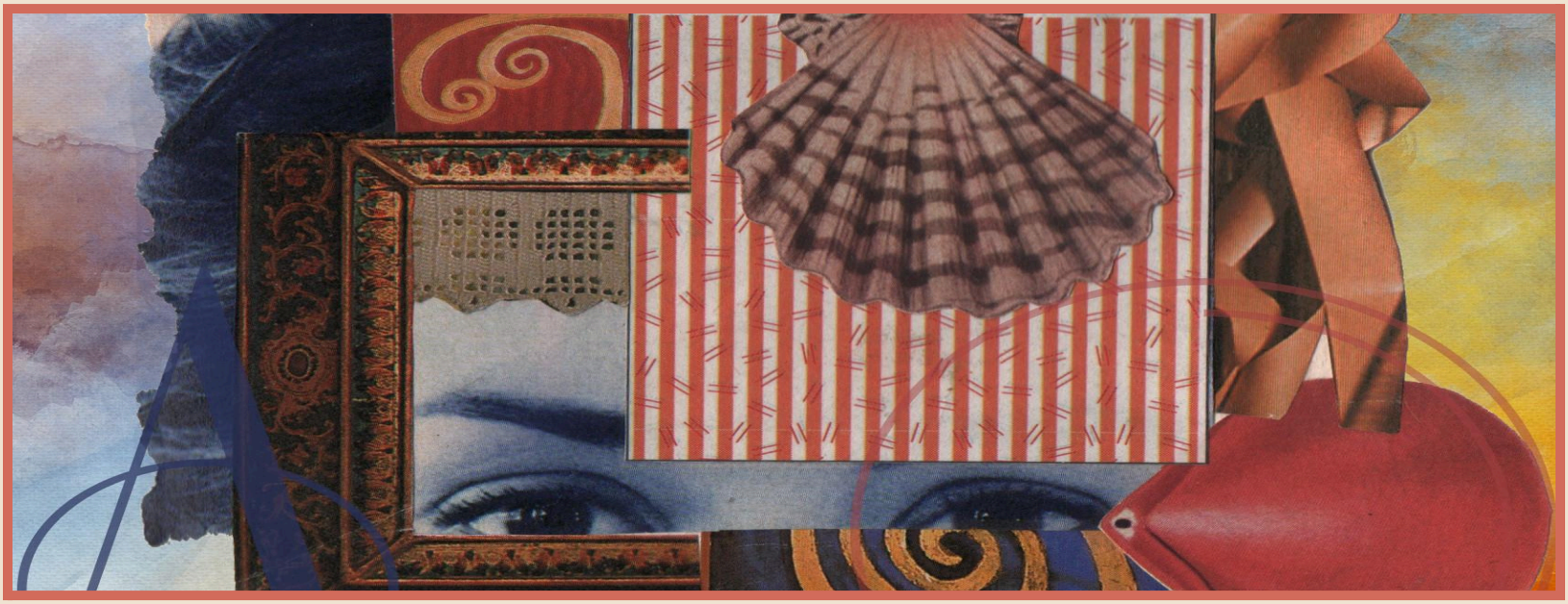


Feminist Approaches to Digital Public Scholarship

A Pedagogy Lab Guidebook

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The Pedagogy Lab

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About the Pedagogy Lab

The Pedagogy Lab is a justice-oriented educational nonprofit advancing speculative, open, and accessible pedagogy. We create public-facing learning resources, support educators and scholars in developing new teaching tools, and build collaborative projects that make humanities knowledge more usable, engaging, and reachable beyond the walls of any one institution.

Our work is grounded in Black, feminist, queer, disability justice, and decolonial intellectual traditions. We are particularly interested in how open education can expand access not only to educational materials, but also to the scholars, fields, histories, and communities that have been marginalized within higher education and the open education movement. The Lab supports forms of teaching and knowledge-making that emerge from communities frequently treated as peripheral to the university while remaining indispensable to its most vital intellectual and political work.

About This Guide

Knowledge is created and shared in many places beyond the university. Community spaces, activist movements, digital networks, cultural institutions, and everyday life all serve as sites of teaching, learning, and knowledge production. Public scholarship builds connections across these spaces, helping research reach broader audiences and contribute to public conversations.

Developed by The Pedagogy Lab, *Digital Public Scholarship for Feminist Scholars* offers practical strategies for sharing research in accessible and engaging ways across a range of digital formats. Whether you are creating social media content, writing a public-facing article, recording a podcast, designing a digital story, or experimenting with video, this guide is intended to support you in bringing your work into conversation with audiences beyond the university while remaining attentive to feminist ethics, risks, and politics.



This guide is written primarily for graduate students, early-career scholars, educators, activists, and community-engaged researchers who want practical tools for communicating their work publicly. No previous experience with public scholarship, social media, podcasting, or content creation is required.

If you are excited by these possibilities but unsure how to begin, this guide is designed to help you integrate public scholarship into your existing research, teaching, and community work. By sharing research publicly, scholars can contribute to collective learning, challenge misinformation, support community knowledge-making, and help build more just futures. We hope this guide helps you make informed choices about how, when, and why to share your work with wider publics, and how to do so in ways that align with your values.

Note: This guide was last updated in summer 2026, and technology tools and platforms change frequently. If you spot any broken links or outdated information, please email us at hello@thepedagogylab.org!

Introduction to Public Scholarship

What Is Public Scholarship and Why Does It Matter?

Public scholarship is the sharing of academic research and ideas beyond academia in formats more accessible and digestible than traditional academic research formats. Our approach to public scholarship grows from a commitment to open education and open access scholarship. We believe knowledge should be shared as widely as possible and that barriers to learning, participation, and information should be removed. Public scholarship is one way of putting those commitments into practice by making research more accessible, usable, and responsive to the communities it may serve.



We also understand public scholarship as both a political and pedagogical practice. Public scholarship is especially important during moments of political contestation, when knowledge itself becomes a site of struggle. Feminist scholarship challenges dominant narratives about gender, race, sexuality, disability, and power. Sharing that work publicly can help connect research to ongoing movements for justice, provide accessible tools for understanding complex issues, and create spaces for collective reflection and action.

Feminist scholarship often urges us to disrupt notions of who can produce knowledge and where knowledge production can happen, making scholarship accessible, justice-oriented, and responsive to social needs. In practice, this could look like writing an op-ed, creating an educational podcast, or sharing research findings on social media— all with the goal of translating insights and knowledge for the public and connecting research to real-world change. By engaging the public in our work, we ensure our research on gender, race, and justice can inform policy, shift cultural narratives, and amplify community efforts, raising consciousness and accelerating progress toward a more just future.

This is especially important for feminist scholars whose work often emerges from and speaks to activist movements and community struggles. Public scholarship becomes a form of praxis and a way of living our feminist values by sharing knowledge in inclusive, transformative ways. It can help democratize knowledge production, validate lived experiences, and invite dialogue with those most affected by the issues we study.

As Feminist Scholars...

We recognize that accessible public scholarship is not one-size-fits-all.

It should change shape based on the scholar, the research, the intended public, and the context. For example, a reproductive justice project might best connect with local activists through a community workshop or an Instagram campaign,

whereas a feminist health science study could reach patients and providers via an informative blog or video.

We strive to be adaptable, supportive, accountable, and mindful of power dynamics.

Feminist public scholarship can create safer spaces for marginalized voices and ensure respect for the knowledge they bring. Scholars from marginalized communities—women, Black people, people of color, Indigenous people, queer and trans folks, and disabled folks—often face extra hurdles and risks in public engagement.

We promote education for liberation by grounding our public scholarship in feminist praxis.

We invite broader publics into critical conversations, co-create knowledge with communities, and collectively envision more just futures.

How Public Scholarship Can Benefit Your Career

Engaging in public scholarship can benefit your professional development and career trajectory in a number of ways.

