

**Lakehead University
Department of Women's Studies**

**WOME5101 YDE – Theory and Method in Women's Studies
Fall 2021 (Methods) - Winter 2022 (Theory)**

“One of the main goals of feminist research projects is to support social justice and social transformation; these projects seek to study and to redress the many inequities and social injustices that continue to undermine and even destroy the lives of women and their families. Researchers look at patterns and trends within the population of all women, and they draw conclusions based on the varied range of women’s unique circumstances. They are frequently concerned with the intersections of gender with other identity standpoints, such as sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, or nationality. Feminist researchers have unique angles of theoretical perspectives that they use to assess women’s status within society and to formulate particular questions that might not otherwise be tackled by the hegemonic ideas that reinforce the existing system of gender inequality”.

-Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber
Feminist Research Practice: A Primer

Instructor: Fall: Dr. Jen Chisholm, Winter: Dr. Jenny Roth

Instruction: Online (Zoom link can be found on course D2L page)

Office: Ryan Building, Rm 2011 (Thunder Bay Campus)

PLEASE NOTE: In line with current COVID-19 public health guidelines, I am working remotely. The best way to connect is to send email and we can schedule a time to chat virtually.

Office hours: Mondays, 2pm-3pm

PLEASE NOTE: In line with current COVID-19 public health guidelines, office hours will be held virtually, via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://lakeheadu.zoom.us/j/97906520058?
pwd=Q24vd2ZDeFVKUndxaXc4RHVrYkdBUT09](https://lakeheadu.zoom.us/j/97906520058?pwd=Q24vd2ZDeFVKUndxaXc4RHVrYkdBUT09)

Meeting ID: 979 0652 0058

Passcode: 733858

Email: jen.chisholm@lakeheadu.ca

Methods Course Description:

This section (Fall 2021) of the course 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 WS specialization will provide the foundation for our weekly discussions. The objectives this semester are to provide students with a foundational understanding of the principles guiding contemporary feminist methodology, and to enhance students' skills and confidence in conducting research through practical research exercises and reflective class presentations.

Required Course Materials:

Feminist Research Practice: A Primer, Edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber

Research as Resistance: Revisiting Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches, 2nd Edition, Edited by Susan Strega and Leslie Brown

Both course texts can be found through the Lakehead University Bookstore (including digital copies upon request).

All other course readings will be posted on D2L.

Learner Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- a. Articulate an advanced understanding of feminist theories and their application across a range of disciplines
- b. Demonstrate an enhanced ability to engage in Feminist methods and methodology
- c. Critically assess and articulate the limitations and strengths of existing feminist theories and methodologies
- d. Demonstrate an enhanced ability to connect feminist theory to other theories related to oppressive structures and power relations and to achieve an advanced understanding of intersectionality

Assignments:

Participation	15% (evaluated weekly throughout term)
TCPS2 Certificate and Reflection	5% (DUE: September 29th, 2021)
Feminist Research Question Exercise	10% (2 x 5%, DUE: October 20th, and November 17th, 2021)
Methods Project	20% (DUE: December 15th, 2021)

Note: This term is worth 50% of your grade for WOME5101

Note: All assignments should be submitted online through the course D2L site.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Class Structure

Our class will meet online via Zoom, weekly on Wednesdays between 2:30pm and 5:30pm.

This graduate seminar requires active, weekly participation and engagement with course concepts and with each other. We will follow a process called circle pedagogy to guide our discussions. Circle pedagogy is based on Indigenous educational approaches, which allows each member of the class time and space of their own to share thoughts, questions and perspectives on course readings and material. Since we cannot sit in a circle together physically, we will create a virtual circle, using a weekly speakers list, which will be communicated to you at the beginning of each class, as well as posted in the Zoom chat.

After one round of sharing, we will take a break. After the break we will go around the circle once more, where students will have the opportunity to share follow up thoughts or questions based on the first round of discussions. You are encouraged to take notes as your classmates speak, and follow up on points raised by others.

Time permitting, we will end the class with an open discussion period for any last thoughts or contributions.

I am always happy to see your faces on video during our class discussions, but it is not a requirement. I recognize that students have differential access to reliable internet, and various levels of comfort with being on camera. I ask that you connect and use your microphone/audio, but you will not be penalized for leaving your camera off.

A Note about COVID-19

This has been an especially challenging year, with many of us struggling with the transition to online learning. I recognize that some of you might be juggling working and learning from home, as well as helping children, siblings or others in your family complete their own schooling. This can be very challenging, and we can't always anticipate what might come up. Your best practice for success is to be honest with yourself about what you need and what you can handle, and then to reach out and communicate with Dr. Chisholm. More than anything, I want you to learn, and be successful in this course, so I am open to working with you to find the best path for success. Below is a list of available (free) resources for students who would benefit from more sustained support or accommodations.

