This course provides an overview of feminist methods, historical developments within feminist methodology, and debates within feminist methodology and epistemology. It is not a ‘how-to’ approach to specific research techniques. (These will be provided by students' home disciplines).

**The objectives of the methodology module are:**

1. To introduce students to methodological problems which arise when theories and methods are developed without attention to the manner in which socio/historical and cultural worlds are structured along the lines of gender. We will examine the ways in which, when women are brought 'within the frame' the frame itself may shift.

2. To introduce students to the range of research methods which have been employed within, or developed for the purpose of, research on women and gender. Case studies of recent feminist research will be analyzed from the perspective of research methods and design.

3. To introduce students to debates about the conduct of feminist research arising from contemporary feminist theory.

**Required Texts**

The course reading package will be made available to students to photocopy and a copy of the weekly articles will be in the folder outside my office door (RB 3018)

**Recommended Optional Texts**


Reinharz Shulamit (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press. (This is a good overview of feminist uses of specific research techniques. We will be using selected readings from this text.)

**Evaluation**

The Methods module will count for 50% of your overall course grade. Details of evaluation will be negotiated in the first class and recorded on the Evaluation Guidelines to be handed out in Week 2.

**Format**

This course will have a seminar format. You are expected to have done readings in advance and actively participate in class discussion and exercises. We will do two experiential research exercises to facilitate our exploration of methodological concerns and issues from a feminist perspective. This will allow group members to gain an understanding of the challenges and rewards of feminist research in one another's home disciplines as well as providing a introduction to the range of feminist methods - both 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' which students may wish to incorporate in their own thesis or research projects.

**Weekly Outline**

January 3 - Orientation and Course Design
January 10 - Method, Methodology and Epistemology in Feminist Research: Negotiating Terminology
Readings: Maynard and Purvis "Introduction" and Maynard "Chapter 1"; Harding “Introduction. Is There a Feminist Method?"

Optional Reading: Longino and Doell "Body, Bias and Behaviour.

January 17- Overview of "Qualitative" Methods - Feminist Oral History, Ethnography, and Interview Research
Readings: Anderson and Jack "Learning to Listen"; Davis and Kennedy "Oral History and the Study of Sexuality in the Lesbian Community"; Oakley "Interviewing Women - A Contradiction?"

January 24. Overview, cont'd - Narrative, Documentary, Content Analysis and Literary Criticism
Readings: Little "Ontario Mothers' Allowance Case Files as a Site of Contestation"; Reid and Tom "Poor Women's Discourses of Legitimacy, Poverty and Health"; and Campbell and Schram "Feminist Research Methods. A Content Analysis of Psychology and Social Science Textbooks"

Optional Readings: Reinhart "Feminist Content Analysis" or Parr "Gender History and Historical Practice"

January 31- Overview, cont'd.- Participatory Action Research, Focus Groups and Original Feminist Research Methods

February 7 - Ethical Issues in Feminist Research
Readings: Patai "U.S. Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?"; Holland and Ramazanoglu "Coming to Conclusions: Research Young Women's Sexuality"; and LU Graduate Studies Ethics Package and Tri-Council Guidelines (these will be handed out in class)

February 14 - The Subjectivity/Objectivity Debate; The Place of Quantitative Methods and Multiple Research Strategies in Feminist Research

February 21 - Midterm Study Week

February 28 - Putting Theory into Practice. Class Presentation of 1st Research Exercise

March 7 - Reflexivity in Research Design and Analysis; Raising Questions and Negotiating Meaning
Readings: Watts "The outsider within: dilemmas of qualitative feminist research within a culture of resistance"; Skeggs "Situating the Production of Feminist Ethnography"; and Gustafson "Best Laid Plans: Examining Contradictions Between Intent and Outcome in a Feminist, Collaborative Research Project."

March 14 - Operationalizing Situated Knowledges - Analyzing Gender in the Context of Other Power Relations; Postmodern Feminist Research -- An Oxymoron?

Optional Reading: MacGregor "Feeding Families in Harris' Ontario: Women, the Tsubouchi Diet and the Politics of Restructuring"

March 21 - Putting Theory into Practice: Class Presentation of Second Research Exercise
March 28 - Roundtable Discussion and Course Review

Citations for Class Readings:


Mies, Maria (1996) Liberating Women, Liberating Knowledge: Reflections on Two Decades of Feminist


Your contributions during the Winter Term are worth 50% of your overall course grade.

**Part A - To be done by all class members** - worth 25% of final grade.

Research Exercises:

A.1) Design, carry out and reflect on two small research exercises from the list below. Choose a different methodology for each exercise. The specific subject of the research exercises is up to you, but in keeping with the orientation of the course, be sure that "gender" and "gendered experience" are central to your inquiry.

The research methods you may choose from include: ethnography, oral history, content analysis, documentary analysis, literary criticism, autobiography/personal narrative, structured or open-ended interviews, focus group interviews, survey research, participatory action research, and collective memory research.

Prepare a brief 15 minute class presentation reflecting primarily on the process and analysis of the research, rather than the findings of your research. 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 research?

The first presentation will be done in class on *February 28* and the second presentation will be done on *March 21*.

A.2) Summarize your reflections on each research exercise in a brief paper (maximum of 4 typed, double-spaced pages, per exercise) to be handed in at the time of the presentation.

**Part B - Choose ONE of the Following Written Assignments** - worth 25% of your course grade. Due April 9

B.1) **Comparative Case Study Review** - Critically evaluate two monographs/case studies/research reports in terms of the methodological approach of the authors 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?

B.2) **Methods Paper** ~ Write a paper describing the methodology chosen for your research paper/thesis detailing your decision trail in choosing this approach. What are the strengths and limitations of this methodology in relation to feminist methodological concerns addressed in course readings and discussions.
B.3) Research Paper - Write a research paper discussing a particular feminist methodology, or 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.

B.4) Bibliography and Discussion Paper - 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?

Format:
Papers for Section B should be 15 typed, double-spaced pages in length exclusive of title and references cited pages. Use the citation style and format appropriate to your home discipline (ie. Chicago, APA, Turabian). Students are expected to be familiar with the Lakehead University regulations regarding Academic Dishonesty and plagiarism.

Part C - Optional Evaluation Component

If class members are in agreement (to be negotiated in class) there will be a class participation mark for the semester (1/2 to be assigned by me and Y2 to be assigned by your peers). Criteria for assessment and the proportion of the overall term's mark will be negotiated as a group.