

Lakehead University
Department of Gender & Women's Studies

WOME 5101 YA – Theory and Method in Women's Studies
Fall 2023 (Methods)
Fridays 2:30-5:30 Zoom

Dr. Jenny Roth (jroth@lakeheadu.ca)
Meetings by appointment on Tues, Thurs, or Fridays
Email me to set up a time

Truly interdisciplinary work – the work demanded by women's studies – is not easy...the critical differences between disciplines have to do with what questions we think are important, what we want to know about. The difficulty of interdisciplinary work lies both in developing a set of questions that can be approached with integrity from multiple perspectives and in gaining the courage to actually work from them. Since at this point most of us have been trained within one discipline, I am not surprised that we can usually tell where someone started; the questions and methods of one discipline tend to be paramount. But paramount doesn't mean exclusive, and that is the difference made by interdisciplinarity.

-- Susan Amussen, "Studying Early Modern Women"

We need to reclaim, name and re-name our experience and thus our knowledge of this social world we live in and daily help to construct, because only by doing so will it become truly ours, ours to use and do with as we will.

-- Stanley and Wise

Methods Term Description:

This term you will review feminist research methodologies from a variety of disciplinary traditions. We will explore feminist perspectives on research as a process and a product, and the potential of feminist research for transformation and social change. Examples from the disciplinary range of our GWS specialization will provide the foundation for our weekly discussions. The objectives this semester are to provide you with a foundational understanding of the principles guiding contemporary feminist methodology, and to enhance your skills and confidence in conducting research or other forms of information gathering through practical exercises and reflective class presentations.

Required Course Materials:

All materials are required except the Optional Readings, which you can use you're your work in this, or other, courses, or to gain a deeper understanding of the week's topic.

Electronic journal articles can be downloaded from the LU library website. Chapter pdfs are available to download from the course D2L. Make sure you have easy access to a

copy of the week's reading(s) for discussion, and that you've prepared the assignments for each week.

Evaluation - The fall term is worth 50% of your overall grade.

Research exercises (2x10%)	20%
Class participation	10%
Methods project	20%

(See details following our Weekly Schedule)

Weekly Schedule

Classes begin the week of September 5, 2023

Week 1 – Introductions and Overview: Feminist Epistemology

Week 2 – No Class – Rosh Hashanah

Week 3 – How we 'do' research matters - a conversation across disciplinary boundaries about why process matters

Prepare: Spend some time thinking about what constitutes 'method' in your home discipline. How would you decide upon or 'frame' a research question or project? What sources of material might you use, and why? How/where would you find information? What theoretical orientations are common in your home discipline and how do they link to other methodologies in your field? What methods or techniques of analysis would you typically use in your research? How would you choose among them for a particular project? Is feminist theory/methodology a core part of your discipline? How do you as an individual, or a team member, locate yourself in your research? How do you analyze your data? What counts as 'evidence' in your field (or how do you 'know' what you 'know')? How do you write up your research findings? Where and how do 'gender' and feminist theory/methodology fit into this? Where and how does 'intersectionality' as a framework and method fit in? How is research in your field similar to, or different from, other disciplines with which you are familiar?

Make notes (using specific examples) to share in the class discussion. Bring along an example of published feminist research from your home discipline to briefly share with the class.

Readings:

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy (2011) "Feminist Research. Exploring, Interrogating, and Transforming the Interconnections of Epistemology, Methodology, and Method." In S. Hesse-Biber, ed. *The Handbook of Feminist Research, 2nd edition*. London Sage, pp. 2-26. [D2L pdf]

Griffin, Gabriele (2011) "Writing about Research Methods in the Arts and Humanities." In R. Buikema, G. Griffin and N. Lykke, eds., *Theories and Methods in Postgraduate Feminist Research. Researching Differently*. New York: Routledge, pp. 91-104. [D2L pdf]

