WGS 211: FOUNDATIONS IN WGS WRITING AND RESEARCH
BLENDDED COURSE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
SPRING 2018, NWQ 1935, T/TH 2-3:15
COURSE DESCRIPTION AND POLICIES

Instructor: Casey O’Brien
Pronouns: she, her, hers or they, them, theirs
Office: Engelmann, B50F
Office Hrs: T/H 3:30-4:30 (or by appt.)
Email: caseyo@uwm.edu
Class List: wgs-211@uwm.edu
Text: 414-736-3711

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Hello! Welcome to WGS 211! I look forward to spending the semester together developing a feminist lens through which to research and construct knowledge. This course will explore what is meant by feminist research, how it is practiced, and how feminist research methods affect and influence scholarship. We begin by examining foundational issues and debates regarding feminist research methods, methodology and epistemology. Further, we will examine current feminist research practices and practice critical writing and thinking necessary to understand and produce feminist research. Since research is a craft best learned through practice, and since the ideas and concepts we discuss in our readings and class discussions will be better understood by doing feminist research, a significant portion of this course will be devoted to engaging in the research process ourselves. In the form of a critically researched personal narrative, students will be asked to research their own histories and the ways in which their experiences are informed by intersections of class, race, gender, and sexuality. Research projects will examine ways in which scholarship in women’s and gender studies has influenced areas of interest specific to the student. Additionally, your final projects will serve as an additional course text during the final two weeks of the semester.

BLENDDED COURSE

This is a 25% blended course, which means we will hold a class meeting online once every other week. These online meetings will be mostly devoted to online writing workshops. Participation in the bi-weekly online discussion forums will count toward your attendance and participation grade. In order to be successful in this blended course, you will need to have regular and reliable access to the Internet.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Regular and reliable access to the Internet

All readings are available on D2L
**Course Goals**

- Develop and demonstrate critical reading, writing, and thinking skills.
- Examine feminist practices associated with evolving epistemologies and research strategies.
- Become familiar with key theoretical and methodological issues and concerns in feminist scholarship and interdisciplinary research.
- Understand how subjective experiences influence the research process.
- Apply feminist theory and research methods to the composing process of one’s personal narrative.
- Transform from observers of historical information into producers of primary source material.
- Develop critical research skills for examining women’s and gender studies scholarship for assessing the status of women, minorities, and feminist research in one’s own field of interest.

**Grading Rubric**

20% Attendance and Class/Online Participation  
25% Homework Assignment Sequence  
15% Critical Intersections Personal Narrative (midterm)  
20% Final Research Project  
15% Final Presentation  
5% Final Reflection

**Grading Scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-94</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86.9</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79.9</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76.9</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-73.9</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69.9</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-66.9</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-63.9</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;59.9</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workload**

This is a reading and writing intensive course. A general guideline is spending 3 hours outside of class per credit, so you should plan to spend about 9 hours per week on readings, completing assignments, and preparing for this class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Estimated Time to Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In class: 2.5 hours per week x 15 weeks</td>
<td>= 37.5 hours per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online discussions: 1.5 x 6 online meetings</td>
<td>= 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required reading: 2 hours per week x 16 weeks</td>
<td>= 32 hours per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required writing: 2 hours per week x 16 weeks <em>(including class assignments, reading responses/analyses)</em></td>
<td>= 32 hours per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project: 2 hours per week X 16 Weeks</td>
<td>= 32 hours per semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam Block</td>
<td>= 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Average</td>
<td>= <strong>144.5 hours</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance and Participation: 20%

Participation need not require speaking in every class discussion, but does require being ready and able to participate in any discussion. If you do not participate verbally the entire term, it will be noticed and taken into account in your final grade. If you are concerned about this portion of your grade please speak to me personally.

The reason I count participation and attendance as such a large percentage of your grade is, in part, because learning is very much a social process: we learn from our interactions with others, the questions we ask, the responses we hear, the conversations we have. For this reason, discussions in the course will be student-generated. By that, I mean you will be responsible for a large part of determining where discussions will go and what you find important, note-worthy, and why. I will certainly be part of discussions and will help guide them, but I expect you to be prepared to take part in the meaning-making process.

