Interdisciplinary Methods in Women’s Studies

in conjunction with the

AHRC Collaborative Research Training
(with the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, University of Leeds)
Interdisciplinary Methods in Women’s Studies

Autumn Term 2007

This module is an introduction to developing skills and doing research in women's studies. It is a compulsory part of the MA in Women's Studies (Humanities) and the MA in Women’s Studies (Social Research). MPhil/PhD students new to York are also required to attend the AHRC Collaborative Research Training elements of this module and may find the module as a whole helpful. They should discuss whether to participate with their supervisor.

The module is mostly taught via one two/three-hour seminar, workshop or other activity per week, Mondays between 1.15 – 4.15pm. However, one session per term will take place in Leeds, and transport to and from Leeds will be provided. These sessions are also longer and take place on Wednesdays – the dates and times are clearly indicated in the calendar of sessions which follows. Room details for York will be posted on the notice board outside the Centre office in Grimston House, or contact Harriet Badger if unsure.

Most sessions require prior preparation. Where specific reading and other pre-session activities are stipulated you are expected to take this seriously and to come to the session prepared to take a full part in the class proceedings. Not only will this add to your overall understanding of the issues being discussed or the activities undertaken, but such involvement will also enhance the learning experience of the whole group.

All students who take this module must participate fully in the sessions (including preparatory work and class discussion). You will be assessed on your contributions to classroom activity and will be required to hand in a portfolio of preparatory notes for the sessions and in-class activities, including a short reflection on a cross-cultural or historical topic.
INTERDISCIPLINARY METHODS IN WOMEN’S STUDIES (5080204)
Convened by Stevi Jackson & Ann Kaloski-Naylor

Credit value: 10 Credits

Description:

This module is designed to equip students with a variety of different skills necessary to undertake and present feminist research at postgraduate level and to gain an understanding of key methodological, epistemological, ethical and political issues in women’s studies. It incorporates the Collaborative Training with the Centre for Interdisciplinary Women’s Studies (CIGS), University of Leeds, with whom we shall hold two joint sessions during the autumn term. This collaboration is funded by the AHRC, with support from the University of York and the University of Leeds.

Students on this module will be introduced to qualitative and quantitative resources for women’s studies with the emphasis on cross-national and historical research; the use of the internet, bibliographical searches and archives; the critical use of textual sources; issues of language and meaning in cross-cultural research and of interpretation in history. The course will be workshop based, and will include on-site introduction to the resources of the J B Morrell Library, the Borthwick Archives, as well as lab-based introduction to computing skills.

In addition the course will foster exchange and collaboration with Women’s/Gender Studies students from other institutions through the collaborative research training undertaken with students and staff from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies (CIGS), University of Leeds. Apart from joint face-to-face teaching sessions we shall also use a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) throughout the course to allow exchange and learning across space with the students from Leeds. The VLE is further explained below.

Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course students should:

- Have an awareness of the range of methodological and ethical issues entailed in researching women and gender
- Be attuned to the importance of both quantitative and qualitative data and methods in investigating gender issues
- Have developed competence in interpreting a variety of textual and visual representations
- Develop skills in interpreting diverse forms of data and be able to think critically about the strengths and limitations of primary and secondary sources available to investigate gender in both historical and contemporary contexts
- Have gained literacy in up-to-date methods of information retrieval and bibliography (including on-line data bases) and in the use of the Internet for research purposes
- Have an understanding of the significance of interdisciplinarity for feminist enquiry
- Have an appreciation of the benefits and potential pitfalls of cross-cultural research.

Teaching Programme:

1 x 2 hours workshop or seminar per week (plus 2 longer sessions as part of the AHRC Collaborative Research Training).

For full details see next page.

Assessment:

Assessment is by a portfolio of work produced in preparing for class participation and from workshop activities in class and will include a short (1000-2000 word) critical reflection on either a cross-cultural or historical topic in women’s studies research, drawing on workshops in weeks 4 and 5 or 7-9.

