

GENDRST 701
Doing Research in Feminist and Gender Studies
McMaster University
2016-2017

Thursdays, every other week, 1:30-4:30pm
Location, Fall Term: TSH 321
Location, Winter Term: TSH 530

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:30-2:30pm or by appointment

Course Description:

This course is a feminist/anti-racist/decolonial/queer exploration of research methods. In it, we will read literature and meet with scholars, from McMaster and elsewhere, who challenge the assumptions and procedures of knowledge production, truth claims, and social change agendas. We will address some of the central concerns of feminist, anti-racist, decolonial and queer research across a range of disciplines, including both formative and more contemporary scholarly work. We will also explore the intersections among methodology and theory; in fact, some of the material we read falls into both or neither of these categories.

The course incorporates some of the events that make up the GSFR Research Symposium; some of the guest lecturers we invite to speak for the program will also come to our class. In addition, two or three McMaster researchers with widely divergent research programs, methodologies and disciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches will come to class to share their approach to research.

The course runs both fall and winter semesters and meets, generally speaking, bi-weekly. Some research symposium events fall outside of our Thursday afternoon meeting time; you are still required to attend these events unless you have a direct conflict with another course or TA assignment.

Course Objectives:

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

1. Familiarity with a number of key foundational, and some more contemporary, works and approaches in feminist methodology
2. Problematizing the idea of feminist methodology. Is there such a thing? How do foundational texts relate to work on critical race, decolonial, and queer methodologies?
3. Critical examination of these texts and methodologies, including how they engage with such issues as intersectionality, inclusiveness, etc.
4. Ability to ground theory/methodology in “real world” examples or case studies
5. Ability to think and write about methodologies in relation to one another
6. Ability to determine the key concepts of a reading, and to facilitate discussion that elaborates/reflects on these concepts.

7. Application of a number of methodologies: we will conduct interviews, complete the MREB ethics protocol, make a critical reading of a text, etc. These will be small-scale assignments, but they will allow you to test out a methodological approach rather than just reading about it.
8. Development of oral communication skills, especially the ability to engage in critical dialogue about intellectual issues
9. Development of listening skills

Required Texts:

All assigned readings for our course are available electronically in “Avenue to Learn,” McMaster’s online learning management system. For instructions on accessing Avenue to Learn, please see below. Readings selected by guest speakers may only be posted one week in advance of their visit to the class.

Assignments and Evaluation Scheme:

Facilitating discussion of an assigned reading	15%
Seminar participation and attendance at Research Symposium Events	15%
Written assignments (5 x 10% each)	50%
Final presentation	20%

NB: For each of the above assignments, please see the detailed handout available in Avenue

McMaster’s Statement on Academic Integrity:

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- 1) Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- 2) Improper collaboration in group work.
- 3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Avenue to Learn:

In this course we will be using ‘Avenue to Learn’ (the online learning management system at McMaster). Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will

be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

I will use 'Avenue to Learn' to distribute additional information about course assignments and expectations, so you should make a point of accessing it frequently (at least twice per week) in order to keep up-to-date with our course. Any announcements about changes to assigned readings, office hours, or class cancellations will also be made through Avenue. Students who are unfamiliar with the 'Avenue to Learn' system should familiarize themselves with the system as soon as possible; if you have any questions please seek immediate assistance by seeing me during office hours, or review the online tips and help available on the McMaster 'Avenue to Learn' webpage.

How to Access Avenue to Learn:

Step One: Make Sure You Are in the Avenue Database

- If you are officially registered in the course (and have paid your fees), you will be automatically enrolled in the Avenue database. Go to Step Two.
- If you are not registered in the course or have not paid your fees, you will not be able to access the course on Avenue and you must remedy that situation. Then, wait until the Avenue database is updated. These updates are supposed to occur daily overnight, but there may be some delays at the beginning of the year. Also, if you register in the course during the first or second week of classes, wait two days; if you still can't access the course in Avenue please contact your instructor.

Step Two: Login to Avenue

- Go to the website: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/index.html>
- Log in. Your user ID is your MAC ID -- eg: if your email id is: janed@mcmaster.ca; then your User ID is: janed. Your Avenue password is the same as your MAC ID password.
- If you do not have a MAC ID or you haven't activated yours yet, you will need to do so. To do this, go to http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/email_accounts/macid.html and follow the online instructions.