Communication skills

Once you have been trained to convey ideas to and for other scholars using the language of your discipline, it can be surprisingly hard to communicate those same ideas to non-academic audiences! But learning how to do this effectively will make you a much stronger scholar and teacher. Translating your research for wider audiences helps you hone valuable skills, such as simplifying complex ideas, storytelling, and cross-cultural communication. These skills are highly valued both inside and outside academia. And your public scholarship projects serve as portfolio pieces showcasing your ability to make complex ideas accessible.



Professional connections and networking

Public scholarship can increase your visibility and help you connect with people both inside and outside your field. For example, by sharing insights on social media platforms, blogs, or other digital venues, you may connect with senior scholars, practitioners, and journalists. Such networking can lead to collaborations, speaking invitations, or interviews. Public scholarship can itself be created in collaboration with others, as well.



Research reach and altmetrics

Public engagement can enhance the impact and recognition of your research itself. Writing a public-facing piece or a thread on social media can lead to thousands of reads, far beyond the audience of an academic journal. This broader exposure might translate into increased media coverage of your work or even higher citation rates—especially if you link to your published work.

In contrast to traditional scholarly metrics like citation counts and journal impact factors, "altmetrics" (or alternative metrics) include quantitative data like event attendance; social media views, mentions, comments, likes, and bookmarks; news media coverage; webpage visits; and Wikipedia mentions. Including public scholarship with altmetrics on your CV can strengthen your profile for jobs both in academia and in the alternative-academic (or "alt-ac") realm. Grant agencies and hiring committees appreciate scholars who demonstrate such public impact, as it shows that you care about community engagement. And employers in nonprofit and advocacy organizations, GLAM fields (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums), government, and similar fields often look for candidates with public communication experience.

Feminist Ethics in Public Scholarship

> *Nothing about us, without us, is for us.*
>
> – Slogan popularized by South African disability rights activists

Embarking on public scholarship requires careful thought about ethics, especially for justice-centered and identity-related work. Because people's personal stories are our research data, we must prioritize consent, privacy, and credit when disseminating our work in digital public spaces. And when we share research that touches on sensitive issues—whether it's racial health disparities, queer experiences of illness, or Indigenous birthing practices—we must consider audience, representation, and potential risks at every step. In doing so, we can engage the public in a way that upholds feminist ethics and protects both us as scholars and those whose stories we carry.

Center, protect, and credit your participants

Academia pushes us toward individualism, but true scholarship is inherently collaborative. As feminist researchers, we have a duty to resist extractive practices and remain accountable to those on whose knowledge our work depends. We must practice an ethic of care in our partnerships and citational practices, centering our participants' preferences about when and how to amplify their contributions vs. protect their privacy.

As a feminist scholar, you can:

- **Collaborate with your research participants in the public scholarship process to the extent possible.** Even after your research project is over, consider how to gather input from participants and involved communities about where and how the findings are presented. You could even co-create content together.
- **Obtain consent from your research participants before sharing anything publicly.** Never share personal anecdotes, photos, or identifiable data from your research participants without explicit permission. If a community member or interviewee allows you to share



their story, discuss how and where it will appear so they aren't caught by surprise. In some cases, even if *legal* consent isn't required (like if you're using publicly available information), ethical practice might mean obtaining consent or at least informing individuals if you plan to spotlight them.

- **Give credit where it's due, and consider how you can amplify others' work and contributions.** Practice a feminist ethics of citation. Even if you don't co-create digital content together, publicly acknowledge (with permission) the activists, elders, scholars, or organizations who contributed to your work. Use your platform to promote their work, as well — for instance, you could serve as "guest posters" on each other's social media accounts.
- **Protect your research participants, and always balance the potential benefits of amplification with the potential harms of exposure.** Remember that anything public can be shared widely beyond your intended audience. This is known as *context collapse*, where a message escapes its context and reaches people who may misinterpret or misuse it. Consider the risks to communities you work with. Could publicizing, say, an undocumented person's story or a critique of a local powerful institution put someone in danger? If so, anonymize details, hold back certain content, wait until certain protections are in place, or choose a more private delivery method. For instance, you can disseminate sensitive findings in a private webinar teach-in with community members instead of a public TikTok.

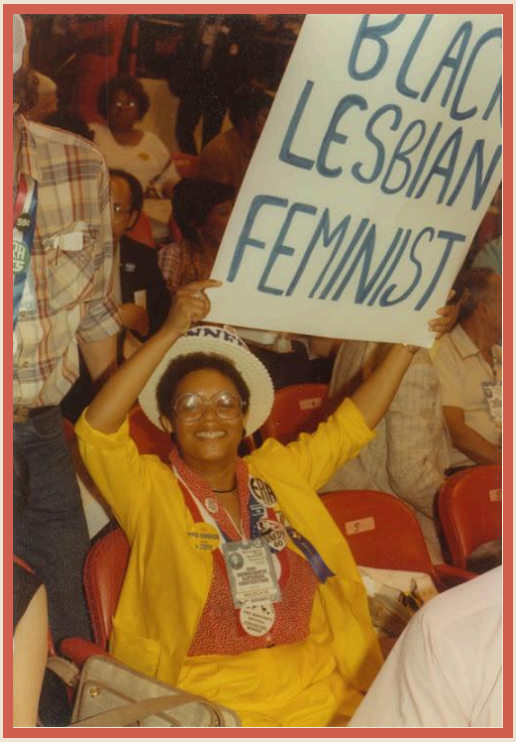
Manage risks to yourself

Public scholarship can carry personal and professional risks for scholars themselves, particularly in digital spaces. As feminist scholars speaking on issues like racism, colonialism, or reproductive justice, you may unfortunately encounter trolling or harassment online. While you shouldn't cater to individuals who approach your work in bad faith, it can be helpful to approach online engagement from a place of relative caution. Keep in mind that social media



platforms are not invested in you, your content, or your best interests and may in fact profit from negative engagement with your work.

Some strategies to manage your digital safety:



- **Use privacy settings strategically, and consider maintaining separate personal and professional accounts.** Think twice before sharing your location, personal contact details, or other identifying information.
- **Consider how your words might be read by someone with no background on the topic.** If you're in doubt, you can disclaim context ("Thread intended for fellow researchers in my field…" or "This story is a fictionalized composite based on research"), though this does not give you legal protections.
- **Weigh any potential risks to your career.** You may want to discuss your public scholarship plans with mentors or your department. While public engagement is often seen positively, controversial stances (even well-supported ones) *could* draw ire from powerful detractors. If you belong to an institution, you may have access to a media relations office or social media guidelines that can offer support if you face harassment.

Know your audience

Before you post, publish, or record, think about *who* you are speaking to and *why*. Are you addressing fellow activists, policymakers, a general informed public, or the community represented in your research?

Identifying your audiences and stakeholders ahead of time helps you stay accountable and tailor your tone and delivery. It can also guide decisions like which details to highlight or which platform to choose.

If your research involves a marginalized community, writing *to* and *for* them (rather than just *about* them) is more ethical and makes for better research. Consider using the language that community members use and answer the questions they find most pressing. Strive to present communities as agents and experts of their own experience, not just subjects. Always ask yourself: How will my communities, inside and outside of academia, feel reading or viewing this? Whose interests does this serve? (If you've directly solicited their input, you'll have a clearer sense of this!)



Formats for Public Scholarship

Choosing a Medium



Public scholarship can take many forms, from a tweetorial to a podcast to a TikTok video. Each format has its strengths, and the "right" medium depends on your message, audience, and comfort level. This section walks you through key social media and digital formats you might use, with tips and examples for each. Before diving in, note that you don't have to use all the platforms—it's often best to start with one or two that make sense for your project and audience, especially ones with which you're already comfortable! Accessible public scholarship can also be creative: you can mix formats (like a blog post with an embedded video) if that helps reach people.

We'll explore:

- **Writing and text-based formats**: Short-form social media posts and longer-form blogs and newsletters
- **Audio and podcasts**
- **Video**: Short-form vertical video and longer video essays
- **Digital storytelling**

For each, you'll find a description, when to use it, examples, tools, tips, and prompts to get started.

