



A Feminist Research Team Workshop

Created by Amy Kipp

In partial fulfillment of SOPR Qualifying Exam requirements
PhD in Social Practice and Transformational Change
January 2022



Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to facilitate conversation on feminist values and practices central to a Feminist Research Team. Through a series of invitations and creative prompts research team members will have the opportunity to discuss the feminist values that underpin their individual and collective academic practice. This workshop aims to create a space where research team members can reflect on their embodied, emotional, political, and everyday experiences in academia in order to re-imagine a Feminist Research Team.

This workshop is designed as a starting point and a part of an ongoing conversation/practice on becoming a Feminist Research Team.



Time, Space, & Materials

- This workshop is designed to last 1.5-2 hours.
- It can be facilitated in person or virtually.
- If in-person, carefully consider what space might promote open and honest conversations. For example, could the workshop be facilitated off campus in a shared space or an interdisciplinary hub?
- Gather the following 'materials' in advance – or, if virtual, encourage participants to gather what they have access to.

Materials List

- Glue or tape*
- Scissors*
- Old magazines clippings*
- Paper
- Art supplies
- Invitations 1-5
- Chocolate
- A hot drink (tea bag)
- Time and care



Invitations

In preparation for the workshop, share the series of invitations with participants, providing them time to reflect on each prompt before the day of the workshop.

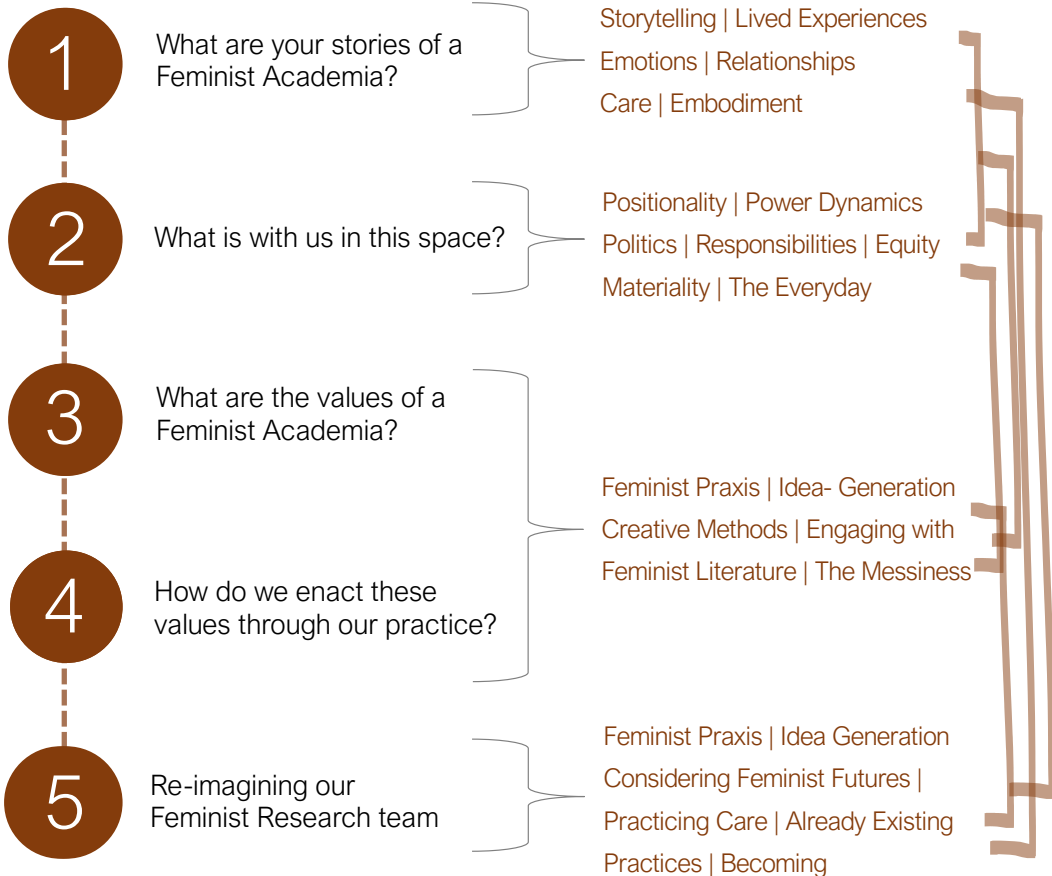
Following an invitational ethic, make it clear to participants that participation is optional and that they can choose how they wish to engage in the workshop.

