

**GENDRST 701**  
**Doing Research in Feminist and Gender Studies**  
McMaster University  
2017-2018

**Term I**

Mondays, approx. every other week, 11:30 – 2:20  
KTH 712

**Term II**

Thursdays, approx. every other week, 11:30 – 2:20  
KTH 712

**Instructor:** Dr. Karen Balcom

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**Office Hours:** Mondays, 2:30 – 4:00 and by appointment

### **Collaborative Work in the GSFR 701 Course Design**

This core of this syllabus was developed by Amber Dean, who was working from a syllabus created by Susan Fast, who was in turn working from a syllabus created by Karen Balcom. Now, the course and the syllabus have come back to me. Thus, you should think of this syllabus and course design as a collaborative project developed over a number of years. Amber Dean is most directly responsible for the format and description of the course as it appears in this syllabus. The language and process around seminar participation (including the seminar participation workshop) came from Melinda Gough.

### **Course Description:**

This course is a feminist/anti-racist/decolonial/queer exploration of research methods. Across the year, 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 older foundations and newer interventions. We will also explore the intersections between 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, one or two McMaster researchers with widely divergent research programs, methodologies and disciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches will come to class to share their approaches to research.

The course runs both fall and winter semesters and meets, generally speaking, bi-weekly. Some research symposium events fall outside of our Monday (Term I)/ Thursday (Term II) meeting time; *you are still required to attend these events unless you have a direct conflict with another course or TA assignment. Failure to attend these events on a consistent basis will result in a failing grade for participation in this class.*

## **Course Objectives:**

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

1. Describe and analyze key interventions in feminist methodology through participation in class discussion and short writing assignments (Assign. #2 and #5).
2. Apply developing skills in oral communication and responsive listening as you participate in critical intellectual debate as part of your class participation responsibilities.
3. Identify key concepts in our readings and facilitate discussion that elaborates/reflects on those concepts through taking your turn as seminar leader as part of your ongoing class participation responsibilities.
4. Identify and analyze your personal learning/writing/research commitments and style through short writing assignments. (Assign. #1 and #5).
5. Ground theory and methodology in “real world” examples and case studies to evaluate the applicability of the models through participation in class discussion, short writing assignments and your final presentation. (Assign #2, #3, #4, Final Presentation)
6. Analyze methodologies in relation to one another to measure comparative strengths and weaknesses through participation in class discussion, short writing assignments and your final presentation. (Assign. #2, #4, #5 and Final Presentation)
7. Apply some of the research methods we discuss. We will conduct interviews (Assign #4), complete the MREB ethics protocol (Assign #3), compose a critical reading of a text (Assign #2), and engage in collaborative writing (Assign #5). These will be small-scale assignments, but they will allow you to test out methodological approaches rather than just reading about them.
8. Critique the overall concept of feminist methodology(ies) through class discussion and short writing assignments. Is there such a thing as feminist research? How do classic texts relate to more recent work on critical race, decolonial, and queer methodologies? (Assign #2, Assign #5 and Final Presentation).
9. Connect your knowledge of feminist research methods to your emerging plan for your Independent Research Project (Final Presentation).

## **Required Texts:**

I have assigned two complete books and a series of articles or book chapters in Term I.

For the books, you will need to purchase a copy or borrow the library copy. There is only one library copy of each book, and so you may need to cooperate with other students in the class. Copies of the books for you to purchase are at Bryan Prince Bookseller in Westdale. If you intend to purchase the books, please support this excellent independent bookseller.

(<http://www.princebooks.net/> )

For the book chapters, there is either a e-copy posted on our Avenue to Learn site, or a link to the library's e-book system. For the basics of Avenue to Learn, see the appendix to this syllabus.

For the academic journal articles, you will access this material directly through the McMaster online library system. For anyone who is new to this process, there is a short guide posted on our A2L site under Content – Student Resources. The basics of using e-reader tools at McMaster are posted in the same place.

In Term II, the class will read one monograph. All additional readings will be accessed online. Copies of this book will be ordered to Bryan Prince Bookseller For Term II.

### **Books Ordered to Bryan Prince Bookseller**

Walcott, Rinaldo. *Queer Returns: Essays on Multiculturalism, Diaspora and Black Studies*. London: Insomniac Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-55483-174-6 [You will need to read this book for September 18<sup>th</sup>; No e-book version of this title was released by the publisher]

Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2017. ISBN: 97808222363194. [You will need to read this book for October 2<sup>nd</sup>; there is an e-book version of this title ISBN: 9789822373377]

### **Assignments and Evaluation Scheme:**

Facilitating discussion of assigned readings/ Annotation of Article Using Annotation Studio	10%
Seminar participation and attendance at Research Symposium Events	20%
Written assignments (5 x 10% each)	50%
Final presentation	20%

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

### **Participation and Assessment of Participation**

This class will work from the guidelines for constructive seminar participation and self-assessment worked out in our session during your orientation.

