Course Description

The project of completing a dissertation is fundamentally a project of making knowledge. Researchers and scholars generate new knowledge about some aspect of the natural, social, or cultural world that is unexplored or unexamined. However, we do not make knowledge in just any way we please. Our methods are shaped by disciplinary theories about the best ways to produce authoritative, valid and true knowledge. Philosophers call these theories of knowledge epistemologies. Simply put, epistemologies are those theoretical frameworks that drive and define the proper processes for the production of knowledge.

Feminists and other social theorists have argued since the 1970s that epistemologies are not neutral. Feminists hold that biased knowledge is not only a result of prejudices held by researchers but is also the product of sexism built into epistemologies. Many early academic feminists were principally concerned with sexism in the natural and social sciences and humanities. However, feminist critiques of epistemological bias quickly expanded to include other interlocking systems of power and oppression including racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, and cis-sexism. Contemporary feminist epistemology is concerned with how a wide variety of social and political power differentials are built into our epistemologies. Interlocking systems of power and privilege structure what constitutes proper knowledge and who can be seen as an authoritative knower. Finally, part of the project of feminist epistemology has been to construct alternative epistemologies that will create knowledge that is 1) useful to marginalized groups of people and 2) advances social justice for all people.

As budding knowledge producers, all doctoral students should be critically reflective about the epistemologies that frame their research projects. Such reflection requires deep engagement with the fundamental assumptions at the center of our epistemologies. In this course students will have the opportunity to explore feminist epistemologies in depth and then apply them to their own projects. The central questions of this course include:

• In what ways do social and political power differentials shape knowledge production?
• How is biased or incomplete knowledge harmful to social, cultural and natural worlds?
• Is value-free knowledge possible? Is it desirable?
• What epistemological alternatives have feminists proposed?
• What are the limitations of various feminist epistemologies?
• How are feminist epistemologies useful to research within leadership studies?

This course will be conducted as a discussion-based seminar. Attendance and active participation are mandatory.
Course Goals

It is assumed that consistent with Gonzaga’s Jesuit mission students desire to live in a more just world. Feminists epistemologies are, at bottom, about epistemic justice. Specifically, my learning objectives for students in this course are as follows:

• Students will demonstrate familiarity with early feminist critiques of bias in both the content of natural and social knowledge and in the epistemologies which produce that knowledge.
• Students will be to describe the concept of epistemological ignorance.
• Students will demonstrate knowledge of feminist critiques of scientific, sociological, historical, educational and ethnographic epistemologies.
• Students will be able to describe, analyze and apply feminist standpoint and postmodernist epistemologies, including strong objectivity and situated knowledges.
• Students will be able to describe feminist empiricism.
• Students will be able to describe, analyze, and apply intersectional approaches to epistemology including black feminist, Chicana feminist, queer, decolonial and endarkened feminist epistemologies.
• Students will be able to describe epistemic injustice and propose strategies to advance epistemic justice.
• Students will be able to identify the epistemological assumptions within leadership studies from a feminist perspective.

Readings

Books (Available at the Bookstore)

Required

Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter - Feminist Epistemologies
Course Reader (tentatively includes):

Gloria Anzaldúa - Now Let Us Shift ... The Path of Conocimiento
Dolores Bernal - "Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology in Educational Research!"
Dolores Bernal, et al - "Chicana Feminist Epistemology Revisited"
Emma Casey - "How Do You Get a PhD in That?"
Cindy Cruz - "Toward an Epistemology of a Brown Body"
Cynthia Dillard - "The Substance of Things Hoped For, The Evidence of Things Not Seen" in On Spiritual Strivings
Roderick Ferguson - "Introduction" in Aberrations in Black
Miranda Fricker - "Epistemic Justice and Epistemic Oppression"
Sandra Harding - "Feminism Confronts the Sciences" in Whose Science? Whose Knowledge
Donna Haraway - "Situated Knowledges"
Donna Haraway - "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" in Simians, Cyborgs, and Women
Nancy Hartsock - "A Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specific Feminist Historical Materialism"
Mary Hawkesworth - "Knowers, Knowing, Known - Feminist Theory and Claims of Truth"
Patricia Hill Collins - "Learning from the Outsider Within"
Patricia Hill Collins - "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought"
Patricia Hill Collins - "Black Feminist Epistemology" in Black Feminist Thought
Aida Hurtado - "Theory in the Flesh: Toward an Endarkened Epistemology"
Maria Lugones & Elizabeth Spelman - "Have We Got a Theory for You!"
Maria Lugones - "Purity, Impurity and Separation"
Maria Lugones - "Playfulness, 'World Traveling' and Loving Perception"
Munulani Meyer - "Our Own Liberation: Reflections on Hawaiian Epistemology"
Walter Mignolo - "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom"
Adrienne Rich - "Notes Toward a Politics of Location"
Emma Perez - "Introduction" and "Sexing the Colonial Imaginary" in Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History
James Scheurich & Michelle Young - "Coloring Epistemologies: Are Our Research Epistemologies Racially Biased"
Joan Scott - "The Evidence of Experience"
Eve Sedgwick - "Epistemology of the Closet" in Epistemology of the Closet
Dorothy Smith - "Sociology from Women's Experience: a Reaffirmation"
Dorothy Smith - "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology"
Linda Smith - "Colonizing Knowledge" in Decolonizing Methodologies
Handel Wright - "An Endarkened Feminist Epistemology?"