Over the course of 1.5 hours work through the 5 invitations with participants. Pay attention to power dynamics as well as individual and collective access needs throughout, moving at a pace that resonates with participants. If you don't get through all the invitations during the workshop that is okay!

Workshop Guide

INVITATIONS

THEMES



1

WHAT ARE YOUR STORIES OF A FEMINIST ACADEMIA?

Think of a moment when you felt cared for during your time in academia. What did this care look like? What did it *feel* like? Who or what was involved? And, what made this moment possible?

Invitation: You're invited to reflect on and share your story during the workshop. Feel free to write down, sketch out, or think about a few ideas in advance.



A SPACE TO
IMAGINE

2

WHAT IS WITH US IN THIS SPACE?

Although meeting virtually, the space that we are creating together for this session is made up of a lot. We bring with us our histories and identities; our emotions and bodies; global, regional, and local contexts and politics; our care responsibilities; everyday objects and technologies; and different power dynamics, among other things.

Invitation: Consider what is with us in this space today. On the google jam board you're invited to write down different things that are in the space with us. You can write down broad categories or things specific to this group or yourself.



A SPACE TO
IMAGINE

3

WHAT ARE THE VALUES OF FEMINIST ACADEMIA?

There are many different understandings of feminism(s), let's explore what endeavouring to practice Feminist Academia has looked like for others.

Invitation: You're invited to share the excerpt you received in the mail with the group – reading it out loud and sharing any reflections you have. As the excerpts are read, others are invited to identify key values that emerge, using the art supplies and paper from your envelope. Feel free to be as creative as you'd like – e.g. writing key words, doodling, cutting, pasting, making visual connections, etc.



A SPACE TO
IMAGINE

TIME AND CARE IN THE “LAB” AND THE “FIELD”: SLOW MENTORING AND FEMINIST RESEARCH IN GEOGRAPHY

Caretta and Faria 2019

“As faculty, we resolutely push back against established hierarchies in academia. We try to create spaces where we can all ask for help, ideas, and support, fostering peer mentoring and mentoring “up” and “down” life-course stages. For example, in our lab meetings we discuss the progression of course work and research. But we also check in about our everyday ups and downs, structural challenges of academia expressed in the everyday. So often unspoken and unaddressed, these nonetheless can sharply affect each of our working lives profoundly. These meetings are fundamental [for] [...] disrupting hierarchical relationships by creating a sense of openness, informality, and shared responsibility for the group.” (page 3)

TIME AND CARE IN THE “LAB” AND THE “FIELD”: SLOW MENTORING AND FEMINIST RESEARCH IN GEOGRAPHY

Caretta and Faria 2019

“[...] We encourage students to create healthy work habits, connecting committed and engaged work with rest and self-care (Caretta and others, 2017). Recognizing this is not simply a choice students can make without major structural shifts in the direction of academia, we instead structure our workload together to support one another, developing strategies to do academic research differently. For example we create ways to share and streamline work, support each other in meeting deadlines. [...] We workshop each others’ and guests’ papers and grant applications, learn how to write abstracts and organize AAG panels, and strategize on job market and grad school application success. But we try to do so in ways that disrupt established unhealthy norms, for example by fostering collaboration rather than competition.” (page 3)

Invitation
#3

A FEMINIST COVEN IN THE UNIVERSITY

Smyth, Linz, and Hudson 2020

“As a feminist covenant, we praise boldness by having each other’s backs when one of us speaks out. We stubbornly cultivate norms of trust, ditching competition, sharing material resources, and collaborating on ideas. Our willfulness to love and resist conjures momentary, inhabitable spaces, where we dream of alternative futures and nurture our energies for revolutionary change. We won’t settle for the few comforts our professionalization affords us or for promises of respect that may never be fully granted. The success of some of us comes on the backs of our more precarious colleagues. We will not leave them behind. Our agenda is to shake up academia as long as we can.”

(page 855)



Invitation
#3

A FEMINIST COVEN IN THE UNIVERSITY

Smyth, Linz, and Hudson 2020

“As we change minor spaces, we transform the major along with them (Katz 2017). As we hand babies to our colleagues in meetings, kiss our friends and brace our knees when it’s clear that we are going unseen, we are becoming coven, bringing it to the here and now. As both a theoretical space and real, material relationships, the coven cultivates a caring and threatening force powerful enough, we hope, to challenge the dehumanizing practices of the academy.” (page 874)




Invitation
#3

FEELING OUR WAY: ACADEMIC, EMOTIONS, AND A POLITICS OF CARE

ASKINS AND BLAZEK (2017)

