

**Contemporary Feminist Debates**  
**27 January 2009**  
**Feminism Paper**

In the preface to *Feminism is for Everybody*, bell hooks' explains that she wrote the book in order to provide her friends and family with a brief and accessible explanation of what feminism is and why it is important. The goal of this assignment is to write a **3-4 page/double-spaced/11 or 12 point font** paper in which you offer your own clear and compelling definition of feminism and why it is/is not important.

In completing this paper, imagine you are writing it to a family member (your mom or dad, for example) or a close friend in order to answer their question: So what is feminism and why are you studying it? Your emphasis should not be on "converting" your audience to feminism or defending feminism against the many charges leveled against it (although you can defend feminism in your paper), but on communicating your own understanding of feminism and why it is/isn't still important.

While you should draw upon other sources (class discussion, readings, etc) to support your points, the goal of this paper is for you to develop your personal definition of feminism and to be able to express that clearly and effectively to others.

Here are some questions to get you started. You should answer at least some of these in your paper, but you do not have to answer all of them.

1. What kind of impact has the feminist movement/feminist ideas had on your own life or the lives of others? On U.S. culture/politics?
2. Has the feminist movement been a success?
3. Is feminism still necessary? Why? Why is it important to study feminism?
4. What is a feminist issue?
5. What kinds of issues should feminists be focusing on?
6. Who embodies your definition of feminism?
7. Would you call yourself a feminist?

This paper is due at the beginning of class on **February 10**.

**SEE OTHER SIDE**

## ASSIGNMENT FOR CLASS ON 2/3

Reading:

a. Selections from a Special Issue: "Blogging Feminism: (Web) sites of Resistance" in the Scholar and Feminist Online.

- Trasiter, Rebecca. "Preface"  
[http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/blogs/traister\\_01.htm](http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/blogs/traister_01.htm)
- Kennedy, Tracy L.M. "The Personal is Political: Feminist Blogging and Virtual Consciousness Raising"  
[http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/blogs/kennedy\\_01.htm](http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/blogs/kennedy_01.htm)
- Siegal, Deborah. "Finding the Past in the Present"  
[http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/blogs/siegel\\_01.htm](http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/blogs/siegel_01.htm)

Special Issue Website:

<http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/blogs/index.htm>

b. SKIM Tobias, Vicki. "Blog This"

<http://womenst.library.wisc.edu/fc/fcblogs1.htm>

**NOTE:** This reading assignment REPLACES the Devoney Looser essay that I originally assigned.

In addition to the above reading, pick one of the following blogs (or pick some feminist blogs that you read regularly) to look at...

<http://www.livingoprah.com/>  
<http://www.feministing.com/>  
<http://bitchphd.blogspot.com/>  
<http://angryblackbitch.blogspot.com/>  
<http://feministlawprofs.law.sc.edu/>  
<http://feministphilosophers.wordpress.com/>  
<http://feministblogs.org/>  
<http://www.blackademic.com/>  
<http://www.amptoons.com/blog/>  
<http://www.pamshouseblend.com>  
<http://www.iblamethepatriarchy.com>  
<http://www.dykestowatchoutfor.com/index.php>

...then, briefly answer the following questions:

- What types of issues are addressed in this blog?
- What kind of blog is it (see Tobias: personal, topical, collaborative, political, corporate, advice)? Why?
- Is the blog feminist? Why/why not?
- What are your reactions to the blog?
- Is this blog (and/or blogging in general) a good feminist tool for raising consciousness?

**NOTE:** All of these links will also be available on our course blog:  
[blog.lib.umn.edu/puot002/gwss3004](http://blog.lib.umn.edu/puot002/gwss3004)