Be sure to review the **accessibility best practices** and **copyright/content reuse considerations**, as well. They apply to public scholarship in all formats.

Writing and Text-Based Formats

Text-based formats are one of the simplest ways to establish a public scholarship practice, especially for scholars trained to write articles and books. Text-based formats include shorter social media posts, as well as longer-form blog posts, essays, and newsletters.

Short-Form Social Media Posts

Choose short-form writing on social media platforms—sometimes called "microblogging"—if you're aiming for speed and shareability, especially if you'd like more audience engagement and interaction.

When To Use

Short-form social media writing works well for:

- **Breaking down a research paper, concept, or piece of media**—your own or another scholar's. Linking back to the original item can help increase its readership, too.
- **Providing real-time responses and insight.** Your posts will be displayed in chronological order in your profile (if not on people's feeds!), allowing you to document your take on events as they're happening. For example, you can live-tweet a conference session you're attending or share your thoughts as you're watching a movie.
- **Engaging in public dialogue and commentary** by responding to someone else's posts with your perspective.
- **Sharing suggestions or tips** related to your area of expertise.
- **Pairing a short essay or anecdote with images**—like photos of your fieldwork, or an infographic.
- **Telling a story or explaining a concept** through a series of posts (a thread).



Tools and Platforms

These social media platforms all enable others to share, quote, or comment on your posts.

- **Instagram**: Owned by Facebook's Meta, this image-based platform is designed for sharing single images, slides of images, or videos with accompanying text captions. Its user base may skew younger and more casual, but many organizations, scholars, and institutions have accounts.
- **LinkedIn**: Designed for professional networking, LinkedIn tends to feel a little more formal and corporate than other platforms. However, quite a few scholars and organizations use it to connect with each other, share publications and announcements, and comment on current events and issues. The 3,000-character limit allows users to share longer reflections. You can "follow" public scholars of interest without needing to send an official "request to connect."
- **X/Twitter**: X (formerly Twitter) shaped microblogging as we know it today, popularizing text-based posts (although posts can include videos and images), post threads, and hashtags. Once a key home for academics, activists, and public scholarship, a significant number of users have left Twitter since Elon Musk took ownership in 2023, and those remaining are increasingly subjected to hate speech and trolling from right-wing and bot accounts. Plenty of users still have Twitter accounts—you may just want to proceed with caution.
- **Threads**: Owned by Meta, Threads' user base has grown exponentially with the exodus from Twitter, and its interface and content have very similar formats.
- **Bluesky:** Bluesky was developed as an alternative to X/Twitter and its interface and content are also very similar. It has significantly fewer users, but their numbers are growing. The Sky Follower Bridge tool makes it easier to find your Twitter and Facebook friends on Bluesky.

Engagement Tips

- **Use hashtags:** Tag relevant organizations or topics to reach your intended audience. (Be sparing! A maximum of 5-10 well-chosen tags is



plenty.) Type hashtags using #CamelCase for accessibility—that is, capitalize each word within the hashtag (#ReproJustice instead of #reprojustice).

- If you do a long thread, **number your posts or use the thread feature**, so people can follow the whole chain easily.
- **Ask a question at the end of a thread** to invite replies and engage others.
- **Respond to comments** to keep the conversation going. This can help build your following and network.
- **Images are engaging:** Add an eye-catching graphic or stylized font to your post or first Instagram slide to grab attention. You can add your own photography, reuse an open access image, or use an application like Canva to design images or infographics.
- **Image captions:** Include a hook in the first line of your image caption—it's what users see before clicking "... more."
- If you prefer to create multiple posts at a time and then publish them on a consistent schedule, try using a **social media scheduling app**.
- Several social media apps, including Instagram, include a "stories" feature for posting quick updates that disappear after 24 hours. You can use stories to tease posts and get more interaction.
- Review the accessibility best practices, which will help increase engagement with your content, as well.

Sample Prompts

Short-form writing is flexible and forgiving. You can always do a follow-up thread or a part 2 post if you have more to say. The key is to start the conversation—you can refine your style as you go. Here are a couple of templates that will help you jump into writing with a structure in mind:

- **Twitter/X/Bluesky post thread:** *"I want to share what my research on [your topic] means for [community or everyday context]... First, [key finding 1 in simple terms]..."* Continue the thread by numbering or using the thread maker, each tweet adding a new piece of the story. Conclude

with *“Thanks for reading! Learn more in [your paper or a resource] and feel free to ask questions.”* Add hashtags to make your post more discoverable.

- **Instagram post caption:** *“[Slide 1 title: A short headline]. Caption start: Have you ever wondered [provocative question]? In my research on [topic], I discovered that [interesting finding]. Swipe to see how [topic] affects [people/issue].”* Then on slide 2, present the first fact, and so on. End the caption with a question or call to action: *“Tell us: have you seen something similar in your community?”* Add hashtags to make your post more discoverable—for example, *#ResearchForJustice #FeministHealth.*

Longer-Form Blogs and Newsletters

Blogging isn't dead! In fact, it's made somewhat of a comeback in recent years, thanks to combination newsletter/blogging platforms like Substack. Blogs and newsletters offer a flexible middle ground between academic writing and more casual social media writing. They provide more space than a social media post to develop ideas, but are generally more accessible and conversational than a journal article or similar academic writing. They can be published on personal websites or on platforms like Substack or Medium. These formats allow scholars to share directly with public audiences without the constraints and time involved in traditional academic publishing.

When To Use

Blog posts (typically around 800 words for a quick read) are useful for reflecting on your research process, telling a story that doesn’t fit in a formal paper, or opining on a trending topic quickly and with more nuance than something shorter-form may allow.

Blogs and newsletters can also help you build ongoing relationships with readers over time. Unlike many social media platforms, where content quickly disappears from view, blog posts and newsletters create an archive of your public scholarship that audiences can return to and share with others (and even cite).



Tools and Platforms

The following blogging platforms allow you to publish your writing online and set up email lists so people can subscribe to your updates.

- **Substack:** A newsletter and blogging platform that makes it easy to publish directly to readers via email. Substack is widely used by many scholars in the humanities and social sciences, although the platform has also been criticized for its limited moderation and its willingness to host writers associated with white nationalist and other extremist viewpoints.
- **Patreon:** A membership platform that allows creators to share public content alongside optional subscriber-only posts, newsletters, podcasts, or other resources supported through recurring donations.
- **WordPress:** A flexible, widely used website and blogging platform that can be used to create anything from a simple personal blog to a large digital project, with extensive options for customization and ownership.
- **Medium:** A publishing platform designed for longer-form online writing, with built-in discovery features that can help writers reach readers beyond their existing networks.
- **Ghost:** An open-source publishing and newsletter platform that combines blogging, email subscriptions, and membership features while offering creators greater control over their content, audience, and data.
- **Ko-fi:** A creator support platform that allows users to accept one-time donations, memberships, and commissions, while also sharing public posts, updates, and downloadable resources with supporters.

Engagement Tips

- **Share blog posts and newsletters across multiple platforms**, including social media, email lists, professional networks, and relevant online communities.
- **Lead with a compelling quote, question, or key takeawa**y rather than posting a link by itself.



- **Engage with comments, replies, and reader questions** when possible to encourage conversation and community-building.
- **Share and amplify the work** of other scholars, organizations, and community partners in your field.
- **Develop a publishing schedule** that feels sustainable, whether that's weekly, monthly, or only a few times a year.
- Over time, **your posts can become a valuable archive of your public scholarship** that readers can revisit, share, and build upon.

Sample Prompts

- **Blog post intro prompt:** *"When I first began studying [your subject], I never expected to find [surprising insight]. Yet as a graduate fellow in Gender, Race, and Health, I've learned [brief teaser of finding]. In this post, I'll explain how [your research discovery] could change how we think about [bigger picture]."* Starting with a personal anecdote or surprising fact hooks the reader.

