Course information:

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1. Course name: Feminist Research Methods

2. Department: WGS

3. Number: 312

4. Cluster requirement: Learning Through Engagement

Faculty information:

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5. Name: Stephanie O'Hara

6. Email: [sohara@umassd.edu](mailto:sohara@umassd.edu)

7. Phone: 8336

Required components:

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8. Master syllabus: [http:///webroots/www.umassd.edu/genedchecklist/holding/mastersyllabuswgs312feministresearchmethods9.17.14.docx](http://webroots/www.umassd.edu/genedchecklist/holding/mastersyllabuswgs312feministresearchmethods9.17.14.docx)

9. Course overview statement:

Women’s and Gender Studies courses naturally lend themselves to learning through engagement, as they utilize feminist praxis: the process in which a theory or knowledge is embodied or enacted to make social change. Feminist research methods, in particular, is a course that requires this intersection of theory and practice. Clearly then, WGS 312 covers outcomes 2 and 3. WGS 312 is also a course about social justice. Thus it connects to outcome 1. Moreover, as a WGS course, and is made clear by the FPAR assignment, WGS 312 frames feminist research as democratic. Knowledge is shared and is used to empower others in the community. This then covers outcome 4.

10. Signed faculty and chair sponsor sheet: sent separately.

11. Official course catalog description for the course:

Framework for thinking and learning about research in women’s and gender studies. The course provides an overview of the terminology and key concepts in feminist research methods. It begins with an examination of feminist critiques of traditional methods of research and conceptions of knowledge. The course then covers, among other things, work on standpoint theory, research methods in the natural and social sciences, ethical/political issues in research and the practice of cross-cultural research.

12. Course approval form: not entered.



**WGS 312, Feminist Research Methods: Master Syllabus**

**Course Description**

Framework for thinking and learning about research in women’s and gender studies. The course provides an overview of the terminology and key concepts in feminist research methods.  It begins with an examination of feminist critiques of traditional methods of research and conceptions of knowledge. The course then covers, among other things, work on standpoint theory, research methods in the natural and social sciences, ethical/political issues in research and the practice of cross-cultural research.

**Course-Specific Learning Outcomes**

In addition to familiarizing students with the central concepts and issues in feminist research methodologies, students will:

* Conduct effective research in women’s and gender studies using feminist transdisciplinary methods
* Examine how feminist methodologies redefine traditional disciplinary methods and concepts through an attention to intersectionality and social categories such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and age
* Explore the problematic nature of traditional research methods and conceptions of knowledge
* Find, formulate, limit, and state a research problem using feminist methodologies
* Learn about research through the conducting of research itself
* Conduct critical literature reviews
* Select and combine appropriate research strategies and feminist methodologies to develop the skills to write a research-length paper
* Reflect on feminist practices in research
* Examine non-Western paradigms of knowledge

**University Studies Learning Outcomes**

For the University Studies curriculum, WGS 312 would fall under Cluster 5b, Learning Through Engagement. As such, after completing WGS 312, students will be able to:

1. 1. Identify the needs and resources of the communities to which they belong.
2. 2. Apply knowledge and skills gained through academic study to real problems and/or opportunities within their communities.
3. 3. Describe the connections between learning on campus and the issues and needs of broader academic, professional or civic communities.
4. 4. Articulate the value of engagement to other members of their communities.

**Sample Course Texts**

1. Jaggar, Alison M. (2007). *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
2. Bose, Christine and Minjeong Kim. (Eds.).(2009). *Global Gender Research: Transnational Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
3. Course packet from University Readers, available at UMD bookstore.
4. Hesse-Biber, Sharlene J. Nagy. (2013). *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Sample Assignment**

Feminist Participatory Action Research (100 points total)

In this course you are learning about the importance of a commitment to social justice in feminist research. For this assignment we will apply what we have learned by employing Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR), a research method that allows researchers and community members to work together. The purpose of this research is to identify problems in your community, empower members to research, and find solutions to problems that will ultimately impact the community positively. You are a scholar and a researcher engaged with your community members as co-investigators, meaning that research is democratic. FPAR includes several phases including: reflection, planning, acting, and observing. You should choose to study a community you are a part of, and you should reflect on your role and level of power in your community. FPAR is political in nature and aims to empower both you and participants, in addition to understanding and improving your community.

