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Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00am – 12:00pm or by appointment.

Course Description:

Feminist research has, since its beginnings in the academy, concerned itself with ways in which feminists centered in academic institutions could work with feminists in community organizations to promote social justice through considered combinations of theoretical analysis and practical action. In recent years, the broader university community has started to recognize the value of this kind of engaged scholarship and the idea of community-engaged learning is now being institutionalized in many Canadian universities, including McMaster. In this course we will explore the ways feminist researchers concerned with social justice have conceptualized and carried out community-engaged research as a process of knowledge exchange between university researchers and community-based organizations working for social justice.

The idea of knowledge exchange is central to feminist approaches to community engaged learning, which emphasize both the situated nature of knowledge and the importance of building partnerships that allow university-centered and community-centered knowledge to interact in ways that increase our abilities to intervene in struggles for social justice. This course will allow students to explore the challenges and possibilities of these kind of knowledge exchange partnerships through a combination of theoretical readings, analytic reflection and practical experience doing research in support of local organizations working on social justice issues.

Course Objectives:

Goals for this course:

1. To assist students in understanding feminist approaches to building knowledge exchange initiatives with community organizations
2. To provide opportunities to think together about the nature of situated knowledge and the particular ways in which university researchers and community organizations develop and deploy knowledge
3. To introduce students to a variety of advocates/activists in the local community and to create opportunities to learn about local approaches to knowledge-building, activism and advocacy from them.

4. To provide experiential and collaborative learning opportunities that will allow students to begin to develop practical skills in community-based research, advocacy and activism in community settings and to reflect on these skills in conjunction with their community mentors and instructor.
5. To provide a range of written and oral assignments that will help students develop skills in communication and in using theory to guide critical reflection on their own practices.

In this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate fluency with published research on community engagement and activism, particularly through the lens of feminist, women's and gender studies.
2. Summarize, analyze, and synthesize theoretical texts.
3. Engage in critical discussion of key texts in seminar discussion and through written work.
4. Contribute to direction and quality of discussion in seminar and learning team meetings.
5. Develop and exercise skills in presenting ideas orally.
6. Develop and exercise skills in critical approaches to community engagement, including advocacy/activism and feminist community-building.
7. Explore and establish a code of ethics for engaging in community-based learning.
8. Undertake a CE project under the supervision of a community-based mentor.
9. Help to mentor fellow students, particularly members of the learning team, by fostering a supportive and engaged environment for experiential learning.
10. Practice the integration of theory with practice through essays that involve critical self-reflection.
11. Work collaboratively to develop a proposal for a Social Justice Intervention (SJI) with learning teams, and present that proposal orally for feedback from a panel of community-based experts.

Required Texts:

All required texts will be available via links on Avenue and/or on reserve at the library. The schedule of readings will also appear on the Content page of the course Avenue site.

A Note About Class Format:

This course will be structured differently than what you have come to expect from traditional graduate seminars. The course will be taught by a faculty member along with mentors who have a range of advocacy/activist experience in feminist or other social justice struggles, movements, and/or non-profit organizations in the wider Hamilton community. Students will be placed in learning teams and these groups will form the base for students' Community Engagement Projects (CE Projects) and Social Justice Intervention (SJI) Proposal Presentations.

Our initial meeting will give us a chance to get to know one another, discuss course requirements, and learn more about the community projects students will work on over the

course of the year. We will then spend five weeks reading, discussing, and critically reflecting on key texts that convey critical perspectives on university-community engagement and address community-based praxis learning as understood by feminist reseach. During this time you will also hear about the CE Projects that are available in this course and meet the mentors who will supervise these projects, and you will develop outlines for the CE projects you will undertake.

The following weeks will be a mixture of seminar discussion and student/mentor scheduled independent meetings and learning. **You are expected to meet with your learning group each week and with your mentor approximately once every two weeks from Oct. 4 to Feb. 27.** These meetings are to be scheduled independently at a time that works for the mentor and the learning team. To accommodate these meetings and the research you will do, our classes will generally meet for only 2 hrs/wk as opposed to the usual three, allowing additional time to be dedicated to learning team and mentor meetings throughout the year. In the Winter term, class will only meet every two weeks, in order to give you more time to complete your projects. The schedule and readings for the Winter term 2 will be announced in December, after we have had time to see how projects are developing and what readings we might want to consider together.

NOTE: In addition to team meetings, each student is expected to spend at least 70 hours over the course of the year on her or his CE Project (approx. 5 hours per week for the 14 week period from Monday Oct. 6 to Friday Feb. 27, although these hours will likely be dispersed differently across weeks depending on the nature of the project).

