

**Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality 1300: Approaches to Research and Writing in WGS
Harvard College/GSAS: 4429
Fall 2011-2012**

Professor Sarah S. Richardson

Office hours: M., 10-12, Boylston Hall G-26, online sign-up through link on iSites
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Class meeting time: M., 2-5, Sever Hall 111 (“section” is from 4:10-5:00 pm during this time slot)

Course website: <http://isites.harvard.edu/k79939>

The objective of this course is twofold: First, the course will provide a feminist analysis of methods and methodologies as intellectual frameworks within the social sciences, sciences, and humanities. We will focus on how feminist scholars challenge dominant theories of knowledge, engage feminist epistemologies, and employ feminist methodologies. Second, the course will provide a practicum in feminist research methods, as students work on a collaborative research project over the course of the semester. Working individually on a project related to students' interests and disciplinary background, and collectively to produce the final product, students will write a multidisciplinary research proposal arguing for the importance of bringing feminist methods and questions to a novel research area. Regular workshops will provide training in library research, presentation skills, and planning for future educational and career goals.

Required texts

Alison Jagger's *Just Methods*, available at the Harvard Coop and on reserve at Lamont. Additional required readings are posted on the course website.

Requirements and grade value

Class participation, weekly discussion forum postings on class readings, and leading class discussion	25%
Personal statement of how feminist methodologies inform your own research, writing, and reading in the field of your choice, 5-7 pp. draft and 8-10 pp. final	25%
Annotated bibliography (minimum 30 entries)	10%
PowerPoint presentation on your research project in progress and participation in workshopping research projects	10%
Draft of white paper contribution, 10 pp.	5%
Final white paper, including your individual contribution of 15 pp.	25%

Class Schedule

	Class	Section	Important Deadlines
Aug. 31	<p>Course overview: What is a feminist methodology?</p> <p>Class research project: Introduction</p> <p><i>Professor available for individual meetings</i></p>	<i>No section this week</i>	<i>No class or section next week; Sign-ups for class discussion presentations on course site by Friday, Sept. 9, 5 pm</i>
Sept. 12	<p>The Humanities, Social Sciences, and Economics</p> <p>Read: <i>Just Methods</i>, pp. 1-104</p>	<p>Discussion: Starting a large research project</p> <p>Read: articles posted in iSites folder for this date</p>	
Sept. 19	<p>Human Biology and the Health Sciences</p> <p>Read: <i>Just Methods</i>, pp. 105-190</p>	<p>Discussion of introductory readings on class research topic</p> <p>Read: articles posted in iSites folder for this date</p>	
Sept. 26	<p>Feminist Studies</p> <p>Read: <i>Just Methods</i>, pp. 192-228</p>	<p>Discussion of feminist readings on class topic</p> <p>Read: articles posted in iSites folder for this date</p>	Sign-ups for meeting with professor (in class)
Oct. 3	<p>Feminist Naturalism</p> <p>Read: <i>Just Methods</i>, pp. 229-267</p>	<p>Workshop: Mapping the Research Field and Defining Research Questions</p> <p>Read: articles posted in iSites folder for this date</p>	Sign-ups for research topic (in section); <i>No class or section next week; Friday, Oct. 14: 5-7 pp. draft of personal statement due (5 pm, dropbox)</i>
Oct. 17	<p>Feminist Empiricism</p> <p>Read: <i>Just Methods</i>, pp. 268-302</p>	Workshop: Reference Management Software	

		At Library	
Oct. 24	Feminist Standpoint Theory Read: <i>Just Methods</i> , pp. 303-341	Workshop: Research Databases <i>Pam Katz and Fred Burchsted, WGS and History of Science Research Librarians, Widener Library</i> At Library	
Oct. 31	Feminist Postmodernism Read: <i>Just Methods</i> , pp. 342-373	Workshop: Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods in WGS <i>Panel of Harvard WGS PhD Students, including: Sandy Plácido (American Studies), Chiaki Nishijima (Social Anthropology)</i>	Sign-ups for research presentations (in class); Friday, Nov. 5: annotated bibliography due (5 pm, by email)
Nov. 7	Objectivity and Validation Read: <i>Just Methods</i> , pp. 374-413	Workshop: Conducting interviews <i>Professor Afsaneh Najmabadi</i> Read: Review materials in iSites folder for this date	
Nov. 14	Democratizing Research Read: <i>Just Methods</i> , pp. 414-456	Workshop: Designing Effective Powerpoint Presentations & Visuals <i>Marlon Kuzmick, Bok Center for Teaching and Learning</i> Read: Review materials in iSites folder for this date	
Nov. 21	Feminist Ethics in Research Read: <i>Just Methods</i> , pp. 457-495 <i>Extra Credit: Complete online CITI training and certificate (approx. 1 hr) and send documentation to professor by end of this</i>	Research presentations	Friday, Nov. 26: 10 pp. draft of section of white paper due (5 pm, by email)

