

**Feminist Pedagogical Resource Guide:  
Introduction to Women's Studies**  
Compiled\* by Farrah Ferriell, Western Kentucky University

\*Farrah Ferriell collected this compilation in 2002-2003 using WMST-L as the main source. The contributions are originals, as written by the contributors. Some content was edited for length, continuity, and errors.

# Feminist Pedagogical Resource Guide: Introduction to Women's Studies

## **Contributors**

Margaret Barber, University of Southern Colorado

Carey Brown, University of Kentucky

Jacqueline Ellis, Bates College

Farah Ferriell, Western Kentucky University

Gay and Lesbian Speakers Bureau

Barrie Gewanter, Syracuse University

Christy Halbert, Western Kentucky University

Arnie Kahn, James Madison University

Molly Kerby, Western Kentucky University

John Killermeier, SUNY Plattsburg

Mark Kirk of Metropolitan State University

Deborah Louis, UMBC

Georgia NeSmith

Jane Olmsted, Western Kentucky University

Keith Roberts, Hanover College

Beth Rushing, Kent State University

Christine Smith

Kathleen Waits, University of Tulsa

# Feminist Pedagogical Resource Guide: Introduction to Women's Studies

## Table of Contents

1. <a href="#">Assignments</a>	1-4
<a href="#">Written Assignments</a>	1-3
<a href="#">Research Assignments</a>	4
2. <a href="#">Exercises and Activities</a>	5-17
<a href="#">First Day of Class Exercises and Activities</a>	5-7
<a href="#">Writing Exercises and Activities</a>	7-9
<a href="#">Questionnaire and Mock Quizzes</a>	9-13
<a href="#">Group Exercises, Activities and Discussions</a>	13-15
<a href="#">Other Exercises and Activities</a>	16
3. <a href="#">Projects</a>	18-21
<a href="#">Semester Projects</a>	18
<a href="#">Interview/Fieldwork Projects</a>	19-20
<a href="#">Other Projects</a>	20-21
4. <a href="#">References and Pedagogy Research Tools</a>	22-27

# ASSIGNMENTS

## Written Assignments

### Journals

Assigning weekly or bi-weekly journals is a common practice in women's studies courses. Assigning students to write critically about their understanding of articles, books, and films is an effective way for instructors to encourage students to read and write critically and also to explore how students feel about the subjects addressed in the course.

Most journal assignments ask students to reflect on course materials. The journals may be personal, but it is important to stress that students should use evidence from their readings to support their opinions.

#### **Assignment or Journal Entry Idea:**

*Submitted by Carey Brown, University of Kentucky*

Assign students one of the following for journal ideas or experimental assignments:

1. Visit a local office or organization where you will be racial or ethnic minority (such as the welfare office or Latina/o Church)
2. Do something that is uncommon for your gender and observe what happens.
3. Search through magazines, art books, newspapers, and other print sources to find as many different representations of the female body that you can find.

Usually students do not find a diverse representation, which can generate a good class discussion based on their search.

#### **Book Review**

*Submitted by Kathleen Waits, University of Tulsa*

Give students the following directions:

Read one of the books listed below. You may report a book you've read previously but you must actually read it.

Pretend that you're writing a review for a Women's Studies book review. The readers are women's studies professors and students around the U.S. (and perhaps international). The report should be about 1000 words. You should provide basic information about the plot, as one would expect in a book review. Analyze the book based on the course materials/class discussion. How does the book touch on feminist/women's studies themes? [or not touch on feminist/women's studies themes?] You may also touch on other issues about the quality of the book and your reaction to it. Indicate whether you

would recommend it to a friend and also whether you would recommend that Women's Studies professors should consider including the book as a part of their class.

Possible list of books:

Pearl Abraham, *The Romance Reader*

Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina*

Julia Alvarez, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*

Rita Mae Brown, *Rubyfruit Jungle*

Ana Castillo, *So Far from God*

Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*

Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent*

Diane Glancy, *Pushing the Bear*

Linda Hogan, *Power*

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*

Nella Larsen, *Passing*

Audre Lorde, *Zami*

Terry McMillian, *Waiting to Exhale*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Gloria Naylor, *The Women of Brewster Place*

Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Anna Quindlen, *Black and Blue*

Ntozake Shange, *Sassafrass, Cypress, and Indigo*

Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

## **Movie Review**

*Submitted by Kathleen Waits, University of Tulsa*

Give students the following instructions:

Watch and review two movies. You can review a movie you've seen before, but you must watch it again.

At least one of the movies must be from before 1980.

You can choose from the lists of movies listed below, but you may also watch and review other movies with prior approval from your instructor. Avoid duplication (two movies from the same director, same screenwriter, etc.).

