

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS PROJECT PODCAST SERIES:
CONTEXTUALIZING FEMINIST VOICES:
THE LESSON PLANS**

Topic: Representing Life Stories Using Digital Tools

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Özge Savaş: Today we have Marisol Fila, who prepared a Lesson Plan called **Representing Life Stories Using Digital Tools**. Can you provide a brief overview of the Lesson Plan and its learning goals?

Marisol Fila: Sure. In the Lesson Plan “Representing Life Stories Using Digital Tools”, the students use different interviews to identify the life events that shape the person's identity, and collaboratively create a timeline of that person's life. The goal of the lesson, as I envision it, is that students can discuss personal and individual experiences in light of the historical events from the country of origin of the interviewee and the history of women's activism in that country. All of those resources are available on the Global Feminisms website, too. The lesson was created so that the students can use the different activities as the basis for a final project that employs the open access digital tool Timeline JS to create an interactive timeline that can be published online.

ÖS: That sounds great. I know that these Lesson Plans have a set of proposal activities in them. What are some of the proposed activities that instructors can find in this Lesson Plan specifically?

MF: The first activity starts with a discussion of the students' life events and experiences. They are thinking about their own experience and discussing that collaboratively in a group. And then it moves to identify relevant life events in an assigned interview. The class will be divided into different groups, and the instructor will assign one interview to each group. The second activity builds from the work done in the first one and asks the students to compare the person's individual experiences with the political, social, economic, and cultural events that shape the countries and the women's movement history. Finally, the final assignment uses all the work done during the previous two activities and, after introducing the digital tool Timeline JS, it asks the students to create an interactive timeline using the tool. They do that online.

In the final project, also then in groups, the students can also work on improving their research skills since they are required to search for additional information and materials that they will later put on the timeline. As a final reflection, each group of students shares their experiences— both with the work of discussing the interviews and their individual life experiences, and the digital tool Timeline JS.

ÖS: It sounds like there's a lot of learning of skills, tools, and content together. That sounds great, and it builds nicely on top of each other, but they can also use them separately. So why would you say, or how is this Lesson Plan helpful for instructors as a resource? What kinds of adaptations [can] instructors make to the lesson plan?

MF: I think that this Lesson Plan is a great resource to introduce the use of digital tools in the classroom, and technology of course, and to develop students' hands-on skills as you were saying before. Furthermore, the lesson stresses the importance of connecting [macro] and micro histories because they are both analyzing individual life events from the interviews and the activist women, and also the key historical events of that country and the women's movement. They can see how big historical events and moments can inform individual lives and experiences. And finally, as it happens with the rest of the Lesson Plans available in the project's website, this Lesson Plan uses primary sources, which are the different interviews, as the base material for the lesson. That is a great opportunity for students to work with primary sources, and to hear from the women directly, in their own voices.

And yes, absolutely, there are several adaptations that can be made of it. For instance, even if the lesson proposes the use of interviews from four different countries, as they are listed, Russia, China, Nicaragua, and the United States; [the] instructor can also use interviews from other countries. Actually, on the website we have a list of some alternative interviews that do a great job in describing individual life experiences and the interviewee's personal life. Instructors can also use those interviews if they prefer, and those interviews are a great fit for the lesson as well.

Finally, the lesson includes different handouts for instructors to model each activity, and also to introduce the digital tool Timeline JS in the classroom and to provide training for students. That handout includes a step-by-step tutorial developed specifically for the lesson, although instructors can collaborate with the library or IT from the University to have that training in class. They can also choose to use other resources for the work in class.

ÖS: That sounds great. Just out of curiosity: is Timeline JS free access/open access that everybody can have?

MF: Yes, it's open access. It's free. It's pretty easy to use because even on their website, they do have a step-by-step tutorial on how to create the interactive timeline. And really, students don't need any more than a Google account, a Google email address, and to download a spreadsheet that is provided on the tool's website and make a copy out of that. It's created from a spreadsheet, so it's pretty easy to use. On the Global Feminisms website, if instructors want to take a look, all the different resources and timelines that talk about the country's history and the women's movement history were built on Timeline JS, so instructors can have an example of how Timeline JS looks published online, too.

ÖS: That sounds really great. Is there anything else that you would like to share about this Lesson Plan? Anything you want to add?

MF: Well, I would really love to hear from instructors after they have tried this lesson so as to know how it went, and what adaptations they have made or not. As I do work on digital scholarship, I'm very interested in hearing more about the students' work with digital tools, and in particular, the combination of primary and secondary sources in digital storytelling. And of course, I would love to hear any suggestions and feedback that instructors who try this lesson have for improving it. Thank you so much!

ÖS: Thank you for joining us and explaining this Lesson Plan.

MF: Thank you.