

# WAYS OF (FEMINIST) KNOWING

Semester 2, 20 credits

*Please note that this outline is indicative as of Summer 2023 and is subject to change.*

## Convenor:

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## Also taught by:

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## Who should take this module?

This module is core for students taking the MA in Women's Studies, MA in Women's Studies (Humanities), and MA in Women's and Gender Studies (GEMMA) Year 1. Students taking the MA in Women, Violence and Conflict may take this as an option module. Research students wishing to 'audit' this module should discuss this with their supervisor in week one and check with the CWS office if spaces are available.

## Description and Aims:

This module critically engages with questions of knowledge and how we, as feminists, conceptualise and produce knowledge—the “feminist way”. Against the backdrop of white-centric, West European, and North American philosophical traditions that take disembodied approaches to knowledge, in this module we will explore what other ways of knowing feminist thought and practice has contributed or can contribute to scholarship. We ask: what counts as knowledge? What are the hierarchies in different forms of knowledge production? And, what are the political and ethical implications embedded within these?

In dialogue with feminist theoretical approaches to these questions, we draw critical attention to the power relations around meanings and constructions of knowledge. We examine how these approaches can be applied to interpret the gendered dimensions of social and cultural lives and we question what has been constructed as gendered ways of knowing. We do so by exploring 'rational', experiential, bodily, emotional/affective, cross-cultural, and post-human ways of knowing.

You may consider this module the critical theoretical counterpart of the more practical, hands-on methodological learning you would gain from Feminist Research Methods.

## Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this module, students should be able to:

- Interrogate and explain a range of theoretical approaches to ways of knowing, with an understanding of the ontological and epistemological foundations of these approaches;
- Demonstrate a critical awareness of the hierarchies in different forms of knowledge, applying this awareness in one's own reflexive research practice;

- Critically analyse the complex issues around meanings and constructions of ‘knowledge’, with a focus on feminist engagements with the politics of knowledge production;
- Apply feminist theorisations of knowledge to conduct research into the gendered dimensions of social, cultural, and political lives.

### **Indicative Programme:**

Week 1: Introduction: Theory with a Capital “T”

Week 2: Feminist Communities, Collective Knowledge

Week 3: Class as a Way of Knowing

Week 4: Life histories and narratives of personal experience

Week 5: Affect and Emotion

Week 6: Ecofeminism

Week 7: Somatechnics/ Transhumanism

Week 8: Transhuman as spirituality/ otherworldliness/ religion

Week 9: Coursework workshop

Week 10: Essay support

Week 11: Essay support

### **Assessment:**

One essay of 3,500-4,000 words. All essay topics must be discussed with and approved by the convenor or another academic member of staff teaching on the module.

### **Indicative Reading:**

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Alaimo, Stacy, and Susan Hekman (eds.). *Material Feminisms*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Collins, Patricia. *The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought*. *Signs* 14.4 (1989): 745-73.

Cudworth, Erika, ‘Feminism’ in Carl Death, ed., *Critical Environmental Politics*. London: Routledge, 2013.

Davis, Kathy (ed.). *Embodied practices: feminist perspectives on the body*. London: Thousand Oaks, 1997.

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.

Haraway, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham and London: Duke, 2016.

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Kosofsky Sedgwick, Eve. *Touching Feeling: Affect. Pedagogy, Performativity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Piercy, Marge. *He, She and It / Body of Glass*. any edition, 1991.

Stanley, Liz. *The auto/biographical I: the theory and practice of feminist auto/biograph*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.