Richardson, Laurel (2001). "Getting Personal: Writing-Stories." *Qualitative Studies in Education* 14(1): 33-38. [D2L PDF]

Week 4 – Social Location and Decolonizing Research

Readings:

- Culler, Jonathan (1982) "Reading as a Woman." In *On Deconstruction. Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 43-63. [D2L pdf]
- Ramazanoglu, Caroline and Janet Holland (2003) "Researching 'Others'. Feminist Methodology and the Politics of Difference." In *Feminist Methodology. Challenges and Choices*. London: Sage, pp. 105-122. [D2L pdf]
- Sky, L (2016) "Searching for my palm tree: Epistemological journeying of a child welfare doctoral student." *Qualitative Social Work* 15(5-6):619-627. [Ejournal]

Optional Reading:

Lundstrom, Catrin (2010) "White Ethnography: (Un)comfortable Conveniences and Shared Privileges in Field-Work with Swedish Migrant Women." *NORA (Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research)* 18(2):70-87. [E-journal]

Prepare: Do the readings, and, reflecting on them, bring an example of research in your own discipline where you think social location may have positively or negatively impacted how the author/researcher conducted or interpreted their analysis. What can we ourselves learn about research methods and social location from these examples?

Week 5 – Oct. 3 – Ethics Workshop

In preparation for this week's class:

- 1) Read the [Guidelines and Policy for the Ethical Conduct of Research and Procedures for Investigating Misconduct](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/research-and-innovation/ethics/human-subjects/resources) on the LU Research Office website: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/research-and-innovation/ethics/human-subjects/resources>
- 2) Complete the [On-Line Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans \(TCPS2\)](#), available on D2L, "ethics examples"
- 3) Bring the "sample ethics proposal" and the "sample cover letter and consent form 1" from D2L for discussion.

Readings:

- Bell, Linda (2014) "Ethics and Feminist Research." In Hesse-Biber, ed. *Feminist Research Practice*, pp. 73-106. [D2L pdf]
- Detamore, M (2010) "Queer(y)ing the ethics of research methods: Towards a politics of intimacy in researcher/researched relations." In K. Browne and C. Nash (eds). *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research*, pp. 167-182 [D2L pdf]

Prepare: How and why do ethics matter in your field of research? What types of dialogue about ethics (reading/research/analysis) are common in your discipline? Bring an example for discussion.

Week 6 – Fall break – no class

Week 7 – Presentations of 1st research exercise

Week 8 – Speech and Silence in Feminist Research

Readings:

Anderson, Kathryn and Dana Jack (1991) “‘Learning to Listen’: Interview Techniques and Analyses.” In Berger Gluck, S. and D. Patai, eds. *Women's Words. The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. New York: Routledge, pp. 11-26. [D2L pdf]

Bazzul, Jesse and Heather Sykes (2011) “The Secret Identity of a Biology Textbook: Straight and Naturally Sexed.” *Cultural Studies of Science Education* 6:265-286. [E-journal]

Harries, B. (2016) “What’s Sex Got to Do with It? When a Woman Asks Questions.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 59:48-57. [E-journal]

Optional:

Davis, Madeleine and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy (1986) “Oral History and the Study of Sexuality in the Lesbian Community.” *Feminist Studies* 12(1):7-26. [E-journal]

Prepare: Reflect on your own work at University over the years to consider whose voices are heard, and whose aren’t? How can feminist methods enable multiple voices, or draw otherwise marginalized voices into the centre? In your own work – regardless of your stream – how can you work to enable space for multiple perspectives?