	<p><i>week:</i> http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~research/hum_s ub/index.html#training</p>		
Nov. 28	<p>Closing discussion</p> <p>Research presentations</p> <p>Discussion of draft white paper and final planning session</p> <p>Read: Draft version white paper. Bring comments.</p>	<p>Workshop: Senior Thesis, Graduate School, and Careers</p> <p><i>Panel: Caroline Light, Linda Schlossberg, Karen Flood, Shauna Shames (WGS alum)</i></p>	<p>Friday, Dec. 3: final version of personal statement due (5 pm, by email)</p> <p>Monday, Dec. 12: Final white paper due (5 pm, by email)</p>

Course Policies

Course website:

The website is a primary tool for this course and will contain the discussion forum and many required readings. Please check the site frequently. Up-to-date syllabus, readings, assignments, handouts, web links, and course announcements will be posted on the course website.

Class announcements:

Assignments, additional readings, schedule changes, and other announcements will be posted on the course website. Special announcements will be sent to your Harvard email account. You are responsible for checking the course website and your Harvard email regularly.

Class attendance:

This is a small discussion-based course that requires your on-time attendance and full participation. More than two absences or late arrivals *for any reason* may lead to dismissal from the course.

Assignments and feedback:

Student work should be submitted in Word format in the Dropbox on the course iSite. The professor will provide feedback using the Word mark-up tool.

Late assignment policy:

Late assignments will incur a 10% penalty per day. If an assignment is due at 5 pm, and you turn it in at 5:30 pm, the highest grade that you can receive is a 90. The professor reserves the right not to provide written feedback on late work. Extensions are granted only with advance notice and usually only in cases of illness.

Office hours:

Please visit me regularly in office hours during the semester. Use the online tool on iSites to sign up for a meeting time. If you are unable to attend the scheduled office hours, email me or speak to me in class to set up a time to meet. You are also welcome to drop by my office any time -- if the door is open, I am happy to see you!

Email:

Please keep email correspondence to a minimum, and if you email me, keep it brief and professional. It is best to visit me in office hours if you have detailed questions about the assignments or readings.

Technology policy:

If a laptop or similar technology will benefit you in the classroom and you can use it without being disruptive, you are welcome to use it. Please use your judgment. Consider the positives and negatives for you and your learning style. Attend carefully to your participation in the class discussion. I recommend disconnecting your wifi. Please disable any sounds. The class expects the professor to step in if technology use becomes disruptive.

Statement on disabilities:

If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester regarding reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course.

Statement on academic honesty:

Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, facilitating dishonesty) is prohibited and will lead to dismissal from the course and referral to Harvard disciplinary procedures.

Guidelines for Course Requirements

Participation

This is a student-centered seminar in which participation and intensive discussion is essential. Class participation is a central element of this course and will frame my evaluation of your academic performance.

Requirements:

- Consistent on-time attendance
- Completion of assignments by due date - requests for extensions and late assignments are *not* looked upon well
- Bring course readings and notes to class and show evidence of deep reading, preparation, and critical thinking
- Participate vigorously, constructively, and attentively in class discussion
- Generous and invested contributions to course discussion board
- Meet with professor in office hours

Discussion board postings

Due: 12 noon the day of class

Our class discussion board will permit the continuation of discussion outside of class and provide an opportunity for you to formulate questions and responses to the readings prior to entering the classroom. These brief written reading responses will also help you identify topics, themes, questions, and material for your short essay and final project.

Requirements:

- The professor will post a prompt by the Friday before each class.
- 300-500 words (about two paragraphs)
- Posting must reference readings and evidence critical, original engagement with the texts

- You may skip 1 post with no consequences for your grade
- You are encouraged to be active in the discussion forum and respond to others' posts. These additional postings need not conform to length/content requirements of the required posts.

Grading:

- Post meets requirements: on time, correct length, addresses the prompt giving evidence of engagement with the texts: *Full credit*
- Post is missing one of the above: *Half credit*
- Post falls short on all of the above or is missing: *No credit*

Leading class discussion

You will be asked to lead class discussion up to 3 times over the course of the semester (depending upon enrollment). Please come prepared with a one-page handout on the reading(s) - this may include an outline, a list of discussion questions, and/or a list of key terms or concepts with definitions. Kick off discussion by speaking informally for 3-5 minutes and be prepared to answer questions from the professor and the class.

Personal statement

Over the course of the semester, you will develop a personal statement of how feminist methods and methodologies inform your own research, writing, and reading in the field of your choice and/or a specific research project that you are working on. You should draw on the course readings as well as readings from other courses and your own research. Write in the first person. Describe how you were introduced to feminist methods and why you have chosen to pursue specialization in WGS. State why, in your view, feminist approaches are important in the production of knowledge. Then, focusing on a specific discipline, field, or research question, give specific examples of how feminist approaches change (relative to conventional or mainstream scholarship) the questions asked, research methods selected, interpretation of evidence or research material, descriptive language and narrative form used in writing up results, ethical framework for research, and knowledge outcomes in the field or research area you choose to discuss. Locate yourself within feminist debates over methodology and describe how you resolve these debates for yourself, and address anticipated criticisms of your methodologies. Cite any materials that you consult. You will submit a 5-7 pp. draft in mid October. The professor will provide feedback. At the conclusion of the semester, you will turn in an 8-10 pp. final version of your personal statement of methodology.