- **Current events:** *"Recent discussions about [news event, policy, or cultural moment] have raised important questions about [issue]. Drawing on my research on [topic], I want to offer some context for understanding what is happening and why."*

Audio and Podcasts

Audio is a powerful format for public scholarship, allowing you to literally speak to your audience in an intimate way. This category includes **audio shorts** (usually under 20 minutes, often focusing on a single idea or story) and **podcasts**, which can be longer, episodic audio programs. The Pedagogy Lab model is a great example: our fellows create audio pieces that might sound like a cross between a guided meditation, a mini-lecture, and a story. Audio can be immersive. Music, sound effects, and tone of voice can convey emotion and context that text alone might not.



When To Use

Audio can be especially helpful for…

- **Adding a personal or narrative touch to your research communication.** Audio formats are fantastic for topics that benefit from oral storytelling or discussion. For example, if your work involves oral histories or interviews, using participants' *voices* (with permission) can be incredibly impactful. A short audio essay could walk a listener through a day in the life of someone affected by your research issue. Podcasts are also useful for dialogue and deep dives—you might host a conversation with an expert or community member, or have a friend interview you about your thesis.
- **Reaching audiences on the go.** People can listen to your audio while working, cleaning, commuting, or doing other activities!
- **Creating a reflective, intimate space for exploring complex or sensitive topics.** Discussing issues like trauma or resilience in audio might come across with more compassion in a voice than on a page.
- **Challenging the dominance of the written word and engaging listeners in a different sensory experience.** If your message can be enhanced by sound—whether it's the cadence of a poem, the rhythm of music, or just the warmth of a human voice, audio is a great format.

Tools and Platforms

You don't need a professional studio to make a good audio piece! Many successful audio shorts and podcasts are recorded at home. The tools listed here are either free or have free versions. They prioritize ease of access so you don't need an expensive setup. The main investment is some time learning the software. Look up your chosen app's official documentation and tutorials on YouTube, and take a few hours just to play around with the program. The end result can sound remarkably professional for zero dollars.



Recording

Record using a smartphone with a decent microphone or a laptop with a headset. Recording devices can pick up a lot of ambient noise, so wear headphones when recording, or even record in a quiet closet surrounded by pillows. Your campus might offer equipment loans or reservable recording studios, too.

Useful apps to start with:

- The default **voice memo or voice recorder app** on your phone or computer.
- **Zoom** for recording remote interviews.

Editing

- **Audacity**: Widely used, free, open source. Lets you delete mistakes, adjust volume, and layer music or sound effects on multiple tracks.
- **GarageBand**: Free, Mac only, beginner-friendly.
- **Ocenaudio:** Free, cross-platform.
- **BandLab**: Free, multitrack editing on tablet/phone
- **Ferrite Recording Studio**: iOS, offers a free basic version, multitrack editing on tablet/phone
- **Riverside**: Audio and video recording and editing, offers a free basic version

Music and sound effects

Adding a little intro music or ambient sound can elevate your audio and help set a mood. For example, you can fade in a track under your voice at low volume. Search for websites with **royalty-free music and sounds**. Make sure they're licensed for use (there are plenty of public domain or Creative Commons sounds; just credit the artist if required). There are many of these sites out there, but here are a few examples:

- **Free Music Archive**
- **ccMixter**: Music



- **FreeSound.org:** Sound effects

There are a few more options listed in the Content Reuse and Copyright section of this guidebook.

Hosting and sharing

- **SoundCloud**: Good for one-off or standalone audio pieces. Free accounts have an upload limit but there's still plenty of space for a few audio shorts.
- **Google Drive/Dropbox**: You can store and share one-off audio files from a cloud drive, like these.
- **Spotify for Creators**: Includes basic recording and editing tools. Use a platform like this one for podcasts/series, which make it easy to distribute to Spotify, Apple Podcasts, etc., at no cost.

Engagement Tips

Getting people to listen to audio can be a challenge—you're competing with a lot of podcasts out there! Some strategies:

- **Keep it short and tight**, especially for an audio short. The Pedagogy Lab keeps pieces under 20 minutes for a reason; even 10 minutes can be impactful and is more likely to hold the attention of busy listeners.
- **Start your audio with a hook**— something that grabs attention in the first 30 seconds. It could be an intriguing question ("*What if a virus could teach us about intimacy?*"), a vivid scene (*"Imagine a hospital waiting room where time stands still…"*), or a powerful quote from someone you interviewed. First impressions matter in audio; it's like the lede in a news article.
- **Promote your audio on other platforms** to reach your audience. Share a link or a short teaser on social media. On Instagram, you could even create an audiogram (a video snippet with a waveform and captions) using a tool like Headliner to help draw people in. Collaborations can also boost engagement: invite a fellow student or community member as a

co-host or guest, and they'll likely share the episode with their networks as well.

- **Always include a transcript!** This is a necessity for accessibility, and it also helps make your audio more findable.
- **For serial audio pieces, establish a schedule**. Consistency and reliability help if you're planning a podcast or series. If people know you drop a new 10-minute story every Friday, they may tune in regularly. But even a one-off powerful audio short can leave a lasting impression.
- **Track listening stats** to see what resonates, and use that insight for future engagement. Many apps like SoundCloud and Spotify provide basic analytics like play counts.

Sample Prompts

- **Audio short outline template:** *Introduce yourself and your topic (30s)* – "Hello, I'm [Name], and I want to share a story about [core topic]." *Set the scene or problem (1 min)* – describe a real or imagined scenario that illustrates the issue (e.g., a person's day affected by your research issue). *Explain the context (2–3 min)* – weave in your research findings or history: "You might be surprised, but [fact/statistic/anecdote]. In my research, I found that…". *Include a break or sound cue* (music or a moment of pause) to let it breathe. *Then delve into why it matters (2 min)* – connect to broader themes or justice issues. Finally, *conclude with reflection and hope (1 min)* – perhaps a call to action or a question: "What if we could change this? I believe we can, and here's how…" followed by thank yous and credits.
- **Podcast interview prompt:** If you prefer a Q&A style, write down 3-5 questions and ask a friend to pose them to you on mic (or you record both parts and edit the question voice out if you want a narrative style). For example: *"Q1: What inspired you to study this? Q2: What's one finding that blew your mind? Q3: How could this change things for real people?"* Answer each in a conversational tone. This can form a natural flow that you then top and tail with intro music and an outro (like "Thank you for listening, follow us at… etc.").

Using these prompts, you can script or semi-script your audio piece. Even if you don't follow them verbatim, having an outline or script can make the piece sound more natural! They'll also make it much easier to create an accurate transcription. Remember, your voice is an instrument—don't be afraid to let your passion and personality shine through! It's that authenticity that will hook listeners and keep them coming back.

Examples

- **Audio shorts at The Pedagogy Lab:** Our Pedagogy Lab fellows have created dozens of openly licensed audio shorts, available in our teaching materials library. These engaging, brief (10-20 minute) pieces blend storytelling and scholarship, using sound and voice to draw listeners into topics like history, identity, and justice. Some examples:
    - **Gentrification and Queer Time** by Ricardo J. Millhouse
    - **Queerness, Race, and Reproduction: Exploring the Politics of Childcare Through and Beyond Lee Edelman and José Muñoz** by David Diaz
    - **"You Can Only Save Her When She's Dead": Femicide and the State in Contemporary Egypt** by Sara Seweid
    - **Queer, Trans*, and Texan at Pride** by Mac Irvine
    - **"I Would Have Just Lived": Surviving Japanese Internment During WWII (Part 1)** by Tatiana Bryant

Video

Short-Form or Vertical Video

Short-form or vertical videos are bite-sized recordings optimized for mobile devices, often shared via TikTok or Instagram's "Reels" feature. Running anywhere from 15 seconds to a few minutes long, these videos usually incorporate a mix of visuals, audio (like music or voiceovers), and text captions.