Due date of Assessment: Monday 14 January 2007, by 5pm
INTERDISCIPLINARY METHODS IN WOMEN’S STUDIES

PROGRAMME FOR AUTUMN TERM 2007

Encorporating Collaborative AHRC Training (Wednesdays when in Leeds, 2.00pm-5.00pm plus travel time) with the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies (CIGS), University of Leeds

WEEK 1&2  GETTING STARTED WITH I.T. (short tutorials)
(Mondays, 8 & 15 Oct) (Various, co-ordinated by Ann Kaloski-Naylor)

WEEK 2  GETTING STARTED: WHY WOMEN’S STUDIES?
(Monday, 15 Oct) (Stevi Jackson/Ann Kaloski-Naylor)

WEEK 3  AHRC Collaborative Research Training at the University of York:
Introduction to the Collaborative Training
12.30-2.00pm INTRODUCING THE VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
(Ann Kaloski-Naylor) in Computer Room A/EW/004
2.30-5.00pm RESEARCHING ACROSS CULTURES
(Stevi Jackson/Ann Kaloski-Naylor/Anne Akeroyd) in V/X/330

WEEK 4  LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES
(Friday, 2 Nov) 2.15 – 4.15 pm in Computer Room L/117
(Sue Cumberpatch)

WEEK 5  GENDER IN/AND TRANSLATION
(Monday, 5 Nov) (Stevi Jackson/Ann Kaloski-Naylor)

WEEK 6  RESEARCHING THE INTERNET
(Monday, 12 Nov) (Ann Kaloski-Naylor)

WEEK 7  HOW DOES OUR PRESENT ENGAGE WITH OUR PAST?
QUESTIONS OF/FROM/ABOUT THE PAST
(Monday, 19 Nov) (Sue Grace)

WEEK 8  FACTS AND/OR FICTION OF/FROM THE PAST
(Monday, 26 Nov) (Sue Grace)

WEEK 9  AHRC Collaborative Research Training at the University of Leeds:
READING GENDER AND SEXUALITY HISTORICALLY (Prof Ruth Holliday/
Dr Mary Swan/ Dr Jill Liddington) – leave University of York at 1.00pm, return at 6.00pm.

WEEK 10  RESEARCHING WOMEN’S LIVES
(Monday, 10 Dec) (Stevi Jackson)
A word about the AHRC Collaborative Research Training which is incorporated into this module:

In 2007 the Centre for Women’s Studies (CWS) at the University of York and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies (CIGS) at the University of Leeds jointly gained a 2-year Collaborative Research Training Award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This is intended to enable the two Centres to collaborate in providing research training, and for students to network together. This programme is therefore delivered as part of the research training provision for postgraduates in Women’s and Gender Studies at CWS and CIGS. For the purposes of this module it involves 2 sessions during which postgraduates from CWS and from CIGS are brought together to have joint research training sessions in Humanities-related research methods. The programme is designed to facilitate networking and peer group work between postgraduates from CWS and CIGS, as well as to offer them expertise from both Centres. In addition, we are setting up a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to enable you and staff to be in contact with each other and work as well as socialize together outside the face-to-face sessions we have together. The VLE is described further below. We hope you are as excited as we are by this venture – it is a unique opportunity in the UK, and we are very proud of it!

THE PROGRAMME ONLINE:
NETWORKING AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

An integral part of this joint programme with CIGS (the Leeds Centre) is a VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). This is an online space where we bring together a number of ways of learning and socialising. The VLE is useful for: a) enabling students and staff from different sites to keep in touch and b) helping to generate inventive, collaborative ways of approaching research methodologies.

It will enable students to:

- keep in touch with each other in order to develop thinking about research methodologies
- produce collaborative work at a distance
- share feminist resources
- arrange social and other extra-curricula events.

For ease, the site is hosted on the York server. The address is: www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/gsp/researchtraining.htm
(Do remember to add this site to your ‘Favourites’ so you don’t need to type it out each time you need access). The url will take you to the ‘open-access’ part of the web site which contains information about the Research Training Programme, links to the profiles of Leeds and York staff and students involved in the project, and a link to the ‘closed’ VLE. All staff and students will be given a York email address and password to access the VLE.

