

WS 265/WS365 Women's Studies Research Methods

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Beach Hall 425
Monday: 2:00-4:30 pm

The purpose of this class is (1) to introduce you to what is distinctive about women's studies research, i.e., problems of androcentric values, analyzing gender bias in research design and practice, and over-generalization in research. In other words we will be discussing issues of feminist epistemology and methodology; (2) to enable you to conduct a women's studies research project using a variety of research methods. Towards this end, we will read and discuss feminist debates on research and each of you will design and carry out a research project.

Required Readings

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Lina Leavy 2007 **Feminist Research Practice: A Primer** Sage.

Articles on HuskyCT

Course Requirements:

1. Read all assigned readings, engage in class discussions, and bring an article on feminist research practice to share with the class (15% of grade)
2. Weekly reflection papers on readings and your own research (25% of grade)
The reflection papers are 1-2 page papers that in the first half of the semester will be on the assigned readings for the day. In these papers you will analyze the readings, focusing on its strengths and weaknesses and your own thoughts on the readings. In the second half of the semester, the reflection papers will be on your research, the challenges, issues, questions about your project, and integrate them with readings from the first half of the semester.
3. Oral presentation of research (10% of grade)

You will make a 15 minute presentation in class about your project, why you chose the topic and method you did, your results, and what makes it a women's studies research project.

4. Research Project (50% of grade, 20% for the research and rough draft, 30% for final paper)

Ideally your rough draft should be a complete version of your final paper. At a minimum, it should include an introduction, methodology, half your data analysis and presentation, and an outline of conclusions.

The final paper should be 15 pages long and include the following:

Introduction: The key questions or topic of your paper and the argument or thesis of your paper.

Methodology: What methods you used in your research and why, and an analysis of your research process.

If you use field observations, make sure that you keep a detailed record of your observations, such as who, what, when, why, where, how. Your own thoughts, feelings, reactions, and the reactions of people you are observing. You need to conduct several observations of at least an hour to be able to make judgments about what you are observing.

If you conduct interviews, you should take detailed notes even if you have the permission to record them. You should transcribe your interviews as soon as possible. The transcript should be detailed and reflect as closely as possible the exchanges during the interviews.

Findings: Presentation of your data, analysis, and how it does or does not answer the questions or thesis in the introduction. Be analytical in your writing and also reflect on the limitations and possible critiques of your project.

Conclusion: State what your data suggest about your questions/thesis. What are the implications of your research findings? What possible research directions are suggested by your research.

Your bibliographic sources should be integrated as appropriate throughout the paper. Show how your sources helped you to define your topic, carry out the research, analyze the data you gathered and draw conclusions.

Ensure that your writing is technically good, get it proof-read, analytically strong and clear. The best way to achieve this is by writing multiple drafts and getting feedback from your peers and the various resources on campus.

Course Schedule

Aug. 27 Introduction to Women's Studies Research

- Sept. 3 Labor Day, No Class
- Sept. 10 Feminist Approaches to Epistemology and Theory
Read pp: 1-100 in the Primer
Research Topic Due
- Sept. 17 Feminist Approaches to Methods and Methodology
Read pp: 111-222 in the Primer
Preliminary Bibliography, 3-4 sources Due (5% of grade)
- Sept. 24 Feminist Approaches to Methods
Read pp: 223-328
- Oct. 1 Feminist Praxis
Read pp: 329-350
Outline of your research project and methods due (5% of grade)
IRB permission if using human subjects
- Oct. 8 Begin conducting Research
- Oct. 15 Research and Reflections
- Oct. 22 Research and Reflections
- Oct. 29 Research and Reflections
- Nov. 5 Research and Reflections
- Nov. 12 Rough Drafts Due (10% of grade)
- Nov. 19 Thanksgiving Break
- Nov. 26 Oral presentations of Research Projects
- Dec. 3 Oral Presentations of Research Projects
- Dec. 10 Final Paper Due (30% of grade)