Given the format's popularity, short-form videos can be a fun, impactful means for public scholarship, especially if you want to reach younger audiences or make your research feel lively and current. They lean more informal, creative, and humorous, but they can also be powerful vehicles for education (think of all the mini “Did you know?” videos out there).

When To Use

Pick TikTok/Instagram Reels if your content can be punchy and visual, and if it benefits from a bit of entertainment value alongside education.

Short-form videos are especially good for…

- **Conveying a quick message in a visually engaging way**—for instance, short facts, myth-busting, how-tos, and behind-the-scenes glimpses.
- **Connecting with an audience through your face and personal presence.** If you’re comfortable with it, showing yourself on camera can humanize your scholarship. People love seeing the person behind the research.
- **Capitalizing on a trending topic or sound,** like using a trending audio clip while overlaying your educational points as text on the screen.
- **Issuing calls to action.** Platform algorithms can expose these to many viewers quickly. For example, a Reel urging people to check out a new initiative or sign a petition related to your research area could gain traction.

Tools and Platforms

Film your vertical videos using a smartphone (9:16 aspect ratio). You can capture, edit, and do almost everything else from directly within the TikTok or Instagram apps, or you can use a separate editing app for more control. The tools below prioritize ease, and they're either completely free or have good free versions. Take some time to play around in the app you choose—a bit of experimentation goes a long way.

- **TikTok and Instagram in-app tools:** TikTok's filming and editing features include effects, text, green screen (to put yourself in front of a background image), voiceover, and a huge sound library. Instagram's Reels editor is similar, though slightly less feature-rich: it lets you record clips, add text bubbles, choose from trending sounds, and publish.
- **YouTube** now offers YouTube Shorts for vertical videos.
- **CapCut:** A popular free mobile video editing app by the makers of TikTok. Known for being particularly easy to use, CapCut allows you to create clips, add music, text, stickers, and other effects, and use other advanced editing features before uploading to TikTok or Instagram. Its automatic captions feature can generate subtitles for your speech, which you can then edit and stylize (helpful for engagement since many users watch without sound). CapCut also lets you save videos without adding branded watermarks (unlike if you're editing directly in TikTok).
- **InShot:** Another free mobile editor, good for trimming, merging clips, and adding filters/backgrounds.
- **Canva:** Canva's mobile and web app lets you create short vertical videos using templates like "Instagram Story." The drag-and-drop editor and stock animations might suit a quick explainer. For example, you can design a motion infographic (like an increasing bar chart animation) or have a quote flying in.

Post Scheduling and Analytics

The following social media management tools allow you to schedule your posts in advance and track user engagement statistics.

- **Buffer:** Offers a free basic account
- **Instagram:** Pre-schedule image posts (regular/free account) or Reels (paid accounts only). Includes built-in analytics, so you can see how many views, likes, shares you get—useful for reporting your impact.
- **TikTok:** Pre-schedule videos (business accounts only). Also includes built-in analytics.



Engagement Tips

- **Grab attention quickly.** Use strong visual and verbal hooks in the first 2 seconds—for example, a bold question or a surprising fact in big text. Dynamic motion and velocity matter: fast cuts and movement hold attention, as does genuine enthusiasm or emotion in your voice. Start your video by doing something eye-catching, like pouring a colorful liquid, showing a historical photo, or panning around a location.
- **Engage with trends carefully.** Part of being on TikTok/Reels is trend participation—using a trending hashtag or challenge can boost discoverability. Make sure that participation in a trend aligns with your message and values. A silly dance might not be the right tonal fit for more serious content, but you could adapt a trending meme format for more educational purposes. For instance, to adapt one recent trend, your video could say, “tell me you’re a feminist researcher without telling me,” and then show a quick montage of images from your life, like a stack of books by bell hooks, footage of you at a protest, etc.
- **Prepare to respond to comments and manage your audience.** Short-form videos can quickly gain traction, and algorithms rely on interaction and engagement, no matter if it's positive or negative! Reply to positive or clarifying comments, but avoid "feeding the trolls." Have a thick skin and a moderation plan: you can ignore or even delete negative or bad-faith comments (although you can also respond civilly with facts, if you'd prefer). TikTok also lets you create videos in response to comments, which is an excellent way to delve deeper into a complex question and show you’re listening. Lean on your friends or colleagues on these platforms—supporting each other’s content with likes/comments helps increase visibility and drown out any negativity.
- **Make it easy for users to access your external sources.** Users are often reluctant to leave the platform they're currently using. Reduce the number of clicks required to get to your source material. If you reference a scholarly article or piece of media, link to it in your caption. You can also gather links in a Linktree account or other personal webpage and direct users there.



Sample Prompts

- **Educational List format:** *"Here are 3 things you didn't know about [your topic]…"* Start the video pointing up as the numbers "1, 2, 3" appear above you, then for each number either say a sentence or use text-to-speech for a fact. End with "Follow for more" or a concluding thought. This is straightforward and effective.
- **Before/After or Myth/Fact format:** Use text headings like "Myth:" then "Fact:" as you physically swipe or transition. For example, *Myth: "Home birth is primitive and unsafe."* (you shake your head), then *Fact: "Research shows planned home births with midwives can be as safe as hospital births for low-risk pregnancies"* (you nod and perhaps show a statistic on screen). This format tackles common misconceptions in a quick-hit way.
- **Day-in-the-Life or Point of View (POV) format:** Film short clips throughout a day or a simulation of an experience. *"A Day in the Lab with a Feminist Scientist"* or *"POV: You're a grad student turning activist"*. Narrate or add captions to give context. This not only educates but also shows the *process* of research and activism, making academics more relatable.m
- **Storytime format:** Just speak to the camera for 60 seconds telling a simplified story from your research, as if chatting to a friend. Use animated gestures or switch camera angles to keep visual interest. For instance, "Storytime: how I found a hidden gem in the archives…". End with why that story matters.

Short-form video might feel intimidating, but it can also be really fun. Don't worry about perfection—authenticity plays well on these platforms. Filming on your phone in your office or backyard with a bit of editing can produce a TikTok that people find genuine and engaging.

Long-Form Videos and Video Essays

Long-form videos and video essays let you explore a topic in greater depth and with more time than the short-form or vertical platforms allow, especially when



you need to demonstrate something that benefits from visuals. Rather than focusing on one quick insight, there is space here for more storytelling, explanation, analysis, and reflection. Videos are usually filmed horizontally and might take the form of a recorded presentation, lecture, interview, or conversation.

YouTube, the dominant platform for this form, has an audience that is broad and global, and content can easily be found via search. Vimeo and other platforms are also popular.

When To Use

Long-form videos and video essays are particularly well-suited for…

- **Research project overviews, mini-lectures, or short documentaries**. Use multiple media components to create an argument or story.
- **Interviews or testimonials.** Horizontal formats work well for panels or conversations involving multiple people, so this format is often chosen for streaming and documenting public symposiums. You could also incorporate a 30-second clip of an interview with an activist or community member as part of a longer video.
- **Walking viewers through a tangible, visible element of your work,** like an artifact, physical space, digital humanities tool, or data visualization.
- **Standalone, reusable educational resources and tutorials.** Unlike short-form videos/reels, long-form video links are typically stable and discoverable, ensuring long-term public access. You can embed them on websites, incorporate them into teaching materials (including online textbooks and modules), share them through social media, and screen them at events.

Tools and Platforms

- **Recording video:** A smartphone or a laptop webcam can capture you speaking. Try to ensure good lighting (daylight or a simple ring light) and a non-distracting background. For higher quality, see if you can borrow a DSLR or camcorder from campus, but it's not strictly necessary. If you

need to record an interview or slideshow presentation via Zoom, you can use Zoom's record function. Many phones now record in HD or 4K, so they are fine for YouTube.