After the CE Projects wrap up at the end of February, we will reconvene for some additional seminar discussion about the challenges of feminist activism and alliance-building from within the University. At this point students will embark on the planning process for their SJI Proposals.

There will be several weeks during the term when we will forego our regularly-scheduled class meetings in the interests of allowing additional time for CE Projects and SJI Proposal development – students are encouraged to regularly consult the tentative schedule below and our 'Avenue' course site for updates to this schedule as the course proceeds.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Seminar Participation Term 1 – 5%

Seminar Participation Term 2 – 5%

Community Engagement Project Learning Team Participation – 10%

Community Engagement Project Agreement (to be written in consultation with Mentor) – 10%
- Due Friday Oct. 21

Reflection Papers Linking Theory and Practice (6 @ 750 words each) – 30%
- Oct. 11, Nov. 18, Dec. 9
- Feb. 13, Mar. 9, Mar. 30

Social Justice Intervention Proposal Presentation – 15%

- April 6th, Presentation to class and invited guests

Critical Reflection Paper (3,000-3,200 words) – 25%

- Due: April 13

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:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- 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. 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 the 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 us during office hours, or review the online tips and help available by visiting 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 707 under "My Courses"

- From your personalized course listings, click on GSFR 707. 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

Important Notes

Email Communication 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 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.

Assignments:

(1) Please submit all written assignments to the Avenue Dropbox by the date/time specified in the relevant Avenue handout.
 (2) Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, 7 days per week.
(3) Please keep copies of and preparation notes for all assignments, including research notes. You may be required to hand in these notes; failure to do so may result in loss of credit for the assignment.

Evaluations:

Students will be requested to complete a course evaluation near the end of term.

Tentative Schedule for Fall Term

(Readings may change as course develops, please consult Avenue regularly)

Sept 13	**Introductions** • Course Overview • Discussion of idea of knowledge exchange and different ways of knowing • What is interesting about putting knowledge into action ?
Sept 20	**Approaches to Community Engagement** • Putnam, Linda L. and Sarah Dempsey. "The Five Faces Of Engaged Scholarship: Implications For Feminist Research." *Women & Language* 38.1 (2015): 11-21 • Shauna Butterwick. "Travels with Feminist Community-Based Research: Reflections on Social Location, Class Relations, and Negotiating Reciprocity." in Creese, Gillian Laura, and Wendy Mae Frisby (eds). *Feminist Community Research: Case Studies and Methodologies*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011. 58-74

Sept 27	**Partnership Agreements** • Mandell, Nancy and Fiona Whittington-Walsh. "Building Bridges Across Sectors. A Resources to Help Create Community and Academic Partnerships." In Berman, Rachel. *Corridor Talk: Canadian Feminist Scholars Share Stories of Research Partnerships*. Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc., 2014. 124-140.
Oct 4	**Meeting with Mentors (during class time, location TBA)** • Overview of organizations/CE projects
Oct 11	**Mid-Session Break (no classes)** • Work through details of proposed project agreement with partners. • *1st Reflection Paper Due*
Oct 18	**Rethinking the Uses of Knowledge** • Smith, Dorothy E. ""Women's Experience as Radical Critique of Sociology." *Conceptual Practices of Power*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1990. • Fraser, Nancy. "Feminism, Capitalism, and the Cunning of History." *New Left Review* 56 (2009): 97-117. • *Oct. 21 Community Engagement Project Agreement Due*
Oct 25	**Individual Meetings with Project Groups** • Review of project proposals
Nov 1	**Visit with local activist/advocates**
Nov 8	**Challenges facing Non-Profits: State/Funder Limits on 'Political' Activity** • Andrea Smith, "Introduction: *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*" • Heather Yundt, "The Politics of Advocacy: Are Charities Apathetic or Afraid?"
Nov 15	**Visit with local activist/advocates**

	- *Nov. 18th Reflection Paper Due*
Nov 22	**Encountering "Strangers" through Community Engagement: Possibilities for (More) Ethical Engagements Across Difference?** - Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (Intro, Chapter 1) - Zembylas M (2012) "Pedagogies of strategic empathy: navigating through the emotional complexities of anti-racism in higher education" *Teaching in Higher Education*, 17.2: 113-125.
Nov. 29	**Class check-in, informal discussion of CE project progress and work remaining**
Dec. 6	**Continue Work on Project. No class.** - *Dec. 9th Reflection Paper Due*