

**COMM 8910: Feminist Organizing**  
**Spring 2020**  
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### **Course Description (Abbreviated)**

This course focuses on the multiple challenges and disputes that have occurred in the process of organizing this field known as feminist organizational communication. We will begin with a general overview of tenets of organizational communication and then move directly into multiple critiques of the field, each from a different feminist tradition. These critiques establish that theories of organization—the process of coordinating meaning, goals, and action—are fundamentally intertwined with racism, heteronormativity, misogyny, colonialism, ableism, and related oppressions. Then, in the second half of the course, we will focus on scholarship that thinks about *disorganizing*, that is, challenging organizational processes that maintain inequity. Throughout the semester, we will consider how feminist organizational communication scholarship and scholars intervene in their own fields and in the academy where we all work.

### **Course Goals**

- To familiarize you with some of the general tenets of feminist organizational communication.
- To engage and develop affirmative academic and organizing practices consistent with feminisms.
- To help you trace the relationships among feminist organizational communication, feminist theories, and your own areas of interest/identity.
- To develop your skills for public and professional scholarship in light of feminist communication theory, research, and organizing.

### **Guiding Questions**

- How is feminist organizing related to the broader field of organizational communication and to other (sub)disciplines?
- What debates and tensions does feminist organizational communication scholarship put at the center? What debates and tensions does it marginalize?
- How might tools, concepts, theories, and practices from feminist organizing challenge and/or uphold organizational inequity?
- How is feminist organizational communication useful for your own research program and scholarly identity?
- How can feminist organizing transform academia?

## Grading

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Percentage of Grade</i>
<i>Course Project</i>	
Course Project: Proposal	10
Course Project: Draft	12
Course Project: Peer Review	10
Course Project: Final Paper	40
<i>Seminar Activity</i>	
Seminar Activity: Concept Map	10
Seminar Activity: Discussion Artifact	8
Seminar Activity: Participation	10
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>100</i></b>

### Course Project

By the end of the course you should have a paper that is ready to be submitted to a conference and that advances your own scholarly projects and identity in some way. Your project can be a continuation of work already in progress. It can be either empirical or theoretical, but you should have in mind the demands and quality standards of particular conference outlets. You will first submit a project proposal. In week ten you will submit a full draft of your project. You will offer and receive feedback from a peer on this draft. Last, you will submit a final, substantially revised version of your paper. (More detail and scaffolding provided in the full syllabus.)

### Seminar Activities

A significant portion of our work together occurs during our class discussions and in the less formal conversations before, after, and around this class. Accordingly, you will be graded on the following three in-class assessments.

#### Concept map

This assignment is intended to help you synthesize our extensive reading by noting relations, continuities, and discordance among topics, themes, methods, concepts, or vocabulary in this course. The set of skills this assignment develops are useful for any literature review, for many kinds of theory-building, for identifying the contributions and implications of your own research and projects, and for comprehensive exam preparations. (Details and scaffolding provided in the full syllabus.)

## Discussion Artifacts

On selected weeks you will be responsible for bringing to class some contemporary problem or information that will connect to our semester-long discussions. You will lead us in ten to fifteen minutes of conversation in which, as a group, we will think about how our readings and conversations connect to your discussion artifact. (Details and scaffolding provided in the full syllabus.)

## Participation

I will grade your participation on the quality of your contributions to our collective learning. Your participation grade in this course is not dependent on how much you say or how often you speak, but instead on a spectrum of communicative contributions. (Details provided in full syllabus.)

## Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignment Due
<b>I. Organizing: Communicating organizations &amp; work into being</b>		
1	What is organizational communication?	
2	Discourses of and about work	
<b>II. Border Disputes: Resisting and transforming an academic field</b>		
3	Race and intersectional feminisms	<u>Project Proposal</u>
4	Postcolonialism and decolonial feminisms	
5	Globalization and transnational feminisms	
6	Defensive feminisms <sup>1</sup>	<u>Concept Map</u>
<b>III. Disorganizing: Challenging violence and inequity</b>		
7	Disorganizational communication	

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<sup>1</sup> This topic is a reference to Harris, K. L. (2019). Unlearning border defensiveness, undermining white supremacist violence: Renewing the case for interdisciplinary inquiry in organizational communication. Paper presented on the Organizational Communication Division's Top Paper Panel at the 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Baltimore, MD.

