

GWSS 3307 FINAL ESSAY/PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

DUE Tuesday, 12/12 at the beginning of class
NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED

Formatting Requirements:

- ➔ Length: 8-10 pages (if writing paper only) or approved project & 3-5 pages
- ➔ Font: 12-point standard font
- ➔ Spacing: Double
- ➔ Must include Name on each page (use header or footer)
- ➔ Include page #s on each page
- ➔ Staple your papers (no bend, tears, paperclips...)
- ➔ Works Cited page with formatted citations (MLA or APA style)
- ➔ Block quotations should be single spaced only (do not fill up pages w/block quotes)
- ➔ Please bold the key concepts/terms you discuss in your essay

No matter your choice of question, your essay will be graded on clarity of ideas: Did you present a strong and clear thesis? Did you provide clear examples that support your argument? Did you demonstrate understanding of key concepts presented in lecture and in the readings? Is the paper properly formatted (grammar, spelling, etc.)? Does the paper fulfill the requirements (length, 12pt font, double space, stapled, etc.)?

Papers/projects are worth 30 points total. “A” work (26+ pts) will satisfy all of the above in all areas. Papers receiving 25 - 21 points (“B” work) will show strong engagement but some lack (that will be noted in the comments) in content, form, structure. Work receiving 20 points or less (“C” work) show basic understanding but reflect major problems in content, structure, argument, format, etc. like lacking a thesis, or a body of the text that does not argue for the thesis stated in the introductory paragraph. Work receiving anything that falls below the above stated requirements, shows lack in all the above content/format requirements.

Content Requirements:

Each essay must cite a minimum of **three scholarly readings** (at least one from our coursepack, others can be found through library book (see the webct homepage for suggested texts) or journal search – <http://www.lib.umn.edu>).

Some key concepts/terms discussed in class and readings: gender, race, class, intersectionality, intersectional analysis, differences (in race, class, gender), power, privilege, colonialism, imperialism, essentialism, patriarchy, oppression, agency, marginalization, hegemony, performativity, power, sex/gender distinction, biological v. social construction, masculinity/femininity, othering, capitalism, queer theory, supremacy, authorship, filmmaker/subject relationship, ethics, politics of representation, race & accountability (responsibility), spectatorship, subjectivity, filmic construction, activism, alternative media practices, feminist filmmaking, alternative outlets/means of distribution...

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Demonstrate your understanding of the key terms/theoretical concepts deployed in the readings that we have done thus far this term by answering one of the following essay questions:

➔ **PRE-APPROVED ESSAY QUESTION PROMPTS:**

1. Do we still need to study women? gender? identity politics? with regards to media making and analysis? How does current ideas in feminist and/or queer theory make the feminist film studies project more or less relevant? Give specific examples from reading and media to support your arguments.

2. Many feminist film theorists we've read this term seek "alternative spaces", feminist resistance media, and alternative filmmaking and viewing practices. Is this possible? What strides have feminist filmmakers made? What are some of the counter/resistant/alternative spaces of media making/viewing exist? Does new technology (like cheap video cameras, home computers and vlogs) offer some space? What is possible in Hollywood, indie, grassroots and other spaces? What are the most relevant spaces/places of feminist media?

3. Should feminist film/media studies be a praxis project? What is the importance of feminist theory? What is the significance of theory in feminist media practices? What is gained by looking at the ideas generated by both, in conversation?

4. Many feminist theorists and feminist filmmakers seek "real" stories to make their films about. For example, Kimberly Pierce writes a script about Brandon Teena and makes *Boys Don't Cry* while Lourdes Portillo films the families in Juarez. Both directors, it can be argued, are constructing realities. Write an essay on the relationship between real stories and cinematic representations. What "issues" are relevant? What is "real", "reality" or a "realistic" representation? What is fiction, narrative, or propaganda? How do you know you can trust what you are watching? Where does "reality" TV fit into this equation?

➔ **PROMPTS NEEDING APPROVAL (one page submitted by 11/24):**

5. Write an in-depth analysis of a particular filmmaker or a filmmaker's body of work, using sites of analysis outlined in question #4. What can be theorized from looking deeply and critically at a director and his/her vision (and what is learned by analyzing more than one film)? Your essay should consider authorship, race and responsibility, spectatorship, filmmaker/subject relationship, and other key ideas about directing that is presented in course readings.

6. Topical question: Choose an issue relevant to feminist film/media studies, research the topic (in theoretical writings, media practices, and cultural productions), and write an analysis of the topic arguing some angle/theme about the research.

Some suggestions:

- Analysis of women/women's bodies on movie posters or DVD covers

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- Women and advertisements: focus on Dove's Real Beauty campaign (like short films and commercials on YouTube)
- gURL culture, cyberfeminisms, the Internet as feminist space
- Media targeted at teens, tweens, or kids (girl power/Disney's Cheetah girls), movies like *Mean Girls*, or TV shows like *MTV's Sweet 16*
- Gender-bending in Hollywood teen films (*She's the Man*, *Just One of the Guys*) or gender in makeover shows (*Queer Eye*, *What Not to Wear*)

➔ **PROJECT/PAPER OPTION GUIDELINES:**

You may choose to make media for credit this term. You will want to come up with the idea/themes of the media and write a paper that shares your theoretical frame (meaning what theory informs the media that you make). You can make media on any theme or topic that you wish, just choose something that is conducive to themes in the course or key ideas in feminist film theory (like representation, race/class/gender..., etc.)

You could make a news story, a short film/video, a vlog, an image slideshow or anything you can think of that is media related. You make make the media individually or as a group (see requirements in proposal request below). If you do a group project EACH group member writes their own paper.

You will present this media project to the class (suggested media length – less than 5 minutes with 5-10 minute individual presentation / explanation of papers (15 – 20 if needed for group presentation)).

➔ **IF YOU CHOOSE PAPER TOPIC OR MEDIA OPTION that NEEDS APPROVAL, YOU MUST:**

Email raim0007@umn.edu a one-page proposal by noon on Friday, 11/24.

Proposal guidelines:

Include your topic (main idea), what you hope to argue in the paper or project (thesis), some possible scholarly sources (to show you've begun researching your topic), and any additional relevant information.

If you plan to do a group media project (such as a powerpoint, slideshow or short video), please you must specify:

- 1) who is in your group
- 2) each person's role (specific job duty allotment)
- 3) a timeline for completion (i.e. this week shoot video, by Nov 31 digitize and begin editing, by Dec 2 rough cut, ready to screen Dec 5).
- 4) any questions you may have about the project, training needs (like we need to learn how to edit in the FMC), or any special tech needs for your presentation