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Women's Studies 4011  
Fall 2007  
MWF 11:15-12:05  
Benson

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## UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

### Course Description

This class is designed as a feminist exploration of the assumptions and procedures of research methodologies across the disciplines, with specific attention to the purposes and processes of generating knowledge about women and gender. We will discuss the central premises and concerns of feminist research, addressing, among other issues, subjectivity, insiders and outsiders, and the place of race, class, and nation in feminist research. We will examine feminist research in the social sciences and humanities, addressing various methodologies and interrogating their epistemological assumptions. We will also explore the application of feminist methodologies outside of academia, in fields such as film, psychology, and law. Students will conduct group projects, and will be expected to address methodological concerns that emerge as the projects evolve, such as access and accuracy, interpretation, and intimacy.

### Required Readings

- *Sneaky Kid and its Aftermath* by Harry Wolcott, available at UGA Bookstore.
- *A Thrice Told Tale* by Margery Wolf, available at UGA Bookstore.
- Readings packet available at Bel-Jean on Broad Street.
- Additional required readings will be provided, most likely electronically, over the course of the semester.

### Course Requirements:

#### **1. Attendance and Participation: 10%**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and complete all reading assignments on time. Eight to ten times over the course of the semester, you will be asked to complete a small activity or write a discussion question based on the reading for that week. This will serve as a check on reading as well as attendance, and thus cannot be turned in late. (A few mandatory attendance dates are written into the course schedule, as well. You will lose a point off your final grade if you do not attend on these dates.)

Consistent tardiness will result in a lower attendance/participation grade. Active and informed participation is expected of all students. Because not all students are comfortable speaking up in class, it is accepted that participation can be verbal or non-verbal. Other acceptable forms of participation include: suggesting outside readings, recommending related films or television programs, and attending and reporting on related campus activities.

#### **2. Take Home Examinations: 2 at 15% each = 30% total**

Take home examinations will consist of essay questions requiring you to analyze and reflect on course readings, lectures, discussions, and guest speakers' presentations.

#### **3. Group Projects: 60% Total**

Students will be organized into groups of (approximately) five individuals. As a group, you will select a topic of mutual interest for research. Each of you will be required to conduct fieldwork and qualitative

interviews. You will write up the fieldnotes and reflections on the interviews. You will prepare a joint presentation of your experiences to the class, and write a final 10 page paper about your research, focusing on the methodological issues you confronted more than the results of the research per se. The paper should incorporate material covered over the course of the semester as well as external sources when relevant. Additional guidelines will be provided later in the semester.

- Proposal (one per group): 5%
- Fieldnotes and interview reflections (three per person, at least one of each, 8.33% each): 25%
- Final Paper using class concepts to evaluate project (one per person): 25%
- Presentation (one per group): 5%

#### 4. Revisions

This is a writing intensive course. All of your assignments are written, and you will be expected to alternate between a variety of written forms (cogent discussion questions, analytic essays, fieldnotes, scholarly paper). Because part of the point of writing intensive courses is to learn how to improve your writing, you are expected to revise one of your exam essays and/or one of your fieldnotes/interview reflections for a higher grade. **You must do at least one revision by the end of the semester. Failure to do a revision will result in a loss of 10% from your final grade in the course. All revisions must be turned in by Dec. 5.** You may submit a **maximum of two** revised assignments (one fieldnote/reflection and one exam essay) for a higher grade. You must turn in both versions of the assignment for the revision to be accepted. You are expected to seek guidance from Professor Richards or TA Goodwin before rewriting your assignments. The higher of the two grades you receive on revised assignments will be counted toward your final grade.

#### Additional Policies

**Late Assignments:** If for any reason you are absent from class when assignments are due, you are still responsible for handing in the assignment by the beginning of the class period on the appropriate date. Late assignments will be marked down one-half letter grade for each day they are late, including weekends. No exceptions whatsoever! (This policy excludes participation activities, which cannot be made up or turned in late.)

**Academic Misconduct:** Academic misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated. Any student found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will be penalized according to university policy. Please consult the Academic Honesty Policy (Section 5) if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating: <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

**Accommodations for Students with Special Needs:** I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Before course accommodations will be made, you may be required to provide documentation to Disability Services (<http://www.dissvcs.uga.edu>, 542-8719).