8	No class: Spring break	
9	Working life and living work: Care work and unpaid labor	
10	Sexuality, sex work, sexual violence	
11	Writing feminisms + paper workshop	Project Draft
12	No class: Professional Association Conference	Peer Review
13	Monsters, queers, and freaks, oh my!	
14	“Violence communicates” <sup>2</sup> : New materialisms and natureculture	
15	Bringing it home: Disorganizing academia	
16	No class: Finals week	Final Project

## Readings

Our reading list includes a few of the most central and cited texts in feminist organizational communication, but it focuses more on a collection of readings that prod the field toward what I hope it can be: More critical of its whiteness, more attuned to its own U.S.- and Euro-centrism, more reflexive about its citation practices and gaps, and super queer. Please read all your syllabi and reading lists, including this one, as story-telling exercises that involve power, politics, professional paradoxes, partiality, and personal connections.

### **I. ORGANIZING: COMMUNICATING WORK AND ORGANIZATIONS INTO BEING** (full syllabus also lists recommended readings)

#### **1. What is organizational communication?**

*required:*

Mumby, D. K., & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies.  
*Management Communication Quarterly*, 10, 50–72.

Broadfoot, K. J. et al. (2008). A mosaic of visions, daydreams, and memories: Diverse inlays of organizing and communicating from around the globe. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 22(2), 322–350. doi:10.1177/0893318908323574

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<sup>2</sup> This quotation comes from Harris, K. L. (2019). *Beyond the rapist: Title IX and sexual violence on US campuses*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Koschmann, M. (2012). What is organizational communication? [video]. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5oXygLGMuY>

Vásquez Donoso, C., Marroquín Velásquez, L., & Angel Botero, A. (2018). In search of a Latin American approach to organizational communication: A critical review of scholarship (2010–2014). *Communication Theory*, 28, 155–179. doi:10.1093/ct/ctx010

## 2. Discourses of and about work

*required:*

Cruz, J. (2015). Dirty work at the intersections of gender, class, and nation: Liberian market women in post-conflict times. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 38, 421–439.

Duffy, M. (2007). Doing the dirty work: Gender, race, and reproductive labor in historical perspective. *Gender & Society*, 21, 313–336. doi:10.1177/0891243207300764

Long, Z. (2016). A feminist ventriloquial analysis of *hao hongzuo* (“good work”): Politicizing Chinese post-1980s women's meanings of work. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 39(4), 422–441.

Macharia, K. (2018, Sep 19). On quitting. *The New Inquiry*. Available at <https://thenewinquiry.com/on-quitting/>

Way, A. (2019). Meaning/fulness through family: Discourses of work among poor and working class youth. *Western Journal of Communication*. Advanced online publication. doi:10.1080/10570314.2019.1688859

## II. BORDER DISPUTES: RESISTING AND TRANSFORMING AN ACADEMIC FIELD

### 3. Race and intersectional feminisms

*required (pick any five of your choice from this list):*

Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class, and race in organizations. *Gender & Society*, 20 (4), 441–464. doi:10.1177/0891243206289499

Ashcraft, K.L. & Allen, B.J. (2003). The racial foundation of organizational communication. *Communication Theory*, 13, 5–38.

Cooke, B. (2003b): “The denial of slavery in management studies.” *Journal of Management Studies*, 40, 1895–1918.

Grimes, D. S. (2002). Challenging the status quo? Whiteness in the diversity management literature. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15(3), 381–409.

