

Feminist and Queer Research Methods and Ethics RSCH-3500 (3 credits)

Netherlands: International Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

This course provides students with an in-depth and interdisciplinary introduction to feminist and queer approaches to academic and art-based inquiry, research design and creative practice, and the methods and methodologies that constitute and guide each of those pursuits.

In line with the foundational mission of feminist and queer studies to make visible and interrogate the heteronormative priors of any endeavor, this course will begin by unsettling established understandings of knowledge and knowledge production before acquainting students with some of the key alternative approaches that have been proposed by feminist and queer researchers and practitioners, such as standpoint theory, partial perspective, intersectionality, and the limits of shared understanding in the face of difference.

In the same vein, students will learn how existing methods of gathering evidence have been reoriented and adapted with the aim of attuning research and artistic practice to power differentials and how they shape social dynamics, while also being becoming familiar with methods that have been especially designed and cultivated to closer reflect the lived realities and sensitivities of the human lives under consideration (such as oral history, autoethnography, life-writing, and creative storytelling). In the process, students will critically reflect on their own positionality as a junior researcher or creative practitioner, and account for the ways in which this may shape their ability to speak for, to, and about the lives of others.

Ultimately, this course is designed to provide students with the theoretical backdrop and to equip them with the methods-based tools to design and undertake a small-scale research study or creative project that draws on and mobilizes these feminist and queer interventions and/as points of departure with the aim of making their work more rigorous, and more just.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of some of the predominant feminist and queer methods deployed in research and creative practice, and to trace these back to their methodological and epistemological foundations.
- Explicate, parse, and convey how a specific methodological approach is situated in theoretical debates that have animated the disciplines of feminist and queer studies, and their critique of knowledge and knowledge production in particular.
- Account for and justify the choice of a specific method of data collection (i.e., method) by showing how it reflects the aims and investments of the corresponding theoretical and analytical framework (i.e., methodology).
- Gain first-hand experience with qualitative methods of data and evidence gathering (such as interviewing, observation, and text-based, discourse, and media analysis) and with a focus on those that have found special purchase in feminist and queer studies (chiefly, oral history, autoethnography, life-writing, and creative storytelling).
- Independently design and foster to completion a small-scale research study or creative project that is relevant to the field of feminist and queer studies (broadly conceived), which requires the formulation of a targeted and well-circumscribed research question or creative scope, a choice of methods that is precisely tailored to the study or project, and the selection of a methodological apparatus that will allow them to analyze their findings and situate their project.
- Identify and address the concerns raised in feminist and queer scholarship about your chosen method of data collection and analysis, whether it be ethical considerations, positionality, power differentials, the risks of othering, or the (im)possibility of collaboration and reciprocity.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational.

The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience*, *reflective observation*, *abstract conceptualization*, and *active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a

variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Required Texts

Book chapters and articles outlined below under Course Schedule, and posted in Canvas in Files. This is a comprehensive selection of those texts:

