leavy & Michelle Yaiser, Feminist Approaches to Research as a *Process*. Chapter 1 in *Feminist Perspectives*.

Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Tracing the Contours: Feminist Research and Feminist Objectivity. Chapter 4 in *Feminist Perspectives*.

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 1:

Get on scholar.google.com and research a possible thesis topic.

Write a two-page, double-spaced paper on why the topic is significant and how your approach is novel. Due next week—February 11 at noon on Blackboard.

You can check out the list of all prior women’s studies master’s theses on <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/wsweb/MATheses.doc> and this is also posted on Blackboard under Course Documents.



February 11

Researching ourselves and others

Celia Kitzinger, Manjit Bola, Amparo Bonilla Campos, Jean Carabine, Kathy Doherty, Hannah Frith, Ann McNulty, Jackie Reilly & Jan Winn (1996). Speaking of Representing the Other. *Feminism & Psychology*, 6(2), 217-235.

Diana Russell (1996). Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Politics of White Feminists Conducting Research on Black Women in South Africa. *Feminism & Psychology*, 6(2), 176-180.

Amanda Kottler, (1996). Voices in the Winds of Change. *Feminism & Psychology*, 6(2), 61-68.

Deborah Marks (1996). Able-Bodied Dilemmas in Teaching Disability Studies. *Feminism & Psychology*, 6(2), 69-73.

Elena Tajami Creef (2000). Discovering My Mother as Other in the Saturday Evening Post. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(4), 443-455.

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 2:

Write a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper in which you critique the standpoint of the authors in this week's readings—which ones are most compelling and why? End with 1-2 paragraphs in which you situate yourself vis-a-vis your own thesis topic. Due next week—February 18 at noon on Blackboard.



February 18

How theory grounds our research

Conducting a literature review

Doing an M.A. exam

READINGS: Sample thesis literature reviews will be posted on Blackboard under Course Documents

Donna Penn (Spring, 1995). Queer: Theorizing Politics and History. *Radical History Review*, 62, pp. 24-42.

Sandra Harding (1996). Gendered Ways of Knowing and the “Epistemological Crisis” of the West. In Nancy Goldberger, Jill Tarule, Blythe Clinchy and Mary Belenky (Eds.) *Knowledge, Difference and Power*. NY: Basic Books.

GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Susan Cayleff

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 3:

Get on scholar.google.com and look at the literature for a possible thesis topic. Compile a bibliography of about 20 of the most relevant sources for your thesis topic. Then write a 5-page, double-spaced literature review of 7 of the most relevant sources. End with your own analysis of this literature, and what it implies for how you will approach your own thesis topic. Due next week—February 25 at noon on Blackboard.



February 25

Using historical archives and writing feminist history

Susan Geiger, What's So Feminist About Women's Oral History? Chapter 22, in *Feminist Perspectives*

Richard Marius (1999). Chapter 2: Thinking About History. In *A Short Guide to Writing About History*. NY: Longman.

William Bruce Wheeler and Susan Becker (1998). Chapter 2: The Road to True Freedom: African American Alternatives in the New South. In *Discovering the American Past: Volume II* (4th Ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Women's History and Gender History: What and Why? Available at:

<http://www.earlymodernweb.org.uk/emn/index.php/archives/2005/03/womens-gender-history-why/>

GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Sue Gonda, Grossmont College Department of History

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 4: In 2-4 pages, analyze the "Questions to Consider" in the article "The Road to True Freedom." These questions help you practice how to question - and find answers - in different kinds of historical evidence. Also study the advice about how to ask "who, what, when, where, why, etc" in the Richard Marius article.

What questions are you asking in your thesis topic? What evidence will help you answer those questions? Evidence, or sources, are direct, primary (first-hand) sources - not scholarly articles or books. Scholarly articles and books are written by someone who has already analyzed the evidence for you. Primary sources, or evidence, is analyzed by *you*. In other words, what sources might you use for your thesis that will help you understand why people acted in particular ways at the place and time of your topic?

{Just to give you some additional ideas of sources/evidence: newspaper articles (found at Union-Tribune archives, SDSU library microfiche, or online), archival papers about a person or topic at a museum, political cartoons, census data (usually found online through the federal government), advertisements in women's magazines or other media, photographs, songs, Hollywood films (i.e., a film made in 1935 helps us to understand ideas and values in 1935), popular fiction, Gallup polls, legal documents from court cases.}

Due next week—March 4 at noon on Blackboard.



March 4
Research proposals

Some sample thesis proposals will be posted on Blackboard under Course Documents

Doreen Mattingly (2003). *Call Centers, Gender, and Globalization: A Comparative Study*. Sample proposal, available on Blackboard under Course Documents.

Proposals, Chapter 1, The Function of the Proposal

Proposals, Chapter 3, Developing the Thesis or Dissertation Proposal

Proposals, Chapter 4, Content of the Proposal

GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Doreen Mattingly

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 5: Write a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper in which you describe which two thesis proposals posted on Blackboard are most compelling and why (interesting, clearly written, easy to follow, persuasive). Due next week—March 11 at noon on Blackboard.



March 11

Quantitative methods

What is “science” and feminist critiques of science

Conducting research online

Janet Saltzman Chafetz, Some Thoughts By an Unrepentant “Positivist” Who Considers Herself a Feminist Nonetheless. Chapter 17 in *Feminist Perspectives*.

Maxine Thompson and Verna Keith, The Blacker the Berry: Gender, Skin Tone, Self-Esteem, and Self-Efficacy. Chapter 18 in *Feminist Perspectives*.

Laura Madson, Inferences Regarding the Personality Traits and Sexual Orientation of Physically Androgynous People. Chapter 19 in *Feminist Perspectives*.

