

**Western University
Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
Winter 2025**

**GSWS 3326G, PHIL 3991G, AH3990G:
EVERYDAY THEORIZING: THEORIZING EVERYDAY
(FEMINIST PHENOMENOLOGY)**

Thursdays 1:30-4:30

TC 343

Instructor: Prof. Helen Fielding

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-2:30 StvH 3138

Thursdays 12:30-1:30 Lawson Hall 3237

Phone: 519-661-2111 X 84548

E-mail: hfieldin@uwo.ca

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With the The Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Neutral peoples, on lands connected to several Treaties including Treaty 6 London Township, Treaty 7 Sombra Township, Treaty 21 Longwoods and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This place continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples who are recognized as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors to society.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Theorizing is something we do everyday. We make sense of what is happening in our lives based on what we have experienced and on what we know. Phenomenology is a method for making explicit this everyday theorizing, and feminist phenomenology begins with asking about the larger structures that shape our everyday experience. Feminist phenomenology is rooted in the study of lived experience. As theory and methodology, it begins with everyday lived experiences which are understood from within a matrix of social, political and institutional forces and structures. We will learn how to make sense of our everyday lives from a feminist critical perspective. For example, the #Me Too movement follows in the tradition of naming and bringing to light that is inherent to feminist phenomenology. Bringing the phenomena (lived experience) to light through description, artworks and literature allows us to analyze how experience is shaped by forces beyond the individual, which can also work to shift the experiences themselves. In this course we will consider some key texts coming out of this tradition, including works by thinkers such as Sara Ahmed, bell hooks, Simone de Beauvoir, Linda Martín Alcoff, and Hannah Arendt. We will consider how phenomenology has been taken up in queer, trans, and decolonial theories. Prerequisite: GSWS 2220E, or permission of the Department.

COURSE TEXTS

All readings are accessible through OWL Brightspace or Weldon Library. All further readings come from Gail Weiss, Ann V. Murphy and Gayle Salamon, *50 Concepts for a Critical*

Phenomenology (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2019).

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=5845955&pq-origsite=primo>

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To be able to articulate the interconnectedness of theory and experience

To develop further feminist experience-based methodologies

To understand what it means to subvert mind/body dualism

To be able to articulate more clearly the interrelatedness of all beings

EVALUATION

Participation		10%
Group Project	(due April 3)	15%
Lived Experience Discussion Paper	(4 pages due Feb. 6)	15%
Essay	(7-9 pages, due March 27)	30%
Final Exam	(2 hours during exam period)	30%

Participation is based on demonstrating that you have read and engaged with the texts.

Group Project: students will work in groups of 3 (or 4). Each group will have 20 minutes, 15 minutes to present their project with an extra 5 minutes for discussion.

Electronic Devices: No electronic aids (including smart phones and smart watches) will be permitted for the exam.

Use of Generated Artificial Intelligence:

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

Absences at Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Advising office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/definitions.pdf

Audit: Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.

ACADEMIC ACCOMODATION AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help.

Contact info for all Faculties is here: https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

THIS OUTLINE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, GIVEN SUFFICIENT PRIOR NOTICE

SCHEDULE

Jan. 9

Introduction: Sensing and Meaning-Making

M. NourbeSe Philip, "Ignoring Poetry".

In *A Genealogy of Resistance* (Toronto: Mercury Press, 1997), 120-125.

Robin Lippincott, "The Obstacle Race," and "Painting". In *Blue Territory: A Meditation on the Life and Art of Joan Mitchell* (Tital Press, 2015) 63-65, pp. 42-44.

Jan. 16

Feminist Phenomenological Beginnings

Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction" and "Biological Data". In *The Second Sex*. trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (NY: Vintage Books, 2011), 3-48.

Further Reading: Shannon M. Mussett, "Ethical Freedom," in *50 Concepts*, 127-133.

Jan. 23

Experience

Linda Martín Alcoff, "The Thorny Question of Experience".

In *Rape and Resistance* (Cambridge, UK.: Polity Press, 2018), 56-75.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/WEST/detail.action?docID=5380549>

Further Reading: Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Myself" in *Rape and Resistance*, 203-226.

Jan. 30

Experience and Postmemory

Mariana Hirsch, "Mourning and Postmemory". In *Family Frames: Photograph Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 17-40;

Marianne Hirsch, "Projected Memory", and "Post-Memory's Archival Turn". In *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2012), 155-174, 227-249.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=909487&query=The%20Generation%20of%20Postmemory>

Further Reading:

Kyle Whyte, "Collective Continuance." In *50 Concepts*, 53-59

Feb. 6

Story-Telling

Hannah Arendt, "The *Polis* and the Household", "The Disclosure of the Agent in Speech and Action", "The Web of Relationships and the Enacted Stories". In *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 28-37, 175-188.

https://monoskop.org/images/e/e2/Arendt_Hannah_The_Human_Condition

[2nd 1998.pdf](#)

Further Reading: Mariana Ortega, "Hometactics", in *50 Concepts*, 169-173

Feb. 13

Speaking through Gesture

Salaman, Gayle. "Movement", in *The Life and Death of Latisha King: Critical Phenomenology of Transphobia* (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 63-102. (Weldon <https://www-degruyter-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/document/doi/10.18574/nyu/9781479835911.001.0001/html#contents>)

Talia Mae Bettcher, "Comments on Gayle Salamon's *The Life and Death of Latisha King*" *Philosophy Today* 66.1 (2022): 191-198

Further Reading: Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans Phenomena", *50 Concepts*, 329-335.

Feb. 20

Reading Week

Feb. 27

Orientations

Sarah Ahmed, "Orientations: Towards a Queer Phenomenology." *GLQ* 12.14 (2006): 543-574.

Further Reading: Lauren Guilmette, "Queer Orientations", *50 Concepts*, 275-282.

March 6

The Lived Experience of Racism

Helen Ngo, "The Lived Experience of Racism and Racialized Embodiment" and "Die *Unheimlichkeit*: The Racialized Body Not-at-Home". In *The Habits of Racism: a Phenomenology of Racism and Racialized Embodiment* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017), 55-91, 93-133.

Further Reading: George Yancy, "Confiscated Bodies," 69-75; Helen A. Fielding, "The Habit Body", 155-160; Emily S. Lee, "Model Minority", 231-236; Shannon Sullivan, "Ontological Expansiveness", 249-254. All in *50 Concepts*.

March 13

Agency

Diana Coole, "Rethinking Agency: A Phenomenological Approach to Embodiment and Agentic Capacities", *Political Studies* 2005 (53): 124-142.

Further Reading: Linda Martín Alcoff, “Public Self/Lived Subjectivity”, *50 Concepts*, 269-274.

March 20 The Lived Experience of Colonialism

Alia Al-Saji, “A Debilitating Colonial Duration: Reconfiguring Fanon.”
Research in Phenomenology 53 (2023): 279-307.

Further Reading: Joel Michael Reynolds, “The Normate”, *50 Concepts*, 243-248.

March 27 Fanon and Interdisciplinary Thinking

Frantz Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness.” In *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans.
Charles Lam Markmann (NY: Grove Press, 1967), 109-140.

April 3 Group Project Presentations and Exam Review