Because this is a blended course, it will be important that you engage in bi-weekly online discussions. Sometimes the discussions will be held among the large group; other times, you’ll be directed to conduct small-group discussions. While the timing is more flexible (you don’t need to be online from 2:00-3:15), you should be sure to devote at least 1.25 hours to the online interactions that we’ll hold every other Thursday.

Additionally, since this is a writing-intensive course, from time-to-time, the primary text we examine in class will be the writing that you and your classmates produce in response to an essay or book we’ve read. The class community should be prepared to discuss anonymous samples of their own and their classmates’ writing with as much thought and consideration as we would a published text. Often the ideas you and your classmates generate in class and in writing can provide entry points for critiquing larger issues relevant to women’s studies.

You may miss one class (either face-to-face or online) with no penalty to your grade. After one absence, your grade will be affected.

Being present for a class means being there for the entire class period. Three late arrivals or early exits (1-19 minutes) will count as one absence. A tardy of more than 20 minutes will be counted as an absence.

Respectful Participation: Please keep an open mind and be respectful of your fellow classmates when they are speaking. Part of being respectful includes giving your undivided attention during class. Please silence and put away your devices during class, unless you are directed to use them for an activity. Participation points will be deducted for using devices unrelated to classwork.
Homework Assignment Sequence: 25%
Throughout the term, I will assign a sequence of reading and writing assignments designed to
guide you through various critical reading, writing, research, and reflective practices. There are 20
assignments in all. You are responsible for thoughtfully completing them and turning them in on
time.
Assignments with their due dates will always be posted under the Content →
“Assignments” section of our D2L site. You are responsible for reading, completing, and submitting
the assignment on time.
If for some reason you must miss a class meeting, please contact me so we can make
arrangements for you to keep up with class work.

| Late Work Policy: I do not accept late work. However, I will drop the lowest score from the H.W. assignment sequence, so if you happen to miss one assignment and receive a 0, it will be dropped and not factored into your grade. |

Critical Intersections Personal Narrative: 15%
This assignment asks you to write a personal narrative about an event or time period in your life
and critically examine its significance on shaping your identity. The purpose of this activity is both
to think about and put into writing ways in which you might position yourself in and amongst
multiple forms of social power and social institutions, including sex, gender, race, class, ethnicity,
ability, nationality, sexual identity, and so forth. This narrative should further work to help you
understand the background you bring to your reading and writing and also the bias with which you
approach your own research. We will read several examples of this kind of writing and will discuss
strategies and approaches you might try out for this assignment. A separate handout with more
information will be passed out in class.

Final Research Project: 20%
This project should grow out of your critical intersections narrative, and it asks you to practice
feminist research and research writing methods as you examine and critically engage with and
interrogate your experiences, biases, and intersections present in your narrative. The final
research project should be an essay ranging about 10-12 pages (but may be longer) in length and
should include a works cited page. You will have the opportunity to work on this project
throughout the semester. A separate handout with more information will be passed out in class.

Final Presentation: 15%
Everyone will present an excerpt from their final project and field questions and comments about
their project. These presentations will be 10-12 minutes and are scheduled for 5/1-5/16. A
separate handout with more information will be passed out in class.

Final Reflection: 5%
The final assignment for our class is a written reflection in which you think back on your
experiences working on your research project this semester, the challenges you faced, the
experiences that were rewarding, the knowledge you created. A more detailed assignment prompt will be handed out. This reflection is due in the D2L Dropbox by midnight, 5/16.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious offence. Plagiarism is when you copy another’s work and pass it off as your own. Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their academic work. Anyone who is found to plagiarize another’s work will be dealt with to the fullest extent in accordance with university policy. For further information on university policies for plagiarism, please see [http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/secU/SyllabusLinks.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/secU/SyllabusLinks.pdf).