White paper

The research practicum portion of this class is worth 50% of your grade. As a group, we will map the existing streams of literature on the announced topic and frame new research questions grounded in feminist methodology. We will engage disciplinary approaches from the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, as well as interdisciplinary approaches. Students, working both individually and collaboratively, will collectively create an annotated bibliography of the relevant literature and co-author a white paper summarizing the major issues, preliminary findings, and potential future directions for feminist research on the announced topic. This multidisciplinary research proposal will argue for the importance of bringing feminist methods and questions to a novel research area. ***The final document may be used for public education and advocacy, course development, grant proposals, and continued research.***

Your contribution to the white paper

You will contribute to the white paper in three ways: (1) Writing a 15 pp. "chapter" of the white paper on a topic of your choosing; (2) Active participation in the lab meeting discussions in which we develop the overall concept and direction for the research project and give peer feedback on work in progress; (3) Co-authoring with the group a 7-10-page introduction to the final white paper and helping to produce the final white paper in terms of formatting and overall editing.

Early in the course, we will define the major research questions in our topic area and each student will select one as his or her contribution to the white paper. You should select a topic that interests you and one that will help you develop proficiency in the field, discipline, or methods that will be most useful to you in the future.

Annotated bibliography

The first step in our group research project will be for each student to produce an annotated bibliography relevant to the individual research question that he or she has taken on. You will receive training in how to use the reference management tool RefWorks. We will use a shared RefWorks account to manage our annotated bibliographies and there will be an in-class workshop on importing, storing, editing, and exporting references in RefWorks. You should find a large number of references relevant to your research question. Then pick the 30 most relevant references and provide a 1-3 sentence annotation capturing the central contribution of the reading and its relevance to your research question.

PowerPoint presentation

We will spend time in class workshopping your ongoing research. Each student will give one PowerPoint presentation on his or her research in progress, followed by questions and discussion.

Requirements:

- Email your PowerPoint file to the professor by 12 noon the day of your presentation
- Use images, multimedia, and textual analysis to share your research and encourage discussion
- Maximum of 15 minutes (no more than 10 slides)
- Polished and rehearsed presentation

Evaluation of your presentation will be based on the following elements:

- *Preparation*: Were you prepared? Is it obvious that you thought carefully about organization and use of the technology and tried to get help if you needed it?
- *Clarity*: Was your presentation clear? Did you attempt to simplify complex concepts? Was your presentation organized and well thought-out?
- *Content*: Did we learn from your presentation? Was the material presented well-researched, rich, and novel to your audience?
- *Discussion*: Did your presentation facilitate discussion? How did you answer questions from the audience, if any?
- *Oral communication and presentation style*: Did you speak loud enough? Slow enough? Clear enough? Did you have good eye contact with your audience? Were you responsive to the audience? Was your presentation engaging and interesting?
- *Effective use of PowerPoint technology*: Did the visual presentation enhance and enliven your talk? Did you find novel and relevant images and multimedia?

Collaborative production of the final white paper

Once each student has completed his or her 15-page section of the white paper, the class will workshop and edit the final document and plan and coauthor a brief introduction of approximately 7-10 pages. Some of this work will happen in class, and some will happen in meetings outside of class at your own prerogative. As a group, you will work together to prepare the final white paper, with a title page, table of contents, introduction, individual chapters, references, images, and notes, to be submitted to the professor by email on Dec. 9 at 5 pm.

Writing guidelines:

- Advance an original argument or analysis using only your own ideas
- State your thesis clearly
- Use specific examples, quotations, and details to support your argument
- Include at least 2, but no more than 5, images or figures in your white paper section.
- Clean grammar and spelling

Formatting guidelines:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Introduction of 7-10 pages double-spaced
- Each chapter should start with a 1-paragraph abstract
- Each chapter should be 15 pages of main text double-spaced *excluding abstract, references, and endnotes*
- All figures and images should be numbered and of good quality, with descriptive captions and full citations
- Appendices may be added for supplementary material, glossaries, images, or other relevant material; this does not count towards the 15-page individual contribution but will be considered favorably
- Consistent formatting throughout the final white paper; style guidelines to be decided upon by the group
- In-text citations and bibliography; complete citations in a consistent, recognized academic citation style decided upon by the group
- MS Word .doc or .docx format
- All text double-spaced
- 12 pt Times New Roman font
- 1 inch margins

Evaluation:

- 80% of your grade for the white paper will be based upon your individual written contribution.
- 20% of your grade for the white paper will be based upon (1) your individual performance in the collaborative effort, as observed by the professor, and (2) the quality of the collective final product. The final white paper should be a coherent, polished team product.