

**Women's Studies (WMST) 405 – Lecture 01**  
**Seminar in Feminist Praxis**  
**Fall 2012**  
**Monday 1300 – 1550**

**Instructor:** Dr. Fiona Nelson  
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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1400-1600  
Or by appointment

**Additional Information:**

Course materials, grades, and a discussion board will be available on Blackboard. Go to: <http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/webapps/login>

**Course Description:**

In “praxis,” theory and practice come together to create informed, conscious and self-conscious action. In this seminar, students will have opportunities to explore how their own feminist convictions might manifest themselves in terms of activism. At the same time, we will investigate the Canadian history of feminist activism and examine the links between feminist theoretical formulations and feminist practices.

Students will be asked to engage in some form of feminist practice, but it is up to you to decide what this means for you. Don't worry, we will talk about this in the seminar. As a rough guide, I would suggest about 4 – 8 hours per month should be spent on your activist projects. Any less than this would probably be too little to allow full engagement in the feminist project. More than this might be burdensome, but that is up to you.

For the most part, in-class time will be spent discussing assigned readings and reflecting on activist experiences. Because we are a small group and will be meeting only once a week, it is imperative that you keep up with the readings and make every effort to attend all classes. Late arrivals and early leavings are very disruptive with small groups. I would thus ask that if you arrive after the door is closed, you wait until the midpoint break to join the class. Likewise, if you will need to leave early, please do so at the midpoint.

**Objectives of the Course:**

The main objective of the course is to help students clarify the ways in which you can actively “do” feminism. You might also have experiences that could help in finding later employment in feminist or human services sectors, if that is your goal.

We will also examine and generate, at least tentative, answers to questions such as the following:

- What is the feminist movement? Does it still exist?
- What counts as feminist activism? Who gets to decide?
- Do feminists have obligations simply by virtue of being feminist?
- How do we weigh/decide between local and global foci and efforts? Can we work locally for global change? Who decides the needs/directions of global action/change?
- What is/should be the role of Women’s Studies programs in terms of feminism and feminist praxis?

**Computer and Internet Use:**

Face-to-face, engaged, interaction is the key feature of a seminar course. Additionally, there will be no lecture during which one needs to take notes. Students are thus requested *not* to use their computers in this class unless specifically requested to do so.

**Textbooks and Readings:**

Orr, Catherine M., Ann Braithwaite and Diane Lichtenstein (eds.) 2012. *Rethinking Women’s and Gender Studies*. New York and Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge.

Rebick, Judy. 2005. *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution*. Canada: Penguin Canada.

Landsberg, Michele. 2011. *Writing the Revolution*. Toronto: Second Story Press.

Rebick, Judy. 2009. *Transforming Power: From the Personal to the Political*. Toronto: Penguin Canada.

**Assignments and Evaluation:**

Attendance/Participation in Future of WMST Symposium (5%)

Symposium Reflection Paper (10%)

Journal Entries/Responses to Readings (30%)

Midterm Assignment and Presentation (20%)

Final Paper and Presentation (30%)

Participation/Attendance (5%)

*ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WMST SYMPOSIUM:*

On Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, the University of Calgary will be hosting a symposium called “The Future of Women’s Studies in Alberta.” This symposium is the first time representatives of all the Women’s Studies programs, and all the campus-based women’s centres in Alberta will come together and discuss the history and futures of academic feminism in Alberta. The Universities of Calgary, Alberta and Lethbridge, as well as Mount Royal University and Athabasca University will be represented. The symposium will begin with a keynote address, on the evening of Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup> by Annalee Lepp, the president of the Canadian Women’s Studies Association. She will discuss trends and developments in Canadian Women’s Studies programs. The symposium will then run all day Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, built around three panel discussions: one with WMST students, one with WMST program coordinators and one with representatives of campus –based women’s centres.

This symposium is a unique opportunity for members of the WMST 405 class. Not only does participation in the symposium represent feminist activism, but we have a unique opportunity to consider some of the central guiding questions of the symposium within the class itself. For this reason, the first few weeks of class will be built around engaging with some of the writing that has informed the symposium, participating in the symposium and then reflecting on the symposium. For these reasons, students are asked to attend the symposium, encouraged to actively participate in discussion while there, and welcomed (but certainly not required) to volunteer for the event.

There will be a 5% participation grade for attending and participating in the symposium. In addition, students will be asked to write a critical reflection paper about the symposium, or about particular aspects of it. The paper should be 3-5 pages in length and is due in class on October 15<sup>th</sup>. More details about the paper will be discussed in class.

