

Feminist Methods in Research and Scholarship

WST6004 Section 6004

Class Periods: W 6-8

Location: UST108

Academic Term: Fall 2022

Instructor:

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Course Description

Research is important because it is the process for knowledge production; it is the way we constantly expand knowledge. Research for social justice expands and improves the conditions for justice; it is an intellectual, cognitive and moral project, often fraught, never complete, but worthwhile (Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012)

This course is an introduction to critical questions about knowledge production and conducting research through a feminist lens. The framework for the course is 'research practices'; you will engage with intellectual debates about what it means to position yourself as a knower by exploring feminist epistemologies and research ethics and applying these to your own projects.

Designed primarily for M.A. students who are seeking to shape their research approach to a topic, it will be helpful to have some prior familiarity with feminist theory and/or women's and gender studies.

A major goal of the course is to explore issues and dilemmas with respect to giving voice to the diversity of people's experiences. In so doing, we will encourage questioning of knowledge claims and power dynamics e.g. What is the relationship of the researcher to the researched? How does the social location (gender, race, class, sexuality, geography/nationality, etc) of the researcher impact research? How have systems of domination been upheld and/or disrupted by research design and practice? How can research contribute to social change?

We will begin with examining feminist epistemologies and ethics, and move into the messy realities, tensions, challenges and opportunities of research as a set of practices. This will involve reading empirical papers using a range of methods, reflecting on what these tell us about the *process* of research. A significant proportion of the course will be spent on developing your own research practices, carrying out small projects using feminist approaches to social science and humanities methods of inquiry.

WHAT TO EXPECT: We are in a new learning space together and you will bring to class your range of disciplinary 'conceptual baggage'. In the beginning of the course - and throughout - we will explore what this means for how we engage in dialogue with each other and with research participants. We will create time for discussion of any questions, doubts, or issues you are struggling with as you work through your research agenda.

All accommodations will be honored. My aim is to create a discussion space where we can engage with each other in as meaningful a way as possible remotely. This entails creating a learning space and community based on inclusion, dignity, respect, anti-racism, and freedom from discrimination.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint or belief.

Land acknowledgement

I acknowledge that for thousands of years the area now comprising the state of Florida has been and continues to be home to many Native Nations. I further recognize that the main campus of the University of Florida is in the heartland territory of two historically-known Native societies—those of the Potano and of the Alachua Seminole. As a part of our current stewardship, I acknowledge my obligation to honor the ancestral, present, and future Native residents of Florida (originally crafted by UF Libraries).

Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites

None

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to critically engage with:

- how feminist methods in research and scholarship emerged and developed in the interdisciplinary field of Women's Studies
- feminist perspectives on research that center intersecting inequalities of gender, race, class, sexuality, citizenship status, colonization, and other systems of power
- the relationship between feminist research principles and their translation into practice
- real life dilemmas that arise from the process of making knowledge claims, through designing research questions, collecting and analyzing data.

You will get the most out of the course if you read the assigned texts with enough time before we meet so that you can participate in discussions.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- draw on core conceptual frameworks in feminist theory to inform epistemology and knowledge production
- demonstrate knowledge of feminist analyses of research practice, including ethics
- recognize and use appropriate terms for different research approaches and techniques.
- develop a methodological approach for their proposed research.

These learning outcomes will be evidenced through assignments.

Materials and Supply Fees

None

Required Textbooks

All required readings will be made available through Canvas or Course Reserves and will be posted at least a week in advance of the date on which they will be covered. Class resources, announcements, updates, and assignments will also be made available through Canvas, so please check the site frequently.

Course Schedule

As we develop the course so that it speaks to your research priorities, the schedule may change. In addition, there will be sessions featuring discussions with feminist scholars which will be based on their availability. This means that the outline below may be adapted as we move through the different topics. All changes in the syllabus will be posted in Canvas.

	Topic
Week 1 24 th August	Welcome, introductions and discussion of your proposed research projects/agendas Please listen to the ' <i>What does feminist research really look like?</i> ' podcast from Gender and Development. Link in Canvas
Week 2 31 st August	Feminist Epistemologies (1)
Week 3 7 th September	Feminist Epistemologies (2)
Week 4 14 th September	Linking epistemology and method
Week 5 21 st September	Researching and representing experience: interviews, focus groups and Photovoice
Week 6 28 th September	Ethics and ethical dilemmas
Week 7 5 th October	Curating and chronicling
Week 8 12 th October	Participatory research and emotional labor
Week 9 19 th October	Ethnography
Week 10 26 th October	Oral history
Week 11 2 nd November	Archival research
Week 12 9 th November	Analysis and interpretation

Week 13 16 th November	Surveys and experiments
Week 14 23 rd November	No class (holiday)
Week 15 30 th November	Final paper check in and workshop
Week 16 7 th December	Closing discussion

Assignment details

There are five assignments for this course. We will discuss the format and content of each in depth during classes. The assignments are intended to allow you to tailor your individual work to your own research agendas, while also sharing key aspects of the learning process with your class colleagues.

Submitting written work

All written work should be typed, double-spaced, with a 12-point font. Please use a reasonable margin (e.g., 1-1.25 inches). Submit everything via Canvas.

Discussion questions (5%) and participation (5%)

Discussion questions are due twice per student during the course. Good discussion questions are based on a close reading of the week's texts and open enough to allow collaborative reflection and dialogue. The goal of this assignment is to help you think about the readings and explore them with each other. What were the most thought-provoking issues raised by the readings? Do the readings "speak to" or complement each other in ways that bear discussing? How might we think about feminist research and methods having read these pieces? Your questions must be posted on the appropriate discussion board in Canvas by 9 a.m. on the day of class (Wednesdays), so that I have a chance to see your thinking before we 'meet' that afternoon. If for some reason you are unable to post them, send them to me via e-mail and I will post them.

