

# SO9E5-20 Feminist Theories and Epistemologies: Debates and Dilemmas

**24/25**

**Department**

Sociology

**Level**

Taught Postgraduate Level

**Module leader**

Khursheed Wadia

**Credit value**

20

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This module introduces postgraduate students to major concepts, theories and debates in feminist theories and epistemologies. It will adopt an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach, and include discussions both of canonical texts and of new and emerging debates in feminist theories and epistemologies.

### Module aims

The aim of the module is to provide students with a detailed understanding of the nature and implications of feminist critiques of academic knowledge production and feminist (re)conceptualisations of the social world. It will be especially valuable to students in MA programmes within the department, but will be made available also to students from other departments (and indeed this interdisciplinary engagement will be a central component of the module).

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

### SECTION 1: FOUNDATIONS

WEEK 1: What is Feminist Theory?

WEEK 2: Who Knows? Feminism and the Epistemic Politics of Identity and Location

### SECTION 2: DEBATES + DILEMMAS

WEEK 3: Truth and Knowledge

WEEK 4: The Self

WEEK 5: Experience

WEEK 6: Difference

WEEK 7: Power

WEEK 8: Agency

WEEK 9: Queering Trans Genders

WEEK 10: Narrating Feminist Theories and Epistemologies

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Identify the key principles of feminist theories and epistemologies
- Map and critically analyse key areas of debate within feminist theories and epistemologies
- Compare and contrast different approaches within feminist theories and epistemologies
- Recognise the implications of feminist critiques of mainstream modes of academic knowledge production and academic writing
- Examine key debates in feminist theories and epistemologies in intersectional ways
- Draw on relevant literature, evidence and experience to produce a written argument about an area of debate within feminist theories and epistemologies

## Indicative reading list

Alcoff, Linda, and Elizabeth Potter, (eds.) 1993, *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York: Routledge.

Benhabib, Seyla, Judith Butler, Drucilla Cornell and Nancy Fraser (1995) *Feminist Contentions*, New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", in: *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4. (Dec., 1988), 519-531

Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith (1993) *Bodies That Matter: on the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, New York: Routledge.

Code, Lorraine (1991). *What Can She Know?: Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Collins, Patricia Hill, 1990, *Black Feminist Thought*, Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Davis, Kathy, Evans, Mary and Judith Lorber (eds) *Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies*.

London: SAGE, pp. 146–166.

Davy, Zowie (2011) *Recognizing Transsexuals: Personal, Political and Medico-legal Embodiment*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Evans, Mary (1982). "In Praise of Theory: the Case for Women's Studies". *Feminist Review*, 10, 61 - 74.

Friedan, Betty (1965) *The Feminine Mystique*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Halberstam, Judith (2011) *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press).

Haraway, Donna (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the reinvention of nature*. New York: Routledge.

Harding, Sandra (1986) *The Science Question in Feminism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hemmings, C. (2011) *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*, Durham, Duke.

hooks, b. (1982) *Ain't I a Woman: Black women and Feminism*, London: Pluto.

Hughes, C. (2002) 'Experience' in *Key Concepts in Feminist Theory and Research*, London: Sage.

Jagose, Annamarie (1997) *Queer Theory: an Introduction*, London, Routledge.

Lorde, A. (1984) *Sister Outsider*, Freedom: The Crossing Press

Lorde, A. (1994) 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House' in M. Evans (ed.) *The Woman Question*, London: Sage

Lykke, Nina *Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing* (London/New York: Routledge, 2010).

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988) 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', *Feminist Review*, 30, pp. 61 – 88.

Mulinari, D. and Sandell, K. (1992) 'Exploring the Notion of Experience in Feminist Thought', *Acta Sociologica*, 42 (4), pp. 287 – 297.

Pereira, M. d. M (2012) 'Feminist theory is proper knowledge, but ...': The status of feminist scholarship in the academy'. *Feminist Theory* 13(3) 283–303

Rich, Adrienne (1980) 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence' in Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halperin (eds.) *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, London: Routledge.

Rich, Adrienne (1984) 'Notes towards a politics of location'. In: *Blood, Bread and Poetry. Selected Prose 1979 – 1985*. New York London: W.W. Norton

Scott, Joan, 1991, "The Evidence of Experience", *Critical Inquiry*, 17: 773-97.

Smith, D. (1987) *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Stanley, Liz and Sue Wise, 1983, *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Widerberg, Karin (1998). "Translating Gender". *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 6 (2), 133 - 138.

Young, I. M. 1990, *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Political Theory*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

## **Interdisciplinary**

The module will feature guest speakers from various disciplines and students will be expected to read literature from different disciplines. We expect the module to attract students from a range of Warwick departments and very diverse UG backgrounds, and students will have the opportunity to adapt the assessment to their own (inter)disciplinary interests and skills.

## Subject specific skills

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student: a) to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; b) to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new argument; and c) to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.
- ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and acting autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level

## Transferable skills

- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
  - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development
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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (9%)
Online learning (independent)	1 session of 1 hour (0%)
Private study	91 hours (46%)
Assessment	90 hours (45%)
Total	200 hours

### Private study description

Reading and preparation for seminars. Preparation and writing of formative and summative work.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A1

	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Study time</b>	<b>Eligible for self-certification</b>
Essay	100%	90 hours	Yes (extension)

### Feedback on assessment

Students will receive written feedback on summative work through Tabula. Students will also receive written (and potentially audio or video) feedback on formative work through Tabula. They can receive verbal feedback during Advice and Feedback hours.

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## Availability

### Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of TSOA-L30J Postgraduate Taught Gender and Sexuality

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 1 of TWSA-M9P7 Postgraduate Taught Gender and International Development
- TSOA-L3PW Postgraduate Taught Social Inequalities and Research Methods
  - Year 1 of L3PW Social Inequalities and Research Methods
  - Year 2 of L3PW Social Inequalities and Research Methods
- Year 1 of TSOA-L3P8 Postgraduate Taught Social and Political Thought
- TSOA-L3PD Postgraduate Taught Sociology
  - Year 1 of L3PD Sociology
  - Year 1 of L3PD Sociology