

Feminism in Action!

Fall 2019

Office: McGannon 137

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Office hours: M 10-12, Th 9-11, &
always by appointment

Feminism, we all know, is a broad movement for social change, aimed at greater gender justice and deeply allied with other progressive social movements. But what are the means that can be used to *attain greater consciousness* of gender-based problems and to *effect real change* in the world? Toward exactly what ends are we working? What inspires people to engage in feminist activism? What sustains them in their activism, through all the troubles and work?

There is a personal element to political activism. What sorts of feminist activism do you imagine *yourself* as willing and able to engage in? What resources and commitments do *you* bring to *your* social justice work? What issues are *you* most passionate about?

After this course is over, and long after, I hope that you will be a more effective and confident feminist activist, motivated and knowledgeable enough to work with others to confront effectively the injustices you see or experience in the world.

You can attain this goal! We will work toward it together!

By coming to class prepared, curious, open-minded, and ready to be a good feminist citizen of our little community, you will, by the end of the semester, be able to:

Identify the range of issues feminists address through activism (Show & Tell; Journal; class readings and discussion);

Compare and ultimately *draw from* past and current examples of feminist strategies for effecting feminist social change (Stage 3; Show & Tell; Journal);

Undertake an activist project, *analyzing* a problem well and *applying* appropriate, effective forms of activism, thinking both practically and creatively (Ally-ship; Activist Project)

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Assessment:

How do you get to show yourself and me

Short writing exercises (10%) You will see some of these described in the syllabus, and others will be assigned as we go. These assignments include both in-class and take-home work, some submitted to the discussion board (but then printed out and put into your journal).

Stages of activist project (15%)

The idea of the three stages is to scaffold your work and to give you maximum feedback on your project as it develops. *Your final project will really benefit from the time you invest here.*

Specific directions for each stage are given on Blackboard.

STAGE 1: The problem

What problem are you hoping to address? Why is it a problem, and for whom? What kind of problem is it? What gets your blood boiling, frustrates you, gets you fired up, etc.?

STAGE 2: Imagining alternatives

Dream a little! How do things look *ideally*? What *better* situation are you hoping to come close to?

STAGE 3: Learning from others and deciding upon actions

What can you learn from examples of feminist activism *around similar issues* or *in similar environments*? Which strategies suit your resources? What resistance or obstacles can you expect to encounter? What will your final “product(s)” be?

YOUR ACTIVIST PROJECTS (40%):

You will be **a/the main actor in one project** and an **ally** to other students on one or more other projects, depending upon your degree of involvement.

For your ally-ship projects (10%), you need only submit a 1-2-page paper that lists (as a log or chart is fine): the tasks you did when, the amount of time you spent on them, and how they contributed to whose project. A paragraph of reflective comments closes it up. The total amount of time on your secondary project(s) should be approximately 4 hours. This includes such acts as doing graphics or photography for someone, helping set up an event, participating in a meeting, etc. Put this assignment in your journal.

Your major project will take approximately 10 hours. **Keep a log** of how much time you spend doing what.

STAGE 4: THE ACTION: (15%)

This is where you carry out the plan you have worked on in STAGES 1-3. You can make a podcast, teach a class, produce and distribute a zine, make a public presentation, post infographics, display artwork, distribute informational tri-folds, hold an event, hold up signs, create a You Tube video, or come up with still other means not listed here.

What for you constitutes a successful action, and *how will you measure that?*

Remember the ends you are after.

Be inclusive and intersectional.

STAGE 5: THE FINAL PAPER: (20%)

Now is the time to bring everything together—your journaling, short papers, conversations, actions, and reflections. (*You have already done so much of the work for this!*) Your final paper will i) define the problem in some detail; ii) describe what you were trying to accomplish, and why; iii) describe the efforts for change you engaged in, including why those strategies were chosen from among all the alternatives, where you looked for support, and where you hit and how you dealt with obstacles; iv) describe the results of your activism, including the product(s) you produced, and some response to your action (how do you measure its success?); and v) conclude with some reflections on your activist journey. Attach to the end of the paper a log of your hours spent working and a very brief description of each activity. More details are in Blackboard.

STAGE 6: Final presentation (5%): Each project will be presented in a public forum, to which we will invite WGS faculty and your friends. Your presentation should include an enticing Powerpoint. You will describe the basic elements of your paper listed above. Time for presentation will vary depending upon how many projects the class as a whole engages in, but you can expect them to be *about* 8-10 minutes, with 2-3 minutes for questions.

Portfolio entries of work from this course (required of all WGS majors, encouraged for WGS minors). WGS has an online portfolio program that is easy to set up and use. Jenni Semsar

Academic Support for Students

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 and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students can visit www.slu.edu/success to learn more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning).