- Alcoff, Linda Martín. "The Problem of Speaking for Others." *Cultural Critique*, no. 20, 1991-1992, pp. 5-32.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, and Tukufu Zuberi. "Toward a Definition of White Logic and White Methods." *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*, edited by Tukufu Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Rowman and Littlefield, 2008, pp. 3-27.
- Bost, Suzanne. "Digging up the Relics of Colonialism." *Quiet Methodologies: Humility in the Humanities*. University of Minnesota Press, 2025, pp. 3-25.
- Brim, Matt, and Amin Ghaziani. "Queer Methods." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 3 & 4, 2016, pp. 14-27.
- Connell, Catherine. "Thank You for Coming Out Today: The Queer Discomforts of In-Depth Interviewing." *Other, Please Specify: Queer Methods in Sociology*, edited by D'Lane Compton, Tey Meadow, and Kristen Schilt, University of California Press, 2018, pp. 126-140.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, vol. 43, no. 6, 1991, pp. 1241-1299.
- Goeman, Mishuana. "Indigenous Interventions and Feminist Methods." *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, edited by Chris Anderson and Jean M. O'Brien, Routledge, 2017, pp. 185-195.
- Gunaratnam, Yasmin, and Carrie Hamilton. "The Wherewithal of Feminist Methods." *Feminist Review*, vol. 115, 2017, pp. 1-12.
- Hekman, Susan. "Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited." *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, edited by Sandra Harding, Routledge, 2004, pp. 225-243.
- Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1988, pp. 575-599.
- Holman, Stacy Jones, and Tony E. Adams. "Autoethnography Is a Queer Method." *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research*, edited by Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash, Routledge, 2016, pp. 195-215.
- Jaggar, Alison M. "Feminist Ethics in Research." *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Routledge, 2014, pp. 473-512.
- Johannesson, Asa. *Queer Methodology for Photography*. Routledge, 2024, pp. 1-48.
- Johnson, Patrick E. "Put a Little Honey on My Sweet Tea: Oral History as Queer Performance." *Imagining Queer Methods*, edited by Amin Ghaziani and Matt Brim, New York University Press, 2019, pp. 45-63.
- McIntosh, Heather, and Lisa M. Cuklanz. "Feminist Media Research." *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, edited by Sharlene Nagasy Hesse-Biber, 2nd edition, Sage, 2014, pp. 264-296.

- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1984, pp. 333-358.
- Narayan, Uma. "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist." *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, edited by Sandra Harding, Routledge, 2004, pp. 213-225.
- Simpican, Stacy Clifford. "Feminist Disability Studies as Methodology: Life-writing and the Abled/Disabled Binary." *Feminist Review*, vol. 115, no.1, 2017, pp. 46-60.
- Wigginton, Britta, and Michelle N. Lafrance. "Learning Critical Feminist Research: A Brief Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies and Methodologies." *Feminism & Psychology*, vol. 0, no. 0, 2019, pp. 1-17.

Assignments

Class participation (10%)

Students are expected to be physically and mentally present for all classes. To prepare for class, students should critically read the assigned texts prior to each class and come prepared with relevant questions and insights.

Reflexivity journal (10%)

This is a weekly, ongoing reflective journal where you will critically examine your positionality, biases, assumptions, and evolving perspectives as a junior researcher. Each entry should connect your personal experiences, reactions, and observations (both within the program's global context and in your everyday life) to the week's course readings and class discussions.

For the latter, you will be asked to flesh out your observations by explicitly linking them to one of the readings for each class, and one exchange that occurred during the in-class discussion.

The journal serves as a vital tool for developing self-awareness and enhancing the ethical rigor of your research practice.

CITI training (5%)

Students will be asked to enroll in the online IRB training through CITI programs. This training module addresses human subjects research protocols and ethical considerations essential for conducting ethical research. You can find a FAQ for students which includes guidelines on how to access the training at this link: [CITI - FAQ Doc for SIT students.docx](#).

Ethics and positionality roundtable (10%)

Drawing on the CITI training, students will earn 10% by participating in a roundtable discussion on ethics and positionality (in class 18) which requires bringing two instances to the roundtable in which the CITI training addresses, surfaces, or elides a concern or objective raised by and in feminist and queer approaches to conducting ethical research.

In addition to sharing these two instances in which the CITI training does or does not align with queer and feminist interventions in the ethical dimensions of conducting research and the positionality of researcher, the student is expected to draw on and mobilize their understanding of feminist and queer interventions in this space by proposing a concrete way in which the CITI training can be expanded or remediated.

Concept map (10%)

By creating a concept map, students will map out and define the key dimensions of their project, narrow down the scope of the project, and establish the relationships between the dimensions of the project and their own positionality and goals as junior researchers.

The goal of the concept map is to allow students to map out broadly where their research is situated, before identifying which aspects they will focus in on – and can do justice to – in a four-week time period. This ordering of their work in this way will provide the basis for their research proposal or Internship agreement.

The assignments will be completed in class (in class 3), but students are asked to take a picture of their completed concept map and upload it under Assignments.