**Cell Phones:** Please make sure to turn your cell phones off at the beginning of class.

Grading Scale:     100-94 = A     93-90 = A-  
                             89-86 = B+     85-83 = B     82-80 = B-  
                             79-76 = C+     75-73 = C     72-70 = C-  
                             69-60 = D     < 60 = F

### Course Schedule:

Aug 17: Introduction to Course

Aug 20-22: What is Feminist Research?

Reading: Harding, Smith (Smith reading not in packet)

Aug 24 & 27: Central Concerns in Feminist Research: Insiders and Outsiders

Reading: Hill Collins, Bolak

Aug 29 & 31: Central Concerns in Feminist Research: Studying Across Race, Class, and Nation

Reading: McCorkel and Myers, Mohanty

### **QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Sept 3: No Class, Labor Day

Sept 5: Understanding and Critiquing Quantitative Research

Guest Speaker: Dr. Blaise Parker

Reading: TBA

Sept 7: Using Quantitative Analyses to Advance Feminist Objectives

Guest Speaker: Jennifer McMahon

Reading:

Sept 10: Quantitative Research Reflection Activity

Sept 12 & 14: Interviewing

Reading: Ellis, et al, Esterberg

Sept 17 & 19: Ethnography

Reading: Emerson et al (3 chapters), Stacey, Allen

Sept 21: Practice in Ethnography (schedule on your own time)

Sept 24: Discuss Practice

Sept 26: Narrative Analysis (tentatively)

Guest Speaker: TBA

Reading: TBA

First examination distributed

Sep 28: Exam Day – Arrange to work in groups or on your own.

### **DOING FEMINIST RESEARCH: FOCUS ON THE PROJECTS**

Oct 1: Expectations for group projects will be discussed today and groups will meet to start brainstorming ideas for projects.

***Attendance Required Today***

Oct 3: Group Meetings to Finish Proposals – Arrange appointment with TA or Professor if desired

- Oct 5: In-Class Interview Workshop  
**First examination due (you must turn it in by Oct 1 if you want your grade prior to drop deadline)**  
**Proposals and Draft Interview Questions Due**  
**Attendance Required Today**
- Oct 8: Conduct Outside Interview Trial – Arrange to meet partner at location of your convenience
- Oct 10: In-Class Report on Interview Trial and Revise Interview Questions
- Oct 12: Fieldwork/Interview Lab 1 -- Schedule on your own time.

### **FEMINIST RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES**

- Oct 15: Literary Criticism  
Guest Speaker: TBA  
Reading TBA  
**First Ethnographic Fieldnote or Interview Reflection Due**
- Oct 17: Feminist Philosophy (tentatively)  
Guest Speaker: TBA  
Reading: TBA
- Oct 19: History  
Guest Speaker: Daleah Goodwin  
Reading TBA
- Oct 22 & 24: Feminism and Film  
Arrangements and requirements for this unit will be described in class.
- Oct 26: No Class (Fall Break)

### **FEMINIST METHODS OUTSIDE OF ACADEMIA**

- Oct 29: Women and Psychological Practice  
Guest Speaker: Michelle Swagler  
Reading: TBA
- Oct 31: Women and the Law  
Guest Speaker: Penn Dodson  
Reading: TBA

### **METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS IN PRACTICE**

- Nov 2: Fieldwork/Interview Lab 2 -- Schedule on your own time
- Nov 5: Access, Accuracy, and Interpretation  
Reading: Milkman, Waters, Borland  
**Second Ethnographic Fieldnote or Interview Reflection Due**
- Nov 7: Interpretation  
Reading: Wolf (book)

Nov 9: Fieldwork/Interview Lab 3 -- Schedule on your own time.

Nov 12: Interpretation, cont'd.

Reading: Wolf (book)

***Third Ethnographic Fieldnote or Interview Reflection Due***

Nov 14: Intimacy in Fieldwork

Reading: Wolcott (book)

***Second Examination Distributed***

Nov 16: Exam Day – Arrange to work in groups or on your own.

Nov 19: Intimacy in Fieldwork, cont'd.

Reading: Wolcott (book)

Nov 21 & 23: No Class (Thanksgiving)

### **PRESENTATIONS**

**Attendance is mandatory for all remaining class sessions!!!**

Nov 26: Taking Stock/Catching Up

***Second Examination Due***

Nov 28: Group 1 Presents

Nov 30: Group 2 Presents

Dec 3: Group 3 Presents

[[Dec 4: University Operating on Friday Schedule. We'll use it if we need it.]]

Dec 5: Group 4 Presents

***Deadline for Turning in Revisions***

***Final Paper Due***