- **Video editing:** For assembling the footage, OpenShot and Shotcut are free, open-source editors for Windows/Mac/Linux that let you trim clips, add images over video (picture-in-picture), and include titles or captions. They have a bit of a learning curve but plenty of tutorials. If you're on Mac, iMovie is a user-friendly free option. On Windows, Clipchamp, which comes with Windows 11, is a beginner-friendly editor with a decent free plan. Both of these apps allow you to add transitions, background music, etc. If your video is mostly slides and short clips, another option is to edit it in Canva, which now supports multi-page video projects. Canva has templates for video presentations that you can customize and export as MP4 files.
- **Whiteboard animations / animated explainers:** If you want to try that style, you can do a free trial for a tool like Doodlecast Pro or Videoscribe. Powtoon also has a free tier to create animated presentations. Alternatively, try the free DIY option: set up a camera above a piece of paper and literally draw while talking, then speed up the video when editing!
- **Audio for video:** Use the same tips from the podcast section for recording clear voiceover if you're narrating separate from filming. Use an audio editing app to clean up the audio track before adding it to the video editor, if needed. Many video editors also let you do voice narration directly onto the timeline. You can add in music and sound effects from a royalty-free sound library like Free Music Archive, ccMixter, FreeSound.org, or another site.
- **Images, footage, and music:** Need a shot of a city or a hospital hallway? You can use royalty-free, stock, or openly licensed footage and images to enrich your video from Pixabay, Pexels, Wikimedia Commons, or another site.
- **Captions:** Add captions (at least in English, or multiple languages if you prefer) to your YouTube videos. YouTube can auto-generate captions, but



you should review them for accuracy. You can upload your own caption file too. Learn more about video accessibility.

- **Publishing:** YouTube is the easiest platform for most people to use because it's free, extensively used, and includes built-in editing features. To share your video files, you'll first need to create a YouTube channel. (Note that this will be tied to a Google account; we recommend using a non-institutional account that you'll have access to even after you graduate.) Upload your video, add a clear title, a description (including citations, credits, and links), and relevant tags. Once the video is uploaded and has its own link, you can then share it and embed it on other sites, if you'd like.

Engagement Tips

- **Length and structure:** Keep your video organized with a clear intro and outro. Engagement often drops if the intro is long, so get to the point quickly. You don't need a flashy 20-second title sequence; 5 seconds is enough, or a simple title over the first shot. In general, shorter videos with tight narratives often hold attention better—if you can say it in 4 minutes instead of 7, do so. Every clip or image should serve a purpose; if it doesn't contribute, cut it. Consider adding a chapter outline (YouTube allows timestamps in descriptions to act as chapters). For example: 0:00 Intro, 0:45 Background, 2:00 Key Findings, 3:30 Why It Matters, etc. This shows the logical flow of the video and helps viewers navigate.
- **Visual appeal:** Unlike on TikTok, you might not need high energy jump cuts, but you still want to avoid a "talking head only" for 5 minutes straight as it can get monotonous. Use slides, B-roll footage, or even on-screen text callouts to underscore points. When citing a statistic or quote, display it in text briefly. This reinforces the information and caters to visual learners. It also makes your video look more professional and engaging.
- **Engage the viewer:** Treat the camera like it's your audience: be conversational, use "you" to speak to viewers. You can even directly prompt interaction: "Leave a comment if you've experienced something similar," or "Subscribe to see more feminist research explained." If



appropriate, encourage viewers to take action or learn more: “If this topic interests you, check out [organization’s] website (link in description) for our events on disability justice.” Having an end slide with social media handles can link it back to your broader audience and mission. And of course, share the video widely: send it to the Center to post, put it on social media, maybe even mention it in classes or to friends. YouTube links are easily shareable.

- **Safety note:** If you include people in your footage (especially non-public figures), get their permission. Avoid showing faces of anyone who hasn’t consented (blur or crop them out if it’s like event footage). And be mindful of any institutional policies—for instance, if you’re filming on a hospital’s premises, ensure you’re complying with their privacy rules.

Creating a short video might seem like a lot of pieces to juggle, but it’s very rewarding to see the final product. Take it step by step: plan the content, gather media, then edit. Don’t hesitate to use templates or ask a colleague for help. And remember, it doesn’t have to be professional documentary quality. As long as it’s clear, accessible, and honest, it will do its job of communicating your research to the public in a new way.

Sample Prompts

- **Concept explanation video:** *“People may be familiar with [topic], but might not understand how it impacts [everyday life/a particular community/you]. In this video, I’ll explain [key concept] using examples from my research. By the end, you’ll understand [key concept].”*
- **Research walkthrough video:** *“My research asks, [research question]. In this video, I’ll walk through what I found, why it matters, and how it connects to larger issues surrounding [social issue, policy debate, community concern, etc.]*
- **Narrative-driven video:** *“In order to understand [research topic], let’s start with a story. [anecdote, story from your research, historical event] This story reveals something larger about [research topic].”*
- **Myth-buster video:** *"A common misconception about [topic] is [misconception]. In this video, I'll explain where that idea comes from, what research tells us instead, and why the distinction matters."*



- **Lecture or teaching video:** *"If you're interested in learning more about [topic], this video will introduce three key ideas, resources, or questions that can help you get started. Think of it as a short guide to understanding [topic] through a feminist lens."*

Digital Storytelling

Unlike the other formats discussed in this guide, digital storytelling is less a single medium than its own approach to public scholarship. Digital humanities and public scholarship projects will often combine text, images, audio, and video, or other interactive elements in ways that don't fit neatly into one category.

At its core, digital storytelling uses narrative to connect audiences with research, ideas, communities, experiences, or theoretical concepts. A digital story might take the form of a video essay or digital exhibit, a social media campaign, podcast, or other combination of formats. Rather than completely replacing any of the approaches we covered previously, digital storytelling often brings them together to create a richer and more comprehensive experience.

When To Use

- **Going beyond raw data:** Digital storytelling is especially useful when data by itself doesn't convey the human element of your research. If you have a powerful anecdote, a case study, or a journey to share, wrapping it in a digital story can make it more relatable.
- **Showcasing community-engaged work:** if your research involves working closely with participants or a specific site, a digital story can help center those voices and places.
- **Evoking empathy or reflection rather than just relaying facts.** Instead of just saying "phthalates are harmful," a digital story might follow "a plastic bottle on its journey" into someone's life, into their body, and out into the environment, narrated in first-person from the bottle's perspective. This kind of imaginative approach can resonate emotionally.



- **Sharing visuals to enrich understanding.** If your work has visual components, like photographs from fieldwork, archival images, or maps, digital storytelling allows you to combine these with narration or text. Sometimes visuals can convey concepts faster than text alone can. Videos are an engaging choice for audiences who might not read a full article but will watch a 3-minute story with images and sound.

Tools and Platforms

- **Video story (slideshow style):** Microsoft PowerPoint and Google Slides are user-friendly choices. In both of these programs, you can create slides with images and text, then use the "record slideshow" feature to add voice narration to each slide. Save it as a video (MP4) and you have a digital story video! Adobe Express (formerly Spark Video) offers a 30-day free trial and an intuitive drag-and-drop interface which lets you add images, text, and music, and record voiceovers for each slide. Canva also has a free video maker where you can animate text and images for a polished result. If you want more control, you could use a video editor to manually synchronize images with a recorded narration track.
- **Interactive maps/timelines:** If your work engages with specific places or times and you like the idea of a story map or timeline, Knight Lab's StoryMap JS and Timeline JS are excellent free tools. Fill out a Google spreadsheet with your narrative text and image links, and the program will generate a web-based interactive that you can share via a link—no coding required. If your institution offers ArcGIS/Esri access, you can try the more powerful (but otherwise expensive) ArcGIS StoryMaps, as well.
- **Web storytelling (scrolling article style):** If you want to create something that feels like a special webpage with embedded media, look at Exposure (some free capabilities) for photo essays. For a custom approach, you could create a WordPress site with a storytelling theme or use Tumblr for a short series of posts that users read in sequence.
- **Comics/illustrated stories:** If you are artistically inclined (or collaborate with someone who is), you might turn your research into a short webcomic. Tools like Storyboard That (free basic version) or Canva (with comic strip templates) can help lay out panels even if you're not drawing



by hand. This is a more niche approach but can be incredibly effective for explaining concepts (think of those cartoon explainer comics).

