

Capstone Seminar (WST 4935)

Fall 2020
Wednesdays Period 7 - 9 (1:55 PM - 4:55 PM)
Online Synchronous

Instructor: Alexandria N. Wilson McDonald
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Course Description

This course, required for all Women's Studies majors, is the culmination of the Women's Studies degree. Throughout the course we explore past and present scholarship in women's, gender, and sexualities studies to reaffirm the interdisciplinary nature of the field and highlight the relationship between feminist theory, intellectual practice, and social change. The majority of the semester is devoted to a full-length independent project on a topic of the student's choosing. The first half of the course is dedicated to exploring feminist epistemologies and methodologies in order to help students prepare their final projects. In the second half of the course, we will be thinking about "feminist futures," as we explore what becoming and living as a feminist means for student's future professional and personal plans.

Course Pre-requisites / Co-requisites

WST 3015 - Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Women's Studies

Learning Objectives

- Students will engage with ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions as they develop their own independent project throughout the course.
- Students will become familiar with the ways in which feminists have used scholarship and activism to address gender injustice in society.
- Students will learn to draw on and apply core concepts of feminist theory.
- Students will position themselves and their experiences into key feminist debates through a "position paper."

Required Texts

Sara Ahmed, 2017. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press.

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. 2012. *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*.

All other required readings will be available in Canvas.

Attendance & Participation

In this class the material that students learn is cumulative; thus, completing the readings and engaging with the course material is a requirement of this course. You are responsible for reading all assigned materials carefully ahead of time in preparation for class.

Attendance for this class will be taken at the beginning of every live class meeting. There will be **five** live Zoom meetings throughout the course of the semester. Check the course schedule for the dates of the live meetings. Each student is allowed **one** unexcused absence. Any further unexcused absences (this includes absences without a doctor's note, excuse from the university, or another acceptable excuse) will result in a deduction of 1 point (for each absence) from your attendance grade.

Due to the online format of this course, I understand that participation in class discussion will be difficult; nonetheless half of your participation grade will be based on class discussion. You should think of this as an opportunity to practice discussing your ideas in a public forum and inputting yourself within relevant debates. For the other half, you will be required to meet with me within the first six weeks of class to discuss your final project. It is up to each student to arrange a meeting with me. For full credit, this meeting must be held prior to the due date of the annotated bibliography.

Requirements for class attendance are consistent with the attendance policy stated in the Undergraduate Catalog Regulations found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Annotated Bibliography

In preparation for the final project, you will complete an annotated bibliography that outlines **five** relevant sources for your project. These sources should be relevant to the research question that you will build your final project around. The articles/books should be listed in chronological order and you must use an established citation style. Annotated bibliographies must include a brief (one long paragraph of around 200 words) annotation that summarizes and analyzes/evaluates each of the five works. Thus, your annotated bibliography will include five long paragraphs, one for each text. See the course schedule for due dates.

Project Outline

In this course each student will complete a final project which will consist of a research design. In preparation for this final project, students will complete a project outline. This project outline must include the student's research question, a discussion of the project's epistemological background, and the selected methodology for answering the proposed question. This should be written in 5 succinct, double spaced pages with a rationale for why a specific research question was chosen and how it will advance feminist knowledge. Further details will be discussed in class. See the course schedule for due dates.

Evaluation Essay

In order to fulfill the BA in Women's Studies requirements, the program has designated the following three Student Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the terminology and concepts central to the interdisciplinary field of women's gender, and sexualities studies.
2. Examine and interpret material using the theory and research methods of women's, gender, and sexualities studies and apply these ideas to current social issues.
3. Present ideas concerning women's, gender, and sexualities studies in spoken and written form.

The undergraduate curriculum is designed to introduce material relevant to these learning outcomes in WST3015 (Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Women's Studies), reinforce them throughout the additional courses taken in the major, and assess students' achievement of these outcomes in WST 4935 Capstone Seminar in Women's Studies. During the Fall semester (2020), your exit assessment will take the form of a "position paper." This assignment is required for all students in the Capstone Seminar. Students will read a selected article and then write a "position paper" of 4-5 pages. Students will be asked to "position" themselves relative to the arguments the author lays out in the essay. Further details will be discussed in class. See the course schedule for due dates.