“[...] We understand care as meeting the needs, and maintaining the worlds, of ourselves and others (Sevenhuijsen, 1998). We see care, then, as highly relevant to contemplating our places in academia. Our move towards a politics of care is thus about more than maintaining; rather, we seek to work towards fair and sustainable relations in academia as related to wider societies. Care, as Conradson (2011) argues, holds the potential ‘of facilitating new ways of being together’ (p. 454).” (page 1089)



Invitation
#3

FEELING OUR WAY: ACADEMIC, EMOTIONS, AND A POLITICS OF CARE

ASKINS AND BLAZEK (2017)

“[...] Care can be a strategic political tool because it is deployed from a ‘context of marginalisation and devaluation’ (p. 48), normatively constructed as limited to the sphere of the private, while ‘the opposite – public accomplishments, rationality, and autonomy – are the predominant values’. Care thus becomes explicitly political in destabilising and challenging such binaries, in being made visible and central in public as much as private spaces and processes. Care matters in the academic context because of its marginalisation. It is, then, central to our critique of the neoliberal landscape and power dynamics of academia.” (p.1097)



Invitation
#3

FEELING OUR WAY: ACADEMIC, EMOTIONS, AND A POLITICS OF CARE

ASKINS AND BLAZEK (2017)

“Our key question is what can a politics of care do for us, and what can we do with it? We have no conclusions or prescriptive recommendations as to our (and wider academic) approaches and actions rather, we will (all) keep feeling our way, negotiating every context, situation and issue, with organisations, colleagues, participants and students. This is not new; feminist approaches in the social sciences and human geography have long advocated exactly this need to reflect, converse and negotiate [...]. What is clear to us, given increasing drivers of individualism and competition, is that we need to keep reiterating and emphasising the personal as political, as embodied, limited and agentic academics, inherently involved with complex networks of reciprocity.” (page 1100)

4

HOW DO WE ENACT THESE VALUES THROUGH OUR PRACTICE?

Considering the values that we've collectively identified, what are our responsibilities to each other, to ourselves, and to our wider communities? What practices can we enact to live into these values in our research team.

Invitation: Let's brainstorm! For each value identified, on the same paper jot down what it might look like in practice. Feel free to think both individually and collectively and get creative with your ideas!



A SPACE TO
IMAGINE

5

RE-IMAGINING OUR FEMINIST RESEARCH TEAM

Based on our conversation, what resonates most with you? Feel free to use the *Building an Ethic of Care in Academia* comic as a guide to spark your imagination.

Invitation: Let's synthesize! Returning to the google jam board let's identify the values that are core to us as Feminist Research Team and the practices we want to work towards. This will be an ongoing conversation, as together we practice becoming a Feminist Research Team.



A SPACE TO
IMAGINE

BUILDING AN ETHICS OF CARE IN ACADEMIA: A GUIDE BY BCNUET

1 DIVERSITY OF PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

BUILD A CULTURE OF MUTUAL SUPPORT BY SHARING RESOURCES AND HIGHLIGHTING UNDERREPRESENTED RESEARCHERS (EX FEMALE, 'OUTSIDER' MINDSET...)

LAB MEMBERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN AFFILIATED TO THE LAB REGARDLESS OF THEIR APPLICATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

OPPORTUNITY TO BE MENTORED BY A MORE SENIOR MEMBER IN THE LAB

SUPPORT ALL TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS LAB MEMBERS WISH TO PURSUE

GO! VAMOS!

2 QUALITY OF WORK

- VALUE COMMITMENT TO WRITING FOR DIFFERENT OUTLETS
- ENCOURAGE CO-PRODUCTION & TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE
- FLEXIBLE HOURS
- VALUE ORIGINALITY VS. VOLUME OF CONTRIBUTION
- ENCOURAGE TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF WORK TO BUILD SELF-IDENTITY & CAREER

FOCUS ON QUALITY VS. 'HOW MUCH', 'WHEN', OR 'FROM WHERE'

3 BOUNDARIES AND COMMUNICATIONS

USE SPACE FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSION, DAILY MESSAGING, MEETING PREP, BRIEF EXCHANGES ON PAPERS

YES!

AVOID

NO EMAILS / WORK ON WEEKENDS AND BETWEEN 6PM AND 7:30 AM

NO WHATAPP / TELEGRAM FOR WORK

USE EMAIL TO SEND IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

AVOID CALLING ON PERSONAL PHONES

4 DEADLINES, TIMELINES & MEETINGS

NEGOTIATE DEADLINES TO MEET THEM ON TIME

SHARE! THINKING YOU'RE LATE IS OK!

