

Y633

Feminist Theory and Methodology

Spring, 2018

Collaboratively Developed Syllabus

Instructor: *Barbara Dennis, she her hers*

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4038

Class Meeting: *Thursdays 9:30 – 12:00*

Room 1084

Office Hours: *Wednesdays 2:00 - 3:00, Thursdays 1:00 – 2:00 and by appointment*

Description:

The class engages with feminist theories and methodologies in a grassroots, communitarian way so that we not only learn about feminist methodologies, but we also experience and engage them. This is a course that works with qualitative methodological approaches, though certainly there are quantitative feminist methodologists.

The syllabus will be collectively informed.

We will do collaborative research projects where we work together gathering and analyzing qualitative data. We will blur the lines between researchers and researched. We will ask ourselves questions about the difference between doing research on people and doing research with people.

There is not one feminist theory or approach, but there are values and challenges that people who identify as feminist share. We will explore these.

My own image of research is one of a conversation – a lively, inclusive, values-oriented, creative, respectful conversation. This is what we will strive for in this class. I know that society is riddled with interactive and normative challenges that make equity seem out of reach, but in this class we will strive to hear one another; to recognize faithfully and with forgiveness when we behave in ways that increase oppression and limit opportunities and the spread of good will; and to open spaces for people to voice their own claims. We will seek consensus and will not use votes to make decisions as these can perpetually minimize minority perspectives. We want all perspectives in the conversation. This democratic

style is easier to write about than it is to deliver. It depends not just on our good intentions, but on our willingness to be vulnerably accountable to one another in ways we cannot fully anticipate or control.

This course will also engage with political issues relevant to women and children in the USA and/or globally.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- *Describe the values and characteristics associated with a feminist approach to qualitative inquiry*
- *Identify historical, political, and theoretical strands in feminist scholarship*
- *Engage with feminist, democratic, and collaborative methodologies*
- *Locate their own work in relation to feminist theory and methodology*
- *Locate one's self in relation to women's concerns, heroes, politics and so forth.*

Texts:

McCann, C. and Kim, S-K. (2017). *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. New York, New York: Routledge. (Referred to in Course Schedule as M&K)

Other readings will be uploaded to the FILES Tab on Canvas. These electronic readings will be marked in the syllabus with (O) for online.

Norms of Engagement:

- If you change topics, first allow others to respond to the current topic.
- Assume we are all here with good intentions.
- We can callout red lights in the moment and we will also hold space for red, yellow, and green lights later in class.
- Ensure that everyone is seen and heard (attending to the physical arrangements and social behavior)
- Make physical space work for us and not against us.
- Be okay with silence.
- Hand-raising is not a demand to speak right away, but a request to be put in the stack.
- Canvas will be used as an extension of the learning space not as a course requirement.

Schedule

Date	Class Topic	Readings Due	Assignment due
1/11	Introduction, Establishing Norms		
1/18	Intersectionality Brainstorming the Possibilities	Crenshaw (O)	
1/25	Intersectionality Workshopping the topic	M&K 18	
2/1	History of Feminist theory	M&K Read the Section Intro plus one chapter in the section	
2/8	Theatre of the Oppressed Project Deliberations/Conclusions	M&K Read another chapter in the history section of the text, Read the “Path Forward” proposal emailed out by Barbara	
2/15	Feminist Theories of Consciousness-raising Mystory		Read and Comment on Project Trajectory
2/22	Pedagogy conversation starter with Francesca AND Feminist Pedagogy Discussion of Readings Revisiting Mystory	*Read <i>one</i> of the following: (1) Beau-Beouf Lafontant, Womanist Lessons for Reinventing Teaching (O) ¹ , Text Chapters (2) 43, OR (3) 45 Magdola Mystory – autoethnography (O)	Bring your PATH plan to class.
3/1	Collective Autoethnography and Its Connection with Feminist	Griffin autoethnography	

¹ Readings marked with an (O) can be found in the Files tab under the reading folder in canvas.