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at Disability_services@slu.edu or by phone at [314.977.3484](tel:314.977.3484). Once approved, information about a student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from Disability Services and within the instructor's official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

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 that involves a Title IX matter, **v j cv" hcewnv{ " o g o dgt" o wuv" pqvkh{ "UNWøu" Vkvng" KZ" eqqt flkpcvqt" *qt" v j cv" rgtuqpøu" gswkxcngpv" qp" {qwt" ec o r wu+ " cp f" u j ctg" v j g basic facts of your experience.** This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX contact will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you 30046£in conne(a)4(lki)-3oolkid, s The(inat(pl73(tudent)] TJ2.03 626.38 Tm[(lea)-3(3.11c)4

Schedule (Blackboard readings are available on the course Home Page):

Tuesday August 27:

Introduction to each other, feminist activism, and the course.

Big question: What inspires people to engage in feminist activism, how do they do what they do, and can I actually be a feminist activist?

Assignment: 10 post-it notes. See description on Blackboard.

Thursday August 29: No class

Homework: Do some feminist activism with your post-its! See Blackboard for specific guidelines. Note that your project must be completed and posted on Blackboard Discussion Board by **Friday at 4:00 p.m.**, and that your comments on 3 classmates' projects are due by **Saturday at 11:59 p.m.**

I. What is/counts as feminist activism?

Tuesday September 3

Grassroots: Introduction, Prologue, Chapter 1, and Appendix A.

Look at the [Feminist Poster Project at the University of Dayton](#).

Look at "[23 Ways Feminists Have Made the World Better for Women](#)."

Want more? Look at "[A Feminist Guide to the Resistance](#)."

Thursday September 5

Sara Ahmed, "The Killjoy Manifesto" (this is lengthy and wonderful, so give yourself time to ponder). Blackboard.

Ted Talk, Roxanne Gay, "Bad Feminist" (11:29 minutes).

Free-write ideas: How do these writings make you think about your own feminist activism? How do the two pieces speak to each other?

Tuesday September 10

Waves of Resistance Conference, "[Manifesto of the First Pan-Canadian Young Feminist Gathering](#)" (2008).

Feminista Jones, "#Blackes, "#BICE ó

In the issue-oriented sections of the course, questions you can consider for discussion and journaling include: How important is it that activism include consciousness raising? What is the role of emotional engagement in activism? Who is well-situated to be an effective activist on this issue? What are some characteristics of successful activist programs? What makes certain acts a form of activism? How can activist projects affect the people involved?

II. What are some of the feminist issues in education, from pre-school through adult ed, and how have they been addressed through various forms of activism?

Tuesday September 17

Our youngest citizens

Teaching Tolerance Project, “Everybody’s Story” and “A Wider Circle,” in *Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades* (Southern Poverty Law

Tuesday October 1: STAGE 1 of your project is due. Bring a clean, printed copy of your paper to class to discuss in groups. **DO NOT MISS THE DAYS FOR FEEDBACK!**

III. Feminist activism around gender non-conformity

Thursday October 3

Radicalqueens, "[Manifesto #2](#)" (1973)

Third International Intersex Forum, "[Public Statement](#)" (2013)

[#Nonbinary](#) (what are the issues, controversies, hurdles, forms of activism, etc.?)

Tuesday October 8

*TransJustice, "Trans Action for Social and Economic Justice," in *Color of Violence: The*

Tuesday October 22: Fall Break

Thursday October 24: STAGE 3 is due. Bring a clean, printed copy to class to discuss in groups. DO NOT MISS THE DAYS FOR FEEDBACK!

Activism around reproduction

October 29

1. The debate in Spain (2013) in very short readings:
“Decidir Nos Hace Libres” (Deciding Makes Us Free) (Blackboard)
Sandra Ezquerro, “[Feminism on the Offensive](#)”
2. Check out the website “[Feminists for Life](#)” especially “Vision” and “Work”
3. Loretta Ross, “The Color of Choice: White Supremacy and Reproductive Justice” *Incite!* Blackboard.
4. Check out the website of [NARAL Pro-Choice America](#), especially the “Issues” section
Visitor, Director of NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri

October 31

Byllye Avery (1990), “Breathing Life into Ourselves: The Evolution of the National Black Women’s Health Project.” , ed. Evelyn C. White.
Blackboard.

Feminista Jones, “Black Mamas Matter.” *Reclaiming Our Space*. Blackboard.
Visitor, Jamaa Birth Village

Activism around disability

November 5

“[The Future of Disability Rights Activism is Female](#)” (read, and also watch Flores Tedx talk embedded in the article [8:20 minutes]) *Ms.* 4/12/18

“[8 Disability Rights Activists Changing the World](#)” (2018)

Nirmala Erevelles, “Disability in the New World Order,” in *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology* (Boston: South End Press, 2006): 25-31. Blackboard.

November 7

Changing Borders Conference, “Priorities for Action” and “Conclusions” (1998)

Women’s Network of Disability Organisations, “Action Plan” (2006)

Visitor, Annesley Clark

11:00 a.m. prior to this class meeting. Also print and put your comments into your journal. If you discussion.

November 14: How's it going with STAGE 4? Discussion and Coordination

Looking back and looking ahead

November 21:

Judith Nies, "Mother Jones," in *Nine Women: Portraits from the American Radical Tradition*. Blackboard.

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