

University of Western Ontario  
Department of Gender, Sexuality, & Women's Studies

Fall 2021

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**WS9459A: Professional Development © (Preliminary)**

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We are located on the traditional land of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawanaron peoples and we complicate the meaning of this location in our course.

Instructor: Dr. Kate Korycki<sup>1</sup>  
Email: [kate.korycki@uwo.ca](mailto:kate.korycki@uwo.ca)  
Seminar Time: Monday 10:30-1:30  
Seminar Location: **TBD**  
Class Website: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>

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**Course Description & Learning Outcomes:**

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This course welcomes and integrates graduate students arriving at the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies. It means to equip the students with insights and skills to navigate university, and it assists them in the process of professionalization inherent in the degree acquisition. In more specific terms, the class examines the university and how it works, and how it struggles to simultaneously transform itself into a vocational institution operating on a market logic, and a decolonized space. It explores the intersecting roles and relationships of a (gendered, racialized and/or otherwise othered) student, teacher, researcher, disciplinary colleague, grant seeker, worker, and a citizen. We concentrate on building practical skills to negotiate these overlapping roles, developing enduring and meaningful practices and nurturing a community. Even though we gather at the beginning of your graduate path, we look beyond the ivory tower and prepare you for that which will earn you a living (as Engels may have said, *one can live on theory for only so long!*).

In our course, the students will practice preparing tutorial lesson plans; facilitating class discussions; offering formative feedback; writing conference abstracts, outlines of grant & ethics proposals; and writing & defending project outlines. Students will also consider and build their professional social media presence, begin to cultivate networks, and practice time- and professional relationship- management. Perhaps most importantly, they will reflect and grow their own writing practices. Finally, the students we will develop preliminary documents launching them into the world of work.

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<sup>1</sup> No materials generated in this class may be recorded or copied without permission or posted to commercial sites. They may be used, with attribution, in students' learning and writing.

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## Required Readings (final list will be announced in August):

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- Students will read extensive excerpts from: 1) Jan E. Allen. *The Productive Graduate Student Writer: How to Manage Your Time, Process, and Energy to Write Your Research Proposal, Thesis, and Dissertation and Get Published*; & 2) Karen Kelsky. *The Professor is In: The Essential Guide to Turning your PhD into a Job*.
- Students will choose and read one of the three books: 1) Dionne Brand. *Theory*. (a novel); 2) Anne Truitt, *Daybook: The Journal of an Artist*; 3) Deborah Levy, *Things I don't Want to Know: A Living Autobiography*.
- Additional weekly readings and films will be available through the library (OWL link).

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## Expectations and Assignments:

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This course marries two distinct pedagogical methodologies, a graduate seminar and a skill-building workshop. In both settings the degree and depth of learning depends on students' participation and active interaction with the material. Before class, students read and reflect on the reading (this may involve taking notes/summaries or writing a journal about work habits); they also prepare short and punchy documents – see the list in the paragraph below as well as in Timeline) - which will be discussed/peer reviewed during class; or they prepare short presentations and topic facilitation. During class, students write on the assigned readings, discuss them, listen and share insights, and they read each other's work & offer formative feedback. The reading load is not as heavy as other graduate classes, but each seminar/workshop requires preparation, attentive presence and active participation.

This is a required pass/fail course. To pass the course, the students need to:

1. Attend classes having read the required material (this will be assessed through in-class writing and discussion; see absence policy below).
2. Prepare 5 short documents workshopped in class (lesson plan, conference abstract, grant proposal outline, paper outline, CV – these will be due before the appropriate class and will be peer-reviewed *in class*). (4 out of 5 must be submitted – details to come).
3. Actively participate in class activities (share views, offer feedback, develop social media guidelines and writing routines – this is key in the process of building a community and will be assessed on an ongoing basis).
4. Prepare one short presentation OR discussion facilitation based on a chapter from Kelsey (this will be scheduled in the first two weeks and will take place throughout the semester).
5. Write a reflective essay (1500 words) in which the student uses the novel or memoirs assigned in the class to identify the rituals, routines, practices, accountability scaffold meaningful for their own writing. (This may require a writing journal – details to come.)
6. Attend Departmental Speakers' series seminars and be ready to discuss them in class (discussions may be devoted to *what/content*, OR the *how* of the presentation, that is the slides, Q&A, audience engagement... etc.).

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## Course Format and Policies:

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Absenteeism: This is a required course, there is no such thing as absenteeism. One unexcused absence is allowed. All other absences require prior conversation and documentation. Also, the classes build on one another, so if a student misses a class, it is imperative that s/he/they reads the assigned material and asks a colleague to share notes from the class meeting.

Discussion etiquette: to ensure best learning, I look at a) the quantity and b) the quality of remarks, as well as c) *listening and respect* for the views of others, d) a spirit of discovery, and finally e) a true commitment to collective learning – this requires not so much affirmation but good, honest, and friendly constructive feedback. To paraphrase bell hooks on love, in this class, we look for commitment to making each other grow, not staying the same.

During class, please turn your phone, messengers & email OFF! It's distracting to all if one comes to class to chat with friends outside of it, plus, it's bad pedagogy ☐ Use a computer only if you must and only for class purpose! This is your time, don't waste it chatting.

Communication with the professor: I strongly encourage and invite talking to each other and me - as opposed to writing. Thus, all students can bring their questions to class. Email is the most discouraged form of communicating and I take 48 hours to respond. Also, there are many emails to which I don't respond individually – either your question is brilliant, in which case I'll answer it via a class announcement; or the answer is in the syllabus, which you are strongly encouraged to read.

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## Weekly Topics & Timeline (readings & activities will be announced mid-August)

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- ☐ Sept 13: Introduction to the course and each other
- ☐ Sept 20: Teaching 1 – class management & time management
- ☐ Sept 27: Grants
- ☐ Oct 4: Teaching 2 – teaching writing
- ☐ Oct 11: Thanksgiving (no class)
- ☐ Oct 18: Teaching 3 – feedback
- ☐ Oct 25: Relationships: professional, social media, personal
- ☐ Nov 1: Reading Week (no class)
- ☐ Nov 8: Conferences – abstract, presentation, network
- ☐ Nov 15: Writing – process & joy
- ☐ Nov 29: Publishing – process & pain
- ☐ Dec 6: Academic job market (and its portfolio)
- ☐ Dec 13: Non-academic job market

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## Western University & Arts and Humanities' General Policies

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Our work in this course is guided by the University's Scholastic Discipline document, as well as the Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore:

**Accessible Education Western (AEW):** Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction

**Health & Wellness Services:** students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.