

Feminist Epistemologies
WGST 5020/POLS 5770/PHIL 5100
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Prof. Penny Weiss
Office: 314-977-3619

McGannon 137
Cell: 765-977-3619

pweiss1@slu.edu
Office hours: M & Th 9-11:30



We will address four sets of questions, and the connections between them:

- * What are the implications of feminism for academic research (who/what we study, how we study it, what we do with the findings)?
- * What implications does feminism have for epistemology (what counts as knowledge/ignorance, how one learns, who knowers are, what barriers to knowledge are connected to gender and race, etc.)?
- * How does Women's & Gender Studies as a discipline incorporate, honor, and continue to explore feminist methodologies and epistemologies?
- * How can you further incorporate feminist methodologies and epistemologies into your own research and writing practices?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (Things you “get” [vs. have] to do)

- Attend; be prepared; participate regularly, vigorously, sincerely, and collegially; be a good feminist citizen (15%)
- Lead discussion of readings (approximately 3-4 times) (15%)
- Provide a “current events” link (twice) (5%)
- Attend (and write up) 2 WGS talks (5%)
- “Just Thinking” journal (5 entries) (10%)
- Write (and present) a research paper (Total of 50%)
 - Proposal (discuss with me) (5%)
 - Bibliography (5%)
 - Draft (review each other's) (10%)
 - Final version (present “conference version”) (30%)

Be aware of SLU's policies on plagiarism and on accommodating disabilities. Take advantage of the writing center & the WGS librarian, Miriam Joseph.

When it is your turn to present a reading...

- Assume everyone has read it. You're talking *about* it, rather than describing the whole piece in detail. You should be able to address the essay in 10-15 minutes.
- Here are some items that may be useful to focus on (feel free to select others):
 - Show us where the author defines the purpose of the piece, explains why that is an important goal, and says how that goal will be met. You *always* want to find this in your readings, and to include it in your own writing.
 - Point out to us what you consider the two most important passages, explaining why they are central.
 - Make 1 or 2 links to other readings (earlier ones or today's).
 - Tell us something you in particular learned from the piece.
 - Tell us how you might use something from the reading in your research.
 - Questions: Does this reading open up other research questions for you? Is there something you'd like the class to discuss? Is anything unclear or problematic to you?

When you are providing a current events link...

- Tell us *briefly* what the recent article/blog/etc. is about.
- Link it to *specific* ideas in *particular* readings.
- Conclude with what the link implies (that the reading is overgeneralized, catching on, bearing fruit, contested, expanded, etc.).

Use this same 3-part current events format in writing up WGS talks (1.5-2 pages). Remember to look for events on the calendar page of the WGS website.

Why a "Just Thinking" journal?

- There are some things you want to process in this format. Make your journal a place where you try things out, build on your ideas, voice a variety of your reactions. This is one site where I won't comment on grammar, organization—anything but your thoughts. So pick an idea or passage from a reading, and go to town with it.
- Keep both being "just" and "thinking" in mind.

"The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn." -
Gloria Steinem

"Questions about knowledge are implicated in all aspects of women's oppression." -
Lorraine Code

SEMESTER SCHEDULE (which we'll try mightily to keep)

8/23 Introductions to one another and to feminist epistemology

- Donna Kate Rushin, "The Bridge Poem"
- Marge Piercy, "Unlearning to Not Speak"
- "A body of knowledge" exercise



8/30 The Tales We Tell: Knowledge, Culture, Curiosity, Re-Interpretation, etc.

- Cynthia Enloe, "Being Curious about Our Lack of Feminist Curiosity." *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (U. of California, 2004): 1-10.
- Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, eds. Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Christina Gilmartin, & Robin Lydenberg (Oxford U. Press, 1999): 15-28.
- Jennifer Terry, "Lesbians under the Medical Gaze: Scientists Search for Remarkable Differences." *Just Methods*, ed. Alison Jaggar (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008): 108-118.
- Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes, Revisited." *The Sciences* (August 2000). <http://www.aissg.org/PDFs/Five-Sexes-Revisited-2000.pdf>
- Aida Hurtado, "Theory in the Flesh: Toward an Endarkened Epistemology." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* (March 2003): 215-225. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248986836_Theory_in_the_flesh_Toward_an_endarkened_epistemology

Reading reflections: What kind of quality or capacity is "curiosity"? What influences it, and what does it affect? How are the examples of science in the Terry and Martin readings influenced by curiosity, ignorance, culture, and fact? How do we leave ourselves open to new ways of conceiving? Overall, for each reading, be prepared to discuss 1) the issues and questions it raised regarding feminist epistemology and 2) its relation to the other readings.

9/6: The Epistemology and Politics of Ignorance (2 weeks)

- Dale Spender, "Why Didn't I Know" *Women of Ideas* (London: Pandora Press, 1982): 2-16.
- Penny Weiss, "The Politics of Ignorance: Christine de Pizan." *Canon Fodder: Historical Women Political Thinkers* (Penn State U. Press, 2009): 30-55.
- Nancy Tuana, "The Speculum of Ignorance: The Women's Health Movement and Epistemologies of Ignorance." *Hypatia* 21, 3 (Summer 2006): 1-19.
- Mary Hawkesworth, "Evidence Blindness," *Feminist Inquiry*, 118-141.

What does it mean for theories of knowledge to have a theory of ignorance? What questions is this relatively new area of research raising?

9/13: The Epistemology and Politics of Ignorance

- Charles Mills, “White Ignorance” <http://shifter-magazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/mills-white-ignorance.pdf>
- Elizabeth Spelman, “Managing Ignorance.” *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, eds. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (SUNY, 2007): 119-131.
- Nancy Tuana, “Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance.” *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*, eds. Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008): 765-791.
- Cynthia Townley, “Reevaluation of Ignorance,” *Hypatia* 21, 3 (Summer 2006): 37-55.

9/20 Some history of feminist epistemology

- Christine de Pizan (1405), *The Book of the City of Ladies* (NY: Persea Books, 1982): 3-32 & 62-97.
- Judith Sargent Murray (1790), “On the Equality of the Sexes.” <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/murray/equality/equality.html>
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1812), “Our Brains and What Ails Them.”
- Jane Addams, (1899) “The Subtle Problems of Charity.” <http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/settlement-houses/jane-addams-on-the-problems-of-charity-1899/>
- Susan Glaspell (1900), “A Jury of Her Peers” <http://www.learner.org/interactives/literature/story/fulltext.html> (Even better to watch this than to read it! Versions include: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cy5uhShkh6g>)
- Audre Lorde (1978), “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power.” https://us.corwin.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/11881_Chapter_5.pdf

As you read or watch these authors from different time periods, you might list what you see as the questions they are trying to address. This will enable us to track both tradition and evolution in the field of feminist epistemology over the course of the semester. Also track your responses to their questions—do they surprise you? Ring a bell with you? Etc. Are there core epistemological questions among early feminist thinkers? What explains the different emphases?

EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE

9/27 A. Testimonial injustice

- Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007): 1-108.

How do epistemology and moral philosophy come together in Fricker? What kinds of practices is she drawing our attention to, and why? How does she explain them? What are their effects on various parties?

10/4 B. More on Credibility and Authoritative Knowledge

- Catherine Kingfisher and Ann Millard, “‘Milk Makes Me Sick but My Body Needs It’: Conflict and Contradiction in the Establishment of Authoritative Knowledge.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 12, 4 (December 1998): 447-466.
- Anita Ho, “Trusting Experts and Epistemic Humility in Disability.” *The International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* 4, 2 (Fall 2011): 102-123.
- Linda Martin Alcoff, “On Judging Epistemic Credibility: Is Social Identity Relevant?” *Engendering Rationalities*, edited by Nancy Tuana and Sandra Morgen (SUNY Press, 2001): 53-80.
- Lorraine Code, “Women and Experts.” *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Cornell 1991): 173-221.

10/11 C. Hermeneutical injustice

- Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007): 147-177
- #### **D. Invisibility**
- Marilyn Frye, “To Be and Be Seen,” *The Politics of Reality* (The Crossing Press): 152-174
 - Marjorie DeVault, “Talking and Listening from Women’s Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis.” *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, eds. Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Michelle Yaiser (Oxford University Press 2004): 227-250.
 - Anne Firor Scott, “On Seeing and Not Seeing: A Case of Historical Invisibility.” *The Journal of American History* 71, 1 (Jun., 1984): 7-21.
 - A. Wendy Nastasi, “Researching to Transgress: The Epistemic Virtue of Research With” *Philosophy of Education* (2012): 258-265.
 - Alicia Garza, “A HerStory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement” <http://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>
 - Susan Ehrlich, “Critical Linguistics as Feminist Methodology.” *Changing Methods: Feminists Transforming Practice*, eds. Sandra Burt and Lorraine Code (Broadview Press 1995): 45-73

** RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE by FRIDAY 10/14 **

10/18: Standpoint Epistemology

- Alison Wylie, “Feminist Philosophy of Science: Standpoint Matters.” <http://philpapers.org/archive/WYLFPO-2.pdf>
- Annette Patterson and Martha Satz, “Genetic Counseling and the Disabled: Feminism Examines the Stance of Those Who Stand at the Gate.” *Hypatia* 17, 3 (Summer, 2002): 118-142

- Marianne Janack, "Standpoint Epistemology without the 'Standpoint'?" An Examination of Epistemic Privilege and Epistemic Authority." *Hypatia* 12, 2 (Spring 1997): 125-139.
- Hawkesworth, Chapter 7, 176-206.

10/25: Intersectionality

- Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *The Feminist Philosophy Reader* eds. Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo (McGraw Hill, 2008): 279-309.
- Nash, J.. "Rethinking Intersectionality." *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 1-15.
- Hawkesworth, Chapter 8, 207-248.
- Rita Kaur Dhamoon, "Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality." *Political Research Quarterly* 64, 1 (March 2011): 230-243.
- Dean Spade, "Intersectional Resistance and Law Reform." *Signs* 38, 4 (Summer 2013): 1031-1055

** BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE by FRIDAY 10/28 **

11/1: Ways of Reading, Writing, & Reasoning and Forms of Knowledge

- Liz Bondi, "In Whose Words? On Gender Identities, Knowledge and Writing Practices" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographer* 22, 2 (1997): 245-258.
- Shari Stone-Mediatore, "Challenging Academic Norms: An Epistemology for Feminist and Multicultural Classrooms." *NWSA Journal* (Summer 2007): 55-78.
- Penny Weiss, "Sei Shonagon and the Politics of Form." *Canon Fodder: Historical Feminist Political Thinkers* (Penn State University Press, 2009):
- Sarah Hoagland, "Resisting Rationality." *Engendering Rationalities*, eds. Nancy Tuana and Sandra Morgen (SUNY 2001): 125-146.
- Hawkesworth, "Evidence," *Feminist Inquiry*, 98-117.
- Arun Mukherjee, "Reading Race in Women's Writing." *Changing Methods: Feminists Transforming Practice*, eds. Sandra Burt and Lorraine Code (Broadview Press 1995): 127-135

11/7: GUEST SPEAKER LORETTA KENSINGER on FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

11/8: Feminist Epistemology and Pedagogy

- "A Guide to Feminist Pedagogy" <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/femped/>
- http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/12229/Feminist_Pedagogy_Is_For_Everybody.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d
- Kathleen Weiler, "Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference." *Harvard Educational Review* 61, 4 (November 1991): 449-474.
- Amie Macdonald, "Feminist Pedagogy and the Appeal to Epistemic Privilege." *Twenty-First Century Feminist Classrooms*, eds. Amie Macdonald and Susan Sanchez-Casal (Palgrave 2002): 111-133.

11/15: ** MEET this week IN GROUPS TO DISCUSS PAPER DRAFTS **

11/22: Objectivity

- Hawkesworth, 76-117 (“Reconceptualizing Objectivity”).
- Alison Jaggar, “Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology.” *Just Methods*, ed. Alison Jaggar (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008): 378-391.
- Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.” *Feminist Studies* 14, 3 (Autumn 1988): 575-599. https://faculty.washington.edu/pembina/all_articles/Haraway1988.pdf

How have the demands of “objectivity” been used against feminist scholarship? What is at stake in being objective? What variety of alternatives to traditional understandings do you see in these readings?

11/29: What is Feminist Epistemology?

- Uma Narayan. 2003. "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist." *The Feminist Philosophy Reader*, eds. Alison Bailey and Chris Cuomo (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008): 756-765.
- Patricia Hill Collins, "Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology." http://www.woldww.net/classes/Principles_of_Inquiry/Collins-AfrocFemEpistemology+.htm (This is from *Black Feminist Thought*).
- Helen Longino and Kathleen Lennon, “Feminist Epistemology as a Local Epistemology.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 71 (1997): 19-54. <http://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Longino-Lennon-Feminist-Epistemology-as-a-Local-Epistemology-Copie.pdf>
- Pick an encyclopedia article/overview of the field of feminist epistemology that seems helpful to you, perhaps discipline-specific. General options here include: Janack's piece on the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and Anderson's on the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* site.

Think back to the list of epistemological questions posed by historical feminist thinkers. What queries seem to travel across time, which are unrepresented here, and what new ones have emerged? How do these overviews compare with the subjects we have covered this semester?

