

Course Description:

What makes research feminist? Who can be a feminist researcher? How has research on women, gender and sexuality brought new questions, ideas and knowledge to a particular area of your discipline?

“Feminist research” is a broad term that in fact represents a diversity of methods, practices and ethical considerations related to research. This course introduces students to feminist research both in practice and method, and provides an overview of basic approaches to social science research. The course is designed to expand graduate students’ knowledge of feminist theories and research design in humanities and social science classes. Readings and class exercises encourage discussion and critical thinking about contemporary debates among feminist and gender studies scholars. The course will also provide the graduate student with basic tools to apply social science feminist research methods in their own research and/or to understand the ways that feminist research methods have been applied to their own fields of study.

Objectives of the Course:

- To guide students who plan to complete a large scale research project in completion of their graduate studies (thesis or dissertation) through the process of developing a research project, from research question through research proposal.
- To guide students who do NOT plan to complete a large scale research project through the process of researching and writing a paper summarizing the impact of women’s and gender studies and feminist scholarship on a specific subfield of their discipline, through examining feminist scholarship in a representative scholarly journal over time.
- To acquaint students with the relationship between feminist theory and feminist research practice, and with current discussions of feminist epistemology and research methodology, including feminist critiques of traditional philosophies of science and the development of feminist epistemologies.
- To provide an overview of feminist research/interpretive methods, and of key debates among feminist scholars regarding feminist research and methodology.
- To provide students with hands-on experiences with research, including university regulations and processes for research using human subjects, to include completion of human subjects certification, conducting a qualitative interview, and implementing some methods for analyzing qualitative interview data.

Because the students in the course may come from different disciplinary traditions and approaches, students will, with the guidance of the professor, determine which methods are most appropriate for their work and how to apply feminist theories and methods to their own research, particularly in the research proposal project. The course format will be a combination of seminar discussions, lectures, and student presentation and research projects.

REQUIRED TEXT

Ackerley, Brooke and True, Jacqui (2010). *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science*. Palgrave Macmillan.

SUGGESTED TEXTS

Charmaz, Kathy (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2E. Sage.

Hesse-Biber (2014). *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, 2E. Sage.

Jagger, Alison (2008). *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Paradigm

Creswell, J. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among 5 Approaches*. Sage

Additional readings available on Blackboard.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation (10%)

Class Discussion Board Exercises (10%)

Each student will be required to prepare a summary of ONE of the assigned course readings and post the summary on the class blog/discussion board in Blackboard. For purposes of this assignment, a course reading is one chapter or one journal length article. The summary should be 3 or 4 paragraphs in length and should summarize the key points of the readings and discuss if possible the relationship between the reading and other course readings. It should be posted to Blackboard by 4 pm on the day for which the reading is assigned. Each summary MUST conclude with 3 to 4 QUESTIONS that could be used to guide class discussion on the reading.

We may take a look at the blog/summary during class, and then your colleagues will read and comment on your essay over the course of the week. Each class member should post at least one comment on the blogs during at least four of the weeks of the semester. This could be arguing with the point, agreeing, providing links to other resources, a variety of other possibilities.

The blogs will be graded on the thoughtfulness and originality of the posting, its accuracy in relation to the reading discussed, as well as use of the unique possibilities of the medium—linking to relevant other resources, etc.—as well as the clarity and accessibility of the posting. Blog participation will be graded by the quality of your contributions as well as whether you fulfill the minimum posting requirement.

Class Presentation Exercise (10%)

Each student will be required to prepare a brief (5-10 minutes) presentation of a **research article** from Supplementary Reading section of “Course Documents” in Blackboard. Tags flagging particular methods are included in the links, but students can also feel free to choose an article based on interest or relevance to their discipline, OR find a study of interest based on research design or relevance to our/their coursework. Independent choices should be cleared with me prior to the presentation. Contents of the presentation should include 1) a brief summary of the study **including context, method and conclusions or outcomes**, 2) background on its authors (if possible), and 3) relevance or relationship to other course readings. **Dates for presentations will include: February 12, March 5, March 19, March 26, April 2**

Interview Assignment (30%)

The purpose of this assignment is to give you some experience with the process of using interviews in research, with the University's human subjects review procedures, and with the basics of analyzing qualitative interviews for research purposes. The assignment involves a) completing the University's human subjects certification, b) scheduling and conducting a face-to-face interview, c) preparing a transcript of the interview, d) taking field notes on the interview, e) participating in the class data analysis of the interviews f) writing a paper on the interview. For the interview subject, you will interview a scholar or researcher about their methods in doing research using a standard protocol that the entire class will use. You may interview a graduate student, as long as that person is a researcher.