Resources Available to Students:

Student Success Centre: Additional help regarding academic matters can be found at the Student Success Centre located in SC 0008 or phone 343-8018 or online at - <http://academicadvising.lakeheadu.ca/>

Student Accessibility Services: For assistance with accommodations for a disability, please visit Student Accessibility Services located in SC 0003 or phone 343-8047 or online at - <http://learningassistance.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Some students may benefit from receiving academic accommodation, due to a disability (physical, learning or otherwise), illness or disruption. Please reach out to Student Accessibility Services and speak with an advisor. Your SAS advisor will work with you to develop a plan, which will then be communicated to Dr. Chisholm. You need not disclose any personal or medical information to Dr. Chisholm, or any of your professors. SAS will work with you to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

Everyone has the right to an accessible education, and all approved accommodations will be honoured, no questions asked.

Student Health and Counselling Centre: For help with personal and/or medical issues, please visit the Student Health and Counselling Centre located in the University Centre 1007 (across from Security) or phone 343-8361 or online at - <http://healthservices.lakeheadu.ca/>.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Participation (15%, evaluated throughout term)

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. In particular, you should come to each class prepared to spark discussion with a substantive reflection or observation about at least one of the readings. Some discussion questions and prompts will be posted on D2L under the “Content” tab for each week. These questions are meant to guide your reading of the required materials, and/or for you to think critically about afterwards. You should come to class prepared to answer or engage with the questions posted, or offer your own thoughts, insights or questions in relation to the readings or topic for each week.

We all benefit from lively, engaged discussion. Using a circle pedagogy, every student will have a chance to speak, and listen to the reflections of your classmates.

TCPS2 Certificate and Reflection (5%, DUE September 29th, 2021)

Students will complete the modules required for the TCPS 2 Core (Course on Research Ethics), provided through the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for

Research Involving Humans. Follow the link provided on D2L, completing all 9 modules and taking the quiz. Upon completion, you will receive a Certificate of Completion.

Each student will submit their TCPS 2 Certificate (downloadable upon completion) and a 1 page reflection on the TCPS2 training course. Your reflection should be guided by the following questions:

What did you learn?

How does it relate to course material/discussion thus far?

Why are Research Ethics especially important for Feminist/Anti-Oppressive research?

Was there anything you felt was missing from the modules?

Feminist Research Question Exercise (2 x 5% = 10%, DUE October 20th, and November 17th, 2021)

Students will complete the “Developing a Feminist Research Question” Worksheet, posted on D2L. The purpose of the exercise is to get you thinking about what makes a research question “feminist”, and prompt you to think about how to integrate intersectionality into research design.

The first completed worksheet is due on November 2nd, 2020. Dr. Chisholm will review your assignment, and provide specific feedback on your proposed research question/project. Students will complete a second (identical) worksheet, incorporating feedback received from the first. The second worksheet is due on November 30th, 2020. This assignment is intended to help you start thinking about a research question for your final project in this course, described below.

Methods Project (20%, DUE December 15th, 2021)

Students may choose ONE of the following options to complete for the Methods Project assignment:

Comparative Method Paper

Students will submit a 10-12 page paper which proposes a research question, or research problematic, and explores THREE potential methods a researcher might use to address the research question. Papers should take the form of a compare and contrast essay, wherein each potential method is described, discussed in relation to its benefits and challenges, and compared with one another. Your conclusion should include which method you deem to be the most appropriate to answer your research question, and why.

OR

Research Proposal

Students will prepare a research proposal. Proposals can be tailored to each students' MA project, or propose a fictional or “dream” research project. A typical research proposal will include: an introduction, literature review, explanation of research methods, potential challenges or limitations of the research, conclusion. However, components of the proposal will vary

depending on the students' home discipline. Students are required to research the requirements in their home discipline, and touch base with Dr. Chisholm to review what will be included in your final submission. Proposals should be approx. 10-12 pages in length.

WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE

Week 1 - Wednesday, Sept 8th: What is Feminist Research?

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 1: A Re-Invitation to Feminist Research

Week 2 - Wednesday, Sept 15th: Feminist Empiricism and Standpoint Theory

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 2: Feminist Empiricism and Standpoint Theory: Approaches to Understanding the Social World

Research As Resistance: Chapter 3: Situating Anti-Oppressive Theories within Critical and Difference-Centered Perspectives.

Sky, L. (2016). Searching for my palm tree: Epistemological journeying of a child welfare doctoral student. *Qualitative Social Work*, Vol. 15(5-6): 619-627.

