WST 4001
Feminist Research Methods

Instructor Information
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Prerequisites/Requirements
This three-hour course is restricted to Women’s and Gender Studies majors. Non-majors may enroll with permission of the instructor. Students must have completed WST 3015 with at least a “C-” as a prerequisite. This course is not a Gordon Rule course nor does it fulfill any University-wide requirements. It is a required course for WGS majors.

Undergraduate Catalog Course Description
The survey, design, and practice of qualitative and quantitative methods in feminist research.

Extended Course Description
What is feminist research? What distinguishes it from other forms of research, in terms of both the process of envisioning and conducting research and in terms of the products of the research endeavor? Can the use of feminist research, both qualitative and quantitative, improve our understanding of women and gender and create the potential to improve and strengthen women’s lives?

In this course we consider these questions as students learn to interpret and conduct feminist scholarship. We begin by contrasting traditional scientific methodologies and epistemologies, or ways of conceiving of knowledge, with feminist approaches to research. Then, using both qualitative and quantitative feminist methodologies, students will participate in feminist research by gathering, analyzing and presenting their own scholarship. We conclude by discussing the relevance of feminist research in efforts to improve the status of women around the world.

Course Objectives
This course will
1. compare traditional and feminist epistemologies and methodologies
2. survey the limitations and advantages of feminist methodologies
3. feature the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data
4. engage principles and practices of effective group methods
5. engage principles and practices of effective public presentations

Student Outcomes:
By the end of the semester students will be able to:
1. differentiate between traditional and feminist epistemologies and methodologies;
2. analyze the limitations and advantages of feminist and non-feminist methodologies;
3. gather and analyze real-world data using feminist methodologies;
4. construct conclusions and recommendations from research they have conducted;
5. work effectively in groups to conduct and publicly present feminist scholarship.
Required Texts


Major Course Topics
1. Introduction to Feminist Research
2. Critiques of Science
3. Standpoint Practice
4. Discourse analysis
5. Interviewing
6. Ethnography
7. Textual Analysis
8. Surveys
9. Mixed methods

Assignments

**Midterm Essay Exam.** 100 points. Scheduled for Week 5, the in-class essay exam covers Chapters 1-4 of the Hesse-Biber & Leavy text.

**Chapter Quizzes.** 105 points. Quizzes begin in Week 7 and cover material in each assigned chapter. Each Quiz is worth 15 points. The quizzes will be a combination of objective and subjective questions.

**Group Research Project Paper and Presentation.** 200 points. Due Week 14. The final project for the class is a group research paper and presentation on the social and cultural world of a sample of women (or men) on the USF campus. For instance, our class might decide to collectively study the experiences and lives of women athletes, Muslim women, fraternity members, STEM women faculty/students, feminist activists, etc. The focus of our research energies will be negotiated on Week 6.

To learn about this population, each group will be using one of the methodologies learned in the class to conduct independent but related research. At the end of the semester, groups will work with each other to develop integrated conclusions and recommendations that are informed by all group results and that will demonstrate the research's relevance to the population being studied. Thus, the outcome for the class will be a comprehensive situational analysis (Clarke 2005) of some population at USF. One grade will be given for each group project; group members will be held equally accountable for their group's project unless there is significant evidence that group members did not equitably contribute to the group. More information about the Group Research Project will be distributed in class.

*Note: Involvement in group activities will be closely monitored and both instructor and peer-evaluated. Being a “free rider” is not only anti-feminist, it is also unethical. Plus, it's more fun to actually be a researcher!*

**Class Participation.** 50 points. Includes: attendance, participation in class discussion (50%), completion of assigned in-class activities (20%) and weekly mini-writing assignments (30%). The writing assignments are brief, 3-minute papers either written during class or before/after class to be shared on the class Discussion Board. Topics for these writing assignments will be set at least one week in advance.
Note: Attendance is not graded, per se. Instead, all students who have fewer than two absences will be evaluated on the other criteria to identify their Class Participation credit. More than two absences without university-approved excuses will result in 0 class participation points.

