

NB: Course outline is preliminary and subject to change

The University of Western Ontario
London Canada
Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

WS 9464B: Feminist Methodologies

Professor: Laura Cayen
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Class: Weds 10:30-1:30

Office hours: TBA and by appt

Course Description

This course will review feminist research methodologies from a variety of disciplinary traditions and theoretical perspectives. Through readings and assignments, a primary objective of this course will be to examine and articulate distinctions and relationships between epistemology, methodology and methods. Through guided practices of critical reflection, students will be able to articulate the assumptions that underlie and inform various feminist research methodologies and understand their implications for research methodology. Emphasis will also be placed on specific methodological issues that span across this range, and will include, for example: ethical issues, researcher reflexivity and positionality, sampling, and the practices and politics of data collection, interpretation and reporting.

Required Reading

Required readings will be posted to the course website. Most recommended readings will be on OWL as well – you can find the others through Weldon.

Student Evaluation

Participation	20%
Epistemological Commitments	10%
Critical Reflection Paper	20%
'One Sheet' Summary and Facilitation	10%
Final Paper	40%

Participation (20%)

Students should come to class with all materials read and notes taken in order to be prepared to contribute to class discussion through questions, comments, and respectful attention. You are

expected to engage thoughtfully and generously to discussion. In particular, you should come to each class prepared with a substantive reflection or observation about at least one of the readings.

Please arrive to class on time. I take attendance and participation particularly seriously on days we have guest speakers.

Epistemological Commitments (10%, 3-4 pages, due Feb *)

In preparation for your final paper you will work to articulate your research paradigm or epistemological commitments (3-4 pages):

Drawing on course readings and other sources as necessary, articulate your epistemological commitments and explore how these commitments inform your research interests and relate to particular theories/concepts that resonate with you and that you are thinking of using in your graduate research. Consider how your epistemological commitments and theoretical influences shape the kinds of research questions you are interested in pursuing, the kinds of knowledge claims you are able to make, and your role/s and responsibilities as a knowledge producer.

Critical Reflection Paper (20%)

You will prepare a critical reflection paper (5 pages maximum) for one week this term. The purpose of the critical reflection paper is to help students cultivate their critical analysis skills through a close reading of the course texts. No outside reading is required. It is preferred that you stick to your assigned text, though you may draw on more than one required reading for a given week in your critical reflection.

Guidance in the form of critical thinking questions has been posted to OWL. These questions can be used to inform your reading, note taking, general participation, and the writing of your final paper in addition to the writing of your critical response paper.

Due date: no later than 1 week after class discussion on your topic; before is also fine.

Students have their choice of week (ie, I'm fine with 'overlap'), but you must let me know your choice by the end of Week 2 so that I can plan my own marking schedule for the term.

'One Sheet' Summary and Facilitation (10% shared/group mark)

Adapting the basic format provided by the professor in Weeks 1 and 2 to suit your own aims, you and 1 or 2 peers will generate a 'One Sheet' Summary of key terms, concepts, arguments, questions, and quotations for the readings on one assigned week. This can be distributed to the class the week following our discussion and serve as a quick reference guide to the material covered in the class as you plan your final papers and future work. 'One Sheet' groups will also be responsible for facilitating discussion: you should come to your assigned week with a clear

idea of the concepts covered in the readings so that you can attend to the discussion and ask clarifying questions of the prof and your peers.

Sign up in our first meeting for Weeks *

'One Sheets' can, in fact, be up to 2 sheets if required. 'One Sheet' Summaries can be single-spaced.

Final Paper (40%, 12-13 pages, due Apr *)

The final paper will begin with a revised (and potentially expanded) version of the previously submitted paper on your research paradigm or epistemological commitments (3-4 pages). Your grade, in part, will be based on how substantively you respond to feedback provided to you on that paper.

For the remainder of the paper, students are required to develop a critical analysis on a topic of their choice that is relevant to the ideas and concepts explored in course readings. Throughout, they should indicate how this analysis is informed by their epistemological commitments.

Students may focus and structure the final paper in a way that will advance their own learning about, and/or interests in, research methodology. For example, students may wish to: (i) focus on a particular methodological issue in their final paper (e.g., reflexivity, sampling, power in the research process, the politics of interpretation); (ii) explore in a reflective paper how their thinking about methodology has been informed, challenged, or otherwise transformed throughout the course (reflective papers must still be critically and theoretically engaged and include research and sources from both inside and outside of the course); or (iii) explore the methodological approach that they would like to take in their own (current or potential future) research projects, with the aim of articulating how this approach links to the student's chosen theoretical location and the assumptions that inform that location. This is not an exhaustive list; alternatives should be discussed with the course instructor.

Papers must integrate and/or be informed by one or more themes covered in the course. Students are expected to draw on both required course readings as necessary and to **conduct research beyond the course readings** in order to develop their analysis on their specific topics. **You must meet with the professor prior to proceeding with this assignment to outline your general plan and approach:** drop into my office hours or e-mail to set up an appointment.

General Assignment Notes:

Assignments should be submitted online through the Assignments tab in OWL, in a Word document, with a file name format beginning with "Lastname Firstname". Do not e-mail assignments. Assignments should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Provide in-text citations where appropriate and a bibliography in APA or MLA format. All written assignments require an introductory paragraph that provides an overview of your approach to the paper along with a **thesis or clear organizing statement**. The expectations for graduate work are high: you will be assessed for effort, initiative, and rigor in all

of your assignments. Consult with me early and often about extension requests or trouble with your workload: we can work it out.