

## **Feminist Thought and Theory**

### **Final Paper Project**

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, the process of writing this paper enables you to critically exploring a topic/idea/theory in greater depth than a critical response, in-class discussion or the midterm exam could allow. Second, the process of revising and rethinking this paper helps you to become a better writer who is able to communicate your ideas more effectively. You may choose either of the following options for your final paper.

1. Pick one of the themes from the second section of the class and write an 8-10 page paper on it. This paper should include a discussion of **at least three** of the texts that we read for class. You are free to use any of the texts from the class for any of these themes. For example, if you were writing about storytelling and self-expression, you could use Allison and her discussion of writing in “A Question of Class” even though she wasn’t assigned for the week in which we discussed storytelling.

- a. The Value of Self-expression
- b. Storytelling and Self-expression
- c. Manifestos
- d. Self-Expression and the Body

In discussing the topic, make sure to talk about what it is and why it is important for feminist theory. You may choose any topic that you wish to discuss as long as it fits with the larger theme.

Some sample topics/questions to explore:

- a. How have women been prevented from expressing their voices?
- b. What kind of truth is important for self-expression through storytelling?
- c. How are radical language and ideas helpful/harmful for feminists in the writing of their political manifestos?
- d. How do illness/disability effect the way we express ourselves through our bodies?

2. Read one of the following books and write an 8-10 page analysis of the text and its relevance for feminist theory. If you would like to write on a book that is not listed, please contact me for approval.

Book List:

Allison, Dorothy. *Bastard Out of Carolina*.  
Bornstein, Kate. *Gender Outlaw*.  
Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/ La Frontera*.  
Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble*.  
hooks, bell. *Talking Back*.  
Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider* or *The Cancer Journals*.  
Mairs, Nancy. *Waist High in the World*.  
Maxine Hong Kingston. *The Woman Warrior*.  
Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*.  
Woolf, Virginia *A Room of One’s Own*.  
Williams, Patricia, *The Diary of a Mad Law Professor*.

You may analyze the book in one of two ways:

- a. Provide an overall summary and critical assessment of the text. In this type of analysis, you clearly summarize what the author’s main points are, you critically reflect on how effective the author is in making her points and how effective her claims are and you explore the usefulness of her main ideas for your own feminist theorizing. While this analysis does not require that you

cover absolutely everything that the author is trying to say, it does require that you communicate the most important points of the book.

**OR**

b. Focus on one particular theme/concept in your reading of the text. In this type of analysis, you discuss how the author theorizes about a certain idea. You are still expected to critically reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the text, but you do so specifically in terms of your selected topic. For example, your paper could be specifically about the mother/daughter relationship in Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* or how Mairs' position as disabled affects her understanding of the world in *Waist High in the World*. Again, your paper should not merely be a summary of how the author discusses this topic, but a critical analysis of their discussion. What questions do their theories raise for you? What are the limitations of their claims, etc.?

The final paper is worth 30% of your total grade. You are required to turn in a draft version on **November 16** and a final draft on the last day of class, **December 12**. The draft is worth 10% of our total grade and the final version is worth 20%.

Although you are not required to do so, I strongly encourage you to come visit me or Kandace at our office hours to discuss your papers.