

Rutgers University
Department of Women's and Gender Studies

988:370:01
Critical Feminist Investigations
Spring 2015: T,Th Period 2 (10:55am-12:15pm)
Heldrich Science Bldg-106

Professor Yana Rodgers
Email: yana.rodgers@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: By arrangement

Course Description: This course has dual purposes, to introduce students to the various stages of research and to provide an introduction to feminist perspectives on the politics of producing knowledge. Each student will learn how to be an interdisciplinary researcher while coming to understand the opportunities that feminism presents as a way of seeing, knowing, and representing the world.

Students will need to read assigned texts carefully and be prepared to discuss them in class. There will be several small projects designed to teach students through action how to conduct feminist research. Students will develop and revise a research proposal that will be the basis for further independent work.

Learning Goals: This course satisfies our department's learning goals. In particular, students will be able to identify, analyze, and critique the formation and reproduction of social, economic, and political hierarchies grounded in race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality.

Evaluation: Grades are determined by attendance and punctuality (10%), class participation (20%), two in-class facilitations (20%), a concept paper (10%), a literature review (15%), and a final research proposal (25%).

Attendance and Punctuality: You are allowed two unexcused absences for the semester. If you have a third unexcused absence you will lose the entire 10% of the attendance grade. If you think you will be missing classes for reasons that cannot be properly documented, then this is not the class for you.

Class Participation: Your contribution to class will be evaluated as follows: 1) Did you participate in a substantive way? 2) Were your comments clear, appropriate, and interactive? 3) Were your comments thoughtful, accurate, and based on the readings? This means that you have read carefully and come prepared to discuss the materials in class. Because of our small class size and seminar setting, it is very important that you take an active role in shaping the conversation.

In-Class Facilitations: You will make two presentations for the class that 1) briefly present the main points of the assigned article for that class period, and 2) facilitate discussion by engaging your classmates in a careful discussion of the article's content. You can do so with pre-prepared questions about the article, multi-media methods such as video clips, and/or some sort of group work or in-class exercise. Each facilitation should cover 30 minutes.

Concept Paper: This one-page, single-spaced "Concept Paper" should 1) identify a **research question** you are interested in pursuing, and 2) provide a **background section** that explains what leads you to believe that this question has not been addressed in the existing literature, and 3) provide a **relevance section** explaining why you think this question is important.

Literature Review: This 5 page review should engage the fields within which your project is located. It should survey at least 10 scholarly sources (scholarly articles and books). Specific instructions will be given during the semester.

Research Proposal: This proposal will be the culmination of the work of the semester and should constitute a formal description of a research project that you plan to undertake after the class ends. The proposal assignment includes both a written component (10-15 pages) and a PowerPoint presentation in class.

Academic Integrity Policy: All work for this course must adhere to the specific practices and ethos of the University's policy on academic integrity, which must be read at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers>. Full compliance with the academic integrity policy is mandatory.

Class Format and Special Events: The class format focuses heavily on class discussion, student presentations, video clips, and in-class small group work. Each class meeting will have a short break. Some classes may also be comprised of guest lectures.

Class Schedule, Topics, and Reading Assignments: All articles and chapters are available electronically through our course sakai page.

Week 1: Introduction to Feminist Research

Tuesday, Jan. 20

Overview discussion of core themes and readings; syllabus review.

Thursday, Jan. 22

Pryse, Marjorie. 2000. "Trans/Feminist Methodology: Bridges to Interdisciplinary Thinking." *NWSA Journal* 12 (2): 105-118.

Week 2: Hallmarks of Feminist Research

Tuesday, Jan. 27

Buker, Eloise. 2003. "Is Women's Studies a Disciplinary or an Interdisciplinary Field of Inquiry?" *NWSA Journal* 15 (1): 73-93.

Thursday, Jan. 29

Gilley, Jennifer. 2007. "Women's Studies Information-Seeking: A State of the Union Address." *NWSA Journal* 19 (2): 220-229.

Week 3: Objectivity and Knowledge Production

Tuesday, Feb. 3

Wiegman, Robyn. 2002. "Academic Feminism Against Itself." *NWSA Journal* 14 (2): 18-37.

Thursday, Feb. 5

Hogan, Kristen. 2008. "Women's Studies in Feminist Bookstores: 'All the Women's Studies Women Would Come In'." *Signs* 33 (3): 595-621.

Concept Paper Due in Class.

Week 4: Conceptualizing Research and Defining Constructs

Tuesday, Feb. 10

Fonow, Mary Margaret and Judith A. Cook. 2005. "Feminist Methodology: New Applications in the Academy and Public Policy." *Signs* 30 (4): 2211-2236.