Final Project

For the final project in this course, each student will prepare a research design of their own. The final research design should be between 8-10 double-spaced pages and it should outline the necessary steps for carrying out the research project. This research design will consist of the first steps of any research project including a theoretical framework section, literature review, and methodology section. Through the research design, students should demonstrate knowledge of feminist theory, feminist epistemology, and feminist methodology. Further details will be discussed in class. See the course schedule for due dates.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance 5%, Participation 10% (5% for class participation & 5% for meeting with the instructor about your project), Annotated Bibliography 15%, Project Outline 20%, Evaluative Essay 20%, Final Project 30%

Grading

Requirements for make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following numerical scales:

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	GPA equivalent
A	94-	4.0
A-	90-93	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	63-66	1.0
D-	60-62	0.67
E	<60	0.00
E1	stopped attending	0.00
I	Incomplete	0.00

Information on UF policies for grading may be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

Other Policies

Academic Honesty - All work in this class is to be your own. Please take note of the Student Honor Code, Student Conduct Code, and Standards of Ethical Conduct. The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

Late Assignments - All assignments are to be submitted by 11:59 pm on the date in which they are due. Please check the course schedule for assignment due dates.

Deadline extensions will be granted only in cases that conform with university policies. Official documentation must be provided for deadline extensions. Otherwise, 1 point will be deducted for each day that an assignment is submitted late. Make-up policies/requirements for this class are consistent with university policies, available at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Accessibility - I am committed to making learning in this course accessible to all. Please contact me to discuss any learning needs that you may have in the first week of the semester. You can also access the resources listed below.

UF Disability Resource Center - <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

UF Counseling and Wellness Center - <https://counseling.ufl.edu>.

Evaluations - Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Recorded Material - Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Technical Issues - If you experience technical issues throughout the course please contact me via email. This is my preferred method of communication. If your technical issues are of a general nature please contact the UF Helpdesk at 352-392-4357. You can access their website here <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu>.

This syllabus is subject to amendment during the semester. Any changes considered necessary by the instructor might be made without prior notification. However, the changes will be announced in lectures and/or via e-mail. If any changes are made, the syllabus will be updated and shared with the students via Canvas.

Course Schedule		
September 2	Course introduction and syllabus review	Live Class Meeting!
September 9	<p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Penny Weiss, “I’m Not a Feminist, but...” Popular Myths about Feminism in <i>Conversations with Feminism</i> (1998)</p> <p>Cynthia Enloe, Chapter 1 “Gender makes the World Go Round: where are the women?” From <i>Bananas, Beaches, and Bases</i> (2014)</p> <p><u>Watch:</u></p> <p>“What does it mean to have a feminist curiosity about international politics?” Interview with Cynthia Enloe</p> <p>“Where are the women in international politics?” Interview with Cynthia Enloe</p>	
	<i>Feminist Epistemologies</i>	
September 16	<p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>“How Do Feminists Do Theory and for Whom?” in <i>Reading Feminist Theory</i> pp. 1-6</p> <p>Jacqui True and Brooke Ackerly (2019) “A Feminist Research Ethic Explained” in <i>Doing Feminist Research</i>.</p> <p>Jacqui True and Brooke Ackerly (2019) “Question Driven Research, formulating a good question” in <i>Doing Feminist Research</i>.</p>	Live Class Meeting!