The participation exercise will be during the session on curating and chronicling. Your task will be to identify a source that collects and disseminates knowledge(s) relating to a feminist research agenda i.e., addresses intersecting inequalities of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, disability or citizenship status. Examples include but are not limited to a website, or document, or podcast series. For the class, you should prepare to present this an overview of this source to the class, along with your analysis of what contribution it makes to feminist research. You do not need to prepare slides, but if you choose an online source you will need to bring the link so that you can navigate around it and show the class.

Epistemology reflection paper (20%, due end of week 4)

You will write a short reflection paper on the readings about feminist epistemologies. At the outset of the course, we will read several papers on feminist epistemologies. For this assignment you will prepare a short summary of each paper written in the style of an annotated bibliography, then a longer reflection (approximately 750 words) where you synthesize the main arguments and points of agreement and contestation. In other words, put these readings in conversation with each other. Where do you find consensus? Where does each reading build on and/or challenge the others? In what ways do their

different perspectives help you understand core themes of feminist epistemologies? How can you identify key features of feminist approaches to knowing? This paper, combining your summaries and reflection should be submitted by the end of week 4, in Canvas. We will also discuss this assignment more in class.

Independent research projects (due week 13)

These assignments offer you an opportunity to conduct small research projects, testing out different approaches and refining your own research processes using either approaches associated with humanities scholarship (textual representations) or social science (engaging directly with people). These approaches might not necessarily be the same as your planned research project but are opportunities to explore what is known about your topic in existing sources, or to develop a technique. They offer opportunities at different stages of the research process, from design to analysis. If you would like to pursue a different research exercise than those below, please talk with me to see if we can make it possible within the course parameters and our combined resources.

Choose TWO options. Full details for each option, including the specific requirements/steps and format for the paper you will submit, will be in Canvas. Each option is 20 points (20% of your grade).

- Interview project and data analysis
- Photovoice project and data analysis
- Analysis of a text (e.g., poem, novel, memoir)
- Curation/chronicling
- Archival research
- Focus group and data analysis
- Online survey and data analysis

Final paper on incorporating feminist research into your projects (30%, due final week)

You will prepare a final paper that sets out how feminist research approaches will inform your studies. This may vary according to your field and topic, and whether you have a distinct project in mind. Your paper will in some way illuminate the intersection of race, class, and/or other issues of diversity with gender. We will discuss this paper more in class as the course develops.

Evaluation of Grades

Assignment	Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Discussion and participation	10	10%
Reflection paper	20	20%
Research project option 1	20	20%
Research project option 2	20	20%
Final paper	30	30%
TOTAL	100	100%

FINAL GRADE

At the end of the semester, final grades will be determined by the following formula:

94 and more points = A	80-83 points = B-	67-69 points = D+
90-93 points = A-	77-79 points = C+	64-66 points = D
87-89 points = B+	74-76 points = C	60-63 points = D-
84-86 points = B	70-73 points = C-	59 and fewer points = E

In cases where the number of points falls in between letter grades, points will be rounded to the nearest whole number.

More information on UF grading policy may be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies>

CONSIDER ADDING A CERTIFICATE IN WOMEN'S STUDIES: If you are taking this course, you are likely only 9 credits away from earning a Certificate (12 credits total) that will appear on your transcript and can be listed on your CV. The *Certificate in Women's Studies* (WST) is designed for graduate students from any discipline who wish to become acquainted with various feminist (and other appropriate) theoretical approaches and methodologies for examining the roles and intersections of gender, race/ethnicity, sexualities and other sociocultural systems. All graduate students in an MA or PhD program from all colleges at UF are eligible to enroll in this program. You can also do a Certificate in *Gender and Development*. For more information see the Center webpage about Certificates and the 2022-2023 Graduate Handbook. Also feel free to contact Dr. Hernandez (jillianhernandez@ufl.edu) with any questions.

COURSE POLICIES

Recording of class lectures

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole

or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Policy on Course Syllabi 3 UF, Academic Affairs, August 5th, 2021 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. This class supports the needs of different learners; it is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Title IX and Gender Equity

Title IX is a federal law that requires officials with the authority to take action, to report violations of the gender equity policy. Officials with authority must report these violations to the Title IX Coordinator or their deputies. The obligation to report applies whenever an Official with Authority receives, in the course and scope of employment, information about the alleged misconduct and policy violation. The report must include all information known to the employee which would be relevant to an investigation or redress of the incident, including whether the alleged victim has expressed a desire for confidentiality. The Office for Accessibility and Gender Equity provides support to anyone affected by sexual or gender-based misconduct, harassment, or discrimination. **Please know that your instructor in this course is considered an Official with Authority who is required to report violations of the gender equity policy.**

You can also find details of specialist support services at the end of the syllabus. You might not need them, but you might know someone who does.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (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 obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see:

<https://registrar.ufl.edu/ferpa.html>

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/> or call 352-273-4450

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>.

Specialist support

Office of Victim Services

1515 Museum Road, (352) 392-5648 (Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) (352) 392-1111 (after business hours and on weekends)

Alachua County Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center 352-264-6760 Monday-Friday, 8:30AM-5PM, some services available 24/7

Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network 352-377-8255 (24 hour helpline)

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services. <https://career.ufl.edu/>

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. <https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)