CONDUCT SELF-IMPOSED UNREALISTIC DEADLINES TO AVOID PROcrastination

AVOID PREPARING TO MEETINGS TO MATERIAL DISCUSSED OPTIONS TO ONE FEEDBACK ON

CANCEL UNNECESSARY MEETINGS IN ADVANCE

AIM TO SEND TEXT ARTICLES, IN PROOF MANUSCRIPTS, DEGREE RELEVANT METRICS, SAYS IF FEEDBACK YOU NEED

THANK YOU! NO

BE FORTH TO SPOT NO TO PROJECTS INTERFERING WITH CARE GOALS, NEW EXPERIMENTS

5 LIFE COMMITMENTS

NOTIFY OTHERS OF THESE COMMITMENTS VIA SLACK AND FEEL YOU WANT THE SUPPORT OF YOUR COLLEAGUES

RESPECT LIFE COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OUTSIDE THE LAB, EVEN THOSE THAT LIE OUTSIDE THE TRADITIONAL NUCLEAR FAMILY THAT LAB MEMBERS CONSIDER IMPORTANT FOR THEIR PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH.

6 UPHOLDING VALUES

CAN YOU HELP ME? I AM CONCERNED.

- HELP ONE ANOTHER, UPHOLD THE BCNUET VALUES WITH KINDNESS AND HONESTY
- BE MINDFUL OF EXISTING AND OPENING UNGEQUAL POWER DYNAMICS IN ACADEMIA AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER WHEN MAKING REQUESTS
- WE ARE NOT SUPER-HUMANS, NOR SHOULD WE STRIVE TO BE
- WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO RESPOND TO CONCERN WITH CARE AND INTEREST TO ENCOURAGE OPEN & HONEST COMMUNICATION

7 MAKING SCIENCE FUN

- TREAT EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT
- PLAN REGULAR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
- DO RESEARCH THAT WE FIND INTERESTING
- CHALLENGE PRACTICES WITHIN OUR CONTROL
- BE OPEN TO THE ELEMENTS OF ACADEMY WE DON'T ENJOY

WE AIM TO KEEP OUR MINDS AS JOYFUL & ENGAGING AS POSSIBLE

WE BELIEVE THAT ACADEMIA CAN BE EXTREMELY ENRICHING & MEANINGFUL IF DONE RIGHT

DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF WHY WE CHOSE THIS PROFESSIONAL PATHWAY IN THE FIRST PLACE.

GRAPHICS BY: CARLOTTA CATALDI



Becoming

Through this workshop participants will engage in the process of becoming a Feminist Research Team. This is a process that is ever changing, as new bodies, emotions, histories, politics, and other aspects move through a research team. The work of becoming a Feminist Research Team is never complete, and the goal of this workshop was to act as one of many steps in this process. To conclude the workshop, discuss what next steps might look like for the feminist research team.

Additional Resources

Adams-Hutcheson, G. & Johnston, L. (2019). Flourishing in fragile academic work spaces and learning environments: Feminist geographies of care and mentoring. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 26(4), 451-467.

Askins, K. & Blazek, M. (2017). Feeling our way: Academia, emotions and a politics of care. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 18(8), 1086-1105.

Bartos, A. E. (2021). Troubling false care: Towards a more revolutionary 'Care Revolution' in the university. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 20(3).

Brannelly, T. (2018). An ethics of care research manifesto. *International Journal of Care and Caring*, 2(3): 367–78.

Caretta, M.A. & Faria, C.V. (2020). Time and care in the “lab” and the “field”: Slow mentoring and feminist research in Geography. *Geographical Review*, 110(1-2), 172-182.

Guyotte, K.W., Flint, M.A., & Shelton, S.A. (2021). Giving up as a willful feminist practice. *Gender and Education*, 33(2), 202-216.

Hawkins, R., Manzi, M., & Ojeda, D. (2014). Lives in the making: Power, academia and the everyday. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 13(2), 328-351.

Kern, L., Hawkins, R., Al-Hindi, K. F., & Moss, P. (2014). A collective biography of joy in academic practice. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 15(7), 834-851.

Mountz, A., Bonds, A., Mansfield, B., Loyd, J., Hyndman, J., Walton-Roberts, M., ... & Curran, W. (2015). For slow scholarship: A feminist politics of resistance through collective action in the neoliberal university. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 14(4), 1235-1259.

Smyth, A., Linz, J. & Hudson, L. (2020). A feminist coven in the university. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 27(6), 854-880.

Contact

Amy Kipp, MA
PhD Student
Social Practice and Transformational Change
University of Guelph

e: akipp@uoguelph.ca
t: [@amykipp](https://www.instagram.com/amykipp)
www.researchingcare.ca
www.amykipp.com