The applications we use in the VLE are:

**Word files**: Used for presenting worksheets and writing assignments.

**Wiki**: This is a web page that can be edited by everyone on the project. It will be used to develop creative ways of thinking collaboratively.

**Discussion List**: This is a social space that will make it easy for students to keep in touch, share work problems, plan trips out and generally get to know each other.

**Blog**: On this VLE, the blog is a simple application which you use to contact the VLE Tutors via a question and answer format. There are separate ‘teacher’ and ‘student’ blogs.

Learning how to use the VLE:

- There will be an Introductory Session on 24th October when we will introduce you to the site and help you use it.
- When you log on the VLE, click on the ‘START HERE’ menu button to gain an overview of the site and instructions for use.
- The ‘SUPPORT’ menu button on the VLE menu links to ‘help’ files.
You will need to spend some time playing on the site in order to become familiar with the applications.
You may blog the Tutors if you have any problems with the VLE, and they will get back to you within two days (and often much quicker).

This is a new venture, and we hope you find the VLE helpful in developing a co-ordinated and rich learning experience. We look forward to meeting you all on and offline.

Ann Kaloski                                   Julie Palmer                                   Anna Piela
VLE co-ordinator                              VLE Tutor                                     VLE Tutor
eakn1@york.ac.uk
INDIVIDUAL SESSION: GETTING STARTED WITH ICT
Co-ordinated by Ann Kaloski-Naylor

These 30 minute sessions will be held at various times during weeks 1 and 2. A list will be put up on the web room door in the Centre – please ensure you sign up for a time slot.

During weeks 1 and 2 all students are required to attend one short session in the Centre’s web room. Our aim is to ensure that everyone has a working knowledge of the basics of the University internet and text processing facilities and resources.

By the end of the session you should be able to:

- access the text processing program ‘Word’ and create a simple document and be prepared to develop a sophisticated level of use as befits graduate work
- open and read PDF files
- log on to your University account
- send and receive emails
- access the World Wide Web and know how to use simple search engines
- utilize both the University Library and external online information resources

Students come to the Centre with diverse experiences of using the web, email, and other internet resources. For some it may be quite new, while many will have varying degrees of expertise and familiarity with the technology. We start from your own skills with ICT (information and communication technology) and help you progress. If you are a complete novice using computers and the internet you have a stimulating journey ahead of you, and we will offer you individual help to get started. If you are web-savvy then all that is needed is a short guide to the University system. Please let us know before the session if you have any particular concerns about using computers and the internet.

Whether you are familiar or not with using ICT you need to be able to navigate the intricacies of the University of York system, so everyone must attend one of these sessions. You will have a one-to-one tutorial which will take account of your own skill level.

Please also note that these sessions offer very preliminary skills, and we expect everyone to be prepared to develop a sophisticated level of use as befits graduate work. Most students will take advantage of some the computing service courses on offer – see http://www.york.ac.uk/services/cserv/training/ for details of the computing service courses and the Iliad (Information Literacy In All Departments) programme.
Week 2
GETTING STARTED: WHY WOMEN’S STUDIES?
Stevi Jackson/Ann Kaloski-Naylor

Student quote:

The only way in which you can be genuinely stimulated and fed by discourses you admire or find congenial is if you dare conquer a voice of your own. Then you will understand why for you it is Kristeva rather than Irigaray, Spivak rather than Derrida, Bakhtin rather than Barthes (Nicole Ward Jouve, 1991: 9)

If the personal is political then it is also social and cultural and a major impetus to feminist research. This week and next we address a host of issues around the concept of ‘experience’. In this session we concentrate on the role of your own experiences in undertaking feminist research and in particular, we consider:

a) those aspects of our lives that have brought us to Women’s Studies
b) those elements of our lives that we may wish to make a part of our methodological repertoire.

Some of the questions we will consider are:

(to help you think about question a)
- What has brought you to ‘women’s studies’? Are there experiences in your life and those of your friends and family that you seek to understand through increasing your insight into gender issues?

(to help you think about questions a and b)
- In your education so far, have you been encouraged to use your own experiences? And if so, in what ways and in what disciplines have you used this knowledge?
- What is ‘experience’? When we talk about ‘our experiences’, what do we mean?

