

FEMINIST STUDIES 144: DOING FEMINIST ACTIVISM IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Summer Session A, 2016

“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting our time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” (Queensland aboriginal activists group, 1970)

Instructor: Rachel Rys

Email: rachelrys@uemail.ucsb.edu

Class Time: MTWR 9:30-10:50

Location: HSSB 1207

Office Hours: Tuesdays 8-9, Thursdays 11-12

Office: SH 4431, Cubicle R

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will investigate how feminist and queer activists resist multiple and intersecting systems of oppression. By studying different writings, campaigns, organizations, protests, performances, and documents, we will examine how activists use multiple strategies to highlight and protest injustices. This course engages with the following questions: What makes activism feminist and feminism activist? What tactics do feminist activists use to resist injustice, what issues do they target, and why? What are the historical, political, and epistemological connections between feminism and broader histories of activism? By grappling with these questions, we will begin to identify and analyze the tools and commitments of feminist activism—in the past, present, and future.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of feminist analyses, this course will utilize a wide range of informational sources and presentation modalities (i.e. lecture, discussion, student presentations, interactive group exercises, writing activities, films). In order to build a community of learners, each class member is expected to participate in both learning and teaching throughout the session.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

While participating in this course, we will:

- Analyze how different political, affective, relational, and creative commitments of feminist theory and activism relate, overlap, and diverge.
- Utilize feminist, queer, and social justice-oriented frameworks and tactics to examine how activism shapes institutions.
- Create and share knowledge about feminism and activism through academic writing, popular writing, presentations, trainings, and creative and scholarly investigation of current issues.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings are available on our class Gauchospace. Everyone is responsible for bringing the reading to class each day. Reading is subject to change, so please be aware of announcements in class and via email.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

- Attendance, preparation, participation (15%)
- Reading journals (25%)
- Presentation (10%)
- Activism Paper (25%)
- Final project (25%)

A=90 B=80 C=70 D=60 F=below 59

Information about assignments will be posted on Gauchospace and introduced and discussed during class. At the end of the quarter, everyone should submit a final portfolio which compiles all the work completed in this course, including a self-assessment.

CLASS POLICIES

We will have discussions in this course which will require us to interrogate many of our closely held beliefs and values. Due to the personal and intimate nature of the course topics and materials, we will workshop class policies together on Day 1. Participants will be asked to sign a course agreement of mutually agreed-upon policies and expectations.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- **Women, Gender, & Sexual Equity Department:** <http://wgse.sa.ucsb.edu>
- **Campus Learning Assistance Services:** <http://clas.ucsb.edu>; 805.893.3269
- **Counseling & Support Services:** <http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu>; 805.893.4411
- **DSP Accommodations:** This course welcomes and accommodates all interested students. Students who require accommodations to fully participate in the course should contact the Disabled Students Program ASAP: <http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu>; 805.893.2668.

IMPORTANT DATES

Thurs, June 30	Paper Proposal paragraphs completed in class
Mon, July 4	Class cancelled: University holiday
Mon, July 11	Activism Paper draft due in class
Weds, July 13	Meetings with Rachel begin after class
Thurs, July 14	Class cancelled: Meetings with Rachel during and after class time
Thurs, July 21	Activism Paper revision due in class
Weds, July 27	Final project presentations in class
Thurs, July 28	Final project presentations in class
Fri, July 29	Final portfolio due to Rachel's mailbox (SH 4701) by 4pm