Movies prior to 1980:

*Woman of the Year, Adam's Rib, Pat and Mike, Desk Set, Psycho, Rear Window,,  
Rebecca, Vertigo, Funny Face, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, Singin' in the Rain,  
Wizard of Oz, Ball of Fire, Bringing Up Baby, It Happened One Night, Ninotchka  
Pillow Talk, Sabrina, Godfather I or II or Godfather Saga, Fort Apache,  
The Quiet Man, Rio Grande, She Wore a Yellow Ribbon, All About Eve, All the King's  
Men, Annie Hall, The Apartment, Best Years of Our Lives, The Deer Hunter  
How Green Was My Valley, Kramer vs. Kramer, Marty, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's  
Nest, Rocky, National Velvet, A Place in the Sun, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf  
Casablanca, Citizen Kane, Gone With the Wind, Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street, The Nun's Story  
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, An Unmarried Woman.*

Post 1980:

*Lianna, Lone Star, Matewan, Passion Fish, Return of Secaucus 7, Aladdin, Beauty and  
the Beast, Lion King, Little Mermaid, Toy Story I and II, any Arnold Schwarzenegger  
action film, Born on the Fourth of July, Eyes Wide Shut, Jerry Maguire, Magnolia,  
Minority Report, Risky Business, American Beauty, The English Patient, Forrest Gump,  
Gladiator, Ordinary People, Out of Africa, Shakespeare in Love, Silence of the Lambs,  
Terms of Endearment, Titanic, Erin Brockovich, Notting Hill, Pretty Woman, Sleeping  
with the Enemy, The Color Purple, Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon, Daughters of the  
Dust, Joy Luck Club, A League of Their Own, Man/Woman/Eat/Drink, Personal Best,  
Pretty Woman, Tootsie, Wit.*

Write a review of about 1000 words analyzing your two movies from a feminist perspective. What are the gender roles in the films? Are women important to the story? Do you think the movie accurately reflects women's lives? Are women shown in any variety? If it is a movie appropriate for children, what messages do children receive about gender roles from the movie? Do the movies reinforce gender stereotypes, counterattack gender stereotypes, or is there a mix? What are the movies' attitudes towards gender roles? With regard to pre-1980 move, what did it tell you about gender life "back then"? Incorporate the class materials as you see fit.

What if there were a women's studies course on American film would you recommend the films? Why/Why not? Regardless of the gender issues, do you think it's a good movie? Why/Why not? Is it a "guilty pleasure" for you?

# Research Assignments

## **Women and Representation**

*Submitted by Carey Brown, University of Kentucky*

Early on in the course, give students a research handout that asks various questions, such as:

1. What are the average incomes for men and women?
  2. How many female CEOs are there?
  3. How many women senators, representatives, and federal judges are there?
- And so on...

Have students research these questions on the web or print sources. This is a great way for students to see for themselves how inequality still exists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, without having to “rant and rave” to them.

## **Women in the World**

*Submitted by Kathleen Waits, University of Tulsa*

Students will need access to *Penguin Atlas of Women in the World* for this assignment. Give the students the following instructions:

1. Using *Penguin Atlas of Women in the World*, pick any one country other than the United States. Select at least 5 maps from the atlas. Examine the status of women in the country as shown in the maps. Be prepared to articulate what you think the maps are telling you. Compare the status of women in the chosen country with the status of women in the U.S., as shown by the maps. Is the country uniformly good, bad, or mixed, as measured by the maps? What is your reaction to what the maps reveal about both your chosen country and the U.S.? Did the results surprise you, either with regard to the country or the U.S.? Do you question the accuracy of the information presented?
2. Using the *Penguin Atlas of Women in the World*, pick any one map that covers the entire world. Examine this map in detail with regard to many countries/regions of the world. Again, be prepared to articulate what you think the map is telling you. What is your reaction to the information from the map?
3. Using the *Penguin Atlas of Women in the World*, pick any one non-map graphic chart. Examine the chart in detail, as you did with the map in #2. Be prepared to articulate what you think the chart is telling you. What is your reaction to the information from the chart?

# EXERCISES and ACTIVITIES

## First Day of Class Exercises and Activities

### **Interactive Quiz**

*Submitted by Beth Rushing, Kent State University*

Write up a short quiz (10-15 questions) that covers many of the topics that will be addressed throughout the semester. Make some questions fun and others more controversial. Write directions at the top of the list that say they are to answer each question with the best of their ability. When they answer all the questions tell them to raise their hands and keep them raised until they are paired up with another student. When people raise their hands, pair them up or triple them if you have to. Ask the dyads to go over their answers together and agree on at least half of the questions. Once they have done this, have them raise their hands to match them up with another dyad. Have the new group agree on at least half the questions.

