

WOMEN'S STUDIES 602
METHODS OF INQUIRY IN WOMEN'S STUDIES
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Spring 2012

Tues 4:00-6:40 pm
Arts and Letters 318
Schedule # 23050

Dr. Doreen Mattingly

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Office Hours: Tues. 10-11 am. 7-7:30 pm
Wed. 11:30 am-12:30 pm
Thurs. 1-2 pm or by appt.

This course will familiarize students with a variety of research methods for giving voice to women's experience and making visible the frequently invisible and undercounted aspects of women's lives. Students will become acquainted with current discussions of feminist epistemology, including feminist critiques of traditional research methods. We will focus on ways of incorporating and analyzing literary works, historical archives, film, ethnography, quantitative surveys, media discourse, and feminist participatory research. We will also discuss issues such as: How and by whom is knowledge produced and validated? Do distinctively feminist methods exist? What is the relationship of the researcher to the researched? How does the social location (race, class, sexual identity, etc.) of the researcher impact on research? What are the issues (ethical, political, epistemological, methodological) that arise in studying "others"? How is feminist theory related to research? How can research relate to efforts for social change?

The course will provide students with hands-on experience about some of the joys and dilemmas of doing research, and students will conceptualize and design their own research project and write a research proposal. The assignments are aimed at familiarizing students with a number of methods that they can apply to their own thesis project. The course ends with students completing their own thesis proposal, but the course is also applicable for students who have already proposed their thesis and are working on the thesis itself.

Several professors will visit the class with expertise on particular topics. Classes will also be interactive with open discussions on all readings, as well as discussion on the development of individual research proposals.

Readings

Locke, Lawrence et al. *Proposals that Work: A Guide to Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals*. 4th Edition. Sage Publications. There is also a 5th edition but we will use the 4th because you can get it cheap online.

Jagger, Alison. ed. 2008. *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Hesse-Biber, Sharon Nagy and Patricia Lina Leavy. 2007. *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Learning Objectives

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

1. Understand the differences between feminist and traditional epistemologies and methodologies.
2. Participate in feminist debates about epistemology, objectivity, and power.
3. Compare qualitative and quantitative research methods.
4. Use a range of research methods in their own research.
5. Become careful and critical consumers of research presented in the media and in academic texts.
6. Complete the SDSU Institutional Review Board criteria for research.
7. Design research projects.
8. Interpret and write up research results.

Expectations, Policies, etc.

Office hours, appointments, and messages: You are welcome to visit or call offices during scheduled office hours; no appointment is necessary. If you want to meet with me at another time, please make an appointment (594-8033). If you need to leave some written work, put it in the envelope on my office door (313 AL). You may also contact me via e-mail (mattingl@mail.sdsu.edu).

Late assignments: Assignments are always due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be dropped one letter grade for each day they are late. A paper turned in more than 30 minutes after class begins will be considered one day late. Do not e-mail papers to me (other than Thought Papers) without getting permission from me first.

Classroom behavior: I come to class on time, awake, and prepared, and I expect you to do the same. This means that you have done all the assigned reading and read the Thought Papers that your classmates have posted on Blackboard. You are welcome to bring coffee or other beverages to class. Food is welcome if there is enough to share.

Blackboard: Blackboard is SDSU's "online course delivery and management system." You must use Blackboard for this course. Many readings will be available only through Blackboard, and you will turn in your weekly Thought Papers by posting them to the site. I will also post all assignments and any updates and announcements to Blackboard.

Assignments/Grading

Participation (10%): These points are basically yours to lose; if you just come to class and speak at least once per class you will get full credit. You can lose participation points by missing class more than once, by repeatedly arriving late or leaving early, or by not speaking in class. I will also periodically ask people to summarize papers or talk about their assignments or proposal – this is included in your participation grade.

Methods Samplers (45%): A total of six hands-on methods assignments will be given throughout the semester; you will complete any **three** of them. They are each worth 15%, for a total of 45% of your grade. In all cases, your write-up will contain two parts. A) A summary of the research findings. This should include your research questions and some kind of answer based on your research. B) A reflection on the research process. What worked, what didn't, what else is needed to make it meaningful, etc. This will include a meaningful discussion of at least two of the readings. See Blackboard for detailed prompts.