Step Three: Choose GSFR 700 under "My Courses"

- From your personalized course listings, click on GSFR 700 under 2012 Fall (T1). You are now inside the Avenue site for our course!

Do I need new software?

All you need to access Avenue is an internet browser. It is possible, though unlikely, that you will have to update your browser or change some of your "pop up" settings. If you have any problems viewing the site, go to the Avenue login page and click on "Browser Check"

eSupport for Avenue

You can access eSupport from the main Avenue site. Go to the login page; click "Support" on the lefthand frame, then click on the "eSupport" hyperlink. Click "I am a student," and you will have access to quick help, video tutorials, manual references, and more

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF SEMINAR TOPICS & READINGS¹

Sept 15 th	What is Feminist Research? Course Overview Required reading: 1) Sandra Harding, “Is There a Feminist Method?” <i>Feminism and Methodology</i> , ed. S. Harding. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987: 1-14.
Sept 20-22	Try to attend talks by visiting professor Mel Y. Chen (optional but encouraged for GSFR students) * Try to participate in Q&A
Sept 27-28	Attend both scheduled talks by visiting professor Virginia Eubanks (required for GSFR students) * Try to participate in Q&A
Sept 29 th	Virginia Eubanks Graduate Seminar (in class) Required readings: 1) Virginia Eubanks, <i>Digital Dead End</i> : Chapters 1, 5, 6, Appendix A 2) Want to Cut Welfare? There's an App for That: https://www.thenation.com/article/want-cut-welfare-theres-app/
Oct 13 th	Fall Break, No Class
Oct 18 th	Attend Research Symposium Talk by Zethu Matebeni, 3:30pm, Location TBA (required for GSFR students) * Try to participate in Q&A
Oct 20 th	How Do We Know? Feminist/Decolonial/Queer Questions about Knowledge Production Required readings: 1) Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “Research Through Imperial Eyes.” In <i>Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples</i> . Zed Books, London, 1999: 42-57. 2) Gordon, Avery. “her shape and his hand.” In <i>Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination</i> . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997: 3-28. 3) Purvis, Jennifer. “Queer.” In <i>Rethinking Women’s and Gender Studies</i> , Catherine M. Orr, Ann Braithwaite, and Diane Lichtenstein, eds. New York: Routledge, 2012: 189-205.
Oct 27 th	Written Assignment #1 (Writing Biography) Due – Upload to Avenue Dropbox

¹ At certain points in the course it may make good sense to modify the schedule of seminar topics and readings. The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course and will notify students accordingly.

Nov 3 rd	<p>Feminist Critiques of Objectivity and Experience</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," <i>Feminist Studies</i> 14.3 (1988): 575-599. 2) Joan W. Scott, "Experience." In <i>Feminists Theorize the Political</i>, Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, eds. Routledge, New York (1992): 22-40.
Nov 10 th	<p>Written Assignment #2 (Critical Reading) Due – Upload to Avenue Dropbox</p>
Nov 17 th	<p>Intersectionality as/in Feminist Research</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Patricia Hill Collins, "Black Feminist Epistemology." In <i>Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment</i>, 2nd edition. New York: Basic Books, 1997: 251-272. 2) Jasbir Puar, "I'd Rather Be A Cyborg than a Goddess: Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory," <i>PhiloSOPHIA</i>, 2012: 49-66. 3) Vivian May, "Intersectionality." In <i>Rethinking Women's and Gender Studies</i>, Catherine M. Orr, Ann Braithwaite, and Diane Lichtenstein, eds. New York: Routledge, 2012: 155-172.
Dec 1 st	<p>Feminist Research Ethics</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Dr. Susan Fast</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Christine Halse & Anne Honey, "Unravelling Ethics: Illuminating the Moral Dilemmas of Research Ethics," <i>Signs</i> 30.4 (2005): 2141-2162. 2) Review the Sample MREB Application available in Avenue 3) Glance over the Tri-Council Policy Statement on "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects" available in Avenue, and read the Introduction and Chapter 1 (pgs. 3-11)
Dec 8 th	<p>Written Assignment #3 (MREB Application) Due – Upload to Avenue Dropbox</p>