

# WGSS 350: Feminist and Queer Methodologies

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## **Course Description:**

This course provides students with a practical exploration of two overlapping but distinct systems of analysis: feminist methodologies and queer methodologies. By examining a range of interdisciplinary, intersectional, and transnational approaches to conducting queer and feminist research, we will develop both a broad understanding of existing methodologies and a deeper practice of our own research methodologies. We will critically engage the topics of how and why we do research as well as who benefits or is harmed by it through examinations of Indigenous critiques of imperialist research methods, queer of color critiques of canonical social science, transnational feminist attempts to translate theory into practice, and the insider/outsider dynamics of researching a marginalized community of which you are a part. Our overall goal is to prepare our analytical tool box for future research through carefully evaluating, selecting, and honing various methods with an awareness of how they can be systematized.

## **Requirements and Expectations:**

Attendance: You are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions, but students with two or less absences at the end of the quarter will not be penalized. For each class you miss after the second, your grade will drop two grade levels (e.g. from B+ to B-). Documentation is required for any excusable absences and all students must attend at least 12 class sessions to pass regardless of any excused absences. You are responsible for obtaining any information from and about missed class sessions. Arriving more than five minutes late, leaving more than five minutes early, or disrupting the learning experiences of other students with one's behavior are unacceptable and will constitute an absence.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstance. This means you must properly cite the words and ideas you borrow from others. Refer to [libguides.wvu.edu/plagiarism](http://libguides.wvu.edu/plagiarism), [wvu.edu/integrity](http://wvu.edu/integrity), or contact me if you have any questions about this topic, but the burden is on the student to be sure they are not plagiarizing.

Accommodations: Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible about any factors bearing on their performance in class or their ability to complete assignments and appropriate accommodations will be made. Many changes cannot be made retroactively, so please contact the instructor sooner rather than later with any concerns.

Email: Readings, assignments, and other communication will be distributed by way of email and the Canvas site throughout the course. It is required that students read all emails and respond to them when necessary. I will respond to any email I receive within one working day, so please extend me the same courtesy.

Portable Electronics: Cell phone use (calls, texts, Tinder, Snapchat, whatever you've got) is prohibited during class sessions. Laptop use is discouraged but acceptable during lectures for note-taking. Use of electronic devices during class sessions will have a negative impact on both one's classroom experience and participation grade. Electronic recording (audio, photo, or video) of class sessions is prohibited.

Non-Discrimination: University policy forbids discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, national origin, religion, and veteran/marital status. We will conduct sometimes-difficult conversations about race, gender, and sexuality in this course in which diverse and conflicting opinions will be respected, but abusive and oppressive behavior will not be tolerated. I encourage you to contact me directly if you have difficulty understanding this policy or feel it is not being properly adhered to in our class or elsewhere on campus. Be aware that university policy dictates that I am a 'mandatory reporter' and must report all incidences of on-campus sexual assault. Throughout this course, we will be discussing and reading texts depicting potentially triggering situations like colonization, domestic abuse, and sexual assault. For the purpose of learning about feminist and queer methodologies, we cannot avoid these topics, so I encourage you to take the necessary precautions that best fit your needs and contact me with any questions if you find this material especially challenging.

## Assignments and Grading:

**Participation** (10% of final grade): This is a reading and discussion intensive course in which you are expected to have done the assigned reading and to have something to say about it (having questions means you have something to say, too). Participation is a matter of quality, not pure quantity, but expect to speak during every class session.

**Reading Journal** (15%): You will need to obtain an examination booklet or other small notebook in which you will write short responses to that day's assigned reading at the beginning of each class session. Journals will be collected periodically and assessed based on completion and degree of engagement with the assigned pages.

**Class Facilitation** (15%): At the start of Week 2, students will sign up in pairs for this assignment as most future sessions will be facilitated by two students. Students should prepare brief critical preambles submitted as hard copy response papers, discussion questions to facilitate conversation, and an activity or other learning aids to better engage that day's assigned reading. Students should prepare enough material to comfortably fill the first half of the session (about 50 minutes).