Course Policies

1. **Grades:** Final grades are determined by combining all points earned, dividing this number by 450, and referring to the following grading scale:
   
   - A= 92% or higher
   - A-= 90-91%
   - B+= 88-89%
   - B= 82-87%
   - B-= 80-81%
   - C+= 78-79%
   - C= 72-77%
   - C-= 70-71%
   - D+= 68-69%
   - D= 62-67%
   - D-= 60-61%
   - F= below 60%

2. **Make-ups:** In-class activities, including weekly writings, group assignments and paper presentations, cannot be made up, but at my discretion and with a legitimate excuse for the absence an alternative assignment may be allowed. If you know in advance any necessary personal absences, such as for religious observances, please let me know by the end of the 2nd week of classes. 
   *Late papers lose 10% of their worth each day they are late.*

3. **Cheating/Academic Dishonesty:** College and university regulations regarding plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be upheld in this course. I take academic honesty very seriously, and I expect you to appropriately and consistently cite your sources in all of your written work and to work independently on all exams and assignments. Please see me if you have questions or concerns about appropriate citation procedures. In terms of sanctions, I will choose from among these possibilities, based upon the severity of the dishonesty: re-do of the assignment, an alternative assignment, F on the assignment, F in the course, FF in the official internal transcript for the course. Please read the university academic integrity policies [here](http://www.ugs.edu/catalogs/0506/adadap.htm)

4. **Automated plagiarism detection service:** The University of South Florida has an account with an automated plagiarism detection service which allows instructors to submit student assignments to be checked for plagiarism. I reserve the right to submit assignments to this detection system. Assignments are compared automatically with a huge database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how a student's paper was plagiarized.

5. **Student privacy:** Students are encouraged to seek information on student privacy. FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) states: The purpose of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is to afford certain rights to students concerning their educational records. The primary rights afforded are the right to inspect and review the educational records, the right to seek to have the records amended and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from the records.

6. Disability services: Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities to arrange appropriate accommodations. Please let me know as soon as possible if you require accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice (typically 5 working days) prior to requesting an accommodation. Students with special needs must be registered with Students with Disability Services, SVC 1133 (974-4309). Visit their website at http://www.sds.usf.edu for more information.

7. Religious Observance: If you intend to be absent because of religious observance, you must notify me by the second day of class. I will attempt to provide reasonable opportunities to make up work that you missed.

8. Taping and recording. I do not allow students to tape or to sell notes and tapes of my class lectures. However, students needing such accommodations may see me for an exception to this policy. Unauthorized recordings will result in course failure.

9. University closure: In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction. In this case, I will continue instruction of this course using Blackboard, email, Skype (potentially), and other internet means. It will be your responsibility to monitor our course Blackboard for updates and information regarding this shift in instructional strategy.

Tentative Agenda

Week 1: What makes research feminist? Is there such a thing as feminist methodology? 
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 1

Week 2: Feminist critiques of traditional science... but efforts to keep the baby AND the bathwater
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 2

Week 3: Listening to each other: Standing up for Standpoint
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 3

Week 4: Deconstructing the Subject and Interrogating Discourse
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 4

Week 5: Midterm Exam

Week 6: Class Project Overview: Situational Analysis of... Topic TBN (to be negotiated!) 
Reading: Clarke: Chaps. 1, 3-4

Week 7: The Art of Asking and Listening
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Chaps. 5-6
Quiz
Interview Group presents proposal
Week 8: Locating Ourselves Within: Watching, Engaging and Learning
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 7
Quiz
Ethnography Group presents proposal

Week 9: The Written Word: Identifying and Analyzing Content
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 8
Quiz
Textual Analysis Group presents proposal

Week 10: Constructing and Counting our Experiences: Surveys
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 10
Quiz
Survey Group presents proposal

Week 11: More on Analysis: How do we know what we know?
Reading: Clarke: Chaps. 5-7
Quiz
Group updates

Week 12: Linking the Projects: Mixed Methods and Feminisms
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 9
Quiz
Group updates

Week 13: What to do, what to do—Writing Conclusions and Femifestos
Reading: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, Ch 11
Quiz
Group updates

Week 14: Group Presentations; Group Papers are Due

Week 15: Closure