Ethnography: Visit a local women’s organization and attend at least one meeting/function/event and do two interviews. You will need to let the group know that you will be researching them for a class project and get their permission in advance.

Life History Interview: Conduct and transcribe a life history interview. Turn in the transcript of the interview, a short paper reflecting on the process and at least two of the readings, and plans for (hypothetical) follow-up research and additional interviews.

Archival Research Report: Using local existing archives, you will investigate an aspect of women’s history.

Survey: Using Survey Monkey you will create a survey, collect data, and analyze the data.

Discourse Analysis: You will develop a coding sheet and analyze at least 10 newspaper articles on a topic.

Image/Film Analysis: Review of MA Proposals due. You will do a systematic analysis of five YouTube clips, three TV episodes, or 10 photographs. You will develop a coding system. Your paper will include a discussion of the question, methods, and findings.

Homework (20%): You will have four smaller homework assignments, each worth 5%

- 1) Complete the SDSU IRB Human Subjects Tutorial -- <https://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~gra/login.php> Due Jan 31. You will need to create a username and password in order to access the tutorial. BE SURE TO SCHEDULE A FEW HOURS TO DO THIS. When you are done, you will get an IRB Tutorial confirmation certificate. Print this out; this certificate is due Jan. 31 in class. (If you have already done this for a prior project or class, that’s fine—I just need to see proof of completion).
- 2) Article analysis – You will select one social science research article that uses qualitative methods. Using the categories in O’Shughnessy and Krogman, identify the method, theory, and epistemology used. Write a 3-4 page paper discussing why you coded the article the way you did, and reflecting on the O’Shughnessy and Krogman paper. Due Feb 7.
- 3) Summary of MA proposal. You must include at least the following: your research questions, a paragraph describing the significance of the topic, and a paragraph describing your method. If you intend to write an MA thesis, you must meet with your preferred advisor this week. Due April 10
- 4) Review of other MA proposals. Write a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper in which you describe which two thesis proposals posted on Blackboard that you found compelling. For each, explain why you like them (interesting, clearly written, easy to follow, persuasive), and discuss the methods selected, why they are appropriate for the question research, and how they were presented.

Research Proposal (25%): Guidelines for thesis proposals are on pp. 24-25 of the Graduate Student Handbook which is on Blackboard under Course Documents. Your thesis proposal should include: (a) an overview of your topic and its significance for women’s studies and feminism, (b) why you chose this topic and your stance vis-à-vis this topic, (c) which theories influence your work on this topic, (d) a review of relevant literature, (e) your method(s) including participants/sources/measures/ archives and how you will interpret the data, (f) an outline of the chapters of your thesis, (g) your potential thesis/project chair and committee members, and (h) a proposed timeline.