(to help you think about question b)
- How does personal experience influence the process of research?
- How can one’s own experiences be deployed in a critical, academic manner?
- In undertaking academic work, what are some of the differences we need to consider between notions of ‘the personal’, ‘intimacy’, ‘private’ and other related terms
- In counterpoint to this cluster of questions, we might also ask about the role of the ‘impersonal’ in feminist research.

Before the session:

Please think about the questions above, and jot down a few thoughts to bring to class. You will not be expected to reveal anything intimate; rather, we will be discussing how to make our experiences an activating and active, critical part of our academic understandings.

Basic reading:

These readings should help you come to terms with some of the key concepts and perspectives that feature in debates on feminist research. Please read them all over the next two weeks


**Week 3**
(Wed, 24 Oct)

**AHRC Collaborative Research Training at the University of York**
(with students from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, University of Leeds)

**Introduction to the Collaborative Training**

12.30-2.00pm **INTRODUCING THE VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**
Ann Kaloski-Naylor in Computer Room A/EW/004
This session will introduce you to the VLE that accompanies this course.

2.30-5.00pm **RESEARCHING ACROSS CULTURES**
Stevi Jackson, Ann Kaloski-Naylor/Anne Akeroyd in V/X/330

**RESEARCHING ACROSS CULTURES: THE USE OF TRANSNATIONAL RESOURCES**
Stevi Jackson/Anne Akeroyd/Ann Kaloski-Naylor

The aim of this session is to help you think about the resources available for conducting research in different countries and to raise methodological issues about interpreting data from varied cultural settings.

This session will be built around the different countries you come from and we ask you each to begin thinking, in the first instance, about your own country and culture.

**Preparation**

Each of you must come prepared to discuss some aspect of gender relations/women’s lives in your own countries and culture. You should do this with the aid of available data from or about your country. Each of you should bring two small items of relevant data; one of these should be statistical, and the other should be a cultural representation (e.g. an advertisement, or a feature from a magazine or newspaper). These should be small: no more than one picture; written text should be no more than a half of a printed A4 page, statistical tables should be no of more than six columns and six lines.

Questions you should address:

Ask yourself: how can I explain something relevant to women in my country to people from other countries? How can the data I have selected help? In the session you will be divided into small internationally diverse groups where you will each use you chosen resources to tell others about your country. You will then discuss among yourselves the advantages and limitations of the data you have selected and how they might prompt you to do further research.

Of each item of data ask:

How should it be interpreted?
What can it demonstrate?
What are its limitations?
What further questions does it raise?
Who has produced it and for what purpose? How does its provenance affect how we interpret it?
What counts as a ‘fact’ and what counts as representation?
What else might you need to know or understand in order to interpret the data better?
What sorts of further research might it prompt you to undertake?

**Ideas and sources: cultural representations**

You might consider any of the following:

An advertisement
A propaganda or educational poster or leaflet
A letter from a problem page
A short extract from a self-help/advice book
Words from a popular or traditional song
A passage from a magazine/newspaper report or article
Ideas and sources: statistics (and apparent ‘facts’)

Statistical data relevant to women, gender differences and gender inequality can be obtained in various ways, often from governments and international organizations. Look for topics such as: Marriage, divorce & childbearing; Education; Work & Occupations; Gendered violence; Crimes by & against women; Income; Poverty; Property rights; Health etc. (NB. Data for Taiwan are often not available from international agencies). You should always read the citations to the sources from which publications have drawn their statistics and any information provided about the data source, the date of when the data were collected, and any shortcomings of the data. Many sources are now available on the internet, so also check the Library catalogue as electronic versions are increasingly being added, especially for publications from international agencies and governments. All the online items below can also be accessed through the Library catalogue.

Some starting points for finding national and international statistics on women and gender

Dench, S. et al. (2002) Key indicators of women’s position in Britain (use this to make comparisons between your country and the UK)

Global, regional and national statistics relating to social development issues. See the ‘Human Development Indicators’ document in the annual global reports: several sections contain gender statistics, but look in particular at the section headed “… and achieving equality for all women and men” - there you can find the ranking of your country in the GDI indices (and details of how the values are calculated). The 2005 report is available at <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/pdf/HDR05_HDI.pdf>

- Gender empowerment measure (GEM) value
  A composite index measuring gender inequality in three basic dimensions of empowerment—economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making and power over economic resources.