Essers, C., Benschop, Y. & Doorewaard, H. (2010). Female ethnicity: Understanding Muslim immigrant businesswomen in the Netherlands. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 17, 320–339. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0432.2008.00425.x

Holvino, E. (2010). Intersections: The simultaneity of race, gender, and class in organization studies. *Gender, Work, & Organization*, 17(3), 248–277. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0432.2008.00400.x

Liu, H. (2018). Re-radicalising intersectionality in organisation studies. *ephemera*, 18(1), 81–101.

Scott, E. K. (1998). Creating partnerships for change: Alliances and betrayals in the racial politics of two feminist organizations. *Gender and Society*, 12 (4), 400–423.

#### **4. Postcolonialism and decolonial feminisms**

Broadfoot, K. J., & Munshi, D. (2014). Postcolonial approaches. In L. L. Putnam & D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational communication* (3rd ed., pp. 151–171). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gajjala, R. (2002). An interrupted postcolonial/feminist cyberethnography: Complicity and resistance in the “cyberfield”. *Feminist Media Studies*, 2(2), 177–193. doi:10.1080/1468077022015085

Hanchey, J. N. (2018). Reworking resistance: A postcolonial perspective on international NGOs. In P. J. Salem & E. Timmerman (Eds.), *Transformative practice and research in organizational communication* (pp. 274–291). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Nkomo, S. M. (2011). A postcolonial and anti-colonial reading of “African” leadership and management in organization studies: Tensions, contradictions and possibilities. *Organization*, 18, 365–386.

Ozkazanc-Pan, B. (2012). Postcolonial feminist research: Challenges and complexities. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*, 31, 573–91.

Prasad, A. (2014). You can’t go home again: And other psychoanalytic lessons from crossing a neo-colonial border. *Human Relations*, 67(2), 233–57.

#### **5. Globalization and transnational feminisms**

*required:*

Cruz, J. M. (2015). Reimagining feminist organizing in global times: Lessons from African feminist communication. *Women & Language*, 38(1), 23–41.

Dempsey, S. E., Parker, P. S., & Krone, K. J. (2011). Navigating socio-spatial difference, constructing counter-space: Insights from transnational feminist praxis. *Journal of*

*International and Intercultural Communication*, 4(3), 201–220.  
doi:10.1080/17513057.2011.569973

Ganesh, S., Zoller, H., & Cheney, G. (2005). Transforming resistance, broadening our boundaries: Critical organizational communication meets globalization from below. *Communication Monographs*, 72(2), 169–191. doi:10.1080/03637750500111872

Shenoy–Packer, S. (2015). Immigrant professionals, microaggressions, and critical sensemaking in the U.S. workplace. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 29, 257–275.  
doi:10.1177/0893318914562069

Ul-Haq, S., & Westwood, R. (2012). The politics of knowledge, epistemological occlusion and Islamic management and organization knowledge. *Organization*, 19(2), 229–257.

## 6. Defensive feminisms<sup>3</sup>

*required:*

Broadfoot, K. J., & Munshi, D. (2007). Diverse voices and alternative rationalities: Imagining forms of postcolonial organizational communication. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21, 249–267. doi:10.1177/0893318907306037

Mumby, D. K., & Stohl, C. (2007). (Re)disciplining organizational communication studies: A response to Broadfoot and Munshi. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21(2), 268–280. doi:10.1177/0893318907306038

Carrillo Rowe, A. M. (2000). Locating feminism’s subject: The paradox of white femininity and the struggle to forge feminist alliances. *Communication Theory*, 10(1), 64–80.  
doi:10.1111/j.1468- 2885.2000.tb00179.x

Buzzanell, P. M. (2000). Commentary about Aimee M. Carrillo Rowe’s “Locating feminism’s subject: The paradox of white femininity and the struggle to forge feminist alliances.” *Communication Theory*, 10(1), 81–89. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2000.tb00180.x

Harris, K. L. (2019). Unlearning border defensiveness, undermining white supremacist violence: Renewing the case for interdisciplinary inquiry in organizational communication. Paper presented on the Organizational Communication Division’s Top Paper Panel at the 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Baltimore, MD.