WEEK 1: FRAMEWORKS AND COMMITMENTS OF FEMINIST ACTIVISM

<p>Mon 6/20</p>	<p>Introductions & Course Guidelines</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [In class] Ludlow, Jeannie. 2004. "From Safe Space to Contested Space in the Feminist Classroom." <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Tues 6/21</p>	<p>Why Feminist Activism?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed, Sara. 2003. "Feminist Futures." <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the field of feminist studies been shaped by the theory/practice divide? What emotions are central to feminist consciousness and why? What does Ahmed mean by "The loss of such an object is not the failure of feminist activism but is indicative of its capacity to move or to become a movement" (249)?
<p>Weds 6/22</p>	<p>Whose Feminist Activism?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rowe, Aimee Carrillo. 2008. "On the Subject of Feminist Alliances." <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Rowe, what is the distinction between coalition and alliance (5)? Why does she argue that feminists should focus on the relational? How can feminists begin to "build power lines that connect us to others in, through, and for justice" (2)?
<p>Thurs 6/23</p>	<p>How Feminist Activism?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weiss, Penny. 2013. "Getting to the Roots; or, Everything I Need to Know about Radical Social Change I Learned in My Garden." <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Weiss, why is a gardening metaphor useful for thinking about radical social change? Which lessons do you find most useful for feminist activism? What are the limits of this metaphor?
<p>Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journals due on Thursday (3) 	

*Readings must be completed *before* class on the day they are listed. i.e. readings listed in the Tuesday row must be completed by Tuesday at 9:30.

WEEK 2: OBSTACLES TO FEMINIST ACTIVISM

<p>Mon 6/27</p>	<p>Contending with Antifeminist and Postfeminist Discourses</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tomlinson, Barbara. 2010. “Transforming the Terms of Reading: Ideologies of Argument and the Trope of the Angry Feminist.” (excerpts) • Butler, Jess. 2013. “For White Girls Only? Postfeminism and the Politics of Inclusion.” <i>Feminist Formations</i> 25(1): 35-58. (excerpts) <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Tomlinson, how does the trope of the angry feminist shape how feminist arguments are received by the public? According to Butler, what are the characteristics of postfeminism and how are they different from antifeminism? What struggles do feminist activists face when responding to antifeminist and postfeminist discourses?
<p>Tues 6/28</p>	<p>Resisting Neoliberalism and Individualism</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martinez, Elizabeth and Arnolando Garcia. n.d. “What is Neoliberalism? A Brief Definition for Activists.” • Jaffe, Sarah. 2014. “Lean Any Way You Want: The View from the Bottom of the Economic System Doesn’t Change.” • Duggan, Lisa. 2012. “After Neoliberalism? From Crisis to Organizing for Queer Economic Justice.” <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After reading Martinez and Garcia, why is it important for activists to understand and resist neoliberalism? How has neoliberalism co-opted feminism and other liberation frameworks (think about <i>Lean In</i>, for example)? According to Duggan, what are some strategies that activists can use and have used to resist neoliberal ideologies?
<p>Weds 6/29</p>	<p>Practicing Intersectionality, Access, and Alliance</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, Andrea. 2013. “The Problem with ‘Privilege.’” • McKenzie, Mia. 2014. “No More Allies.” • McKenzie, Mia. 2015. “How to Tell the Difference Between Real Solidarity and ‘Ally Theater.’” • Vosper, Nicole. 2016. “What Makes Me Tired When Organising with Middle Class Comrades.” • Withersaj. 2015. “How and Why Movements Need to be Inclusive.” <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the ideological, material, and practical difficulties of allyship across gender, race, class, and ability? According to Smith, what is the effect of “confessing” privilege in activist spaces? How does her argument relate to the perspectives of McKenzie, Vosper, and Withersaj?
<p>Thurs 6/30</p>	<p>Funding the Revolution</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, Andrea. 2009. “Introduction: The Revolution Will Not be Funded.” (excerpts) <p>Journal:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• According to Smith, what is the non-profit industrial complex (8-11)? Why is it important for feminist activists to think about the role of the state in non-profit work?
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Assignments:

- Journals due on Thursday (3)
- Paper proposal paragraphs completed in class on Thursday