### **Details for Assignments**

Detailed Guidelines for all assignments are posted on Avenue to Learn.

### **Annotation Studio**

I am just learning to work with an online tool called Annotation Studio, which will allow us to share our reading/note taking/annotation practises with each other. I plan to incorporate Annotation Studio into our process for reading and preparing for class, but this will not happen

until mid-October when we have finished with the two books that open the semester. Check out Annotation Studio at: <http://www.annotationstudio.org/> We will explore the tool together before you try it out on your own.

## **Attendance at Seminar Meetings and GSFR Research Symposium Events**

Seminars are much more fulfilling for everyone when you and your colleagues read all of the material, think about it, and come to class prepared to enter a meaningful discussion. The participatory, seminar format of this course is based in methodologies for teaching and learning which conceptualize the classroom as a community. Participation in any community is dependent upon presence, and therefore attendance is mandatory. This is especially important given that our course meets only once per week. If you are going to be absent, I expect to hear from you in advance. During the final week of classes, **students will submit via Avenue completed self-assessment forms** describing and evaluating their own participation. As your instructor, I will be strongly guided by self-assessed grades, although I reserve the right to make changes as needed. Minimum expectations include: regular attendance, informed oral contribution to class discussion, respectful listening, and engaging with others' comments to further our shared understanding of course materials and themes.

Please note, as well, that public events and seminars in the GSFR Research Symposium are also part of this class. You are expected to attend the events (as outlined in this syllabus) unless they conflict with your TA responsibilities or other classes. Consistent failure to attend these events will lead to a failing grade for participation in this class.

## **Assessment of Papers**

Your written work will be graded on analytical and factual content, and on the quality of your written expression. The production of clear, well-organized prose is an essential skill.

You are welcome to meet with me to discuss improving your writing, but I also encourage you to use other resources on campus available through the Student Success Centre:  
<http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-skills.html>

**You might also explore the online tool Grammarly, which will point out errors in your prose and suggest corrections. You can access a free version of Grammarly at <https://www.grammarly.com/>. There is also a premium version with more features. Mac students can get a 50% discount for subscriptions. Details, and more help with writing at: <https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-support/academicsupport/#academicWriting> (click on Grammarly discount)**

You are welcome to use the pronouns of your choice.

You must use a recognized academic citation style and apply it consistently and correctly throughout your work.

You are free to use the citation style with which you are most comfortable. Our library catalogue will link you to online versions of most style guides.

## **Late Penalties**

Assignments are due (posted to a dropbox on Avenue) at 12:00 midnight. Late penalties of 5% per day apply for every day an assignment is late.

## **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.

We 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.

## **Special Needs**

If you have special needs regarding note taking, recording lectures, or completing assignments you should inform me by the end of the second week of classes. If you have an accommodation agreement through the Student Wellness Center (<http://wellness.mcmaster.ca>) or Student Accessibility Services (<http://sas.mcmaster.ca>), please bring it to me (or inform me that it is coming) by the second week of classes. I want to help you, but I have to know what you need.

*If for any reason you do not wish to contact SAS regarding accommodations, please consider informing me so we can discuss possible options together.*

## **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observations (RISO)**

If you anticipate the need for an academic accommodation (you must miss a class or an assignment) because of Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observation, you must visit your faculty office (Humanities, Social Sciences, Science, etc.) and ask for a R.I.S.O form. After you get a response to this form from your faculty office, you contact your instructor(s). The official policy says that you must ask for the form within ten days of the beginning of the term, but if

you miss this deadline, please speak with me directly. In a small class, we can handle this less formally in most cases.

## **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.

**Violations of Academic Integrity on the part of graduate students will result, without exception, in a formal charge of academic dishonesty and a hearing before the Faculty of Graduate Studies adjudicator for academic dishonesty.**

If you are unsure about the definition of plagiarism and how it might apply to your work, speak to me before you hand in an assignment. Everyone has questions, and there is no harm in asking them. There is harm in submitting work that includes plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty

## **Modifications to Course Outline**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email (Avenue email for this course) and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

## Faculty of Humanities Email Policy

It is the policy of the Faculty of Humanities that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University email account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. Instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

## Reading and Seminar Schedule

*Please note that we connect this class with other events in the GSFR programme, and we also try to incorporate both visiting speakers and our GSFR faculty in the class. Thus, at certain points in the class 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.*