When everyone is finished, discuss the questions with the class. A great discussion should be generated, and the students become more familiar and friendlier with each other.

Off beat question suggestion: How many Betty Rubble vitamins are there in a Flintstones vitamin bottle? (the answer is none). The question generates a discussion about the invisibility of women in art, literature, science, etc.

### **Feminism and Students**

*Submitted by Carey Brown of University of Kentucky*

Tell the students that this is a course that discusses women's issues from a feminist perspective. Ask the students to raise their hand if they are feminists; you may not get many to admit this. Have the students write down every stereotype and generalization they can think of regarding feminists, and write their responses on the board. Then ask the students to raise their hand if they are Christians (many more students are likely to respond. Ask the students to list as many stereotypes as they can in regards to Christians, and write those on the board beside the other set of stereotypes. Ask the students if the stereotypes about Christians are true. Make the point that some Christians may behave in a stereotypical manner, but most do not. Ask them if they agree. Make the point that this is also true for feminists, because many feminists do not meet these stereotypes they listed on the board. Then discuss the stereotypes and lead into a discussion about feminism and feminist issues.

## **Careers and Generations**

*Submitted by Barrie Gewanter, Syracuse University*

Ask the students what kind of work their grandmothers did outside or inside the home and write them on one side of the board. Next ask the same about their mothers and write the results in the middle of the board. Finally, ask them the same about themselves and their future jobs/current jobs.

Ask the students to analyze the data collected on the board and generate a discussion about the results.

## **Feminist Questionnaire**

*Submitted by Arnie Kahn, James Madison University*

### **Questionnaire:**

Hand out a sheet to all students with the following questions:

1. What is the message you received when growing up regarding males if you are female or about females if you are male?
2. Who is a woman you admire and why?
3. Do you consider yourself a feminist?

After the students are finished, ask each student to share his or her answers to one of the three questions.

Note: It is interesting to ask the same questions at the end of the semester.

## **Gender Writing Exercise**

*Submitted by Sally Harrison-Pepper, Miami University (Ohio)*

Have the students take out a piece of paper and have them write “As a woman I…” or “As a man I…” and tell them to complete the phrase. Encourage them to write a few sentences until they are satisfied. Give them 3 or 4 minutes to write. Allow the students anonymity on this exercise. When they are finished, take up the papers, mix them, and pass them out again. Have the students read the responses. This should generate interesting discussion to begin the introduction to your topic.

## **Social Construction of Gender**

*Submitted by Jacqueline Ellis, Bates College*

Bring in “gender objects” such as deodorants, cigarettes, condoms, and skin care products that are branded as masculine or feminine to varying degrees. Divide the students into small groups and give each group a few items to label and analyze. Ask them to give the items a gender and explain why.

## **Collage**

*Submitted by Mark Kirk, Metropolitan State University*

Bring piles of magazines and newspapers, scissors, construction paper, markers, and stick glue. Ask the students to create a collage that explores what it means to each of them to be a woman or a man. Give them plenty of time and when they finish ask them to use the collage as a way to introduce themselves to their classmates. When everyone is finished, have the students arrange the collage on the floor to create a larger collage.

## **Writing Exercises and Activities**

### **Social Construction of Gender**

*Submitted by Georgia NeSmith*

The following is an exercise that Georgia NeSmith has used twice as a discussion opener for the first day of an introduction course.

Some preparatory information: The first three paragraphs of explanation and instruction are used only to set up the situation. Although when I first made up the exercise I fully intended to follow-up. Discussion of how I use the results of this exercise follows the end of the explanation. If you use this exercise please grant credit to Georgia NeSmith.

Hand out should read:

“J.D.’s Story”

Make up a name for yourself—first and last name. Choose any name you want (try to avoid generic names: Jane Doe, John Smith, etc.). Also, in case two or more names are identical, choose a two-digit number to accompany your name. You will need to remember this name and number, so don’t forget!

Fictional name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please read the following story and follow the instructions at the end.

Once upon a time there lived a child, whom we shall call J.D. J.D. was a very bright, active, headstrong child and often got into trouble with adults because J.D. was always questioning everything.

J.D. taught J.D.'s self to read when J.D. was only five. J.D. had a brilliant imagination. Above all, J.D. loved fairy tales. J.D. would imagine slaying fierce dragons and saving J.D.'s parents from the dragon's wrath.

J.D. loved to run fast and hard across the fields near J.D.'s home. J.D.'s body was as strong as J.D.'s mind.