Week 9 – Literary, Textual and Discourse Analyses

Readings:

Lazar, M. (2007). “Feminist critical discourse analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis.” *Critical Discourse Studies* 4(2):141-164. [E-journal]

Lukić, Jasmina and Adelina Sánchez Espinosa (2011) “Feminist Perspectives on Close Reading.” Buikema et al., *Theories and Methodologies*, pp. 105-118. [D2L pdf]

Roth, Jenny and Chris Sanders (2018). “Incorrigible slag,” the case of Jennifer Murphy's HIV non-disclosure: Gender norm policing and the production of gender-class-race categories in Canadian news coverage.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 68: 113-120. [E-journal]

Optional:

Hillsburg, Heather (2013) “Towards a Methodology of Intersectionality: An Axiom-Based Approach.” *Atlantis* 36(1):3-11. [E-journal]

Prepare: We will do practice discourse analysis with sample interview transcripts in class, and reading discussion.

Week 10 – Participatory Action and Lessons from Research with Vulnerable Populations

Readings:

- Ackerly B. and J. True (2010) “Back to the Future: Feminist Theory, Activism and Doing Feminist Research in an Age of Globalization.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 33:464-472. [E-journal]
- McIntyre, Alice (2002) “Women Researching Their Lives: Exploring Violence and Identity in Belfast, the North of Ireland.” *Qualitative Research* 2(3):387-409. [E-journal]
- Bootinand, Jan for the Global Alliance against Traffic in women (2008) “Feminist Participatory Action Research in the Mekong Region.” In Jaggar, *Just Methods*, pp. 445-456. [D2L pdf]

Optional Reading:

- Gustafson, Diana L. (2000) “Best Laid Plans: Examining Contradictions between Intent and Outcome in a Feminist, Collaborative Research Project.” *Qualitative Health Research* 10(6):717-733. [E-journal]

Week 11 – What we See and what we don’t See: Ethnographic and Visual Analysis

Readings:

- Buikema, Rosemarie and Marta Zarzyck (2011) “Visual Cultures: Feminist Perspectives.” In Buikema et al., *Theories and Methodologies*, pp. 119-134. [D2L pdf]
- Pausé, C. J. (2012). “Live to Tell: Coming out as Fat.” *Somatechnics* 2(1): 42-56. [D2L pdf]
- Nicholas, Jane (2014) “A Debt to the Dead? Ethics, Photography, History and the Study of Freakery,” *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 47(93):139-155. [E-journal]

Week 12 – Practices and Politics of Archiving, Interpretation and Representation

Readings

- Ashton, J. (2017) “Feminist Archiving (a manifesto continued): Skilling for Activism and Organizing.” *Australian Feminist Studies* 32:91-92:126-149 [D2L pdf]
- Power, E. (2004) “Toward Understanding in Postmodern Interview Analysis: Interpreting the Contradictory Remarks of a Research Participant.” *Qualitative Health Research* 14(6):858-865. [E-journal]
- Reale M. (2014) “The Only Way I Can Say this: Representing African Refugees’ Experience Through Poetic Inquiry.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 43(6):770-773.

Wk 13 - Presentations of 2nd research exercises

Methods Course Evaluation

1. Research Exercises Weeks 7 and 13 (2 x 10% each – total 20 marks)

There are 3 parts to this exercise:

- A sample methodological exercise with a focus on gender and its intersections (topic of your choice in consultation with instructor)
- brief class presentation (10-12 minutes)
- 3 page summary report

Research exercise presentations will take place in class during Weeks 7 and 13. Please note: ALL students will present on the same day to facilitate collective group reflection and discussion. No exceptions will be made without University documentation.

Instructions:

- Design, carry out and reflect on *two* small research exercises. Choose a *different methodology* for each exercise. You may choose the same subject or a different subject for each of the exercises, but in keeping with the orientation of the course, be sure that intersectional feminism is central to your inquiry. You must also demonstrate links to course readings and discussion for your reflection and analysis. The research methods you may choose from include those covered in this course, and any that you want to use we have not covered.