Recommended:
Foucault - Power/Knowledge

Blackboard:
Alessandra Tanesini - Feminist Epistemology (two brief introductions)

Schedule & Assignments

The tentative reading and assignment schedule can be found below. Readings assigned for each session must be read prior to class. You should be ready to discuss the articles in detail. You are expected to come to class with your own questions for discussion.

Key: BB - Blackboard; A&P - Alcoff and Potter; CR - Course Reader

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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| 1       | BB Tanesini 1 & 2  
Web: http://www.iep.utm.edu/fem-epis/  
A&P Introduction  
CR Scheurich & Young  
CR D Smith (1979)  
CR Harding | Introduction to Feminist & Anti-racist Epistemology  
Epistemic Injustice  
Feminist Critiques of Social and Natural Science |
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| 2       | CR Fricker  
CR Hawkesworth  
CR Lugones & Spelman  
CR Meyer  
CR Casey | Epistemic In/justice  
Power/Knowledge & Authority  
Who is a knower? |
| 3       | CR Hartsock  
CR Rich  
A&P Harding  
A&P Longino | Feminist Empiricism  
Feminist Standpoint  
Situated Knowledges  
Epistemic Privilege |
| 4       | CR Haraway - Situated Knowledge  
CR Haraway - Cyborgs  
CR Lugones - Purity  
CR Lugones - Playfulness  
CR Sedgwick | Feminist Post-Modernist Epistemology  
Queer Theory & Epistemology |
| 5       | CR D Smith  
CR Collins - Social Construction  
CR Collins - Outsider  
CR Collins - Epistemology  
A&P On | Feminist Critiques of Sociology  
Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology |
| 6       | CR Scott  
CR Ferguson  
CR L Smith  
CR Perez  
CR Mignolo | Feminist Critiques of History  
Decolonial Epistemologies  
Epistemic Disobedience |
| 7       | CR Cruz  
CR Anzaldúa  
CR Bernal  
CR Bernal et al. | Chicana Feminist Epistemologies  
Education & Epistemology |
| 8       | CR Dillard  
CR Wright  
CR Hurtado | Endarkened Feminist Epistemologies  
Epistemology & Spirituality |

**Synthesis & Reflection Journals**

You will have four journal entries to complete over the course of the semester. Students may determine at what points they would like to submit, but the journal entries should be spaced over the semester, and not all submitted at the end. In your entry you should synthesize the readings since your last journal entry and reflect on what you take away from them. This is an opportunity to begin brainstorming for your final paper and to get early feedback from me. Though these are journal entries, your writing should meet academic scholarly standards. All references should be properly cited. The length of the journal should be no less than 2 pages typed (double spaced) at a minimum. However, you will likely need more space to fully synthesize and reflect on the readings.
Epistemological Paper

In this paper you will draw from your synthesis and reflection journals to build an analysis of feminist epistemologies in relation to your own research project. You will identify epistemic injustices that may arise from research like yours. Using the theories from the course, you will propose ways you can work towards epistemic justice in your particular project. The paper will be 18-20 pages in length and will use the style of your choice (APA, MLA, CMS, etc). This will be your principle work product for the course and will represent 50% of your final grade. You will be assessed using the academic writing guidelines on the DPLS website. Your paper will be due at the end of the semester on TBD.

Grading

30% Participation
20% Synthesis & Reflection Journals (5% each)
50% Statement of Ethics