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Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-4:00

Course Description  
This course is required for PhD students enrolled in the Graduate Option in Gender and Women’s Studies and is optional for MA students enrolled in the Option. The course provides students with the opportunity to discuss and develop their original research in gender and women’s studies after taking WMST 601. It focuses on the process of integrating the insights of feminist theory and the practice of feminist methods into students’ own research projects. Additional readings will vary by year according to the research foci of participants. The course is designed to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and dialogue and encourages students to present their own work.

Course Aims and Organization  
The aim of this course is to provide a “workshopping” environment for students engaged in writing a piece of work based on original research. The course provides a context in which to teach your subject matter and present your own work, receive feedback from your peers, and revise and advance your writing. The goal is to allow you to develop your own research and writing in a feminist vein. This means drawing on and integrating feminist theories and methods as appropriate to your research, while being guided by feminist concerns and insights in defining and articulating that research.

Since the course is organized around and focuses upon advancing students’ own work in gender and women’s studies, it is important that you have an idea of the research project or trajectory that you will be pursuing. In particular, you should focus on a discrete piece of work that you will aim to develop by means of the course. This could be a chapter of your dissertation (PhD) or thesis (MA), a paper for PhD candidacy, or a paper you are preparing for publication. The exact nature of this piece of work is left open to negotiation with the instructor, but you should aim at a final paper of 20-25 pages in length.

A core part of the academic experience in gender, feminist, and women’s studies is to learn to present one’s work and speak to peers in an interdisciplinary context; engage seriously and critically with others’ work outside one’s field; and respond to and revise one’s work in light of critical feedback. This course aims to provide all three aspects of this interdisciplinary experience.

Required Texts  


Recommended Texts  

Marks Breakdown  
In-Class Presentation: 20%
Participation: 20%
Colloquium Presentation: 20%
Final Paper: 40%

Assignments

All written assignments must:

- be typed and double-spaced using 12 pt. Times New Roman font
- have one-inch margins
- use MLA formatting
- have the student’s name, the instructor’s name, course code, date, and word count printed in the top left-hand corner of the first page (no title page is necessary)
- have numbered pages
- be submitted as a hard copy; email submissions will not be accepted

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In-Class Presentation
You should aim to teach your subject matter to others in the class, keeping in mind that this is an interdisciplinary context of your peers within feminist/gender/women’s studies. The aim of this presentation is both to familiarize the class with your area of research, and to provide you with experience in both teaching your specific area of expertise and critical discussion leading.

Assign a reading or readings that relate to your research but that is also broad enough for the rest of the class to access. The article(s) should have a feminist and/or gender/women’s studies focus; please do not assign more than 50 pages of reading. You must make copies of your reading available to the class at least one week in advance of your presentation. If you need assistance with making copies of the reading, please see the course instructor.

Your presentation guide the class through the questions and/or arguments raised by the reading, commenting on how you will use this work in your paper. You should aim for an approach that combines your own commentary with discussion questions for the class.

Participation
This course relies on seminar participation because part of learning involves being in the world with others. Learning is social, and one of the goals of a Women’s and Gender Studies education is to foster a social and intellectual community of feminist learners and to develop your critical voice. Your participation grade will be based on the quality of your contributions to the class. Classroom contributions included engaging in discussions; asking critical questions; giving feedback to your peers; listening actively and respectfully; showing up on time; and helping to build accountable space.

Colloquium Presentation
The colloquium paper will be either a section or a condensed version of your final paper. Please submit a written version of the paper to the instructor. This paper will be presented at a public colloquium on Friday, April 4. Your colloquium presentation will be 20 minutes in duration. There will also be some additional time for questions and answers at the end of the paper. This assignment will be assessed based on the paper itself, your delivery of the paper, and your participation in the question and answer session.
Final Paper
The final paper will be submitted two weeks following the colloquium presentation, in order to give you the opportunity to revise your work based on any feedback that you received at the event. You should aim to produce a 20-25 page (article length) paper that contributes to your field of study and that could be submitted to an academic journal.

Policies and Guidelines

How to Interpret Grades in this Course
I am eager to help you do well on assignments before they are due. Please visit your professor during office hours to ask questions about material for the course and assignments on which you are working. If you wish to show me a draft of an assignment, you may do so during that time. I will look over an outline and comment on the introductory paragraph of drafts.

Grades are assigned based on the scale set out in the Arts and Sciences calendar. Grades in the “A” range are awarded only for superior work (and not merely sufficient performance). Grades in the “B” range are awarded for work that is above satisfactory. In the “C” range they are awarded for satisfactory/sufficient work. And in the “D” range, they are awarded for unsatisfactory work.