Course Schedule		
September 23	<p><u>Rationalist/positivist epistemologies</u></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Catharine E. Hundley. 2012 “Feminist Empiricism.” In <i>Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis</i>. pp. 28-46</p> <p>Richmond Campbell. 1994. “The Virtues of Feminist Emericism.” <i>Hypatia</i>.</p> <p>Alyssa N Zucker and Laura J Landry. 2007. “Embodied discrimination: The relation of sexism and distress to women’s drinking and smoking behaviors.” <i>Sex Roles</i>.</p> <p><u>Watch:</u> Instructor’s recorded lecture</p>	
September 30	<p><u>Standpoint epistemologies</u></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Sandra Harding. 2012. “Feminist Standpoints.” In <i>Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis</i>.</p> <p>Audre Lorde ‘Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference’ in <i>Sister/Outsider</i>.</p> <p>Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1994) Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Colour. <i>Stanford Law Review</i> 43(6) 1241-1299 (link in Canvas)</p> <p><u>Watch:</u></p> <p>Instructor’s recorded lecture</p> <p>Kimberlé Crenshaw - Ted Talk “The urgency of Intersectionality”</p>	

Course Schedule		
October 7	<p><u>Postmodern/poststructural epistemologies</u></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Susanne Gannon and Bronwyn Davies. 2012. "Postmodern, Poststructural, and Critical Theories." In <i>Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis</i>.</p> <p>Jacqui True and Brooke Ackerly (2019) "Theory and Conceptualization: situating your topic, also known as...." "The Literature Review" in <i>Doing Feminist Theory</i>.</p> <p><u>Watch:</u> Recorded guest lecture</p>	
	Feminist Methodologies	
October 14	<p><u>Participant Observation</u></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Wanda S. Pillow and Cris Mayo. 2012. "Feminist Ethnography: Histories, Challenges, and Possibilities." In <i>Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis</i>.</p> <p>Carol Cohan (1987) "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals." <i>Signs</i>.</p> <p><u>Watch:</u> Instructor's recorded lecture</p>	Annotated Bib. Due

Course Schedule		
October 21	<p><u>Conducting Interviews & Reflexivity</u></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Marjorie L. DeVault and Glenda Gross. 2012. "Feminist Qualitative Interviewing: Experience, Talk, and Knowledge." In <i>Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis</i>.</p> <p>Sara L. Crawley. 2014. "Autoethnography as Feminist Self-Interview. In <i>The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft</i>.</p> <p>Peregine Shwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow. 2010. "Checking Researcher Sense Making Through Reflexivity" pp. 100-104 in <i>Interpretive Research Design</i></p>	Live Class Meeting!
October 28	<p><u>Textual and Visual Analysis</u></p> <p><u>Read:</u></p> <p>Michelle M. Lazar 2007. "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis." <i>Critical Discourse Studies</i>.</p> <p>Manoucheka Celeste. "Black Women and U.S. Pop Culture in the Post-identity Era: the case of Beyonce Knowles" In <i>Transatlantic Feminisms: women and gender studies in Africa and the Diaspora</i>.</p> <p>Maddy Coy "I am a Person Too: Women's Accounts and Images bout Body and Self in Prostitution" pp. 103-121 in <i>Prostitution, Harm and gender Inequality: Theory, Research and Policy</i></p> <p><u>Watch:</u> Instructor's recorded lecture</p>	
	Feminist Futures	

Course Schedule		
November 4	<u>Read:</u> bell hooks (2000) “Visionary Feminism” in <i>Feminism is for Everybody</i> Sara Ahmed (2017) Introduction: Bringing Feminist Theory Home” in <i>Living a Feminist Life</i> <u>Watch:</u> Akwugo Emejulu (2018) “Crisis Politics and the Challenge of Intersectional Solidarity”	Project Outline Due
November 11	Holiday	
November 18	<u>Read:</u> Sara Ahmed (2017) “Part I Becoming Feminist” in <i>Living a Feminist Life</i> Roxanne Gay’s essay <i>Bad Feminist</i>	Live Class Meeting!
November 25	Holiday	
December 2	<u>Read:</u> Sara Ahmed (2017) “Part III Living the Consequences” in <i>Living a Feminist Life</i> <u>Watch:</u> Instructor’s recorded lecture	Evaluative Essay Due
December 9	<u>Read:</u> Sara Ahmed (2017) “Conclusion 1: A Killjoy Survival Kit,” and “Conclusion 2: A Killjoy Manifesto” in <i>Living a Feminist Life</i> pp. 590-628 <u>Watch:</u> Heartland Future Talks 2019: Judith Butler	Live Class Meeting!
December 16		Final Projects Due