WEEK 3: ON STUDENT & CAMPUS ACTIVISM

<p>Mon 7/4</p>	<p>Class Cancelled: University Holiday</p>
<p>Tues 7/5</p>	<p>The “New” Student Activism</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grosz, Elizabeth Grosz. 2000. “Histories of a Feminist Future.” • Buckley, Cara. 2012. “The New Student Activism.” • Wong, Alia. 2015. “The Renaissance of Student Activism.” <i>The Atlantic</i> May 21. • Curwen, Thomas, Jason Song, and Larry Gordon. 2015. “What’s Different about the Latest Wave of College Activism?” <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does Grosz mean by, “What <i>counts</i> as history, what is regarded as constituting the past, is that which is deemed to be of relevance to the concerns of the present” (1019). What are some of the common threads across the three newspaper articles about student activism (language, focus, timeline, etc.)? Drawing from Grosz, what is the function of telling the story of student activism in this way? How does each author represent the past, present, and future of student activism and why?
<p>Wed 7/6</p>	<p>In Defense of Campus Activism</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zeilinger, Julie. 2016. “4 Popular Complaints About Campus Activism That Are Totally Misguided.” <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zeilinger defends campus activism by deconstructing four prevalent arguments that discourage these efforts. How does she respond to these arguments and what does she suggest instead? Drawing from this and other readings, how does campus activism interact with non-campus activism? What would it look like to forge this connection?
<p>Thurs 7/7</p>	<p>Issues in Campus Organizing</p> <p>Readings (Choose one set of readings from the following):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape and Sexual Assault <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Svokos, Alexandra. 2015. “How Activists Improved the Handling of Campus Sexual Assault this Year.” • Bolger, Dana. 2015. “UCSB Student Activists Tell University: “It’s Not on Us. It’s on You.” • Trigger Warnings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loverin, Bailey. 2014. “Trigger Warnings at UCSB.” • Smith, Andrea. 2014. Beyond the Pros and Cons of Trigger Warnings: Collectivizing Healing.” • Racial Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landsbaum, Claire and Greta Weber. 2015. “What Happened at the University of Missouri?” • Nyong’o Tav. 2015. “The Student Demand.” • DREAM Act

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gonzalez, Paulina. 2012. “The Strategy and Organizing Behind the Successful Dream Act Movement.” • Gonzalez, Paulina. 2012. “Winning the Dream: Part Two of the ‘Strategy and Organizing Behind the Successful Dream Act Movement.’” • Million Student March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Million Student March. “#millionstudentmarch.”. • Quinlan, Casey. 2015. “What You Need to Know about the Huge Student Protest Sweeping the Country Today.” <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose one category (or more!) from below and complete all the readings listed underneath that subheading. According to your readings, how do the students or groups that are profiled discuss their grievances? What tactic(s) do they use to make change on campus? What successes have they had? What obstacles have they faced and what pushback have they received?
<p><i>Assignments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journals due on Thursday (3) 	

WEEK 4: TOOLS AND TACTICS OF FEMINIST ACTIVISM

<p>Mon 7/11</p>	<p>Commitments of Feminist Activism</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Post your responses to the class Google Doc under the 7.11 listing]: From what we have read, seen, and discussed in this course so far, what do we as a class hold as the commitments of feminist activism? Make a claim about one commitment, discuss why you think commitment is specifically important for <i>feminist</i> activism/activists, and provide an explanation or example of what this commitment might look like in practice. Keep in mind what we’ve discussed so far about the purpose, tools, obstacles, relationships, allyship, etc. See if you can come up with a new idea that is not already listed--be creative and specific! <p><i>Assignments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper Due! • Paper Option 1: Bring hard copy in class • Paper Option 2: Post digital version to Gauchospace AND bring hard copy in class
<p>Tues 7/12</p>	<p>Tools, Strengths, and Limits of In-Person Activism</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bobo, Kim, Jackie Kendall, and Steve Max. 2001. “The Fundamentals of Direct Action Organizing.” • Kahn, Sia. 2010. “20 Principles for Successful Community Organizing.” • [Optional] Snaith, Emma. 2016. “Sisters Uncut: Direct Action Changes Conversations Very Quickly.” <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the benefits of direct action organizing and community organizing for addressing feminist concerns? What types of issues can be addressed by this approach? What are the benefits and limits of this approach (think about scale, access, timeline, etc.)?
<p>Weds 7/13</p>	<p>Tools, Strengths, and Limits of Online Activism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with Rachel begin after class today <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rees, Anna. 2015. “Digital and Online Activism.” • Berlatsky, Noah. 2015. “Hashtag Activism Isn’t a Cop-Out.” • Benlevi, Jason. 2012. “Who is Social Media Really Working For?” <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Rees, what are some of the strengths and limits of online and digital activism? Why does Mckesson (interviewed by Berlatsky) argue that social media is "democratic" and "decentralized" while Benlevi argues that social media is "concentrated, centralized and controlled"? What factors, focus, and examples do you think led these two respondents to such different perspectives on the power of social media?