	Theory	(O) Cann et al collaborative autoethnography (O) Choose one of the following from M&K 34, 35, or 36	
3/8	Photovoice Methodology and its Connection with Feminist Theory	Wang & Burris Photovoice (O) Robinson-Kielig (O) Boylorn autoethnography (O) Choose one of the following M&K 39, 42, 44	
3/15	No Class Spring Break		
3/22	Researcher Positionality	Archer (O) Lather Validity (O) Korth (That is me, by the way) (O)	
3/28	Workshopping Day		Methodologies that Center the Self Assignment Due
4/5 ⁱ	Methodologies of Entanglement Participant Observation	McNamara Feminist Ethnography (O) Collins (O) Westmarland (O) Barad performativity (O) M&K Section II	Completed having read an autobiography – 1 page summary insights relevant to a pedagogy or feminist perspective that is equity oriented

		Introduction	
4/12	What's different about a feminist interview or focus group? Testimonios	Kamberelis and Demitriadis (O) Bernal et al (O) Devault (O) Henry (O) Espino (O)	
4/19			
4/26	Workshopping		Methodologies of Entanglement Due
5/3	During the final exam period we will be doing something public to engage our conversations with others		Bringing It: Public Conversation
5/7			Collective Reflection due

PROJECT

As a class we will complete a collective research project that examines pedagogy from a feminist perspective which looks at both informal and formal learning spaces including teaching and learner perspectives. Our aim is to better understand what feminist pedagogy might entail, what its ramifications are, what its limitations/weaknesses might be, the various ways it might be described. The project will take the shape of a prism, where the diversity and multiplicity of its parts creates a whole that cannot be reduced to a single aspect. All strong feminist projects assume that knowledge is not neutral, that research cannot be conducted from a place of pure objectivity, that our goals matters, and that reflection must be included in any theory/practice of inquiry.

Because this project will have lots of moving pieces, each person will need to create their own path using the structures that are given below. That is, each person will select one set of activities from each category. If you have an idea for something that is not on here, please propose it as part of your path description. To do this, you will complete the path description worksheet provided. You may work together on any of the assignments, but then you submit your own unique assignments.

Methodologies that Center the Self

In an effort to understand both consciousness-raising and the entanglement of self and knowledge, and to honor the feminist commitment to consciousness-raising, we will each complete one form of methodological engagement that centers on the self.

Option 1: Mystory Performance on a Significant Teaching/Learning Moment

Complete the readings in the Mystory Folder in Canvas. Complete a Mystory including the stages that involve community reflection (time will be given for this in class).

Option 2: Autoethnography of your life as a feminist, a student, a teacher

Complete the readings in the Autoethnography Folder in Canvas. We will produce a collective of autoethnographic tales in digital form on a facebook page.

Option 3: Photovoice. The Material of Teaching/Learning

Complete the readings in the Photovoice Folder in Canvas. Collect and Analyze photovoice material with group mates. Prepare a digital photovoice show for our facebook page. This photovoice project can bring out moments in our experiences that are less formal encounters with feminist learning/teaching.

Methodologies of Entanglement

This set of methodologies will create dialogue opportunities with others on the topic of teaching and learning with an openness toward feminist theory and pedagogy. We will each complete one of these options.

Option 1: Taking in the Voices of those who do it

Complete the reading in the Feminist Pedagogy Folder in Canvas. Conduct a focus group or interview with groups of peoples who identify as a feminist teacher. OR conduct a focus group or interview with groups of people who are preparing to be teachers. Audio-record the interview/focus group. Transcribe and create a thick record of the interview/focus group.

Option 2: Observing and Examining Feminist Classes on Campus

Select a class to observe. Contact the instructor and arrange to sit in and take notes, also audio record.

Option 3: Review popular media on feminist pedagogy.

Select a genre (e.g. film, blog, Huffington Post, facebook spaces) to review feminist pedagogy writ large (looking for core principles of feminist pedagogy at work). Choose 5-8 examples of clips, blogs, articles, facebook pages that can be analyzed as examples of feminist pedagogy.

Option 4: Testimonios

Collect at least one testimonio of an empower feminist space. Use videography to capture the testimonio. Prior to capturing the story, help prepare the person for what they plan to say – outline the points, etc. The testimonio should be roughly 5 minutes.

Option 5: Anti-feminist Testimonios

Create a corpus of short video testimonios given by people who do not think of feminist pedagogy as an ideal. Prior to capturing the testimonio on video, help the person prepare for what they will say— outline points, etc. These short testimonios should be roughly 305 minutes.

Option 6: Emancipation Across the Spectrum

Select 2 public events to observe. Choose events that are not expressly about feminism and are not classroom spaces. Make observation notes and audio/record transcribe to create a thick record.

Option 7: Policies matter

Review syllabi from feminist courses OR gather campus level policies relative to equity. Create a corpus of documents for review.

Collective Reflection

Option 1: Write a 2-page reflection and upload to canvas in a discussion thread

Option 2: Video record a reflection and upload to canvas in a discussion thread

¹ Highlighted section to be completed after feedback on methodologies of entanglement feedback