If your "subject" consents, you will make an audio recording of the interview and then prepare a written transcript. You should also take notes during the interview and, immediately following the interview, write "field notes" that summarize the interview, your impressions, and thoughts you have about the interview. **Transcripts and fieldnotes are due by April 9th; final-draft interview papers are due April 23rd.**

You should include your field notes and transcript as an appendix when submitting your final interview paper.

Final Project Assignment (40%)

There are 2 options for this end-of-term project. As it's the major written project for the course, it should incorporate and/or reflect the materials and topics covered in the course. More detailed instructions will be distributed within the first month of the course, but generally students can either produce

1. **A Preliminary Research Proposal**, including the development and defense of a research question, contextualizing discussion of the research problem, and preliminary design for data collection and analysis;
2. **An Extended Literature Review**, including the development and defense of a research question, a review and analysis of existing literature related to the question, and other considerations of bibliographic research such as the defense of delimiting time periods.

Final projects will be due May 7th

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 22: Introduction and Overview

Review of Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program, offered through [Rutgers-Newark's Office of Research Regulatory Affairs](#). **Read through the overview of this program.**

Introduction to Course & Research Methods

January 29: Introduction to Feminist Research

Hesse-Biber, "Feminist Approaches to a Research Process"

Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis"

Najmbadi, "Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Analysis?"
Ackerly and True, Chapters 1-2

February 5: Responsive and Restorative Research

GLQ Forum, "Thinking Sex/Thinking Gender"

Tickner, "You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists"

Waring, "Counting for Something! Recognizing Women's Contribution to the Global Economy through Alternative Accounting Systems"

Allen, "The Patriarchalization of Native American Tribes"

Nash, "Rethinking Intersectionality"

Complete your Human Subjects Certification by February 9

February 12: The Research Relationship

Khan, "Reconfiguring the Native Informant: Positionality in the Global Age"

Cohen, "The Kothi Wars: AIDS Cosmopolitanism and the Morality of Classification"

Shweder, "What About 'Female Genital Mutilation?' And Why Culture Matters in the First Place"

Charmaz, "An Invitation to Grounded Theory"

Research Article Presentations, Round 1

February 19: Planning Your Research

Ackerly and True, Chapters 3-4 & 11

Buch and Staller, "What is Feminist Ethnography?"

Hahn, "Emerging Voices: Encounters with Reflexivity"

Summary Questions/Topic Areas Due; in-class workshop/elevator pitch

February 26: Literature, Archival and Bibliographic Research I

Class Meets in Dana Library; specifics TBA

Ackerly and True, Chapters 5-7

Charmaz, "Gathering Rich Data"

March 5: Data Collection I

Ackerly and True, Chapters 8-9

Leech, "Asking Questions: Techniques for Semi-Structured Interviews"

Aberbach and Rockman, "Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews"

Charmaz, "Interviewing in Grounded Theory Studies"

Research Article Presentations, Round 2

Project Proposals/Revised Questions Due via email by March 8th

March 12: Spring Break

March 19: Data Collection II

Thorne, "You Still Takin' Notes? Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent"

Scott, "Quantitative Methods and Gender Inequalities"

Goldman, "Identifying Ugliness, Defining Beauty: A Focus Group Analysis"

Research Article Presentations, Round 3

March 26: Data Collection III

Maguire, "Feminist Participatory Research"

Williams, "Doing Feminist Demography"

Research Article Presentations, Round 4

April 2: Data Analysis I

Tessier, "From Field Notes, to Transcripts, to Tape Recordings: Evolution or Combination?"

Hesse-Biber, "Analyzing Qualitative Data: With or Without Software"

Research Article Presentations, Round 5

April 9: Data Analysis II

Phillip, “Working With Qualitative Longitudinal Data (in NVivo)”

Sidney, “The Role of Ideas in Education Politics”

Charmaz, “The Logic of Grounded Theory Coding Practices and Initial Coding”

Reminder: Field Notes and Preliminary Transcript of Interview Due

April 16: Assembling Projects

Working Session: prepare a brief outline for distribution (no more than 1 page), and revised/extended elevator pitch; we will review: putting together the final lit review or research proposal; interview paper suggestions & feedback.

April 23

Conferences & Catch-up as needed; ***Interview Paper Due***

April 30

Conferences & Catch-up as needed

Final Project Deadline: May 7th, via email