| Week | Topic | Readings | Assignments/Notes |
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| 1 Jan 24 | Intro – thinking about methods | Jayartne and Stewart, “Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences,” in <i>Just Methods</i> Thorne, “You Still Takin’ Notes,” in <i>Just Methods</i> Shiva, “Democratizing Biology” in <i>Just Methods</i> | |
| 2 Jan 31 | Feminist Epistemology | Collins, “Black Feminist Epistemology,” in <i>Just Methods</i> Schemen, “Epistemology Resuscitated,” in <i>Just Methods</i> Harding, “Borderlands Epistemologies,” in <i>Just Methods</i> Jaggar, <i>Love and Knowledge</i> ,” in <i>Just Methods</i> O’Shaughnessy and Krogman, “Revolution Reconsidered,” <i>Blackboard</i> | IRB Tutorial due (all) |
| 3 Feb 7 | Ethnography | Buch and Staller, “The Practice of Feminist Anthropology,” in <i>Feminist Research Methods</i> White, “Talking about SEX and HIV,” in <i>Just Methods</i> Visweswaran, “Betrayal: An Analysis in Three Acts,” <i>Blackboard</i> | Guest speaker: Huma Ahmed Ghosh Article Analysis due (all) |
| 4 Feb 14 | Oral History | Leavy, “The Practice of Feminist Oral History and Focus Group Interviews” in <i>Feminist Research Methods</i> Saika and Ross, “Excerpts from the Voice of Feminism Oral History Project” <i>Blackboard</i> Opie, “Qualitative Research, Appropriation of the ‘Other,’ and Empowerment,” in <i>Just Methods</i> | Guest Speaker: Irene Lara |
| 5 Feb 21 | Interviews | Nagy Hesse-Biber, “The Practice of Feminist In-Depth Interviewing,” in <i>Feminist Research Methods</i> Islam, “Research as an Act of Betrayal,” in <i>Just Methods</i> Lister, “Feminist Dilemmas in Data Analysis,” <i>Blackboard</i> | <u>Ethnography due</u> |
| 6 Feb 28 | Archival Research | Buss, “Constructing Female Subjects in the Archive,” <i>Blackboard</i> Kadar, “An Epistolary Constellation: Trotsky, Kahlo, Birney,” <i>Blackboard</i> Kelly-Gadol, “The Social Relation of the Sexes,” in <i>Just Methods</i> | Guest speaker: Susan Cayleff <u>Oral History Interview due</u> |

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| 7 Mar 6 | Using Quantitative Data | Leckenby, "Feminist Empiricism," in <i>Feminist Research Methods</i> Benería, "Paid and Unpaid Labor," in <i>Just Methods</i> Chant, "Feminization of Poverty," <i>Blackboard</i> | |
| 8 Mar 13 | Surveys | Miner-Rubino and Jayaratne, "Feminist Survey Research," in <i>Feminist Research Methods</i> Aune, "Much Less Religious, A Little More Spiritual," <i>Blackboard</i> Lackenby and Hesse-Biber, "Feminist Approaches to Mixed Methods Research," in <i>Feminist Research Methods</i> | <u>Archival Research Report due</u> |
| 9 Mar 20 | Feminist Science Studies | Gould, "Critique of <i>The Bell Curve</i> ," <i>Blackboard</i> Lloyd, "Bias," <i>Blackboard</i> Roy, "Feminist Theory in Science," <i>Blackboard</i> | Guest Speaker: Sara Giordano |
| | Spring Break | | |
| 10 Apr 3 | Discourse Analysis | Price, "Quest for Purity," <i>Blackboard</i> Leavy, "The Feminist Practice of Discourse Analysis," <i>Feminist Research Methods</i> Myers, "African American Women and Violence," <i>Blackboard</i> | Guest Speaker: Kimala Price <u>Survey Monkey Assignment due</u> |
| 11 Apr 10 | Image and Film Analysis | Hatten and Trautner, "Equal Opportunity Objectification" <i>Blackboard</i> Hall, "Encoding, Decoding," <i>Blackboard</i> Kuhn, "Photography and Cultural Memory," <i>Blackboard</i> | Guest Speaker: Ahn Hua Summary of proposal due (all) |
| 12 Apr 17 | Action Research | Maguire, "Feminist Participatory Action Research," in <i>Just Methods</i> Cahill, "Including Excluded Perspectives," <i>Blackboard</i> Esbenshade, et al. "County Employees: Overworked and Undermined," <i>Blackboard</i> | Guest Speaker: Jill Esbenshade <u>Discourse Analysis due</u> |
| 13 Apr 24 | Proposal writing | <i>Proposals that Work</i> , chs. 1, 3 Hesse-Biber, "Putting it Together," in <i>Feminist Research Methods</i> | <u>Image/Film Analysis Due</u> |
| 14 May 1 | Proposal writing | <i>Proposals that Work</i> , chs. 4, 6 | Review of MA Proposals due (all) |
| 15 May 8 | Proposal writing | <i>Proposals that Work</i> , chs. 8,9,10 | |
| May 15 | | | Proposal due (all) |