If you choose a methodology that involves research with human subjects you will need to prepare an ethics proposal well in advance for approval by the LU REB. We will discuss details of ethics in research and the Tri-Council and LU REB guidelines in class early in the semester to facilitate this option. *To allow time for REB approval (minimum 2-3 weeks after submission) it is advisable to make this your second research exercise.*

- Summarize your reflections on each research exercise in a *brief paper* (3 double-spaced pages, per exercise) to be handed in at the time of your presentation.
- Using your summary paper as a basis, give a focused 10-12 minute class presentation reflecting primarily on the learning process of the research exercise. I will stop people at the 12 minute mark, so be sure that your presentation is the equivalent of approximately 4.5 typed pages, double-spaced.
- Reflection portion: What questions/concerns did you encounter in designing, carrying out, analyzing and summarizing the research? What strengths and limitations do you see to this research approach? How might you draw on these experiences in formulating and carrying out another research project, or your own thesis/project research?

2. Class participation – 10% (Required)

Class participation will be based on your full attendance and preparedness for weekly classes, the quality (not quantity) of your contributions, and your

demonstration of both active listening and active engagement with the course materials and concepts. It is expected that students will have read all of the assigned readings prior to class and come prepared with discussion points and questions to contribute. You can miss one class without penalty.

We will be using a pedagogical circle approach to our discussion, and I will randomly assign the speaking order at the start of each class so that each person has a chance to speak.

3. Methods Project – 20%

Choose ONE of the following options

- *Comparative Case Study Review* - Critically evaluate two monographs/case studies/research reports from your home discipline in terms of the methodological approach of the authors and their attention to feminist theory and methodology giving consideration to the following issues:
 - What topic/issue/theme/literature was the author addressing?
 - What were the arguments for the choice of this particular method of study?
 - How were interpretations/analyses derived from the data?
 - To what extent did the authors take a *reflexive approach* in choosing/designing, analyzing and presenting their research?
 - Did the author/do you consider the work informed by feminist theory and methodology? Why or why not?
 - How might you draw on the authors' experiences in formulating your own research?
- *Reflective Methods Paper* - Write a paper describing the methodology chosen (or evolving methodology) for your research paper/thesis/creative project detailing your decision trail in choosing this approach. How is your methodology informed by feminist theory and methodology? How have you located yourself in this research? What are the strengths and limitations of your approach in relation to the themes discussed in this course? What challenges to you foresee with your research and how do you anticipate addressing them?
- *Research Paper* - Write a research paper discussing a particular feminist methodology which interests you, or exploring a particular debate or tension within feminist methodology. Use examples from specific case studies either within one field, or across several different fields to illustrate and draw links to course materials as relevant.
- *Annotated Bibliography of Feminist Research in your Home Discipline* - Compile a bibliography of feminist research in your home discipline. Write a discussion paper reviewing the methodologies employed and methodological concerns identified by feminist researchers in the field. In what ways have feminist research methods challenged/contributed to conventional research in your field? Which topics and

areas within the discipline is it is most frequently used to study? In what other areas might it be used effectively? **Note** that any errors in the citation style formatting, given the availability of resources, will result in a deduction of 5 marks for each entry in which there are errors (100 marks = percentage you assign).

Format:

The body of the paper should be 10-12 double-spaced typed pages. Be sure to make clear links to course readings and materials and carefully cite all sources used. You may use your home unit format (MLA, ASA, APA) for referencing, citations and the bibliography. Students are expected to be familiar with the Lakehead University regulations regarding Academic Dishonesty and plagiarism. These will be strictly followed.

GenAI Use Prohibited

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google) among several others. Other Generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E.

Any use of GenAI systems to produce assignments for this course is not permitted. All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be the student's original work. The submission of any work containing AI generated content will be considered a violation of academic integrity ("Use of Unauthorized Materials").

Please ask me any questions in relation to plagiarism, if you're unsure.

Remember to cite **all** information and ideas that you get from the readings, the films, and the discussions, including paraphrased information (non-directly-quoted ideas and concepts).

Late papers will be penalized 5% per day. Work over a week late will not be accepted without University documentation.