<p>Thurs 7/14</p>	<p>Class Cancelled: Paper Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with Rachel continue during class time today <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings
<p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journals due on Thursday (1 through Google Docs on Monday, 2 in hard copy on Wednesday) • Activism paper due Monday 	

WEEK 5: CAMPAIGN PLANNING: CONSENSUS BUILDING, ISSUE FORMING

<p>Mon 7/18</p>	<p>Using Social Media for Change</p> <p>Readings: Choose ONE or more of the below readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M., Kaye. 2014. “On #yesallwomen, One Year Later.” • NPR. 2014. “Hashtag Activism in 2014: Tweeting ‘Why I Stayed.’” • Stephen, Bijan. 2015. “Social Media Helps Black Lives Matter Fight the Power.” • Penney, Joel. 2015. “Facebook’s Rainbow Profile Pictures: The ‘Slackivism’ Debate Rages On.” • Berkowitz, Ben. 2011. “From a Single Hashtag, a Protest Circled the World.” <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From this article, podcast, and/or video, how is social media used to address this topic? Why did the organizer or originator of this campaign use this particular strategy? What are the specific benefits of this use of social media? What are the limits? (Think back to our conversation on Wednesday about the pros/cons of social media.)
<p>Tues 7/19</p>	<p>Project Prep: Identifying an Issue</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Consensus Council, n.d. “Consensus-Based Decision-Making Processes.” <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p>Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come to class on Tuesday with questions about the consensus building process and ideas for the final project.
<p>Weds 7/20</p>	<p>Project Prep: Identifying Audience, Message, & Delivery</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Change Agency. n.d. “Campaign Planning Template.” • The Change Agency Website <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of tools and structures do these resources provide? Do they raise any new questions or concerns for you? What types of strategies seem appropriate for addressing the issue we identified as a class?
<p>Thurs 7/21</p>	<p>Project Prep: Identifying Resources and Strengths (PHELPS 1518)</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now that you have an idea what you will be working on, identify at least two resources that will help you (organizing websites, books, news articles, blogs, campus resources, etc). Print the source to turn in or put a citation in your response so I can also take a look at this resource. <p>Journal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do these resources offer you? A model, a process, a step-by-step, an inspiration, a new understanding? What lessons can you learn from this resource? How will you apply these lessons to the project you are working on?
<p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journals due on Thursday (3) • Activist paper revisions due on Thursday 	

WEEK 6: PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Mon 7/25	<p>Project Prep: Work Day (PHELPS 1518)</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Tues 7/26	<p>Project Prep: Work Day (PHELPS 1518)</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Weds 7/27	<p>Project Prep: Work Day (PHELPS 1518)</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p><i>Journal:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Thurs 7/28	<p>Sharing, Reflecting, Envisioning (HSSB 1207—Regular Classroom)</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A <p><i>Final Project Reflection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [1 page] Reflect on the course and what you have learned about feminist activism. What knowledge will you take away from this course? What questions do you still have about the tools and commitments of feminist activism? What do you see as the <i>future</i> of feminist activism? • [1 page] Reflect on the final project. What have you learned from applying our theories and discussions about feminist activism to a tangible project? What struggles did you encounter through this process? What resources and strategies did you discover? What questions do you still have about <i>doing</i> feminist activism?
<p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final project sharing on Thursday • Final project component and 2 page reflection due in class on Thursday 7/29 <p>OR</p> <p>Due to Feminist Studies mailroom (SH 4701) by Monday 8/1 at 4pm at the latest. Any digital components must also be emailed to racheltyl@umail.ucsb.edu by Monday 8/1 by 4pm.</p>	