## III. DISORGANIZING: CHALLENGING VIOLENCE AND INEQUITY

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<sup>3</sup> This topic is a reference to Harris, K. L. (2019). Unlearning border defensiveness, undermining white supremacist violence: Renewing the case for interdisciplinary inquiry in organizational communication. Paper presented on the Organizational Communication Division’s Top Paper Panel at the 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Baltimore, MD.

## 7. Disorganizational communication

- Allen, B. J. (1996). Feminist standpoint theory: A black woman's (re)view of organizational socialization. *Communication Studies*, 47(4), 257–271. doi:10.1080/10510979609368482
- Cruz, J. (2020, Feb 20). Alternative organizing. [podcast]. *Communication Matters*. Available at <https://www.natcom.org/ncapodcast>
- Trethewey, A., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2004). Practicing disorganization: The development of applied perspectives on living with tension. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 32(2), 81–88. doi:10.1080/0090988042000210007
- Parker, P.S. (2001). African American women executives' leadership communication within dominant-culture organizations: (Re)Conceptualizing notions of collaboration and instrumentality. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15, 42–82.
- Srivastava, S. (2006). Tears, fears, and careers: Anti-racism and emotion in social movement organizations. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 31(1), 55–90. doi:10.1353/cjs.2006.0028
- Vásquez, C. & Kuhn, T. (2019). *Dis/organization as communication: Exploring disordering, disruptive and chaotic properties of communication*. New York, NY: Routledge. (excerpt—introductory chapter)

## 8. SPRING BREAK—no readings

## 9. Working life and living work: Care work and unpaid labor

*required:*

- Denson, N., Szelényi, K., & Bresonis, K. (2018). Correlates of work-life balance for faculty across racial/ethnic groups. *Research in Higher Education*, 59, 226–247. doi:10.1007/s11162-017-9464-0
- Ganesh, S., & McAllum, K. (2012). Volunteering and professionalism: Trends in tension? *Management Communication Quarterly*, 26(1), 152–158. doi:10.1177/0893318911423762
- Gist, A. (2018). (Dis)embodied job search communication training: Comparative critical ethnographic analysis of materiality and discourse during the unequal search for work. *Organization Studies*, 39(9), 1251–1275. doi:10.1177/0170840617736936
- Manalansan, M. F. IV. (2008). Queering the chain of care paradigm. *The Scholar and Feminist Online*, 6(3). Available at [http://sfonline.barnard.edu/immigration/print\\_manalansan.htm](http://sfonline.barnard.edu/immigration/print_manalansan.htm)



Meisenbach, R. J., Remke, R. V., Buzzanell, P. and Liu, M. (2008). “They allowed”: Pentadic mapping of women’s maternity leave discourse as organizational rhetoric. *Communication Monographs*, 75, 1–24.

## **10. Sexuality, sex work, and sexual violence**

*required:*

Blithe, S. J., Wolfe, A. W., & Mohr, B. (2019). *Sex and stigma: Stories of everyday life in Nevada’s legal brothels*. New York: New York University Press. (excerpt)

Bruni, A. (2006). “Have you got a boyfriend or are you single?”: On the importance of being “straight” in organizational research. *Gender, Work, and Organization*, 13(3), 299–316.

Compton, C., & Dougherty, D. (2017). Organizing sexuality: Silencing and the push-pull process of co-sexuality in the workplace. *Journal of Communication*, 67(6), 874–896. doi:10.1111/jcom.12336.

Eger, E. K. (2018). Transgender job seekers navigating closeting communication. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 32(2), 276–281. doi:10.1077/0893318917740226

Harris, K. L. (2018). Yes means yes and no means no, but both these mantras need to go: Communication myths in consent education and anti-rape activism. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 46(2), 155–178. doi:10.1080/00909882.2018.1435900

## **11. Writing feminisms**

*required:*

Vachhani, S. J. (2015). Organizing love: Thoughts on the transformative and activist potential of feminine writing. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 22, 148–162.