Thursday, Feb. 12

Kitch, Sally and Mary Margaret Fonow. 2012. "Analyzing Women's Studies Dissertations: Methodologies, Epistemologies, and Field Formation." *Signs* 38 (1): 99-126.

Week 5: Research Design and Becoming an Effective Researcher

Tuesday, Feb. 17

Halse, Christine and Anne Honey. 2005. "Unraveling Ethics: Illuminating the Moral Dilemmas of Research Ethics." *Signs* 30 (4): 2141-2162.

Thursday, Feb. 19

O'Reilly, Kathleen. 2006. "Women Fieldworkers and the Politics of Participation." *Signs* 31 (4): 1075-1098.

Week 6: An Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Tuesday, Feb. 24

Meet at Douglass Library for research session with Kayo Denda. Topic: How to conduct a literature search.

Thursday, Feb. 26

Berik, Günseli. 1997. "The Need for Crossing the Method Boundaries in Economics Research." *Feminist Economics* 3 (2): 121-125.

Esim, Simel. 1997. "Can Feminist Methodology Reduce Power Hierarchies in Research Settings?" *Feminist Economics* 3 (2): 137-139.

Week 7: Asking Questions: Interviews and Focus Groups

Tuesday, Mar. 3

Montell, Frances. 1999. "Focus Group Interviews: A New Feminist Method." *NWSA Journal* 11 (1): 44-71.

Thursday, Mar. 5

Hyams, Melissa. 2004. "Hearing Girls' Silences: Thoughts on the Politics and Practices of a Feminist Method of Group Discussion." *Gender, Place and Culture* 11 (1): 105-119.

Literature Review Due in Class.

Week 8: Qualitative Methods Continued

Tuesday, Mar. 10

Van Staveren, Irene. 1997. "Focus Groups: Contributing to a Gender-Aware Methodology." *Feminist Economics* 3 (2): 131-135.

Olmsted, Jennifer. 1997. "Telling Palestinian Women's Economic Stories." *Feminist Economics* 3 (2): 141-151.

Thursday, Mar. 16

Strobel, Margaret. 1999. "Getting to the Source: Becoming a Historian, Being an Activist, and Thinking Archival: Documents and Memory as Sources." *Journal of Women's History* 11 (1): 181-192.

Week 9: Quantitative Methods: An Introduction to Descriptive Statistics and Charts

Tuesday, Mar. 24

Bennett, J., W. Briggs, and Mario Triola. 2014. *Statistical Reasoning for Everyday Life*. 4th Edition. Boston: Pearson Education Inc. Chapter 1, "Speaking of Statistics."

Thursday, Mar. 26

Bennett, Briggs, Triola: Chapter 3, "Visual Displays of Data."

Week 10: Describing Data and Talking About Numbers

Tuesday, Mar. 31

Bennett, Briggs, Triola: Chapter 4, "Describing Data."

Thursday, April 2

Miller, Jane, and Yana Rodgers. 2008. "Economic Importance and Statistical Significance: Guidelines for Communicating Empirical Research," *Feminist Economics* 14 (2): 117-149.

Draft Research Proposal Due in Class.

Week 11: Data Sources

Tuesday, April 7

Smith, Michael. 1994. "Enhancing the Quality of Survey Data on Violence Against Women: A Feminist Approach." *Gender & Society* 8 (1): 109-127.

Thursday, April 9

Jacobsen, Joyce, and Andrew Newman. 1997. "What Data Do Economists Use? The Case of Labor Economics and Industrial Relations." *Feminist Economics* 3 (2): 127 - 130.

Jacobsen, Joyce, and Andrew Newman. 2003. Do Women and Non-economists Add Diversity to Research in Industrial Relations and Labor Economics? *Eastern Economic Journal* 29 (4): 575-91.

Week 12: Knowledge Production: From Theory to Research

Tuesday, April 14

MacDonald, Martha. 1995. "Feminist Economics: From Theory to Research," *Canadian Journal of Economics* 28 (1): 159-76.

Thursday, April 16

Guest speaker. Jillian Foster.

Week 13: Knowledge Production and Feminist Activism

Tuesday, April 21

Johnston, Josée and Judith Taylor. 2008. "Feminist Consumerism and Fat Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign." *Signs* 33 (4): 941-966.

Thursday, April 23

Mamo, Laura and Jennifer Ruth Fosket. 2009. "Scripting the Body: Pharmaceuticals and the (Re)Making of Menstruation," *Signs* 34 (4): 925-950.

Video clip: *Orgasm Inc.* (Call no. 10-2567).

Week 14: Knowledge Production: Research Proposals

Tuesday, April 28. Student Presentations of Research Proposals

Thursday, April 30. Student Presentations of Research Proposals

Final Draft of Research Proposal Due in Class.