Engagement Tips

Design your digital stories so as many people as possible can experience them:

- **Engage people through interactivity.** The beauty of digital storytelling is you can invite the audience to engage not just by commenting, but by exploring. If you create, say, an interactive timeline of feminist health movements, encourage the reader to click through an interactive element: *"Explore the map to find your community's data"* or *"Zoom into the timeline on the year you were born"*. This makes them an active participant. Even in a video story, you can prompt engagement by asking a reflective question at the end, or providing a link for viewers to "learn more or get involved."
- **Make it easy to share your digital story on social media.** If your story is on a webpage, include share buttons or at least a short URL and a hashtag that viewers can use if they post about it. If it's a video, people might share the YouTube or Vimeo link – ensure your title and description are enticing and clear so when it's shared it draws people in ("Video: How a Xicana scholar is reclaiming childbirth – 3 min watch"). Engaging content plus easy shareability equals a wider impact.
- **Make sure your digital story functions on different devices.** If you're doing a scroll-based story, see that it works on mobile as well as desktop (many people might view it on their phones). If using fancy multimedia, ensure it doesn't require special software beyond a web browser. Simplicity often aids accessibility.
- **Make sure to follow accessibility best practices.** This is especially important for digital stories, which often combine materials in many different formats.



Sample Prompts

- **Personal narrative video prompt:** *"Think of one person or moment from your research that moved you. Write a one-page story about that, in first person if appropriate. Identify 5-10 images that can support that story (they could be literal, like a photo of a place, or symbolic, like a stock image of hands to represent care). Record yourself reading the story aloud, as if telling a friend. Then combine your narration with the images in sequence."* This exercise often produces a heartfelt digital story.
- **Data-driven story prompt:** *"Take a key piece of data from your research (a graph, a statistic, a geographic pattern). Now create a narrative around 'a day in the life' or 'before/after' that humanizes that data. Use a tool like StoryMap or a simple slide show to juxtapose the data with storytelling.*
- **Collaborative storyboard prompt: I**f you're not sure how to frame it, try storyboarding with peers: *draw 6 boxes on paper, and sketch out a beginning, middle, end.* Beginning: present a *problem or character*; Middle: show *struggle or discovery*; End: show *change or call to action*. Even stick figures and rough ideas are fine. Once you have a storyboard, it's easier to pick the right tool to implement it digitally.

Digital storytelling might feel the most "artistic" of these formats, but don't let that intimidate you. The focus is on authentic storytelling, not high-budget production. As feminists have shown in community digital storytelling workshops, a simple story deeply felt can be transformative. By blending your research with creativity and care, you can produce a digital narrative that stays with your audience.



Accessibility Best Practices

Accessibility is a core principle of feminist public scholarship because access to knowledge is inseparable from questions of power, participation, and inclusion. If the goal of public scholarship is to share knowledge beyond the university, we must also consider who can engage with and benefit from that knowledge. Creating accessible content helps reduce barriers for disabled audiences and reflects a broader commitment to inclusion and an ethic of care.

Accessibility also benefits audiences regardless of disability status. Features like captions, image descriptions, clear formatting, and plain language can make content easier to navigate for people with a wide range of abilities, preferences, devices, and contexts. By designing with accessibility in mind from the beginning, rather than as a supplement or afterthought, public scholars can create content that is more welcoming and engaging for everyone. Content that meets accessibility requirements is also more likely to be accessed, cited, and assigned!

Writing Style

- **Keep your writing clear and jargon-free.** This benefits everyone, especially readers unfamiliar with academic terms. Tip: Consider having someone not in academia or your field review your piece.

Text

- Make sure the **font size is** large enough and **text colors have enough** contrast to be read easily. White text on light yellow, for example, is hard to see.
- Structure your text so that people can navigate it with screen reader devices and skim it more easily. Use **short paragraphs** and **bullet points** (like we're doing in this guide!) so people can more quickly grasp your main points.



- In blog posts and longer pieces of writing, use **headings**. Look up how to apply headings for the program or platform you're using. The two phrases below look the same, but only the first one uses the "heading" text style in Google Docs. The second one is formatted to *look* like a heading to human eyes, but it won't be recognized as a heading by screen reader devices.

> **This is a heading.** *[style is Heading 1]*
>
> **This is not a heading.** *[style is Normal Text]*

Images

- **Add alt text and/or image descriptions to images** so that visually impaired audiences using screen readers can access the content. This applies to all digital platforms, from Instagram and Twitter to Google Docs and Wordpress.
    - Review the Alt Decision Tree from the Web Accessibility Initiative to determine what purpose your image serves and how to write suitable alt text for it.
    - Then look up how to add alt text for the specific program or platform you're using. For instance, on Instagram, you can put a very short description in the alt text field and then add a longer image description at the end of your caption (preface it with "Image description:" or "ID:").
- If you're sharing an **image that includes text**, make sure the same information is also present in text form near the image—for instance, in the image's caption. Make sure that any text in your image also has sufficient **color contrast**, as well.

Audio

- **Speak clearly.** Speak clearly and at a measured pace in your recordings. Enunciate technical terms. This not only helps listeners, including those

whose first language isn't English, but it also improves the accuracy of auto-transcription tools.

- **If the audio features multiple speakers, introduce each person.** Ask speakers to take turns and identify themselves (or you as narrator can say "Now you'll hear from X"). This helps listeners follow along.
- **Use background music and sound thoughtfully.** Keep the volume of background sounds low if you're speaking, and make sure it doesn't drown out your voice (test with headphones on different devices). If you use a popular sound, consider providing more context in your audio or accompanying text if the connection isn't obvious. For instance, a trend sound might be a joke from a show—make sure to tie it to your point so it's not lost on those unfamiliar.
- **Always provide a text transcript for audio files.** Many in your audience might be D/deaf or hard of hearing, and even hearing listeners appreciate transcripts—for instance, if they're searching for a specific quote from the piece, or if they're in an environment where they can't play sound. Transcripts also help search engines index your project and make it more findable. To create a transcript, start with your written script (if you have one), transcribe manually, or use a free automated tool—for instance, Otter.ai (includes a generous free tier for automatic transcription). Note that you'll need to review and clean up automatic transcriptions for accuracy. When you publish your audio, there may be a space to copy in your transcript, or you can link to it as a word document.
- **Optional: Provide detailed show notes** that describe the contents of the audio and give more context, in addition to a transcript.
- **Consider including content warnings.** If your audio includes potentially triggering content, give a gentle warning at the start (e.g., "Content note: this episode discusses obstetric violence and may be upsetting to some listeners"). This practice aligns with a trauma-informed, feminist approach to education.



Video

- **Always caption your videos.** Many viewers scroll with sound off, and captions also make the content accessible to D/deaf and hard of hearing audiences. Transcripts also help search engines index your project and make it more findable. It's easier to create captions if you scripted out your video in advance, but you can also use an auto-captioning feature (like on TikTok or YouTube), as long as you manually review and edit captions for accuracy. Ensure that captions sync with the audio. Use a clear, simple font and adequate color contrast so they're easy to read. (YouTube defaults to white text with black outline, which is usually fine.)
- **Convey and describe key information in multiple formats—text, visual, and audio. Include crucial information in text-based formats like captions, transcriptions, and on-screen text, not only in the audio layer of your video.** For YouTube videos, you can add descriptions to the caption or link to a separate document. It's not common to put full image descriptions in Instagram or TikTok captions due to character limits, but you can at least ensure your voiceover or on-screen text conveys what's happening. You can also add short image descriptions to the caption, like, "Video shows researcher holding a plant while text on screen explains herbal remedy."
- On the other hand, **if your video shows something important in visual format (like a chart or on-screen text), make sure you also read or describe what it is** for audio-only and visually impaired listeners. For instance, "This graph behind me shows…" or "As Audre Lorde said in this quote from 'Uses of the Erotic,'…" or "On the screen is a historical photograph of Fulton's Health Food Center in the 1970s."
- **If your video is heavily visual without much audio narration** (like silent film clips or graphics set to music), add a detailed text description, and consider making an accompanying accessible version with audio description.