### Monday, September 11: What is Feminist Research? / Course Overview

Brayton, Jennifer, Michelle Oliver and Wendy Robbins. "Introduction to Feminist Research." Policy, Action, Research – List. Undated. Accessed August 15, 2017.  
<http://www2.unb.ca/parl/research.htm>

Harding, Sandra. "Is There a Feminist Method?" In *Feminism and Methodology*, ed. Sandra Harding, 1-14. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. [A2L – Content – Reading]

Tallbear, Kim. "Standing With and Speaking as Faith: A Feminist-Indigenous Approach to Inquiry," In *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, Ed. Chris Anderson and Jean O'Brien. Abingdon: Routledge University Press, 2017. [A2L – Content – Reading] \*\* Still pending as of Sept. 8th

### Monday, September 18: Guest Seminar Leader, Rinaldo Walcott

<http://www.wgsi.utoronto.ca/person/rinaldo-walcott>

*Students are expected to attend seminar at our regular time and to attend Rinaldo Walcott's public lecture later in the afternoon. You are only excused from the public lecture if it conflicts with another class or your TA responsibilities.*

Walcott, Rinaldo. *Queer Returns: Essays on Multiculturalism, Diaspora and Black Studies*. London: Insomniac Press, 2016. Available for Purchase at Bryan Prince Booksellers. Chapters as Assigned.

### Monday, October 2: Who are we as Feminist Researchers and Pedagogues?

Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2017. Available for Purchase at Bryan Prince Booksellers. We will read the entire book.

### **Monday, October 16: How Do We Know? Feminist/Decolonial/Queer Questions about Knowledge Production**

Smith, Linda Tuhiwā. "Research Through Imperial Eyes." In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books, 2012. [A2L – Content – Reading]

Purvis, Jennifer. "Queer." In *Rethinking Women's and Gender Studies*, ed. Catherine Orr, Ann Braithwaite, and Diane Lichtenstein, 189-205. New York: Routledge, 2012. [A2L – Content – Reading]

Gordon, Avery. "her shape and his hand." In *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, 3-31. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. [Library Catalogue – ebook - read online or download]

\*\*\* Don't leave this to the last minute; there are limits on simultaneous borrowers and if this is the first time you use e-books from our library and you want to work offline, you will need to download Adobe Reader. You can then download the book and/or print. Follow the prompts given to you by the library system and then Adobe Reader. You will need your library barcode.

### **Monday, October 23: Written Assignment #1 Writing Biography Due: Upload to Avenue Dropbox**

### **Monday, October 30<sup>th</sup>: Feminist Critiques of Objectivity and Experience**

Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 2 (1988): 575-599. [E-journal Article]

Scott, Joan. "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 773-797.

Briggs, Laura. "Epilogue: Ghosts, Cyborgs and Why Puerto Rico is the Most Important Place in the World." In *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and US Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. Irvine: University of California Press, 2002.

### **Monday, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>: Written Assignment #2 (Critical Reading) Due: Upload to Avenue to Learn**

### **Monday, Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>: Intersectionality as/in Feminist Research**

Hill Collins, Patricia. "Black Feminist Epistemology." In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, 251-272. New York: Routledge, 2000. [Avenue – Content – Reading]

Paur, Jasbir. "I'd Rather Be A Cyborg than a Goddess: Becoming Intersectional in Assemblage Theory." *philoSOPHIA* 2, no. 1 (2012): 49-66. [E-Journal Article Note: The capitalization is key to finding the right journal]

May, Vivian. "Intersectionality." In *Rethinking Women's and Gender Studies*, ed. Catherine Orr, Ann Braithewaite, and Diane Lichtenstein, pp.155-172. New York: Routledge, 2012. [A2L – Content – Reading]

Crenshaw Williams, Kimberle. "Keynote at WOW, March 14, 2106."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DW4HLgYPIA> (30 min)

\*\*\*see especially section on structures and identities (this section excerpted at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPtz8TiATJY>)

**Week of Nov. 13-17: Campus Visit of Anahid Kassabian** (<http://figureground.org/interview-with-anahid-kassabian/>)

*Students are expected to attend seminar at our regular time and to attend one of the public events from Anahid Kassabian's campus visit. You are only excused from the public lecture if it conflicts with another class or your TA responsibilities. It is \*\*possible\*\* that our seminar meeting may be changed to a seminar with Kassabian.*

### **Monday, Nov. 27th: Feminist Research Ethics**

Halse, Christine and Anne Honey. "Unravelling Ethics: Illuminating the Moral Dilemmas of Research Ethics." *Signs* 30, No. 4 (2005): 2141-2162. [E-Journal Article]

Janovicek, Nancy. "Oral History and Ethical Practice after TCPS 2." In *The Canadian Oral History Reader*, 73-97. Ed. Llewellyn, Kristina, Alexander Freund and Nolan Reilly. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015. [Avenue – Content – Reading]

CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC. *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects*. December 2010.