*ABOUT THE JOURNALS:*

The journal entries are your critical responses to some aspects of the assigned readings. These will be brief, about two pages. Do not attempt to summarize the reading(s) and do not engage with more than one main idea or argument. What is important here is that for each entry you identify one thing that captured/stimulated you in the readings. This might be a point/insight you loved, something you hated, something that you need to think through more fully etc. For your journal entry, grapple critically with that “thing.” This will be explained more fully in class. You are required to submit six journals although you have the option of submitting up to eight. There are eight dates on which we will be discussing the readings, two classes for each book. Mandatory journals are due on the first day of discussion of each book (Sept. 17, Oct. 1, Oct. 29, Nov. 19). Your next two journals can be submitted on any two of the second classes of discussion (Sept. 24, Oct 15, Nov. 5, Nov. 26) If you choose to submit more than six journals, your four mandatory entries and the top two grades on the others will be used in the calculation of your final grade. The journal must address the reading that is being discussed the day the journal is submitted. People will be asked to discuss their journals in class, so keep this in mind when choosing your topic/approach.

*Late journals will not be accepted.*

*ABOUT THE MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT AND PRESENTATION:*

This will be a 6-8 page paper that you will discuss in class. The paper will ask you to reflect critically on your praxis experiences, on class readings to this point, and on a journal article relevant to the topic of feminist praxis. The assignment and a list of possible articles will be distributed in class on October 1<sup>st</sup>. You may choose an article from this list or you may find a different article (which should be approved by me). The requirements for this paper will be discussed in greater detail in class. The paper is worth 20%. Due date for paper (and presentation date): October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

*ABOUT THE FINAL PAPER AND PRESENTATION:*

This will be your opportunity to tie together your practical experiences through the semester and the theoretical, conceptual and historical material we have examined in class. Essentially, it will be your final report about your feminist activism. Further details will be discussed in class.

The paper should be 12-16 pages, double-spaced. The paper will be worth 30%.

Presentation and due date: December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE GRADE:*

All students are encouraged and expected to participate in the class discussions; the ability to articulate one’s position and discuss it with others is a vital academic skill to develop. Likewise, people are asked to be mindful of how much they are contributing and try not to dominate class discussions; being able to listen is also a very important skill. Seminar courses depend fundamentally on the quality of class discussion. I will thus also be noting attendance and anyone missing three or more classes, for any reason, will lose the entire 5% participation/attendance grade.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

\*There will be NO registrar-scheduled final examination.

### **Deferrals:**

If at all possible you must provide *advance* notice to the instructor if you are unable to pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student. Assignments submitted after the deadline, without documentation or my approval, may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Please note that requests to defer a final examination or to defer term work past the end of a term go through Enrolment Services and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U of C Calendar. You can find the forms you need as well as information on appropriate supporting documentation online:

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/forms\\_students](http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/forms_students)

### **Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades:**

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor. Under no circumstances may papers/assignments be placed on or under the professor's door.
2. Term work will be returned in class. Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise, final papers will be available for pick-up only during the professor's office hours at the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted publicly. They are available only online.

**The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)** legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

**Academic Accommodation:** Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, phone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no

later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

### **Academic Misconduct:**

Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

### **Plagiarism**

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre ([efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://efwr.ucalgary.ca)) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

### **Writing Skills Statement**

All written assignments will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

### **"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

### **Grading System**

The following grading system will be used:

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99

B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

### **Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see the U of C Research Ethics “Information for Applicants,” sections 3.0 to 9.0, inclusive: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/for-researchers/ethics>

There will be no requirement of conducting human-subject research in this course.

### **Emergency evacuations:**

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by *[check link to find assembly point for your building: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/node/75>]*

### **Students’ Union:**

Students’ Union contacts can be found at:

<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/page/affordability-accessibility/contact>

### **Student Representation**

There are now four Arts reps because of the amalgamation, with the email addresses being [arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca), and [arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca). Please contact if you have questions related to Students Union matters, events, or concerns.

For your student ombudsman, please see

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

### **Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of TFDL.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

The following are the dates by which indicated readings should be completed:

September 10 <sup>th</sup> :	No Readings
September 17 <sup>th</sup> :	Orr, Braithwaite and Lichtenstein: pp xiii - 172
September 24 <sup>th</sup> :	Orr, Braithwaite and Lichtenstein: pp 173 - 332
October 1 <sup>st</sup> :	Rebick - <i>Roses</i> : pp xi - 124
October 8 <sup>th</sup> :	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS
October 15 <sup>th</sup> :	Rebick – <i>Roses</i> : pp 126 - 257
October 22 <sup>nd</sup> :	Midterm Assignment Presentations – No Readings
October 29 <sup>th</sup> :	Landsberg: viii – 175
November 5 <sup>th</sup> :	Landsberg: pp 177 - 326
November 12 <sup>th</sup> :	READING DAY - NO CLASS
November 19 <sup>th</sup> :	Rebick - <i>Power</i> : pp 1 - 130
November 26 <sup>th</sup> :	Rebick - <i>Power</i> : pp 131 - 264
December 3 <sup>rd</sup> :	Final Presentations – No Readings