- Gender-related development index (GDI) value
  A composite index measuring average achievement in the three basic dimensions captured in the human development index—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living—adjusted to account for inequalities between men and women.

Population Reference Bureau <http://www.prb.org/>. Covers the population dimensions of important social, economic, and political issues. See e.g.

- Datafinder - Population and Health Data. This database contains data on 137 population, health, and environment variables for more than 220 countries, 28 world regions and sub-regions, and the world as a whole. [NB. Highlight the country etc., highlight table(s) and click ‘submit query’]. <http://www.prb.org/datafind/datafinder6.htm>

Analyses demographic, social & economic correlates of living arrangements of people aged 60 years or over in 130+ countries, focusing on co-residence with family members, solitary living and the institutionalisation of older persons. See Chapter II: Living Arrangements: Patterns and Trends. 

To find government publications online for your country see Richard’s Kimber’s Political Science Resources. See links to Area Studies & Government Websites

See also University of York Electronic Resources for Women’s Studies

Further reading

Look at these sources if you want to further your understanding of the problems presented by statistical data and the difficulties of finding those relevant to women and gender.


Week 4 LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES
(Fri, 2 Nov) Sue Cumberpatch in Computer room L/117

This session is a hands-on skills session to help you begin to find your way around the myriad of research resources available in the Library and online. No prior preparation is required.

Week 5 GENDER IN/AND TRANSLATION
Ann Kaloski-Naylor/Stevi Jackson

In this session we will be using the concept of ‘translation’ to think about the portability of our feminist work and ideas – and the limits of that portability. We will look at work by linguists, anthropologists, sociologists and feminist theorists, all of whom wrestle, in different ways and to different extents, with issues of ‘translation’. Please note: this is not, perhaps, an area of thought in which relevance to gender or women’s studies is always immediately and transparently evident. We may have to work hard to tease out the implications of translation and its problems. On the other hand, if you routinely work in multiple languages (and some of you do) the pleasures and pains of having to work in translation will be all too obvious. We hope you will feel able to talk about your encounters with issues and problems of translation.


Lin Chun is addressing some very important and salient issues of the relationship of ‘translation’ to Chinese feminist politics. What factors, according to Lin Chun, have come into play in the evolution of a language of (and for) Chinese feminism? What lessons can non-Chinese feminists learn from this process?

Unni Wikan. ‘Beyond the words: the power of resonance’, in Gisli Palsson, ed. Beyond Boundaries:
Unni Wikan is an anthropologist concerned with the potentially 'imperialising' effects of translating words and ideas from an 'exotic' to a Western culture. What issues and tendencies does she identify as problematic? How are they problematic? What solutions does she offer? What can we learn as Women's Studies scholars from her predicament and discussion?

Maria Birbili. 'Translating from one language to another', Social Research Update Issue 31. Available at: <www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU31.html>

In this short practical guide, Birbili discusses some of the methodological problems of translation in social science research, including both qualitative and survey methods. What kinds of problems does Birbili identify in the use of translation in social research? Are there different problems associated with different methodologies? Is there a tension between rendering research participants speech intelligible in another language and preserving accuracy and cultural specificity? What particular problems are associated with the use of translators? What are your views on the solutions Birbili offers to these problems?

Gloria Anzaldúa. 'How to tame a Wild Tongue', in Borderland/La Frontera: The New Mestiza. San Francisco, Aunt Lute Books, 1987. 53—64. Anzaldúa is concerned, among other things, with the implications of 'living between languages' for identity. What, for Anzaldúa, are the advantages and disadvantages of her linguistic multiplicity? What do you bring away from her piece as a feminist?


You should read all five short pieces, taking notes as you go along, but should come to the class prepared to discuss your answers to one of these sets of questions.