**Administrative Drop**

In accordance with UWM registration policy, I will drop, without notification, any student who misses the first full week of class to allow others to add.

**Resources:**

**Women’s and Gender Studies Offices:** [http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/womensstudies/](http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/womensstudies/)

Curtin, 535 or 414-229-5918

**UWM’s Women’s Resource Center:** [http://www4.uwm.edu/wrc/wrc_interim/interim/index.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/wrc/wrc_interim/interim/index.cfm)

Union, WG93

**UWM’s LGBT Resource Center:** [http://www.aux.uwm.edu/lgbt/](http://www.aux.uwm.edu/lgbt/)

Union, WG89

**UWM’s Inclusive Excellence Center:** [http://www.uwm.edu/inclusiveexcellence](http://www.uwm.edu/inclusiveexcellence)

Union, W119

**Academic Resource Center (ARC):** If you require special accommodations, be sure to email or see me with your VISA statement the first week of class so arrangements can be made. If you haven’t already, contact the Academic Resource Center at [http://uwm.edu/arc/](http://uwm.edu/arc/) or 229-6287.

**Norris Health Center:** [http://uwm4.edu/norris/](http://uwm4.edu/norris/) or 229-4716


**Preferred Name at UWM:** [http://uwm.edu/registrar/students/student-preferred-name/](http://uwm.edu/registrar/students/student-preferred-name/)
Please write questions, comments, and/or reflections you have about the syllabus in this box.
Below lists readings and major assignments due at each class meeting. All course readings are available in D2L. Along with the below readings, the assignments handed out as part of the assignment sequence should also be turned in on time as listed on each assignment prompt. All assignment prompts will be posted to our D2L site.

**Week 1**  
1/23: Class introductions, course description & syllabus
1/25: Jane Gallop: “Close Encounters: Ethics of Reading”

**Week 2**  
1/30: Sandra Harding: “Is There a Feminist Method?”  
Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber: “Re-Invitation to Feminist Research Practices”
2/1: ONLINE CLASS  
D2L Discussion: Feminist research practices

**Week 3**  
2/6: Gesa Kirsch: *Ethical Dilemmas in Feminist Research*, Introduction and Chapter 1
2/8: Gesa Kirsch: *Ethical Dilemmas*, Chapters 2 & 3

**Week 4**  
2/15: ONLINE CLASS  
D2L Discussion  
Jacqueline Jones Royster: “Academic Discourses”  
carmen kynard: “New Life in This Dormant Creature”

**Week 5**  
2/20: Patricia Hill Collins: “Black Feminist Epistemology,” *Black Feminist Thought*

**Week 6**  
2/27: Alison Bechdel: “That Old Catastrophe,” *Fun Home*
3/1: ONLINE CLASS  
Workshop Critical Intersections Personal Narrative

**Week 7**  
3/8: Ruth Behar: “Writing in My Father’s Name”  
Critical Intersections Personal Narrative due
**Week 8**

3/15: **ONLINE CLASS**
Complete Midterm Survey
Workshop project proposal and research question(s) in writing groups

**Week 9**
SPRING BREAK

**Week 10**
Revised research question(s) & annotated bibliography due in D2L Dropbox


**Week 11**
4/3: Annotated bibliography due

4/5: **ONLINE CLASS**
Online Writing Groups—Synthesize ideas

**Week 12**
4/10: Sample student paper

4/12: In-class writing workshop

**Week 13**
4/17: Nancy Sommers: “Between the Drafts”

4/19: **ONLINE CLASS**
Online Writing Groups

**Week 14**
4/23: In-class writing workshop
Discuss sample paper
Select presentation dates/times

4/26: In-class writing workshop

**Weeks 15-16**
5/1-5/16**: Final Project Presentations
5/16: Final Reflections due in D2L Dropbox by midnight

*The Schedule is subject to change with prior notice.
**Our Exam Block is scheduled for 5/16, 12:30-2:30 in our classroom, Engelmann B73