**Archives Paper** (15%): During Week 2, we will visit the on-campus archives and students will begin work on an essay applying feminist and queer methods to a historical document of local relevance. Essays should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words (3-5 pages) and make use of a range of quality secondary sources in order to analyze a single primary document.

**Prospectus** (15%): Before preparing your final examination essay you will prepare a Prospectus that identifies and explains the topic of your final, provides some of your preliminary contentions and questions, and details your provisional sources through an annotated bibliography.

**State of the Field Final** (30%): The final exam for this course is a 2,500-3,000 word (8-10 page) essay that makes an argument about a particular feminist and/or queer methodology of your choice. You must research the origins of the field, identify the central thinkers and themes, assess its current usefulness and limitations, and make your own case for the significance of this particular field to the overall goals of queer and feminist inquiry.

Rubrics will be provided with more specifics and grading criteria for each assignment. Any request to review a grade must be submitted within 24 hours of receiving it.

### Grading Scale:

>92=A, 90-92=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-79=C+,  
73-76=C, 70-72=C-, 67-69=D+, 63-66=D, 60-62=D-, <60=F

### Student Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize the intersections between sex, gender, sexuality, and other social and cultural identities, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, class, religion, and ability.
- Analyze and communicate ideas effectively in oral, written, and visual forms.
- Apply critical sex, gender, and sexuality perspectives across various disciplines.
- Read, understand, and evaluate scholarship and theories in feminist, gender, and sexuality studies.

### Required Texts:

These texts are available at the Viking Bookstore and many other retailers. All other readings will be distributed in class or electronically via Canvas. Please bring the text to class on any day we have reading assigned from it.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, Second Edition* (London: Zed Books, 2012 [1999]).

Roderick Ferguson *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar (editors) *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010).

Martin Manalansan, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

### Due Dates:

**Archives Paper:** February 15<sup>th</sup>    **Prospectus:** March 1<sup>st</sup>    **Final Paper:** March 20<sup>th</sup>

**Facilitations:** Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>, Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, & 27<sup>th</sup>, Mar 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, & 13<sup>th</sup>.

## Course Organization and Reading Schedule

**Jan 9:** Introductions and syllabus distribution

**Jan 11:** Sandra Harding “Is There a Feminist Method?” and Barbara Smith “Where’s The Revolution?” (both on Canvas).

**Jan 16:** Chandra Mohanty “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” Joan Scott “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” and David Halperin “How To Do The History of Male Homosexuality” (all on Canvas).

**Jan 18:** VISIT TO ON-CAMPUS ARCHIVES at either 2pm or 3pm (sign up in advance)  
Mandatory orientation at Goltz-Murray Archives Building (808 25<sup>th</sup> Street).

**Jan 23:** Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, pages 1-80.

**Jan 25:** Smith, pages 81-110.

**Jan 30:** Smith, pages 111-184.

**Feb 1:** Smith, pages 185-232.

**Feb 6:** Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, pages 1-53.

**Feb 8:** Ferguson, pages 54-109.

**Feb 13:** Ferguson, pages 110-148.

**Feb 15:** Watch *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* in class.

Archives Paper Due

**Feb 20:** Amanda Swarr and Richa Nagar, *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*, pages 1-62.

**Feb 22:** Swarr and Nagar, pages 65-103.

**Feb 27:** Swarr and Nagar, pages 105-165.

**Mar 1:** Swarr and Nagar, pages 166-217.

Prospectus Due

**Mar 6:** Martin Manalansan, *Global Divas*, pages 1-88.

**Mar 8:** Manalansan, pages 88-125.

**Mar 13:** Manalansan, pages 127-191.

**Mar 15:** Course evaluation and wrap up.

Submit Final Exam Essay through Canvas by Tueaday March 20<sup>th</sup> at 3pm!