Harris, K. L. (2016). Reflexive voicing: A communicative approach to intersectional writing. *Qualitative Research*, 16(1), 111–127. doi:10.1177/1468794115569560

Fairhurst, G. T. (2000). Paradigm skirmishes in the review process. In S. R. Corman & M. S. Poole (Eds.), *Perspectives on Organizational Communication* (pp. 120–127). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

## **12. No class: Qualitative Research in Management Conference**

## **13. Monsters, queers, and freaks, oh my!**

required:

Thanem, T. (2006). Living on the edge: Toward a monstrous organization theory. *Organization*, 13(2), 163–193. doi:10.1177/1350508406061677

Calafel, B. M. (2012). Monstrous femininity: Constructions of women of color in the academy. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 36(2), 111–130. doi:10.1177/0196859912443382

McDonald, J. (2015). Organizational communication meets queer theory: Theorizing relations of “difference” differently. *Communication Theory*, 25(3), 310–329. doi:10.1111/comt.12060

West, I. (2010). PISSAR’s critically queer and disabled politics. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 7(2), 156–175. doi:10.1080/14791421003759174

Harris, K. L., & Fortney, J. M. (2017). Reflexive caring: Rethinking reflexivity through trauma and disability. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 37(1), 20–34. doi:10.1080/10462937.2016.1273543

Vachhani, S. J. (2014). Always different? Exploring the monstrous-feminine and maternal embodiment in organisation. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 33, 648–681.

#### 14. “Violence communicates”<sup>4</sup>: New materialisms and nature/culture

required:

Harris, K. L. (2019). *Beyond the rapist: Title IX and sexual violence on US campuses*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (excerpt)

Jørgensen, K. M., Strand, A. M. C., & Boje, D. (2013). Towards a postcolonial-storytelling theory of management and organization. *Philosophy of Management*, 12(1), 43–66.

Tarin, C. A. (2019). Buen vivir: Indigeneity, environmental activism, and decolonial organizing. In L. Hernandez, D. I. Bowen, S. De Los Santos Upton, & A. R. Martinez (Eds.), *Latina/o/x Communication Studies: Theories, Methods, & Practice*. Lexington Books.

Towns, A. R. (2018). Black “matter” lives. *Women’s Studies in Communication*, 41(4), 349–358. doi:10.1080/07491409.2018.1551985

Wilhoit, E. D., & Kisselbergh, L. G. (2019). The relational ontology of resistance: Hybridity, ventriloquism, and materiality in the production of bike commuting as resistance. *Organization*, 26(6), 873–893. doi:10.1177/1350508417723719

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<sup>4</sup> This quotation comes from Harris, K. L. (2019). *Beyond the rapist: Title IX and sexual violence on US campuses*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

## 15. Disorganizing academia

*required:*

- Calafell, B. M. (2017). When depression is in the job description #realacademicbios. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 5–10. doi:10.1525/dcqr.2017.6.1.6
- Cruz, J., McDonald, J., Broadfoot, K., Chuang, A. K., & Ganesh, S. (2018). “Aliens” in the United States: A collaborative auto-ethnography of foreign-born faculty. *Journal of Management Inquiry*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/1056492618796561
- Gantman, E., & Contreras, M. (2001). Argentine universities in the age of the knowledge society. *Organization*, 8(2), 243–250. doi:10.1177/1350508401082010
- Jackson, R. L. II. (2000). So real illusions of black intellectualism: Exploring race, roles, and gender in the academy. *Communication Theory* 10(1), 48–63. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2885.2000.tb00178.x
- Liu, H. (2019). An embarrassment of riches: The seduction of postfeminism in the academy. *Organization*, 26(1), 20–37. doi:10.1177/1350508418763980