Final grades will be based on the McGill University scale, reproduced here:

85-100% = A
80-84% = A-
75-79% = B+
70-74% = B
65-69% = B-
60-64% = C+
55-59% = C
50-54% = D (Conditional Pass)
0-49% = F (Fail)

Late Policy
I expect you to submit your work on time. Extensions will only be granted in cases of officially documented family, personal, or medical emergency.

Disability Services
If you have a disability, please register with the Office for Students with Disabilities at 398-6009 (www.mcgill.ca/osd).

Unfortunately, the instructor’s office is not accessible for visitors with mobility impairment, but meetings at alternate locations will be happily arranged.

Email Policy
If you have a question for the professor that involves more than a yes/no answer, please ask your question during office hours instead. If you are unable to meet with the professor during office hours, please feel free to make an appointment.

Please do not email the professor on the weekends or after business hours.

Grade Appeals
Assignments are graded on performance, not effort. Grades are final, except where a mistake has been made in calculation. Here are the circumstances under which the professor would change a grade: (a) if an error has been made at the level of calculation, or (b) if you have not been held to the same standard as everyone else. If you seek clarification on a grade you have received, you should visit your professor during office hours, keeping in mind the criteria of evaluation on which your assignment was graded. The professor will neither defend nor contest the evaluation; she will instead discuss ways in which you can understand the evaluation and improve upon your performance.
In the event that you feel you received an undeserved grade and wish to dispute it, you must make your case in writing within one week (7 days) of receiving the grade. The case in writing must detail the grounds on which you are making an appeal, accompanied by the original assignment (make a photocopy for yourself). The letter must be typed, single-spaced and printed on paper; email submissions will not be accepted. Grade complaints will not be considered after the week deadline, or if they are not made in writing. If the professor agrees to review your assignment and re-evaluate its grade, keep in mind that your grade could remain the same, be elevated, or be reduced.

Guidelines for Productive Discussion
Our seminar time is dedicated to in-depth discussion. Following a few basic discussion guidelines will help insure that this time is productive, enlightening and fun for all of us.

1. Experience and anecdote do not constitute evidence in a scholarly argument. While you each bring interesting experiences to the classroom, ONLY bring up your personal experience when it is relevant to class discussion; think carefully about this before you speak about your experience. If you bring up your own experience in class, recognize that it becomes a public topic for discussion. Others may interpret your experience differently than you do, and they are free to respectfully disagree with your interpretation. Furthermore, ask yourself what point you seek to make by talking about yourself. Is it really relevant? Do you want others to know this about you?

2. Work to create a shared climate of friendly and lively discussion. Avoid personal attacks, jabs, and grandstanding behaviors. Also avoid overly personalizing the topic under discussion. The point is to build knowledge together, not to look good or act smarter than everyone else or endlessly talk about yourself.

3. Disagreements are natural and welcome in scholarly discussion. So are arguments. But arguments are not contests. Grant your fellow course participants courtesy and respect, whether you agree with what they say or not.

4. As much as possible, avoid purely negative critique in your comments. Our goal in discussion is to understand the texts we read and how they might be useful to us – in addition to cultivating our skills in critique. Understand first; criticize second.

5. Wait your turn – do not interrupt others.

6. You do not have to express your own opinion on a subject. You are also free to change your mind on any topic at any time.

Weekly Schedule
CLASS ONE: INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM (6 JANUARY)
Introduction to the Class and to Each Other

Theme I: The Politics of Feminist Research and Writing in the Academic Sphere

CLASS TWO: FEMINISM AND WRITING (13 JANUARY)

Orr, Catherine M. “Activism.” Rethinking Women’s and Gender Studies. Ed. Catherine M. Orr,
***Sign Up for Seminar Presentations***

CLASS THREE: FEMINISM AND THE ACADEMY (20 JANUARY)
Readings:

CLASS FOUR: FEMINISM AND VOICE (27 JANUARY)
Readings:

Theme II: Feminist Research Workshop

CLASS FIVE: WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS (3 FEBRUARY)
Readings: TBD

CLASS SIX: WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS (10 FEBRUARY)
Readings: TBD

CLASS SEVEN: WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS (17 FEBRUARY)
Readings: TBD

CLASS EIGHT: WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS (24 FEBRUARY)
Readings: TBD

Reading Break: No Class on 3 March

CLASS NINE: WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS (10 MARCH)
Readings: TBD

CLASS TEN: WORK-IN-PROGRESS PRESENTATIONS (17 MARCH)
Readings: TBD

Theme III: Feminist Research Colloquium

CLASS ELEVEN: COLLOQUIUM PREPARATION (24 MARCH)
No Readings

CLASS TWELVE: COLLOQUIUM PREPARATION (31 MARCH)
No Readings

***COLLOQUIUM (FRIDAY 4 APRIL)***
Note: This event will likely begin in the morning and end in the afternoon. Save the Date!

CLASS THIRTEEN: CONCLUSION OF THE COURSE (7 APRIL)
No readings