Elevator pitch (10%)

Based on your concept map and the work you have done on your proposal so far, students will give a 5-7-minute oral presentation of their proposed research or artistic project to their fellow students. Those students will then share their feedback with the student who presented.

At a minimum, you should introduce your topic, your (tentative) research question or the scope of your artistic project, the (proposed) methodology/theoretical framework you will be drawing on, as well as the data you will gather and analyze or the artistic practice you will engage with. In other words, lean on your proposal (in progress), and present a summary of each of the components of your proposal.

You will deliver your pitch in class (in class 20).

Feminist and queer methods and methodologies AMA (15%)

In preparation for classes 9 and 14, you will have to compile an “Ask Me Anything” dossier that will guide your engagement with the researchers from the University of

Amsterdam and the VU University of Amsterdam, as well as our site visit to the Queer Art Collective. Your dossier should contain the following:

- Three questions for both the presentations and the site visit (so six in total) that are designed to tease out the specific and motivated relationship between the researchers' and artists' chosen methods, and the methodologies in which they situate their research.
- A synthesis of the researchers' and artists' responses to your questions, in which you reiterate how both explain the relationship between methods and methodology.
- Your personal reflection on their response, which must be informed by at least one of the readings discussed in class that directly speaks to a feminist and queer investment in the connection between methodology and method outlined by the researchers and artists in their response.
 - Each of the two AMA's should be 750 words in length (with an acceptable 10% deviation).

Draft research proposal (30%)

You will develop a comprehensive 6-8-page proposal for a qualitative research study. This study should be relevant to the program's themes, and focus on a critical global issue. Your proposal must include a literature review, clearly articulated research questions, a proposed methodology (including sampling, data collection methods, and an initial data analysis plan), a section outlining ethical considerations and relevant IRB protocol elements, an estimated timeline, and a discussion of anticipated challenges and limitations. This proposal serves as a crucial foundational step for your final research project. Proper citation and reference list are required.

The draft must be submitted first (and is worth 10%), while the final paper will be submitted after incorporating feedback from peers, your Academic Advisor, and the instructor (and counts for 20%).

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-

based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

Program Expectations

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be

marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.

- **Course Communication:** Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- **Content Considerations:** Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- **Classroom recording policy:** To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.]

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Accessibility Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.

Course Schedule

**Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs*

Details, including site visits and assignment due dates will be fleshed out by the specifically faculty. Below you will find a breakdown of the topics covered in this course each week:

Class 1: Introduction to the course

Class 2: Introduction to the ISP I: from topic to research question

Class 3: Introduction to the ISP II: from research question to research design

Class 4: The whys and wherewithal's of feminist research

Class 5: The whys and wherewithal's of queer research

Class 6: Key debates in feminist methods and methodology I: standpoint theory, partial perspective, and feminist empiricism

Class 7: Key debates in feminist methods and methodology II: intersectionality *as/in* theory

Class 8: Key debates in feminist methods and methodology III: intersectionality *as/in* practice

Class 9: Theory *and/in* practice: presentations by researchers from the University of Amsterdam and the VU University of Amsterdam on their methods and methodological approaches

Class 10: Queering methods I: autoethnography

Class 11: Queering methods II: oral history and life-story writing

Class 12: Queering methods III: interviewing queerly

Class 13: Queering methods IV: queering photography

Class 14: Practice as praxis: site visit to Queer Art Collective to meet with queer-identified artists and learn about their artistic practice

Class 15: What counts as evidence?: from data to lived experience

Class 16: Toward the ISP I: the role of the literature review

Class 17: Toward the ISP II: (feminist) ethics, the SARB process, and the HSR form

Class 18: Toward the ISP III: Ethics and positionality: CITI training debrief + roundtable discussion

Class 19: Toward the ISP IV: writing and structuring qualitative and creative research

Class 20: Defending the ISP: developing and honing oral presentation skills

Class 21: Course wrap-up, in-class evaluation, and exit tickets

Note: The remaining 3 contact hours are reserved for one-on-one advising sessions about the ISP proposal, HSR form, and/or any other component of the ISP process.