

September 2021

## Editors' Introduction: Welcome to the Inaugural Issue of Feminist Pedagogy

Emily Davis Ryalls

*California Polytechnic State University, edryalls@yahoo.com*

Rachel E. Silverman

*Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Rachel.Silverman@erau.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/feministpedagogy>



Part of the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Ryalls, Emily Davis and Silverman, Rachel E. (2021) "Editors' Introduction: Welcome to the Inaugural Issue of Feminist Pedagogy," *Feminist Pedagogy*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/feministpedagogy/vol1/iss1/1>

This Introduction to Special Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at DigitalCommons@CalPoly. It has been accepted for inclusion in Feminist Pedagogy by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@CalPoly. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@calpoly.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@calpoly.edu).

Editors' Introduction

Welcome to the Inaugural Issue of *Feminist Pedagogy*

Emily D. Ryalls  
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Rachel E. Silverman  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

This journal was born out of our – Emily and Rachel's – passion for intersectional feminist pedagogy. For years, we presented panels of original teaching ideas at conferences for the National Women's Studies Association; the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender; and the National Communication Association. These panels were well attended, and the response was always incredibly positive; however, when we searched for a way to move the work forward via publication, we found an interdisciplinary home for this sort of scholarship was lacking. Inspired by the feminist teachers and mentors in our lives who encouraged us to do the work we wanted to see in the world, we decided to start a journal where folks like us could reflect on their experiences in the classroom and share activities that empower students.

When we set out to create *Feminist Pedagogy*, we had no idea what we were doing or if anyone would even be interested in a journal focused on interdisciplinary and intersectional feminist pedagogy. In April 2021, when Emily posted the journal announcement to Twitter, the tweet received nearly 2,000 likes and over 700 retweets. We were validated. Academics from around the world were looking for a place to publish and read this sort of work. We were also terrified.

We conceived of *Feminist Pedagogy* as a publication for original scholarship on higher education teaching strategies and approaches. The journal will publish original teaching activities, critical commentaries, as well as book and media reviews, from various disciplines, methodological approaches, and theoretical standpoints. Most importantly, we are interested in approaches to the classroom that place questions of power, inequality, and justice at the center of teaching and transcend disciplinary boundaries.

We hope *Feminist Pedagogy* will find its audience with folks from diverse academic backgrounds, individuals who believe in the power of teaching and learning. The submissions we have received thus far are situated within the fields of Women's and Gender Studies, Education, Sociology, Communication Studies, Political Science, English, Theater, and Engineering. Scholarship has come from graduate students, as well as university staff and professors, in the United States, Canada, and India. As we move forward, we look forward to extending our reach even further.

Many feminist academics argue there is no concrete way to perform feminist pedagogy; instead, there are reoccurring themes that tie feminist pedagogies together (Hoffman and Stake, 1998; Shackelford 1992; Webb, Allen & Walker, 2002). These themes, reducing the classroom power

gap, viewing students as active participants in their education, addressing systems of oppression, and dismantling said systems through a democratized classroom, are at the center of the pieces in this inaugural issue.

For getting the journal launched, there are many people we need to thank, including our wonderful Editorial Board made up of scholars committed to intersectional feminist pedagogy. We are particularly indebted to our Book and Media Reviews editor, Dr. Aubrey Huber and our Editorial Assistants, Gracie Babatola, Mac Clark, and Erjona Gashi for their dedication to this project and for our social media presence (find us on Twitter @FeministsTeach, Instagram @feministpedagogy, and Facebook @FeministPedagogyJournal). Finally, we would like to thank Digital Commons and especially Angeline Hong, who was excited by our ideas and always patient with our many questions about journal development.

Lastly, as we prepared to launch this first issue, we received the heart wrenching news that bell hooks passed away. We were struck with how many people in our social media – including some of our authors and reviewers – shared the ways hooks’ engagement with issues of love, liberation, and care was at the heart of their approach to the classroom. If there is ever a time when more love is needed, that time is now.

In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, hooks (1994) argues for the creation of a “democratic classroom” where students and instructors share power and neither dominates the learning process. hooks suggests that by engaging students in the world around them, instructors educate students for “the practice of freedom.” This process, what hooks calls “engaged pedagogy,” fosters critical thinking and provides students with the tools to question inequality and social structures. As Reese (2021) writes, “Whether interrogating feminist theory (*Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*), education (*Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*), film (*Reel to Real*), or relationships (*All About Love: New Visions*), hooks never shied away from sharp and unflinching critiques, but her observations were always underpinned with a distinct sense of care and love.” We dedicate our inaugural issue of *Feminist Pedagogy* to the exceptional thinker, writer, and teacher bell hooks.

#### References

- Hoffmann, F. L., & Stake, J. E. (1998). Feminist pedagogy in theory and practice: An empirical investigation. *NWSA Journal*, 10, 79–97. doi:10.2979/NWS.1998.10.1.79
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge.
- Reese, A. (2021, December 15). bell hook, renowned author and feminist scholar, dead at 69. *Vulture*. <https://jezebel.com/bell-hooks-renowned-author-and-feminist-scholar-dead-1848222290>
- Shackelford, J. (1992). Feminist pedagogy: A means for bringing critical thinking and creativity

to the economics classroom. *The American Economic Review*, 82(2), 570-576.

Webb, L. M., Allen, M. W., & Walker, K. L. (2002). Feminist pedagogy: Identifying basic principles. *Academic Exchange*, 6(1), 67-72.