Week 3 - Wednesday, Sept 22nd: Feminist Postmodernism, Poststructuralism and Critical Theory

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 3: Feminist Postmodernism, Poststructuralism and Critical Theory

Research As Resistance: Chapter 1: Becoming an Anti-Oppressive Researcher

Research As Resistance: Chapter 5: The View from the Postructural Margins: Epistemology and Methodology Reconsidered in Research as Resistance

Week 4 - Wednesday, Sept 29th: Ethics and Feminist Research TCPS 2 Certificate and Reflection DUE

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 4: Ethics and Feminist Research

Research As Resistance: Chapter 2: Emerging from the Margins: Indigenous Methodologies.

Eyre, L. (2010). Whose Ethics? Whose Interests?: The Tri-Council Policy and Feminist Research. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*. Vol. 26(3): 75-85.

Week 5 - Wednesday, Oct 6th: Feminist Ethnography

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 5: What Is Feminist Ethnography?

Benson, K. & Nagar, R. (2006). Collaboration as resistance: Reconsidering the processes, products, and possibilities of feminist oral history and ethnography. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 13(5): 581-592.

Schrock, R. (2013). The Methodological Imperatives of Feminist Ethnography. *Journal of Feminist Scholarship*. Vol. 5(5): 48-60.

Week 6 - Wednesday, Oct 13th: - READING WEEK - NO CLASS

Week 7 - Wednesday, Oct 20th: Feminist Community Action Research Feminist Research Question Exercise #1 DUE

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 6: Feminist Practice of Action and Community Research

Research As Resistance: Chapter 4: Our Community Action Research Project: A Blueprint for Resistance.

Gustafson, D. L. and Brunger, F. (2014). Ethics, "Vulnerability," and Feminist Participatory Action Research with a Disability Community. *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 24(7): 997-1005.

Week 8 - Wednesday, Oct 27th: Narrative and Storytelling

Research As Resistance: Chapter 6: Narrative Research and Resistance: A Cautionary Tale.

Research As Resistance: Chapter 7: Honouring the Oral Traditions of the Ta't Mustimuxw (Ancestors) through Storytelling.

Christensen, J. (2012). Telling Stories: Exploring Research Storytelling as a Meaningful Approach to Knowledge Mobilization with Indigenous Research Collaborators and Diverse Audiences in Community-Based Participatory Research. *The Canadian Geographer*. Vol. 56(2): 231–242.

Week 9 - Wednesday, Nov 3rd: Literary, Textual and Discourse Analysis

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 9: Feminist Media Research

Research as Resistance: Chapter 9: "On the Footsteps of Foucault": Doing Foucauldian Discourse Analysis in Social Justice Research

Lazar, M. (2007). "Feminist critical discourse analysis: Articulating a Feminist Discourse Praxis." *Critical Discourse Studies* 4(2):141-164.

Reid, Colleen and Allison Tom (2006) "Poor Women's Discourses of Legitimacy, Poverty, and Health." *Gender & Society* 20(3):402-421.

Week 10 - Wednesday, Nov 10th: Feminist Survey Research & Survey Workshop

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 10: Feminist Survey Research

Muehlenhard, C., et al. (2017). Evaluating the One-in-Five Statistic: Women's Risk of Sexual Assault While in College. *The Journal of Sex Research*, Vol.54(4-5): 549-576.

Week 11 - Wednesday, Nov 17th: Feminist Policy and Program Analysis Feminist Research Question Exercise #2 DUE Guest Speaker: Kate Grantham

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 11: The Feminist Practice of Program Evaluation

Porter, M. (2010). The Lombok process: Challenging power in a transnational, comparative research project. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 33: 492-500.

Grantham, K. (2018). Assessing International Student Mobility in Canadian University Strategic Plans: Instrumentalist versus Transformational Approaches in Higher Education. *Journal of Global Citizenship and Equity Education*, 6(1), 1-21.

Week 12 - Wednesday, Nov 24th: Feminist Interviewing and Relational Practice

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 7: Feminist Approaches to In-Depth Interviewing

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 8: The Practice of Feminist Focus Groups

Kirsch, G. (2005). Friendship, friendliness, and feminist fieldwork. *Signs*, 30(4): 2163-2172.

Alcoff, L. (1991). The problem of speaking for others. *Cultural Critique*, Vol. 20: 5-32.

Week 13 - Wednesday, Dec 1st: Feminist Research in Review

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 12: Feminist Approaches to Mixed Methods Research

Feminist Research Practice: Chapter 13: Conclusion: Putting Together Your Research Project