

Contemporary Feminist Debates
Blog Assignments
Spring 2010

PART ONE: GENERAL PARTICIPATION

250 points

ENTRIES

- 3** direct engagement entries
- 1** example for "this is a feminist issue because..." category
- 1** agenda

COMMENTS

- 2** on others' "this is a feminist issue because..." examples
- 6** on others' direct engagement entries
- 2** your choice

ENTRIES:

3 Direct Engagement Entries: 3 @ 20

60 points

You are required to post responses (as new entries) three times during the semester. These entries, which should be 200-250 words, must respond to the question/s posted by Sara or Michelle for that week. To get full credit, your responses should draw upon the readings for that week. While these entries can be informal, they should be thoughtful and demonstrate a serious engagement with the questions and the topics of the course. See other sheet for list of due dates.

1 Example for "This is a feminist issue because..." category:

20 points

You are required to post an example of issues/current events/popular culture examples that you believe are important feminist issues or that demand a feminist analysis. While you should provide some remarks on why you chose the issue/example/event, you are not required to give an in-depth explanation. Your post is intended to offer up an example for other class members to analyze and comment about. See other sheet for list of due dates.

1 Agenda:

50 points

Several times during the semester, we will devote class time to developing agendas for addressing contentious and important issues within feminism. In these sessions, you will break up into small groups and collectively develop an agenda. You are required to post one of those agendas on our blog site. You are encouraged to be creative in your post. For example, you could post a bullet list of action items or an image of flyer that you want to circulate. Or you could post a manifesto that you and your group have written. Or you could post a vlog (video blog) in which you speak out against the issue or a Public Service Announcement in which you try to raise awareness about the issue.

COMMENTS:

2 Responses to examples of “this is a feminist issue ...” category: 2 @10 20 points

You are required to post comments on why (and how) 2 different issues/current events/popular culture examples, provided by other students, are feminist issues.

6 Responses to others’ direct engagement entries: 6 @ 10 60 points

You are required to post comments on other students’ direct engagement entries for six different weeks. Your comments should be thoughtful and respectful and they should demonstrate a serious engagement with the issue and with the author of the entry.

2 Your choice: 2 @ 10 20 points

You are required to post comments on two additional entries throughout the semester. These comments can be responses to other direct engagements, follow-ups to comments posted on your own entries, responses to “this is a feminist issue because...”, or anything else you want to comment on during the semester.

EXTRA CREDIT:

“This is a feminist issue because...” examples: It is possible to earn up to an additional 20 points extra credit if you submit more than 1 example. Each extra example is worth 5 points (so you can submit an additional 4 examples: 4 @5 points each = 20 points).

Comments: It is possible to earn up to an additional 10 points extra credit if you submit more than 10 comments. Each extra comment is worth 2 points (so you can submit an additional 5 comments: 5 @2 points each = 10 points).

EVALUATION OF ENTRIES/COMMENTS:

Entries:

√+	20 points	You demonstrated a serious engagement with the question/s. You drew upon the readings and fully explained your response.
√	17 points	While you answered the question, your response didn’t draw upon the readings or engage with the question enough.
√-	15 points	You offered a superficial response that failed to engage with the readings or past discussions.

Comments:

√+	10 points	You engaged with the original post and provided a thoughtful response to their entry.
√	8 points	You responded to the question, but didn't engage with the original post enough,
√-	7 points	You failed to address the issues raised by the original post .

PART TWO: TRACKING YOUR ISSUE**150 points**

- 1 entry on historical background
- 1 entry on local impact/importance of your issue
- 2 entries on academic sources
- 1 entry of your choice
- 1 entry summarizing tracking

Summary: In groups of 2 or 3, you are required to track a specific topic related to the larger issues of the class. You and your group members will be responsible for tracking (researching, reading about, following) an issue and then presenting a series of entries in which you document that tracking. **Your tracking entries must all be posted on the Friday before the week in which we develop agendas for your topic. Your summary entry must be posted by Monday of the week in which we develop agendas for your topic.** So, if you and your group sign up to track an issue related to reproductive rights, you must post all of your entries by Monday, Feb 26 and your summary entry on March 1.

The purpose of this assignment is twofold. First, tracking a term related to one of the issues enables you and your group members to learn more about an issue that is important to feminism. Second, in posting your tracking on our blog and presenting on your findings to the class, you serve as a teacher for the rest of the class, educating on us on why your chosen issue is important and guiding us as we develop feminist agendas.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your tracking of the issue should not focus exclusively on one perspective. Nor should your entries present one position on how to understand and/or address the issue you are tracking. The purpose of your entries is to provide all of us with more information so that we can critically reflect on the issue and its many sides. Taken as a whole, your entries should **include** at least **three different perspectives** on your issue.

