Problems in Feminist Research
Tuesdays 2:30-5
SCAF 201

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This is a graduate seminar in feminist research, and constitutes a core course for students enrolled in the Graduate Certificate Program in Advance Feminist Research. Feminism has long been interested in a foundational way in questions of epistemology (how we know what we know) and research methodology (how we go about developing original research), because in its most recent incarnations, post-1968, it emerged as an academic formation that asked basic questions about disciplines: how did they invent a world without women? How was systemic bias built into its knowledge systems such that they made women, people of color, working class people, people outside the US and Europe (“the West,” as it came to be called, through an Orientalist bit of geographic folly), peasants, slaves, indigenous people, colonized people, (most) queers, trans folk and a great many others invisible? Obviously, in this endeavor feminists had help from many other fields and activist movements, which worked together across disciplines and movements to transform knowledge. In many ways, they won—no discipline or field of study is unchanged or untouched by these inquiries, although some are obviously more resistant than others.

This course proceeds in the spirit of that ongoing revolution. We will make no assumptions about what “feminism” means or what “feminist research” is (much less “feminist methodology” or “feminist epistemology”), but let that emerge through a reading of recent scholarly work that calls itself feminist (or is written by people who work in WGSS departments, whether they use the “feminist” word or not). It presumes a fairly extensive background in feminist scholarship; this is a “current problems” not a “basic concepts” course. We will read the books in this course less for what they are saying (although of course it’s impossible not to be interested in that, so we will give that some attention), than for how their arguments are constructed. We will read footnotes, assess archives, discuss sources, and look at the epistemology through which the arguments are framed. We will use this work to consider how we are doing our own scholarly writing, and how we can use interdisciplinary feminist scholarship to shake the foundations of the world as it is.
REQUIRED BOOKS

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS
There are two grading options for this class, depending on how you are using it. You can either use it to develop a framework for thinking about feminist research problems (option 1) or use it to solve problems in your own scholarly writing (option 2).

Option 1: All paper should be emailed to me
class participation: 15%
papers: Four 2pp reading response 5% each
Two 5-7pp papers 20% each
Final paper: 25%

1. Write four 2 pp. reading response papers. These will be frontloaded in the beginning of the semester to help you get quick feedback and help on your reading and writing, and correspondingly less pressure to speak up in class. Due Jan. 31, Feb. 7, Feb. 14, Feb. 21.

2. Write two 5-7 pp reading-response papers bringing together at least two of the readings in the weeks prior to the paper. Due March 21, April 18.

3. Write a 10 pp. conference paper that includes original research on a subject of your choosing developing methodology related to the course material. Subject matter might include historical research (relying on an archive of published or unpublished sources), a reading of a novel or a play, a reading of public policy problem or feminist issue using fresh sources (that is, tell us something new that we did not already know, based on your own research). This list is meant to be suggestive rather than inclusive. DUE May 9
Option 2: Paper should be emailed to me
30% class participation
70% article-length (~25pp) final paper DUE May 9

ATTENDANCE POLICY
You're expected to come to class with the reading done. If you must miss a class, email the instructor. Two absences are a cause for concern. If you miss three or more classes, plan on meeting with me to discuss options related to making up the work, taking a grade reduction, or repeating the course.

WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE

Jan. 24. Week 1—What Problems are We Thinking About in Feminist Research?
*Bring an article to class that exemplifies feminist work you admire*

Jan. 31-Week 2—From Pop Culture to Contemporary Politics

Recommended
Liza Featherstone, *False Choices: The Faux Feminism of Hillary Rodham Clinton* (2016)
Andi Zeisler, *We Were Feminists Once: From Riot Grrrl to Cover Girl, the Buying and Selling of a Political Movement* (2016)
Angela Davis and Frank Barat, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundation of a Movement* (2016)
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists* (2015)

**Option 1—2pp paper due.**

Feb. 7. Week 3—Race, memory, slavery

Recommended

**Option 1—2pp paper due.**
Nancy Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (Verso, 2013)

**Recommended**

**Option 1—2pp paper due.**

Feb. 21. Week 5—Big Narratives: White Feminism? Imperial Feminism? Liberal Feminism?

**Option 1—2pp paper due.**

Feb. 28. Week 6—Intersectionality

**Recommended**

March 7. Week 7--Latinidad
Karma Chavez, *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities* (University of Illinois Press, 2013)
*We will attend her lecture from 4-6 in the ILC hub*

**Recommended**
Rosamond King, *Island Bodies: Transgressive Sexualities in the Caribbean Imagination* (2016)
Juana Maria Rodriguez, *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings* (New York: NYU Press, 2014)

**Spring Break**

**March 21. Week 8--Transgender Studies**

**Option 1—5-7pp paper due**

**Recommended**
Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008)

**March 28. Week 9--Science**

**Recommended**
April 4. Week 10—Reproductive Politics and Sustainability

Recommended
Laura Briggs, “*Imperialism as a Way of Life*: Thinking Sex and Gender in American Empire,” *Radical History Review* Special Issue: Sexing Empire 123 (October 2015).

April 11. Week 11—Queer/Trans/Left Politics

Recommended

April 18—No class. Monday Schedule.
Option 1—5-7pp paper due

April 25. Week 11-- Settler Colonialism and the Problems of Citizenship

Recommended
Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*
Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*
Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity*

May 2. Week 12-- Trafficking/Transnational Feminisms

Recommended
Victoria Law, “Against Carceral Feminism” *Jacobin*
[https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/10/against-carceral-feminism/](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/10/against-carceral-feminism/)

**May 9—Final Papers due**