

Kristin LaFollette

Research Statement

As a creative-critical scholar, I am interested in arts-based research. My master's thesis was a creative "transgenre" work that was part fiction, part poetry, and part collage. The context essay I wrote for this creative project focused on the development of collage, transgenre work (or work that combines multiple genres/mediums), and the intersections of art and writing from the Dada and Surrealist movements. In addition, it examined several published transgenre compositions and discussed my own rhetorical decision-making processes while creating the thesis. This experience of creating a transgenre thesis project impacted my studies as a doctoral student in rhetoric and writing; my dissertation research explores transgenre composing through a queer theory lens to examine and reimagine norms in writing studies scholarship and pedagogy. The dissertation advocates for creative-critical scholarship and the use of art in writing. My identity as a creative writer and an artist is consistently intersecting with my scholarly identity, and my work challenges the binary that writing is *either* scholarly *or* creative. My dissertation project pushes back against this oversimplification and utilizes arts-based and queer methodologies and collage, interviews, and textual analysis as methods.

I received a graduate certificate in women's, gender, and sexuality studies (WGSS) during my doctoral program, and my interests in feminist and queer theories developed out of the experiences I had while completing that certificate program. I am particularly interested in how established norms and traditions can be queered or deconstructed to make space for knowledges and ways of meaning-making that have been typically undervalued or marginalized. I completed an independent study for the WGSS certificate on queer theory in rhetoric and composition studies, and during that independent study, I developed an intermediate writing course curriculum that utilized queer theory to question and reexamine the ways that writing and composing traditionally take place in academic settings. I published a book chapter in the collection *Queer Affective Literacy: Fostering Critical Emotional Sensibilities in the Classroom* about queering classroom spaces to create space for students with unique emotional concerns. Rather than retrofitting the classroom, my chapter called for a reimagining of classrooms to create inclusive spaces where students can actively learn and engage with the material, their classmates, and the instructor.

Feminism is also central to my research, and I often explore the ways women use poetry as a form of feminist activism. I published an article with *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal* on women's poetry as social activism, and my capstone project for the WGSS certificate explored poetry through a feminist lens. Using a blog interface to host the project, I examined the ways that women's poetry acts as activism and furthers the feminist cause. I analyzed the work of women authors who have published traditional collections of poetry like Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath, but also explored the poetry of women using social media venues like Tumblr and Twitter as outlets to support feminism and raise awareness for women's rights. Intertwined with my interests in feminist and queer theories is my interest in cultural rhetorics. As a woman of Cherokee heritage, I am particularly interested in American Indian studies, decolonial theory, and making space for Indigenous voices and knowledges amongst the dominant ways of knowing that are often taught in institutional settings. Through

my feminist, queer, and decolonial approaches to research, I strive to make space for all forms of knowledge, further social justice causes, and celebrate diversity. I hope to publish my research in journals like *Peitho: Journal of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition*, *Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture*, and *Constellations: A Cultural Rhetorics Publishing Space* in the future.