5 TRACKING ENTRIES: 5@ 20 points each**100 points****1 entry on historical background:**

In this entry, you are required to provide some historical background on your topic. This entry could include a timeline of events (or a link to a timeline) or a summary of some key events or figures. For example, if you are tracking women's health care activism, you could trace the history of the Boston Women's Health collective and *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

See: www.ourbodiesourselves.org

1 entry on local impact/importance of your issue:

In this entry, you are required to post information on the impact and importance of your issue locally (University of Minnesota or the Twin Cities) or regionally (Minnesota or Midwest). For example, in this post you could write about local organizations, local laws/policies, or even local news events related to your topic.

2 entries on academic sources:

In these entries, you should post links to/summaries of an academic source related to your topic. By academic source, I mean an article from a scholarly journal or an academic book/book chapter. Please check with me if you are uncertain about your source. In addition to providing a link to your source (and the bibliographic information), you should post a brief summary of the article and the author's perspective on the issue.

1 entry of your choice:

In this entry, you can post about anything related to your topic. For example, you could post a commercial from youtube about the issue or you could provide the link for a blog/organization that writes about/organizes around your topic. You could post about a law or a case related to the topic. Or you could post some media examples (movies, tv shows) that discuss the issue.

1 SUMMARY ENTRY:**50 points**

In this entry, you are required to post a summary of your findings through tracking your issue. Your summary could include a discussion of key points and perspectives. It could also include a brief discussion of the experience of tracking your term. Finally, you should offer some of your thoughts, as a group, on the issue—why you chose it, what you learned, etc.

There will be 3 groups for each larger topic. Although you may choose your topic, no two groups can work on the same exact topic. Here are a few sample topics:

Reproductive Rights:

- How important are abortion rights for feminism and feminist agendas for reproductive rights? Is the issue of abortion the dividing line between feminist and anti-feminist?
- Reproductive technology: the limits/possibilities of in-vitro fertilization, surrogacy? Where do feminists stand on the issue of Nadya Sulieman ("octomom")?
- Women's Health and Health Care Reform: Where does women's health fit into the Obama administration's health care reform? How are feminists responding to the Stupak amendment? How much compromise is too much?
- Women's Health Care Advocacy: What are some important feminist health issues beyond abortion? Locally? Nationally? Transnationally? Globally? How have/are feminists working on women's health care issues?

Work:

- Careers and the mommy track: How are women seen in relation to their (real or imagined) potential of getting pregnant? How does this affect their ability for career advancement? Does this mommy track still exist?

- What does equality in the workplace look like? Equal pay? Equal opportunity? How are feminists working for equality? Should eliminating the wage gap be an important focus of their agenda? What else needs to be done?
- What are some important workers' rights issues beyond equality? How do those issues differ depending on the type of job? How are feminists organizing for labor rights?
- What is the ERA (equal rights amendment)? Are all feminists in support of it? Why/why not? Why has it failed to pass? Should passing the ERA be an important goal for feminists?

Family Values:

- What are some feminist family values?
- Marriage: Is marriage a patriarchal institution? Should feminist and queer communities advocate for same sex marriage? What about civil unions? What rights are/should be tied into marriage?
- Kinship/family: what is a family? What are some different ways of envisioning family/kinship configurations? How do/should laws recognize these different types of families? How are feminists responding to this issue?
- How are children/youth valued or devalued within families? What are some feminist strategies concerning children/youth? How should feminist incorporate children into their agendas?

Sex Wars:

- Feminism and Pornography: what is pornography? Should it be restricted/regulated? In the case of pornography, are there limits to freedom of expression/freedom of speech? What is the difference between erotic and pornographic? Who does/should get to decide?
- Sex Education: What are some feminist strategies for teaching sex education? What is the history of sex education? Current policies? Should safe-sex be taught in schools or left to parents? Where do/should children get their understandings of sex/sexuality?
- Raunch culture: Is American culture too raunchy? And, what does that mean? Where does feminism fit into all of this? Is "raunch culture" the legacy of second-wave feminism? How might different feminists (from different times in history) respond to this charge?

Prison Industrial Complex:

- Why is the prison industrial complex a feminist issue? How does the PIC affect women? In particular, what women are most affected by the PIC?
- How can feminists work with other social movement groups to develop responses to the PIC?
- What resources should feminist organizations be working to provide for incarcerated people (women, men, trans folk)?
- How are incarcerated individuals/communities resisting/fighting back? What are the most effective ways to resist/rebel/transform/disrupt the Prison Industrial Complex?

SIGN-UP SHEET: 3-4 members per group

Issue	Names	Topic
Reproductive Rights		
Reproductive Rights		
Reproductive Rights		
Work		
Work		
Work		
Feminist Family Values		
Feminist Family Values		
Feminist Family Values		
Sex Wars		
Sex Wars		
Sex Wars		
Prison Industrial Complex		
Prison Industrial Complex		
Prison Industrial Complex		