Content Reuse and Copyright Considerations

In the U.S. context, as soon as a creator makes an original work and sets it down in a "fixed medium"—whether that's a blog post, a published book, an image, a song, or a note on a paper napkin—it is protected by copyright law. This applies to works of public scholarship, too: both your own content, and any content made by other people that you may wish to reuse.

For that reason, it's helpful for public scholars to have a basic understanding of copyright and the feminist politics of citation, especially because public scholarship is (usually) intended to be available publicly and digitally for the long term. As Sara Ahmed tells us in Living a Feminist Life, "citation is feminist memory. Citation is how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before; those who helped us find our way when the way was obscured because we deviated from the paths we were told to follow… [C]itations can be feminist bricks: they are the materials through which, from which, we create our dwellings."[1] In this spirit, we encourage attention to the feminist genealogies within which we write, post, and teach, and to the citational practices which make those genealogies legible.

We recommend reading the U.S. Copyright Office's clear, helpful **overview of copyright**. However, copyright and fair use are applied and interpreted on a case-by-case basis, so the specific details are beyond the scope of this guide. In addition, we are not legal experts at The Pedagogy Lab, and nothing we say here should not be construed as legal advice! If you're affiliated with an institution and would like more assistance navigating your particular situation, we recommend reaching out to your institution's library.

That said, we've included some general tips below on maintaining ownership of your work, and on reusing other people's content in your public scholarship.

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[1] Sara Ahmed, "Introduction: Bringing Feminist Theory Home," in *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 15–16, https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373377-001.

Maintaining ownership of your work

You automatically hold the **copyright** to any original content you create. This means you have the exclusive right to reproduce and distribute your work (which applies to both physical and digital copies), make derivative works and adaptations based on the original (for instance, an audio recording of a piece of writing), and publicly display and perform your work (for instance, creating an exhibit based on your work, or streaming a digital video file). As the copyright holder, you can also grant other people permission to do these things—like if someone emails you asking if it's OK to translate a piece you wrote into another language.

You might want to apply a **Creative Commons license** to your work. These licenses are especially helpful in educational contexts because they let you maintain your copyright while allowing other people to use your work in particular ways, without having to ask you for explicit permission. For example, the permissive CC BY license lets other people share, make copies of, remix, adapt, and build upon your work, as long as they give you appropriate credit. The more restrictive CC BY-NC-ND license lets people share and make copies of your work in any medium or format, but they can't make adaptations or remixes of the work, they can't make money off of your work, and they must still give you appropriate credit. This guidebook is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0!

Because public scholarship frequently relies on using different digital platforms to distribute work and reach a wider audience, it's important to mention that when you agree to the **terms and conditions of a particular platform**, you are often granting that platform the right to do some of these things with your copyrighted content. TikTok's Terms of Service, for instance, state that content creators, "by creating, inputting, publishing, and otherwise providing [their content] on or to the Platform," grant TikTok a "non-exclusive, irrevocable, royalty-free… assignable, sub-licensable… and worldwide" license to "access, reproduce (e.g. to copy), distribute, share, download, adapt or make derivative works (e.g. to translate and/or create captions), perform, and communicate [content] to the public (e.g. to display it), for the purposes of operating, improving, and providing the Platform and developing new technologies (including training, testing, and improving our machine learning models and



algorithms) and services…" A creator's TikTok settings may also grant other TikTok users similar rights to reuse their content.

This is not inherently a bad thing, but it's good to be aware that using a given platform could mean giving up some of the control you might otherwise have over what you create. It's not terribly different from the contracts authors sign in order to publish work in a scholarly journal. In both cases, we recommend reading the fine print so you know what you're agreeing to!

Reusing other people's content in your public scholarship

You're already familiar with **citation**—where you can quote or paraphrase pieces of someone else's writing in the context of your work, as long as you give appropriate credit and tell readers where to find the original work. You should continue to cite and credit other people in your public scholarship, just as you would in traditional scholarship.

However, the process is a little different if you're looking to **copy, reuse, or adapt text or multimedia** content that someone else made into something you are creating. For example, in a public scholarship project, you might want to:

- Add background music to a podcast.
- Find images through a Google search to add visuals to a storymap.
- Make an Instagram post combining a photo that someone else took with your own commentary.
- Upload a copy of a published book chapter that you reference in a blog post so your readers can access it right away.

There's a difference between, say, sharing a copyrighted book chapter with your students on a private course site vs. uploading the book chapter online and linking to it in a blog post where others can access it. The second situation is considered making a reproduction or copy of something, and it's prohibited under copyright law unless you have explicit permission. But the more you can avoid coming up against copyright, the more you'll be able to focus on the most meaningful parts of your public scholarship!



That said, here is what we generally recommend if you're looking to reshare or reuse any writing, sounds, images, video, art, or anything else that someone else created.

- **Use your own original work.** If you can go outside and take a photo to accompany your blog post, do that instead of worrying about getting permission to use someone else's. Just make sure to ask for consent before taking and sharing any photos of other people or work they've created.
- **Look for openly licensed, royalty-free, or stock media.** You can generally reuse these in your work without needing to get permission, but check the terms and conditions to make sure! Here are a few places to start:
    - Creative Commons Search Portal: Search CC-licensed media across multiple platforms
    - Pixabay: Royalty-free stock images, videos and music
    - Wikimedia Commons: Openly licensed images, sounds, and videos
    - Pexels: Stock photos and royalty-free images and videos
    - Unsplash: Stock and royalty-free photos and illustrations
    - Open Peeps and Humaaans: Hand drawn libraries of illustrations of people from Pablo Stanley and the Together team. Mix and match body types, clothing, hairstyles, emotions, and poses to create different people.
    - Free Music Archive
    - ccMixter: Music
    - FreeSound.org: Sound effects
- **Link out or provide a citation instead of making a copy.** If there's, for instance, a piece of writing or a video you'd like to link to in your public scholarship, see if you can find and link to a version that someone else has made available online. Remember to check the link periodically to make sure it's still active. You can also choose just to provide citation information so people can look it up themselves.



- **Locate the copyright holder to get explicit permission.** If you want or need to reuse a piece of media that's fully copyrighted and isn't available under a stock or Creative Commons license, it's best practice to reach out to the copyright holder for permission. This USCB page links to some sample permission request letters. Explain who you are, what your public scholarship project involves, and what you're hoping to do with the person's work. While this process may seem intimidating or inconvenient, it can be a way to build trusting, reciprocal relationships with aligned scholars, activists, and artists!
- **Always provide attributions to give credit for any media you didn't create yourself.** There aren't formal rules for attribution statements like there are for citation styles, but in general, it's helpful to say the author's/copyright holder's name, where the item comes from (link out), and the terms under which it's being reused. Here are some sample attribution statements:
    - *Photo by Janina Taylor Wallace, used with permission.*
    - *Photo of Bans Off DC protest (May 14, 2022) by Miki Jourdan, licensed CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.*
    - *Cricket sounds: LS100141.WAV by jediduke via freesound.org. License: Sampling+*

Conclusion

This guidebook is meant to be a living resource. Public scholarship is an evolving practice: new platforms and technologies will emerge, and we will all learn from our experiences. No guide can offer a definitive roadmap, and much of what you learn will come from experimentation and collaboration. As feminist scholar- activists, we have an opportunity to make knowledge more accessible, accountable, and culturally responsive. At its best, public scholarship serves to connect research with collective learning and to invite more people into the conversations that shape our futures.

Approach feminist scholarship with curiosity and care! Share what you learn, support others in their work, and remain open to new ways of communicating your work. Happy creating!

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