

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

GSWS3320G: Gender and Feminist Methodologies

Spring 2027

Preliminary outline - subject to change

Instructor: Dr. Jameelah Morris

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Antirequisite(s): GSWS 3321F/G and GSWS 3322F/G.

Prerequisite(s): GSWS 2220E or GSWS 2302F/G, or the former GSWS 2273E, or permission of the Department.

We are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

Course Description:

This course explores feminist epistemologies and research methods. We will focus on how feminist scholars have challenged dominant theories of knowledge and the major methodologies used in the social sciences and humanities. Through a combination of lectures and hands-on workshops, we will explore how feminist and queer theory and politics shape the questions we ask, the materials we use, and our understanding of the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

The course proceeds in two parts. The first part examines foundational debates in feminist epistemology: What is knowledge, and who produces it? How have mainstream research traditions excluded or distorted women's experiences? What does it mean to adopt a feminist standpoint? The second part moves into practice, with workshops on five core methods: interviewing and oral history; ethnography and observation; discourse and textual analysis; archival and historical methods; and survey and quantitative approaches. In each case, we ask not only how these methods work, but what feminist researchers have found enabling, limiting, or worth transforming about them.

A key premise of the course is that the researcher is never outside the research. Who you are, where you stand, and what assumptions you bring to a project shape every methodological choice you make from how you frame a research question to how you interpret evidence. Students will be asked to reckon with this premise early in the course and return to it throughout.

To reflect on and engage with feminist methods, students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, write memos after each workshop, complete a researcher positionality statement, and compose a research proposal in stages over the course of the semester. By the end of the course, students should be equipped to formulate a viable feminist research question,

select and justify an appropriate methodology, and situate their choices within the wider landscape of feminist scholarship.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify and explain key debates in feminist epistemology and their implications for research.
2. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of core feminist research methods.
3. Reflect critically on your own social location and its influence on the research process.
4. Design a viable feminist research project, including a research question, literature review, and methods plan.
5. Communicate ideas clearly and analytically in written and oral form.
6. Gain exposure to a range of feminist research methods and develop the vocabulary to discuss, compare, and evaluate them as methodological options.

Required Texts:

Students are not required to purchase any texts for this course. All readings will be available on Western's Course Readings platform.

Evaluation:

- **Attendance and Participation— 10%**
- **Methods Case Study + Presentation— 15%**
 - You will be assigned one published feminist study from a curated list and asked to write a short audit (~800 words) that examines how the study works as a piece of research. You will then present your audit to the class in 10 minutes, followed by peer questions. The goal is to practice reading research critically, not just for what it finds, but for how it was built. The written audit is due the day of your presentation. Specific dates and the list of assigned studies will be posted on Brightspace.
- **Short Research Memos— 20%**
 - Following each workshop (5), you will write a short 1 page memo. Specific memo assignments and their due dates will be posted on Brightspace
- **Research Proposal: Draft Section — 15%**
 - At the midpoint of the semester, you will submit a draft of the first two sections of your research proposal. It will be evaluated on analytical clarity, engagement with course concepts, and the viability of the research question. Detailed guidelines and the due date will be distributed in the first week of class.
- **Final Project- Research proposal— 40%**
 - Over the course of the semester, you will develop an original 8-10 page feminist research proposal in stages. The final proposal brings together four components: a positionality statement that locates you as a researcher; a statement of the problem and a focused research question; a short review of relevant existing literature; and a proposed methods design that justifies your methodological approach in relation

to your question and epistemological commitments. *The short research memos, draft section, and the methods case study scaffold directly into this project.* Detailed guidelines and interim deadlines will be distributed in the first week of class. The final proposal is due on the last day of class.

Course Website:

All course information, including assignments, will be posted on the course website. Go to <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>.