

Feminism in Action

WSTD 3850-01/POLS 3850-01 //Fall 2018

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This course will explore the relationship between feminism and social action. We will begin by focusing our classroom readings and discussions on a personal relationship to feminist activism, followed by an historical investigation, and then a deep look into contemporary feminism and action. Each student will also put their own feminism into action.

Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Give examples of different types of feminist activism;
- More fully understand their own relationship to feminism;
- Use feminist concepts and ideas to analyze how culture and social institutions shape possibilities for justice in everyday life;
- Use intersectional theories and concepts to participate in community action or service;
- Get to know contemporary feminist writers;
- And, have created a feminist activist project.

Course requirements and grades: Your final grade in this course will be determined as follows:

Class participation and attendance. The quality of this course will depend upon your willingness to engage in discussion. Discussion includes a lot of things, such as attending class, commenting upon a passage in the reading, active listening, asking questions, clarifying a point, and relating the course material to your own experiences or contemporary issues. Because we have a relatively small group, it is crucial that everyone attend class, read the assigned material before class and be prepared to participate in discussions. **You may miss a total of three class periods** during the semester for any reason, including illness (you need not provide an excuse); additional absences will lower your grade. I strongly suggest that you “save” your absences for times when you may really need them during the semester, such as when you are ill. I will use participation in class discussions as a factor in deciding borderline grades for the course.

Feminist Killjoy Survival Kit, 20% of your grade. Every student will create a personal feminist killjoy survival kit as described by Sara Ahmed in her book, **Living a Feminist Life**. There will be more information about this as the semester gets underway but for now, know that you will use Ahmed's format and will share your survival kit with the class. You will be graded on the thought you put into your survival kit and your presentation of your ideas.

Activist journal, 10% of course grade. In this journal, you will record your reflections on the assigned readings. I suggest that you keep the journal in a three-ring binder.

For your reflections, you will make entries for each class period's assigned readings. The entries should be in the form of a list of three things that you learned from that day's readings; include some indication of which readings prompted each entry. Your individual entries need not be full sentences, but feel free to include longer reflections if you want. Once you get multiple lists, attach headings to the individual entries that indicate the lessons that you might apply to your own activism. For example, you might use headings such as:

- Surprising things I learned
- Things that inspire me
- Things that do/don't resonate with my own experience
- Definitions of feminist activism
- Goals of activism
- Motives and motivations behind activism
- The effectiveness of different forms of activism
- The role of coalitions in activism.

The headings can then become useful ways to group your reflections, compare ideas from different readings, and see how your interests change over time. These will then serve as a basis for you to chart the evolution of your thinking over the course of the semester, and as material for your final paper.

Please bring each day's reflections to class and date them. You will hand in each week's reflections on Thursday (covering the two class periods for the week) and they will be graded credit/no credit.

Contemporary Feminist Presentation and Paper, 20% of grade: Each student will choose a contemporary feminist writer or artist to present to the class. Presentations will include a critique of their work and how it reflects/relates to/advances feminist ideas. The presentations will be accompanied by a paper to be handed in the day each student presents.

Activist project, 50% of your grade:

Each student must engage in two activist projects of their own choosing during the semester. These projects must either be different from your current volunteer activities or must take your current volunteer work in a new direction. One of the two projects will be your main project and the other will be your secondary project:

- 15 hours of work plus a 10-page final paper. In this paper you will incorporate what you have learned in the course that is relevant for the project. I will provide more details about the format, etc. in a few weeks.
- Attach to the end of the paper a log of your hours spent working and a very brief description of each activity.

Choose either:

- **an activist project on the SLU campus.** You may instigate a project on a particular issue (for example, sexual assault policy or body image or health issues) or contribute to an existing project or organization, depending on what skills you are trying to gain and what your interests are. Again, your goals are to learn about organizations and organizing, build your skills, and add to your experience. You may work individually or in groups.
- **Or, an activist project involving the St. Louis community.** You may choose to work with a group or project in the St. Louis community **IF, and only if**, you already have a relationship with that group and/or project. There is not enough time in this course to develop a new relationship to a project or community in a way that is consistent with respectful collaboration. You may create something new for a partnership you already have or use this time to learn more about your group or project.

Portfolio entries of work from this course (required of all WGS majors, encouraged for WGS minors). WGS has developed an online portfolio program that is easy to set up and use. I will provide you with all the information you need to do so. WGS majors will add at least one of your projects and corresponding paper from this course to your portfolio. You may also want to use it the portfolio to organize material from your other courses, but that is completely optional.

Electronic devices: Students may not use any electronic devices in class, including cell phones, tablets, and laptop computers.

On grading: Assessing the quality of student work is both an objective and subjective process- especially when it involves evaluating levels of engagement and expressive competence. If you would like clarification of any assignments, request feedback regarding your progress, or wish to discuss a grade, do not hesitate to contact me. Please keep a copy of all materials you hand in for evaluation.

Evaluation:

“A” grade means **excellent** quality. Meets and *exceeds* requirements. Is accurate and specific. Demonstrates thoughtful analysis and/or synthesis of course material. Demonstrates exceptional initiative, craftsmanship, creativity and/or critical thinking.

A 93%-100%, A- 90%-92%

“B” grade means **high** quality, above average. Fulfills requirements. Is accurate and

specific. Demonstrates competence in analyzing and synthesizing course material. Demonstrates a measure of initiative, craftsmanship, creativity and/or critical thinking.

