



London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership

Advanced Research Methods in Social Sciences

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| Course Code & Title | LISS213H Feminist Research Methods | | | | |
| Convenor(s) | Gabriella Stringer, Queen Mary University London, School of Business and Management | | | | |
| Institution | Queen Mary University London | Department | | LISS DTP | |
| Academic Year | 2023-24 | Term | | Autumn/winter | |
| Number of sessions | 4 | Research Platform | Social Theory & Epistemology | Length of Session(s) | 3 hours each |
| Day, Date | | Start : End | | Room Location | |
| Monday 27 November 2023 | | 14 :00-17:00 | | Via Zoom | |
| Tuesday 28 November 2023 | | 14 :00-17:00 | | | |
| Wednesday 29 November 2023 | | 14 :00-17:00 | | | |
| Thursday 30 November 2023 | | 14 :00-17:00 | | | |
| Enrolment Links: | Available to book on SkillsForge from Thursday 21st September 2023 . Click to log in and register: https://training.kcl.ac.uk/kcl/#he/dev/eventDetails;em.providerCode=LISS,providerOrgAlias=kcl,number=213H; Questions? Visit our Training FAQ here: Frequently Asked Questions - LISS DTP (liss-dtp.ac.uk) | | | | |

Course Description:

Feminism, as both a political movement and a social theory, has made crucial contributions to our shared understandings of social research, and the power dynamics at work in the research process.

Moving from more abstract discussions around feminist theory, through to interactive explorations of the practical application of feminist research methods, this course aims to provide students with an introduction to ways of understanding, evaluating, and producing social research underpinned by feminist approaches and epistemologies. We will explore how the principles of feminist research have influenced social research – and the social world more broadly. We will pay close attention to the tensions, dilemmas and intersections at work in contemporary feminist thought, and what these mean for us researching today, with reference to the politics of feminist research, and issues around representation, voice, positionality and power.

The course will be delivered online through a combination of lectures, discussions and interactive activities relating to social research methods.

Reading List:

N.B. This is a general background reading list. Each section listed below includes suggested reading specific to that session. There are also many good quality feminist method readers available in LISS institution libraries.

Brooks, A. (2006) 'Feminist standpoint epistemology: building knowledge and empowerment through women's lived experience', https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/12936_Chapter3.pdf



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Feminist Africa 2023, Volume 4, Issue 1 “African Women Workers in a Changing World”

Gunaratnam Y., and Hamilton C. (2017) Introduction the Wherewithal of Feminist Methods. *Feminist Review*;115(1):1-12. doi:10.1057/s41305-017-0023-5

Holland and Ramazanoglu (2003) *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing Feminist Research*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Olufemi, L. (2020). *Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power (Outspoken)*. London: Pluto Press.

Journals: Hypatia, Signs, Feminist Africa, Feminist Review

Videos:

Sandra Harding on standpoint epistemology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOAMc12Pqml>

Eligibility:

This course is open to all PhD students using social science methodologies.

Pre-course preparation:

The below are suggested readings for each session. These are not required readings, if a student has not read the text, they are still welcome to join the session. These readings are designed to enhance and deepen your understanding of themes and issues covered.

Number of students: 20 max

Session 1: Feminist thought and action – principles in feminist research

This first session orientates the course with a focus on the liberatory potential of feminist thought, action and research. From Sojourner Truth’s speech in 1851 to the present day Kurdish Women’s movement, feminist thought and activism have been grounded in localised struggles for health and healthcare - reproductive and maternal health; labour rights - from freedom from enslavement to gender pay gaps; voting rights and political leadership; action against discrimination; struggles for the protection of life on earth. What does this mean for feminist research? What are our feminist research intentions? What is our feminist theory and practice?

We’ll gone on to consider some key interventions that feminists have made – in epistemology, methodology and research ethics in order to rectify injustice and harm in research. This session considers the three key epistemological interventions feminists have made and the implications of feminist thought for what methods we use.

Recommended readings:



Dirik, Dilar. (2022) *The Kurdish Women's Movement : History, Theory, Practice*. Pluto Press. Chapter 2: Theory

Haraway, D. (1988). *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575–599. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>

Harding, S. (2004). *A Socially Relevant Philosophy of Science? Resources from Standpoint Theory's Controversiality*. *Hypatia*, 19(1), 25–47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810930>

Session 2: what methods best met the research aims?

How do we decide which methods are best for the research project? In this session we will discuss methodological controversy and tension. Why qualitative methods have been argued to bolster feminist goals around representation and emancipation and explore what it means to approach quantitative research in feminist ways. In this session we will discuss some of the methods mobilised in feminist research with specific reference to both secondary data use and primary research with surveys, interviews, ethnography, and arts-based participatory methods.

Kelly, L. Burton, S. and Regan, L. (1994) *Researching Women's Lives or Studying Women's oppression? Reflections on what constitutes feminist research* in Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. Taylor & Francis. (pub 2013)

Oakley, A. (1981). *Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms*. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing Feminist Research*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Oliveira, E. (2019) *The personal is political: a feminist reflection on a journey into participatory arts-based research with sex worker migrants in South Africa*, *Gender & Development*, 27:3, 523-540, DOI: [10.1080/13552074.2019.1664047](https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2019.1664047)

Session 3: Research Ethics: Power, privilege, and choices

From project design, set up, analysis, write up, publication and impact work we have power as researchers. We will explore biases at work in social research and discuss the complexity and politics of representation in research processes. We will unpack ideas around who gets to speak, and who gets to produce knowledge in research processes, and discuss the ways in which feminist interventions might disrupt some of the power inequalities at work in research.

Building on this we will consider feminist standpoint theory and discuss researcher positionality. This session unpacks the importance of researcher positionality and the co-construction of knowledge during the research process.

Focusing on discussions of power and privilege, this workshop will further explore the role of power dynamics in the research process, including those at work between researchers and participants, and the ways in which structural inequalities 'bleed in' to the research space.,

This will also involve discussions of research ethics - in project design, set up, field work, analysis, write up and sharing our research. How can we honour the imperative to do no harm? How do we protect and safeguard the wellbeing of research participants? How can a feminist care ethics can influence how we work.



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Recommended Readings:

Anumol (2022) *Caring as Research, and Researching with Care*. Comparative Political Theory

Armstead, C. (1995) *Writing Contradictions: Feminist Research and Feminist Writing*

Session 4: When is the end is not the end?

How can feminist research interact with and contribute to positive social change? How can we design for impact and social engagement? What about engagement through co-produced participatory research? How do we share our findings in impactful ways? How can we plan for this from where we are now? This session brings together the threads from throughout the week to help us all consider

Essential Reading:

Please read and consider at least one article of relevance to your research topic, from *Feminist Africa* or *Agenda Journals*. We'll be using these in a group exercise.

Supplementary text book reading to the course:

Brannelly, T. and Barnes, M. ed (2022) *Researching with Care: Applying Feminist Care Ethics to Research Practice*. Policy Press

Leavy, P. and Harris, A.M. (2019). *Contemporary feminist research from theory to practice*. New York, Ny: Guilford Press.

Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (eds.) (2016). *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. Taylor & Francis.

Ryan-Flood, R and Gill, R. (2010). *Secrecy and silence in the research process: feminist reflections*. London: Routledge.