Aims:
- To consider the theoretical and methodological implications of working across locations (of time, culture etc.)
- To consider the usefulness -- and limitations -- of metaphors ('translation') as a starting point for research
- To gain practice in working across disciplines and in evaluating the different priorities and practices of research from a variety of disciplinary perspectives


Week 6 RESEARCHING THE INTERNET: COMMUNICATION AND CREATIVITY Ann Kaloski-Naylor

This week's work will act as a critical introduction to researching the internet web via two themes: communication and creativity. We consider ways in which existing methodologies can be best utilized, and new methodologies developed, in order to examine women's use of digital media for artistic and communicative purposes. The focus will be on 'the web', or World Wide Web, but we will also touch on issues that are pertinent to other application on the net (eg some Bulletin Boards, email).
Note that this is not a practical ‘hands on’ session about using the internet to enable research. While the internet is clearly a useful resource for accessing details of books, papers and other information on any topic, the skills needed for this are dealt with in other sessions. This week we look at the net not as a research tool, but as a site of cultural, social and artistic production; we consider the theoretical implications of such activity and the methods we can best use in order to conduct worthwhile research.

Summary of aims:
- To consider the net as a place where interactions occur (eg in chat rooms and Second Life or via discussion lists), where texts are produced (eg web pages, art works) and where both occur (eg blogs, wikis).
- To identify methods and skills needed for researching the patterns, experiences and effects of engaging with these different technological spaces.
- To outline particular ethical issues raised by net research.
- More generally: to introduce ways of developing an interest in an issue into a viable research topic.

Before the session

Reading

Carolyn Guertin and Marjorie Coverley Luesebrink The Progressive Dinner Party http://califia.us/RM/dinner1.htm

Compulsory Reading: the commentary by Katherine Hayles, then browse the site and enjoy some of the artistic pieces. This kind of web-native work may be new to many of you; this is a great opportunity to capture your initial thoughts, so do write them down.

David Gauntlett Thoughts on ‘Media Studies 2.0 ’www.theory.org.uk/mediastudies2.htm This offers a good summary of recent web developments by outlining ‘media studies 2.0’. Compulsory.


If you have time: look at the ‘further reading’ suggestions and follow up your particular interest.

Tasks

1. Identify a web-related topic that you think needs investigating
2. Formulate a question: what, specifically, do you want to know?
3. Methodology: How will you respond to your question? What will you actually do to explore the particular aspect of your topic you have chosen? (eg interviewing, ethnographic work on a social network, analyzing representations, amassing and reading print journals about the web). How does your chosen method affect your question? Don’t worry about being at the beginning of your methodological training – just use your common-sense, existing knowledge and any useful theoretical perspectives from this week’s reading. The point of this exercise is to practice working out from a research topic to think about how to make methodological decisions. This is work-in-progress.
4. Think about any particular ethical issues that may arise from this research.
5. Type out a short – one page – summary, to include:
   a. your name
   b. a provisional title for your project
   c. a brief, one-paragraph description that tells the class about your topic, including why it is an important area to research and what led you do it (for example, personal experience or a particular text)
   d. your question
e. half-a-page on your proposed methodology
f. an indication of any ethical challenges you have identified.

6. Copy your page so that your work-in-progress thoughts can be distributed to everyone in the class. Please hand in one copy to me by 10.00am on the morning of the session.

Class exercise

In class we will discuss each worksheet. By this means, the whole class will:
  a. be introduced to a range of internet-related topics
  b. be exposed to a variety of research methods and the rationale for using them
  c. practice evaluating different research methods and continue to develop ways of constructively responding to the work of others.

After class

1. Go back over your worksheet, and make notes arising from the class discussion
2. Draft out version 2 of your research methodology to help identify how your ideas on producing a good research proposal are developing.

Further Reading:


Communication:
Sherry Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (1995). Influential and very readable analysis of communication, subjectivity and bodies online; a little too simplistic at times.

Creativity:
Roland Barthes 'From Work to Text' in *The Rustle of Language* Trans. Richard Howard (1986). pp. 56-64. Written before hypertext, but worth thinking about the concepts raised by Barthes in the light of the palpable hyperlinking that is now becoming part of contemporary literary online work.


Cyberfeminism:
David Bell and Barbara M Kennedy (eds) *The Cybercultures Reader* (2000). Section on cyberfeminism; excellent introduction and a good selection of articles.