B+ 87%-89%, B 83%-86%, B- 80%-82%

“C” grade means **average** quality, satisfactory achievement, *Exhibits varying weaknesses*, may not fulfill all requirements; misinterprets instructions; late assignments. Lacking in initiative, creativity, craftsmanship and/or critical thinking. Poor communication skills distract or detract from the content of the work.

C+ 77%-79%, C 73%-76%, C- 70%-72%

“D” grade means **deficient** quality, passing.

D 60%-69%

“F” grade means **failure** to meet minimum requirements, not passing

F <60%

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU’s Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU’s sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: www.slu.edu/here4you and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

Disability Services

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information

about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at: https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Student Success Center

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/> to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching.

University Writing Services

Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas

to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/> or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.

Basic Needs Security

Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.

Week 1, 2: What is my personal relationship to feminism?

(Please note that these dates are subject to change as we find it necessary to spend more time on a subject or respond to the unexpected)

Tuesday, August 28: Introduction to course and each other, understanding the difference between activism and volunteering. Read and discuss *toward a revolutionary feminist pedagogy*, bell hooks

Reading assignment: **Living a Feminist Life**, introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 (pages 1-64)

Thursday, August 30: No Class use this day to go in and discuss with Jenni what your skills and interests are to help determine where you can be of most help and impact — there isn't a set list of "openings" as with internships.

Tuesday, September 4: Discuss homework chapters; do you see yourself in her writing? Lisa the Lionheart; students choose a contemporary feminist activist to discuss with class later in the semester.

Reading assignment: **Living a Feminist Life**, Chapters 3 and 4 (pages 65-114)

Thursday, September 6: Discuss reading

Reading assignment: **Living a Feminist Life**, Chapters 5 and 6 (pages 115-160)

Week 3, 4: Introduction to Beautiful Trouble

Tuesday, September 11: Discuss reading; introduce students to the book **Beautiful Trouble** by going through the 'Tactics' section, show examples.

Reading Assignment: **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, chapter 1

Thursday, September 13: Discuss reading; who are you in your activism? Do you know? Tatyana Fazlalizadeh <https://www.pbs.org/video/tatyana-fazlalizadeh-visual-artist-goax45/>

Assignment: Read Chapters 5, 6 Living a Feminist Life

Tuesday, September 18: Discuss reading; what is the difference between an activist and a diversity worker?

Assignment: **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, chapter 1

Thursday, September 20: Discuss reading; who are you in your activism? Do you know? Tatyana Fazlalizadeh <https://www.pbs.org/video/tatyana-fazlalizadeh-visual-artist-goax45/>; explain expectations for one page project description

Assignment: 1 page activist project description

Week 5: Activist project descriptions, Beautiful Trouble

Tuesday, September 25: Discuss project descriptions together, look at Beautiful Trouble books/website and at Noah's project powerpoint.

Assignment: **Beautiful Trouble**, 'Principles' section

Thursday, September 27: Discuss Principles section and the web of creating an activist engagement. Share my own web with NODhouse and Room13Delmar. Then, create a web with the book. How do all these things connect? Why is it presented this way? How is this different than a linear approach, especially when working with others?

Assignment: watch *She Is Beautiful When She's Angry*, Netflix

Week 6: *She Is Beautiful When She's Angry*

Tuesday, October 2: Discuss documentary; go over feminist author/artist presentation expectations (will anyone be ready to go on Thursday, October 11?)

Thursday, October 4: Look at activist art from same period as documentary: Suzanne Lacy, Mierle Ukeles Leiderman, Judy Chicago, Ana Mendieta, Betye Saar, Adrian Piper

Week 7: Cheeraz Gormon; first day of student led reading discussions

Tuesday, October 9: Cheeraz Gormon visits to talk about Sibling Support Network

Thursday, October 11: first day of student led reading discussions

Assignment: Read 'Theories' in **Beautiful Trouble**

Week 8: Beautiful Trouble Theories and second student led reading discussions

Tuesday, October 16: share a theory with class, discuss killjoy survival kit (bring a box as an example)

Thursday, October 18: second student led reading discussions

Week 9: Fall Break and Discuss rest of Living a Feminist Life

****Finish Living a Feminist Life during break****

Tuesday, October 23: Fall Break, no class

Thursday, October 25: Discuss the rest of Living a Feminist Life; introduce killjoy survival kit project, hand out boxes

Assignment: create your killjoy survival kit

Week 10: Killjoy survival kits, work on projects in class

Tuesday, October 30: Share killjoy survival kits

Thursday, November 1: Work on projects in class

Week 11: Student led reading discussions

Tuesday, November 6: Third student led reading discussion; be sure to vote

Thursday, November 8: Fourth student led reading discussion

Week 12: Project Work Day, Combahee River Collective

Tuesday, November 14: Student project work day

Thursday, November 16: Go over final paper expectations. Read and discuss Combahee River Collective Statement, begin to think about using it to create a course statement

Week 13: Help with projects; Thanksgiving

Tuesday, November 21: Discuss and work on projects during class

Thursday, November 23: No class, Thanksgiving

Week 14: Developing a Course Statement

Tuesday, November 28: Work together using format of Combahee River Collective Statement to write a course statement

Assignment: work on course statement

Thursday, November 30: Finish Course Statement together

Friday, December 1: Paper rough drafts due by 5:00

Week 15 Major Project Presentations

Tuesday, December 5: Major Project Presentations

Thursday, December 7: Major Project Presentations

Scheduled Final time:

Thursday, December 13, 12:00-1:50