1. Topic proposal (10 points)

You should begin by reading the learning module on FPAR. After you have read the module, you should first come up with a description of your preferred project. You should describe your own history and skill set that would facilitate involvement in this project. You must obtain permission from your instructor before you move on to step two. Ideally, you are thinking about gender problems in your community. For example, if you are thinking about your professional community, you are identifying women’s participation, status etc. This proposal should be a fully developed paragraph that is posted to a discussion board.

2. Interview and observe a member of your community (60 points)

Choose one person from your community (professional, scholarly, social, cultural, economic or political). You must use a consent form, and explain the purpose of the research before beginning. For example, if you have chosen to interview a community health worker at your local Planned Parenthood then you must first obtain consent from the organization, and the potential participant.

3. Identify needs of community (30 points)

In the online discussion board titled FPAR you should create a three-paragraph post where you reflect on your experience. You should report the results of your interview, analyze the needs of your community and articulate proposed solutions. This reflection post will be shared with the participant, and posted on the discussion board.

**Alignment**

This sample assignment meets all of the learning outcomes of Cluster 5b. The Feminist Participatory Action Research assignment deepens students’ understanding of academic study because it allows them to apply what they learn in Feminist Research Methods to problems and issues found in their communities. As a methodology, feminist participatory action research (FPAR) allows researchers and community members to work together. The topic proposal and reflection components require students to identify the needs and resources of their communities, and consider power imbalances between researchers and participants. The required reflection essay allows students to make connections between their learning and their community. Students are asked to share their reflections with participants. As such, learning outcomes 3 & 4 are met, inasmuch as students can describe and articulate the value of engagement to members of their communities.

**FPAR Assessment Rubric**

\_\_\_\_ (10 points) Topic Proposal

\_\_\_\_\_Describes the proposed project in depth.

\_\_\_\_\_Identifies history and skill set of researcher and justifies choice of topic.

\_\_\_\_\_Proposal is a fully developed paragraph and is posted on discussion board.

\_\_\_\_\_ (60 points) Interview and Observation

\_\_\_\_ Consent is granted

\_\_\_\_ Transcript and notes of interview and observation submitted on course site

\_\_\_\_ Effective interview techniques are used.

­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_(30 points) Reflection

\_\_\_\_\_ 2 course readings are used to support analysis

\_\_\_\_\_ Results are reported

\_\_\_\_\_ Solutions are proposed

\_\_\_\_\_ Statement is error-free, shared with participants, and posted on discussion board

\_\_\_\_\_ Statement is properly formatted and cited

**Assessment of Student Learning (WGS 312 Course Grade)**

* Research Topic and Questions 5%
* Literature Review 10%
* Research Design Proposal 30%
* Peer Review of Research Design 5%
* Discussion/Participation 20%
* FPAR assignment 30%

The writing assignments of this course focus on creating the foundations for a major research project. You will learn how to produce and reflect upon the separate components of a major research project. This will include the following assignments:

Research Topic and Questions

(i) Choose a research topic. By now you will have seen the sorts of topics that are of interest to feminists. Your topic can be in any discipline. The crucial point is that this will be a feminist research project. Explain why it is a feminist research project. You will also have to do some preliminary research in order to make sure that this topic is neither too narrow nor too broad.

(ii) Identify your research question(s). Your project will be a search for knowledge about your particular topic. What questions do you think should be answered? The questions you choose will generate your search for knowledge. As we have seen, asking the right (feminist) questions is crucial. This assignment should be typed up and include a works cited page. Bring a printed copy to class. This should be 1-2 pages.

Literature Review

In preparation for your research project, you will conduct a literature review focused on your topic.  In other words, you will locate and review literature about your topic and the questions/issues you are investigating.  Then, you’ll report, in writing, what you have found. You are expected to locate at least **5** **(five)** main sources. The course site offers models of literature reviews (although yours will be considerably shorter) and advice on finding resources, etc. The length of your literature review will depend on your topic and sources. This should be a minimum of 3 pages and a maximum of 10 pages. Bring a printed copy to class on the due date. The literature review requires a works cited page.

Research Design Proposal

Explain the following foundational components of your project. Your proposal should answer the following questions and should be 5-7 pages typed.

(i) How the research topic would help women/promote social justice

(ii) What information is needed to answer your questions and perform the research successfully?

(iii) What study design and methods would you use to perform the research and why

(iv) If you are using “conventional” methods, what potential problems might your research face?

AND/OR if you are using feminist research methods, explain why they are feminist methods

Peer Review of Research Design

You will review one of your peers’ research design proposals after reading several of your peers’ examples.

Feminist Participatory Action Research (100 points total)

See pages 2-3, above.

**Course Policies**

**Incompletes:** According to the university catalogue, an incomplete may be given only in exceptional circumstances at the instructor’s discretion. The student must be passing the course at the time of the request or sufficiently close to passing. If the work is not completed within one year of the recording of the incomplete grade, the grade will become an F(I). The incomplete policy for this course is that at least 70% of the course must be already completed and an exceptional circumstance (e.g., a medical issue) must exist. If you believe that you need an incomplete, please e-mail me by December 10 stating your reasons for requesting an incomplete and giving times when you will be available to communicate with me to discuss it. You are responsible for filling out and submitting the incomplete forms.

**Academic Integrity:**Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that have no place in this or any other course. The University’s Academic Integrity Policy specifies our institutional expectations for honesty and integrity in the learning environment. The policy explains what counts as violations of academic integrity and the penalties associated with those violations.

What constitutes plagiarism? According to the Academic Integrity Policy, “Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: ‘to paraphrase Plato's comment...’ and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.”

“In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.”

You can find the entire Academic Integrity Policy at: <http://www.umassd.edu/policies/activepolicylist/academicaffairs/academicintegritypolicyandreportingform/>

**MLA or APA Documentation:** With each of your written assignments, your quotations and works cited pages will be checked. Thus, with each assignment, you need to include a Works Cited page and follow proper MLA (Modern Language Association) or APA (American Psychological Association) documentation.

**Center for Access and Success:** In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please meet with the instructor at the beginning of the semester and provide the appropriate paperwork from the [Center for Access and Success](http://www.umassd.edu/dss/). If you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact with the instructor at the beginning of the semester and provide the appropriate paperwork from the Center for Access and Success. The necessary paperwork is obtained when you bring proper documentation to the Center for Access and Success, which is located in Pine Dale Hall 7136 Tel: 508-999-8711.

<http://www.umassd.edu/dss/>

**NOTE**: Exemptions and accommodations due to a documented disability **cannot** be applied retroactively.

**Sample Course Schedule**

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| **Week/Date Beginning** | **Topic** | **Assignments** |
| Week 1 | **CLASS INTRODUCTIONS** | **Readings:**   * Review the course assignments and requirements * Brooks & Hesse-Biber, “An Invitation to Feminist Research.”   **Assignment:**No assignments due  **Discussion:** Post due July 1 by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due by July 4 by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 2 | **WHAT ARE FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS?** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, p. vii-xi; pp. 191-198 * Introduction (online). You need not read sections 3, 6 and 7 at this time. * Zinn et al, “The Costs of Exclusionary Practices in Women’s Studies,” pp. 198-205 (in Jaggar)   **Assignment:** No assignment due  **Discussion:** First post due July 8 by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due by July 11 by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 3 | **HUMANITIES** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, pp. 3-6 * Nochlin, excerpt from “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists ?” (online) * Kelly-Gadol, “The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women’s History,” pp. 6-13 (in Jaggar) * Moulton, “A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method,” pp. 13-21 (in Jaggar)   **Assignment:** FPAR topic proposal due by July 15 11:59 EST.  **Discussion:** First post on discussion board, due July 15 by 11:59 PM EST; Response posts due July 18 by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 4 | **SOCIAL SCIENCES** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, pp. 34-9. * All readings from Jaggar, chapter 2 (pp. 39-67). * (Coursepacket) “Feminist participatory action research: Methodological and ethical issues” by Gatenby and Humphries   **Assignment:** No assignments due  **Discussion:** First post due July 22nd by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due July 25th by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 5 | **HUMAN BIOLOGY** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, pp. 105-8. * Terry, “Lesbians under the Medical Gaze,” pp. 108-118 (in Jaggar) * Lloyd, “Bias in the Science of Evolution,” pp. 130-146 (in Jaggar)   **Assignment:** FPAR Interview and Observation due by July 29, 11:59 EST.  **Discussion:** First post due July 29 by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due August 1 by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 6 | **HEALTH SCIENCES** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, pp.147-151 * Dickson, “Metaphors of Menopause: The Metalanguage of Menopause Research,” pp. 151-63 (in Jaggar) * Messing, “Don’t Use a Wrench to Peel Potatoes: Biological Science Constructed on Male Model Systems is a Risk to Women Workers’ Health,” pp. 163-182 (in Jaggar)   **Assignment:** No assignments due  **Discussion:** First post due July 29 by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due August 1 by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 7 | **WORK WEEK** | **Readings:**   * “Putting it Together” (handout on website)   **Assignment:** Research topic due  **Discussion:** No discussion board posts |
| Week 8 | **FEMINIST NATURALISM** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, pp. 229-235 * All readings in section (in Jaggar) * Look also at sections 3, 6 and 7 from Introduction from week two   **Assignment:** No assignment due  **Discussion:** First post due August 19th by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due August 22nd by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 9 | **FEMINIST EMPIRICISM** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, pp. 268-271 * Scott, “Experience,” pp. 268-271 * Code, “Incredulity, Experientialism, and the Politics of Knowledge,” pp. 290-302 (in Jaggar) * Hesse-Biber, “The Practice of Feminist In-depth Interviewing” (handout) * White, “Talking about Sex and HIV: Conceptualizing a New Sociology of Experience,” pp. 272-281 (in Jaggar) * Buch & Staller, “The Feminist Practice of Ethnography” (Handout)   **Assignment:** No assignments due  **Discussion:** First post due October 22nd by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due October 25 by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 10 | **FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, pp. 303-307 * Collins, “Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought,” pp. 308-319 (in Jaggar) * Mies, “The Need for a New Vision: The Subsistence Perspective,” pp. 320-330 (in Jaggar) * Harding, “Borderlands Epistemologies,” pp. 331-341 (in Jaggar)   **Assignment:** No assignment due    **Discussion:** First post due August 26th by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due August 28th by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 11 | **FEMINIST POSTMODERNISM** | **Readings:**   * (Jaggar, pp. 342-346 * Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” pp. 346-352 (in Jaggar) * Opie, “Qualitative Research, Appropriation of the “Other” and Empowerment,” pp. 362-373 (in Jaggar)   **Assignment:** No assignment due  **Discussion:** First post due November 12th by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due November 15th by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 12 | **WORK WEEK** | **Readings:**   * No readings due   **Assignment:** Literature Review Due April 25th at 11:59 p.m. (relative to your particular time zone).  **Discussion:** No discussion board |
| Week 13 | **DEMOCRATICIZING RESEARCH AND FEMINIST ETHICS IN RESEARCH** | **Readings:**   * Jaggar, pp. 414-17; 457-60 * Maguire, “Feminist Participatory Research,” pp. 417-432 (in Jaggar) * Alcoff, “The Problem of Speaking for Others,” pp. 484-05 (in Jaggar)   **Assignment:**FPAR reflection due  **Discussion:** First post due November 19th by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due November 22nd by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 14 | **WRAPPING IT UP** | **Readings:**No readings due  **Assignment:** No assignments due  **Discussion:** First post due December 3rd by 11:59 PM EST. Response posts due December 6th by 11:59 PM EST. |
| Week 15 | **END OF SEMESTER** | **Readings:**   * No readings due   **Assignment:**Final Research Design portfolio due on December 13th by 11:59 PM EST.  Please be sure to fill out the end of semester course evaluations.  **Discussion:** No discussion posts due |