Ethical Issues:
Alison Adam *Gender Ethics and Information Technology* (2005).


<http://www.nyu.edu/projects/nissenbaum/projects_ethics.html> hosts a variety of articles about internet research ethics from a 2002 conference at Lancaster University including those which touch on internet textual research, see, in particular: E H Bassett and Kathleen O’Riordan. ‘Ethics of Internet Research: Contesting the Human Subjects Model. Ethics and Information Technology’

Online bibliography:
Week 7

HOW DOES OUR PRESENT ENGAGE WITH OUR PAST?: QUESTIONS OF/FROM/ABOUT THE PAST
Sue Grace

This seminar will run as discussion with a short written ‘experiment’. We will start by constructing some of our own histories and views of ‘History’ and compare these to some more traditional approaches to History as an academic discipline. These might relate to personal or to national histories. Our key questions for this session will be: What is history? Has it changed since my last formal encounter with it? How can I use it to enrich my work? A secondary discussion will be around the skills of interviewing for oral history projects – and the complexities therein.

Seminar preparation

Please all read these key texts:


and


A reading list of other linked articles will be available in the Common Room reading boxes.

Week 8

FACTS AND/OR FICTION OF/FROM THE PAST
Sue Grace

We will talk further about why we need history and how we can integrate it in our work. One particularly complex and rich area of history is that of the history of crime. We will look at some historical notions of motherhood and then consider the crime of child murder. We will look at texts that purport to be both fact and others that are clearly fiction. We will also ask to what extent we may be creating and re-creating fictions retrospectively when we attempt to articulate the past. A secondary discussion in this seminar will consider whether we can rely on, and indeed use, statistics in such a problematic area.

Seminar Preparation

Please will everybody read:


WEEK 9

AHRC Collaborative Research Training at the University of Leeds:
READING GENDER AND SEXUALITY HISTORICALLY
Prof Ruth Holliday/Dr Mary Swan/Dr Jill Liddington
Leave University of York at 1.00pm, return at 6.00pm.

Details of this session will be provided as handouts prior to the session.
Building from last week’s work, we will delve further into ideas of feminist ideas of experience, this time addressing a whole host of issues around the deployment of the experiences of others. In doing this we will make use of some central concepts in debates on feminist research, such as ontology, epistemology, methodology, reflexivity and ethics. Make sure you do the introductory reading to ensure that, if you have not encountered these terms before, you have some rudimentary understanding of what they mean within the context of research on women and gender issues.

This session is wide ranging and engages with some of the major questions entailed in conducting feminist research (many of which will recur again in various contexts later in the course, and which you will need to consider in conducting the research for your dissertation). Like the work in week two, it is intended to start you thinking about these issues – and certainly not to be the final word.

- What do we mean by ‘experience’? (again) Who do we mean by ‘women’? (again)
- Why do these questions need to be asked? How do differing ontological and epistemological positions affect the answers we might give?
- Does a focus on women’s experience necessarily entail taking a feminist standpoint?
- Where women study women how do we think about their/our status as insiders/outsiders?
- What difference would it make for men to study women or for women to study men?
- What does adopting a reflexive approach to research entail?

**Preparation**

Come to the session with notes on your thoughts on the above questions, informed by your reading and be prepared to exchange your views with others. Because you are being asked to read around a wide range of issues, the essential reading has been kept as short and simple as possible. Please ensure you read everything identified as basic reading. This reading is basic – you will need to move beyond it to get to grips with the issues involved in doing feminist research. So please try to read more widely if you have time. Read strategically in order to develop a perspective on the questions for discussion.

**Introductory reading on feminist debates on methodology and epistemology.**

Other useful sources:

Harding, S., ed. (1987) *Feminism and Methodology*. Bloomington: Indiana UP. KT (This is a rather old collection, but it contains some of the foundational texts in debates on feminist methodology and epistemology.)


**Thinking about ‘experience’**

Basic reading:

Further reading:


The personal and reflexive in feminist research

Basic reading:


Further reading:

Insider/outsider perspectives

Basic reading:


Further Reading: