

## Feminist STS – course syllabus 2025 (period III)

SOSM-SL322 | Master's Programme in Social Research, University of Helsinki

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### Course Dates:

Mo 13/1/2025	10:15 AM–11:45 AM	Snellmania, K1056
We 15/1/2025	10:15 AM–1:45 PM	Päärakennus, U3039
Mo 20/1/2025	10:15 AM–11:45 AM	Snellmania, K1056
We 22/1/2025	10:15 AM–1:45 PM	Päärakennus, U3039
Mo 27/1/2025	10:15 AM–11:45 AM	Snellmania, K1056
We 29/1/2025	10:15 AM–1:45 PM	Päärakennus, U3039
Mo 3/2/2025	10:15 AM–11:45 AM	Snellmania, K1056
We 5/2/2025	10:15 AM–1:45 PM	Päärakennus, U3039

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- understand key issues, topics, and conceptual tools in feminist STS literature
- analyse and discuss contemporary societal issues in relation to this literature
- synthesise ideas from readings and discussions, then articulate them orally and in writing
- develop the sensitivities and the skills for generative, engaged, and safe discussion

### Topics / Schedule

All readings can be found on Moodle, Helka, and/or the links provided below. Of the list of assigned readings each week, students will be responsible for approximately two, to be delegated in class.

*Week 1. Foundations of Feminist STS: from science to society.*

#### Monday Lecture, 13 January 2025

10:15-10:55	Welcome: explain syllabus, clarify expectations, come to agreements
11:00-11:45	Lecture: The who, what, and how of feminist/STS: then, now, ahead

Assigned Readings for Wednesday

- [Moored Metamorphoses](#) (Subramanian 2009)
- Situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988)
- Strong objectivity (Harding, 1995)
- Dynamic objectivity (Keller 1985)
- Intersectionality (Combahee River Collective, 1977)
- Standing With [TallBear](#), 2014)

**Wednesday Seminar, 15 January 2025**

10:15-11:00	Discussion: share what you've learned from the readings.
11:00-11:30	Lunch
11:30-1:45	Activity – Scent Trails: sniff out the gendered assumption

*Week 2. Beyond body/mind dualisms: ways of knowing and modes of knowledge construction***Monday Lecture, 20 January 2025**

10:15-11:00	Lecture: How does one come to know? Minds, Bodies, and Making Sense of Compromised Times
11:10-11:45	Activity: Who knows what a microbe is?

## Assigned Readings for Wednesday

- Law (2004) After Method, preface and introduction (excerpt)
- Haraway 1995, chapter 5 (select pages)
- Knowing by tinkering and tacit knowledge (Knorr-Cetina 1981, chapter 1)
- Knowing by attuning to enactments (Mol 2002, chapter 2)
- Knowing by sensory embodiment (Mol 2016, chapter 3)
- Knowing by community activism (Murphy 2012)
- Contested knowing ([Philip 1998](#))

**Wednesday Seminar, 22 January 2025**

10:15-11:00	Discussion: share what you've learned from the readings.
11:00-11:30	Lunch
11:30-1:45	Fermentation workshop, with new materialist preface

*Week 3. Naturecultures***Monday Lecture, 27 January 2025**

10:15-11:45	Lecture and discussion
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## Assigned Readings for Wednesday

- Troubling “sustainability” --> [Chapter 2 The Sea Is Empty \(Elspeth Probyn\)](#)
- Troubling “individuals” or “species” --> [Microbial Kin \(Amber Benezra\)](#)
- Troubling “benefit” --> [Decolonizing Patent Law \(Laura Foster\)](#)
- Troubling “life” --> [Chapter 9 Life/nonlife binary \(Kim TallBear\)](#)

**Wednesday Seminar, 29 January 2025**

10:15-11:00	Discussion: share what you've learned from the readings.
11:00-11:30	Lunch
11:30-1:45	Documentary “Walking with Fermenters” followed by group discussion

*Week 4. Who and how one critiques: from monsters and oddkin to hope, speculation, utopia***Monday Lecture, 03 February 2025**

10:15-11:45      Lecture and discussion: "What's it like living side by side? Monsters, oddkin, and worlds to come."

## Assigned Readings for Wednesday

- [Ruha Benjamin – Introduction and chapter 6 "Trust" of Viral Justice](#)
- [Introduction to Multispecies Justice Sophie Chao and Eben Kirksey](#)
- [Being-in-the-room privilege: Elite capture and epistemic deference. Olufemi A Táíwò. The Philosopher 108 \(4\), 61-70](#)

**Wednesday Seminar, 05 February 2025**

10:15-11:00      Discussion: share what you've learned from the readings.

**BRING LUNCH TO EAT DURING FILM VIEWING!**

11:00-1:45      Film analysis and discussion: *Poor Things*

**Content warning!** *This film is rated K-16 in Finland – it includes graphic images of bodily harm, nudity and explicit sex scenes. If anyone is uncomfortable watching this together in class, please let the course instructors know so that alternate plans can be made.*

**Assessments**

Students will be assessed on three criteria with the following weights for the final grade:

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|--|-----|
| 1. Participation in class (e.g., presenting readings, engaging in discussions) | 25% |
| 2. One entry in a concept glossary (750-1000 words plus references)            | 25% |
| 3. Learning diary (minimum 8 entries, to be built upon throughout the course)  | 50% |

*Assessment 1: Participation (25%)*

We are a small group, meeting intensely over four weeks, with lots of discussion and reflection in between. We (the instructors) want to see you chew through the material in such a way that shows incremental learning (e.g., half-formed thoughts) along the way rather than you demonstrating full mastery of the material from the start. So 'participation' means engaging with course materials critically, creatively, and conscientiously. This last part—conscientiousness—entails the work of maintaining a safe(r) space in the classroom, where active listening, respect, compassion, openness and humility will be key towards learning together. We will revisit this list of values during the first class so that we are all on the same page.

Participation can take different forms, so there is no one way that 'participation' looks or sounds. But to make this assessment more concrete, here are some areas that the instructors will focus on:

- How you engage during Monday's lecture: asking questions, offering examples, etc.
- How you share your understanding of weekly readings during Wednesday seminar
- How you partake in the workshop/activities on Wednesdays

### Assessment 2: Concept Glossary (25%)

We will collectively build a glossary of **Keywords for Feminist STS**. Each student will be responsible for one entry in it. The keywords will not be decided in advance, but a list will be shared on Moodle so that there are no overlaps. (This also means that keywords will go towards whomever claims one first.) Importantly, the selection of keywords will come from our course discussions and materials, and we will frequently make suggestions during lectures (as in, randomly choosing “agential realism” or “two-eyed seeing” will not work unless it comes up in class). Some terms will already be coined, like matters of care or situated knowledges. But you may propose additional ones in consultation with the course instructors. **The glossary entry is due no later than one week after the course ends. The glossary will be made public on the CSSM website.** Submission will be via Moodle.

Each entry should be between 750-1000 words and accomplish the following:

- (a) **define the keyword, including its original source(s), both in terms of author(s) and text(s)**  
Aim for a brief (1-2 sentence) description of the term as the opening sentence(s).
- (b) **analyse the background or context for how the keyword became significant in feminist STS:**  
Is the keyword a reaction to something? What and why does this reaction matter?  
What other concepts does this keyword build upon? What does this lineage show?  
Is it specific to a particular region in the world or historical time period? Are there different, possibly competing uses of the term?
- (c) **choose two contemporary examples that demonstrate the value/utility of your keyword**  
Only one of the examples can be something we have discussed in class—if you wish.  
If there are hyperlinks, images, etc. that help the reader understand, please include.
- (d) **cite at least two readings from the course. We expect this to be written in an academic style.**

Alternately, you could think of the sections above in terms of the questions:

- (a) What is the keyword?
- (b) Where does it come from? Why does it matter?
- (c) How does the example show what the keyword does?
- (d) Who are you citing? Do they have different uses for the term and how?

Rubric for glossary entry:

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keyword adequately and accurately defined</li> <li>- Origins of keyword fully traced to author(s) and/or text(s)</li> <li>- Keyword is contextualised relative to feminist/STS discourse(s) or lineage(s)</li> <li>- Examples demonstrate the student's ability to apply course concepts and synthesise ideas based on course materials</li> <li>- Overall, the entry shows clear and cogent analysis of the keyword and its significance in feminist STS</li> <li>- Written in an academic style with at least two course readings referenced</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keyword defined, but origins are approximated or otherwise vague</li> <li>- Context is provided but may lack depth or breadth</li> <li>- Examples are described but not be fully analysed to show the keyword in action</li> <li>- Overall, the entry shows the student's capacity for organising ideas in an analysis but may lack the capacity to evaluate or show relevance to the bigger picture</li> <li>- At least two course readings are referenced</li> </ul>

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Simple definition provided but not fully fleshed out.</li> <li>- Origins of keyword not fully traced or misunderstood</li> <li>- Context missing or is detached from the keyword's history</li> <li>- Only one example provided and/or examples do not connect with course content or class discussions</li> <li>- Only one course reading cited.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Definition is misinterpreted, misattributed, or not cited.</li> <li>- Minimal description origins and context.</li> <li>- Examples do not connect with course content or class discussions.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Origins and context for keyword missing.</li> <li>- Shows misunderstanding of the keyword (e.g., in examples)</li> <li>- Citations missing.</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No glossary entry</li> <li>- Or, less than half of the word count</li> </ul>

### Assessment 3: Learning diary (50%)

A learning diary is a tool for reflection, showing *what* you learned *while* you're learning. It is designed to help you recall, retain, and assess what you have learned in class by incrementally reflecting on your thoughts, questions, and opinions. This learning diary replaces an academic essay or final exam but functions similarly by assessing students' ability to summarise, analyse, apply, and synthesise materials from the course. **It will be due no more than one week after the last class.**

The key to writing a learning diary is to build on the lectures/workshops from our class time together. This means restating in your own words what the lecture/workshop/reading covered, then adding your own insights, commentary, examples, associations, critiques, or questions. Since this is a subjective piece of writing (i.e., written in the first-person voice), this is a chance to document how your thinking changes too. If ever you feel stuck, use the following prompts to help get you started:

1. What were the main points of today's class/lecture/workshop/reading? Paraphrase and summarise in your own words.
2. How did today's activities relate to your prior knowledge or experiences? What was new to you? Did it inspire you to change your thinking, and why? Or did it go against your thinking, and how do you feel about it now? Describe your reactions or changes that you can observe in the moment (e.g., I used to think \_\_\_\_ but now I think \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_).
3. What other connections can you make based on today's class (e.g., connections to other topics, to other courses you're taking, or to life outside of the classroom)? Follow these new trains of thought, inspirations, criticisms, debates, etc. and see where you end up. Try articulating what you can apply from this course in your overall studies or in your life.
4. Are you left with any questions? Whether you have clarifying questions (about content) or exploratory questions (that prompt discussion), practice them in writing first so that you can raise them in class.
5. What was the most important takeaway from today's class? Judge what you will take with you into the next meeting.

The successful learning diary will

- Be written incrementally over the 8 classes. Do not wait until the end! (It never works.)

- Balance elaboration, details, and nuance with clear and concise writing. (Ramble on, but stay focused.) This is why there are no word counts or page limits.
- Keep a respectful tone of writing, but you do not need to adhere the formal conventions of academic writing.
- Make connections to ‘outside’ material, drawing on lived experience, current events, art/media, guest lectures, conferences, political protests relevant to feminist STS etc. to show the instructor how you integrate ideas.

We welcome modes of expression other than text (e.g., visuals) but they will be evaluated *in addition* to the rubric below (not in lieu of) so think of them as supplementary. In other words, they will be considered a bonus, not a requirement or a replacement.

#### Rubric to assess learning diary

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All sessions reflexively analysed.</li> <li>- All readings summarised and analysed in relation to each other.</li> <li>- Personal learnings reflected against readings with critical thinking.</li> <li>- Overall, the diary demonstrates critical understanding of the broader societal issues relevant to the course and how the course has led to a broadened capacity to make sense of these issues.</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All sessions and readings covered.</li> <li>- All readings summarised and analysed in terms of course concepts.</li> <li>- Personal learning described in connection to the readings but may lack critical engagement or depth of analysis.</li> <li>- Overall, the diary shows the student’s capacity for reflection.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All sessions and readings covered but descriptively written.</li> <li>- Personal learnings reported but detached from the readings.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some sessions missing, readings and sessions short and descriptively reported.</li> <li>- No analytical engagement with texts or activities.</li> <li>- Personal learnings described but not in connection to texts or sessions, or no personal accounts provided.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More than half of the sessions missing.</li> <li>- No or minimal description of texts.</li> <li>- Shows misunderstanding of the texts or the tasks.</li> <li>- Personal style without reflection with provided texts or no personal accounts provided.</li> </ul>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No learning diary submission</li> <li>- Or, less than half of the sessions or readings covered</li> </ul>

## Expectations

**Readings.** Students are expected to engage with the assigned readings prior to class. Without reading the material firsthand, the discussions that follow will fall moot and become limited. That said, these readings are difficult so try the best that you can and ask questions along the way. Trying to articulate what you *don’t* know is just as much part of the learning process as articulating what you *do* know. That’s what the Wednesday discussions are for: to practice tackling these readings together. Practically speaking, we expect master’s students to be able to locate articles on/through Helka. If you have difficulties, come see one of us and we’d be happy to give you a small tutorial.

**Attendance policy.** We expect students to attend all classes, as you can see from the way Assessments 1 and 3 are framed. If you already know in advance that you'll be missing a class, please contact us *in advance* so that alternate arrangements can be made. That said, life happens. While we'd appreciate a quick note if you cannot attend (so that we don't worry about your wellbeing), we will not require medical notes and the like. Please know that students must attend a minimum of 75% of the course for a passing grade.

**Late policy for turning in assignments.** Assessments 2 and 3 will be due no more than one week after the course ends. Late submissions will be docked one full mark (e.g., 4-->3) for each day late unless alternate arrangements have been made with one of us.

Creating and Maintaining Safe(r) Space Classrooms: to be discussed during the first class. Our agreements will be listed here and the course syllabus will be updated before our second meeting.