[http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS\\_2\\_FINAL\\_Web.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS_2_FINAL_Web.pdf)

(Read Introduction and Chapter One; review at least one other chapter of your choosing)

Review Sample MREB application posted on Avenue [A2L – Content – Reading]

**Monday, December 4: Written Assignment #3 (MREB Application) Due – Upload to Avenue to Learn**

## Term II

### **Thursday, January 11: Feminist Approaches to Ethnography/Oral History/Interviews**

For this class, we will work with an extended debate around the possibilities and problems for feminist ethnology and interviewing published in a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* in August 2013. Everyone will read the Introduction to the debate, the Feature Article and at least one of the commentaries. The easiest way to access this material will be to look up the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* in the library under e-journals, pick a subscription bundle that includes 2013, and then navigate to the table of contents for vol. 42, no. 2 (August 2013)

### **Week of January 15-19: Visit of Dylan Robinson to McMaster**

(<http://www.queensu.ca/lcu/people/faculty/dylan-robinson>)

*Students are expected to attend one of the public events from Dylan Robinson's campus visit. You are only excused from the public lecture if it conflicts with another class or your TA responsibilities. It is \*\*possible\*\* that our seminar meetings may be changed to incorporate a seminar with Robinson.*

### **Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>: Discussion & Workshopping of IRP topics / Overview of IRP proposal process**

*Come with a one paragraph articulation of your idea for your IRP plus a preliminary bibliography*

### **Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>: Written Assignment #4 (Interview) Due: Upload to Avenue**

### **Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup>: Feminist Collaboration**

Singley, Carol J. and Elizabeth Sweeney. "In League With Each Other: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Collaboration." In *Common Ground: Feminist Collaboration in the Academy*. Ed. Elizabeth Peck and Joanne Mink. SUNY Press, 1997. [A2L – Content – Reading]

Benson, Koni and Richa Nagar. "Collaboration as Resistance? Reconsidering the Process, Products, and Possibilities of Feminist Oral History and Ethnography." *Gender, Place and Culture* 13, no. 5 (October 2006): 581-92. [E-Journal Article]

Christian, Dorothy and Victoria Freeman. "The History of a Friendship, or Some Thoughts on Becoming Allies." In *Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Relationships*. Ed. Lynne Davis. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010. [A2L – Content – Reading]

### **Week of February 26 - March 2<sup>nd</sup>: Two Visitors to Campus**

### **Thursday, March 1: Seminar with Alexis Shotwell**

Reading tba

### **Thursday, March 1: Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz**

*Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz is visiting campus as the guest of the Wilson Centre for Canadian History in a Global Context the Indigenous Studies Programme. It is STRONGLY recommended that students attend the public lecture on Thursday afternoon.*

### **Friday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>: Public Lecture Alexis Shotwell**

*Students are required to attend the public lecture in Alexis Shotwell's visit. You are only excused from the public lecture if it conflicts with another class or your TA responsibilities..*

### **Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>: Written Assignment #5 (Collaborative Writing) Due – Upload to Avenue Dropbox**

### **Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>: Activist Scholarship**

Orr, Catherine. "Activism." In *Rethinking Women's and Gender Studies*, 85-101. Eds. Catherine M. Orr, Ann Braithwaite, and Diane Lichtenstein. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Sudbury, Julia and Margo Okazawa-Rey. "Introduction: Activist Scholarship and the Neoliberal University after 9/11." In *Activist Scholarship: Antiracism, Feminism, and Social Change*, 1-14. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2009: 1-14. [A2L – Content – Reading]

Si Transken. "Feminist Research/ers, Longitudinal Multilocationality, Money: How Many Ways Can This Hurt?" In *Corridor Talk: Canadian Feminist Scholars Share Stories of Research Partnerships*, 194-220. Ed. Rachel Berman. Toronto: Inanna Publications, 2014. [A2L – Content – Reading]

### **Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup>: Applying All We've Learned: Methods/Ethics/Activisms**

Dean, Amber. *Remembering Vancouver's Disappeared Women: Settler Colonialism and the Difficulty of Inheritance*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015.

### **Thursday, April 6: Final Presentations**

## **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/>
- 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](http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/email_accounts/macid.html) and follow the online instructions.

### **Step Three: Choose GSFR 701 under "All Your Courses"**

- From your personalized course listings, click on GSFR 701 under 2017 Fall (T1). You are now inside the Avenue site for our course! The site should be active as of Monday, Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **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"