Ellen Riggle, Sharon Rostosky and C. Stuart Reedy (2005). Online survey for BGLT research: Issues and techniques. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 49(2), 1-21.

Instructions on how to create surveys on Blackboard are posted on Blackboard under Course Documents.

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 6: Get on Blackboard (there is a separate Blackboard site for our course specifically for student online surveys) and develop a 5-item quantitative online survey (true/false or multiple choice items) related to your thesis topic. Due THIS SATURDAY, March 14.

Then some time between Sunday March 15 and Wednesday March 18 get on Blackboard and take (i.e., fill out) the surveys of everyone in the class. Complete these surveys by noon next week, March 18.



March 18
Qualitative Methods/Ethnography

Marjorie Devault, Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis. Chapter 13 in *Feminist Perspectives*.

Jennifer Mason (2005). Appendix: Difficult questions for Qualitative Research. In J. Mason, *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage Publications.

GUEST SPEAKER: Professors Huma Ghosh

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 7: Get on Blackboard for this course and develop a 3-item qualitative online survey (open-ended items) related to your thesis topic. Due THIS SATURDAY March 21.

Then some time between Sunday March 22 and Wednesday April 8 at noon get on Blackboard and take (i.e., fill out) the surveys of everyone in the class. Complete these surveys by April 8 at noon.

March 25

NO CLASS—MOST GRADUATE STUDENTS WILL BE ON THE INDIA TRIP

April 1

NO CLASS--SPRING BREAK



April 8

Analyzing Literature

Class time to be rescheduled

This is the first night of Passover AND Professor Anne Donadey teaches during our class time. So we will meet during a different time this week

Paula Gunn Allen (1986). Kochinnenako in Academe: Three Approaches to Interpreting a Keres Indian tale. In *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 222-244.

Laura Mulvey (1989). Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946). In Laura Mulvey *Visual and Other Pleasures*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Anne Donadey

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 8: Select one genre of literature (e.g., poetry, science fiction, children's literature, romance novels, crime fiction, whatever—as long as it is fiction) and select two works that focus on the topic of your thesis. Write a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper in which you compare and contrast how these two works deal with your topic, being sure to focus on a close reading of the text. Due next week—April 15 at noon on Blackboard.



April 15

The Interpretive Turn: Discourse and Narrative Analysis

Marian Meyers (2004). African American Women and Violence: Gender, Race and Class in the News. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(2), 95-118.

Martha S. Feldman, Kaj Skoldberg, Ruth Nicole Brown and Debra Horner (2004). Making Sense of Stories: A Rhetorical Approach to Narrative Analysis. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 14(2), 147-170.

The following two readings are on Blackboard under Course Documents:

Sex-on-TV-4-Executive-Summary

And

Sex-on-TV-4-Report-Methodology

GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Kimala Price

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 9: Get on google.com to search popular media news items, blogs, and images about your thesis topic and write a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper using narrative analysis. Due next week—April 22 at noon on Blackboard.



April 22

Making sense of data

Eben Weitzman (2000). Software and Qualitative Research. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

There are samples of undergraduate student qualitative and quantitative papers on Blackboard under Course Documents; all about the same in-class survey. Read them to see which ones you think are most interesting, clear and persuasive and why.

GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Irene Lara

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 10: Write up the results of your quantitative and qualitative surveys that students completed online several weeks ago. Be sure to present all data in tables, graphs or pie charts and also to interpret them in the text. Due April 29 at noon on Blackboard.



April 29

Activism and feminist participatory research

Randy Stecker (2005). The Goose Approach to Research. Chapter 2 in *Research Methods for Community Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Karen Kendrick (1998). Producing the Battered Woman: Shelter Politics and the Power of the Feminist Voice. In Nancy Naples (Ed.) *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender* (pp. 151-173). NY: Routledge.

Roberta Feldman, Susan Stall & Patricia Wright (2000). The Community Needs To Be Built By Us: Women Organizing in Chicago Public Housing. In Nancy Naples (Ed.) *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender* (pp. 257-264). NY: Routledge.

GUEST SPEAKER: To be determined

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT 11: All students in this course will be required to complete the IRB (Institutional Review Board) tutorial, whether or not they will be doing research with “human subjects” in their thesis. To complete the tutorial, get on <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~gra/login.php>. You will need to create a username and password in order to access the tutorial. BE SURE TO SCHEDULE A FEW HOURS TO DO THIS. When you are done, you will get an IRB Tutorial confirmation certificate. Print this out; this certificate is due May 6 in class.



May 6

Ethics in feminist research

Writing up research results in interesting ways

How to determine authorship

Proposals, Chapter 2, Doing the right thing: “The Habit of Truth.”

Gesa Kirsch, Friendship, Friendliness, and Feminist Fieldwork. Special issue of *Signs: New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies* Vol. 30 no. 4, Summer 2005. Available online at

www.journals.uchicago.edu/Signs/journal/contents/v30n4.html

Sabine Grenz, Intersections of Sex and Power in Research on Prostitution: A Female Researcher Interviewing Male Heterosexual Clients. Special issue of *Signs: New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies* Vol. 30 no. 4, Summer 2005. Available online at www.journals.uchicago.edu/Signs/journal/contents/v30n4.html

Corinne Glesne (1997). That Rare Feeling: Re-Presenting Research Through Poetic Transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(2), 202-220.

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT: Final Research Proposal Due in class next week—May 13. Guidelines for thesis proposals are on pp. 18-19 of the Graduate Student Handbook which is on Blackboard under Course Documents.

May 13

Writing the research proposal

Proposals, Chapter 6, Style and Form in Writing the Proposal

Proposals, Chapter 7, The Oral Presentation

Proposals, Chapter 8, Money for Research