J.D. was also very kind and gentle. J.D. was particularly good at getting friends and classmates to cooperate with each other and organize toward accomplishing a common goal.

J.D. was very confident about what J.D. could be and do. J.D. was good in science and math, but also could write beautiful stories and poems. J.D. was very good in sports, particularly basketball and baseball. And J.D. was a champion marathon runner.

But J.D. also enjoyed ballet and was well known for being a sensitive and graceful dancer.

\*\*\*\*\*

Finish this story. Give J.D. a complete name. Describe J.D. and J.D.'s childhood and adult life in as much detail as you can imagine. Keep writing until you are told to stop. Use the back of this page and add any pages that you need.

When the students are finished writing, don't take up their stories. Ask them whether J.D. is male or female and why. The point of the discussion is to bring to light the reasoning processes whereby they assign gender to this child.

Note: it is possible to come up with a gender-neutral name and avoid gender specifications (which students may surprisingly do).

You may also assign J.D. a race and class to bring up other important issues.

## Sexuality

Submitted by Margaret Barber, University of Southern Colorado

The following exercise is a writing prompt. Copy and paste the following excerpt and allow your students ample time to finish the passage.

"This morning when you awoke from a night's sleep, you became aware that society was no longer as you remembered it. In fact, it had universally made a 180-degree turn in sexual orientation and the world you remember as being a comfortable environment for heterosexuals like yourself no longer accepts people like you. You don't want to return to isolation, so you must deal with the situation, and do it right now.

But now you don't fit in. Homo-erotic love is the required standard. Heterosexuals are moral outcasts. They are widely thought to molest children, and the marriage of your financé(e) that you have looked forward to for several years will not be legally recognized. Procreation takes place in test tubes and hired wombs according to accepted

procedures, and couples like you and your fiancé(e) are considered hazardous to population growth.

You turn on the TV news, only to see a demonstration on the courthouse steps by anti-heterosexual activists shouting “heterosex is sin” and “ban the straights.” A sense of doom envelops you as the truth sinks in. You have a cup of coffee and sit down to think about how you will deal with the situation. What do you think? How will your life change? What will happen to your relationship with your family and friends, now all gay? What will happen when you return to work straight? Will you attend the office dinner party? Will you take your fiancé(e) with you?

You think of several choices available to you. Will you try to turn gay? Will you stay straight and pretend to be gay? Will you allow others to know that you are straight and risk the consequences? What might they be? How do you decide to deal with the situation? Why?”

## **Questionnaires and Mock Quizzes**

### **Leadership, Gender, and the Invisible Ceiling**

*Submitted by Keith A. Roberts, Hanover College*

Instructions:

1. Type a sheet with the following heading: MASCULINITY and FEMINITY. Type these instructions for students “Mark each characteristic with an “M” for masculine or an “F” for feminine depending on whether you think the characteristic is generally defined by society as a masculine or feminine characteristic.”
2. Type another sheet with the following heading: CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERS. Type these instructions: “Mark an “X” by the 10 characteristics which you think are the most essential qualities for a leadership position in a complex organization (business, government, etc).”
3. Type the following list with a readable font on BOTH sheets. Make both sheets look the same from a distance so students don’t realize someone has a different sheet than they do. You can adjust this list as you wish:

\_\_\_\_\_ achiever  
\_\_\_\_\_ aggressive  
\_\_\_\_\_ analytical  
\_\_\_\_\_ caring  
\_\_\_\_\_ confident  
\_\_\_\_\_ dynamic  
\_\_\_\_\_ deferential (defers to others, yields with courtesy)  
\_\_\_\_\_ devious  
\_\_\_\_\_ intuitive

- \_\_\_\_\_ loving
- \_\_\_\_\_ manipulative
- \_\_\_\_\_ nurturing
- \_\_\_\_\_ organized
- \_\_\_\_\_ passive
- \_\_\_\_\_ a planner
- \_\_\_\_\_ powerful
- \_\_\_\_\_ sensitive
- \_\_\_\_\_ strong
- \_\_\_\_\_ relationship oriented

4. When you come to class with the exercise sheets be sure to pass out a proportionate number of each kind of sheet to class without their realizing that the sheets are different. Ask the students to fill out the form and immediately give you the form when they are finished. Tell them to follow the instructions on the sheet, and tell them to not ask questions or to refer to other classmates for help or clarification. Take up the sheets to calculate for the next day.
5. For the next class meeting have your results ready. Most likely the masculine characteristics are usually highly correlated to the list of preferred leadership qualities. Find some positive correlations between masculinity and leadership and a few negative correlations. Do the same for femininity also. This exercise should lead to a lively discussion about gender and leadership. It may help to bring in a census bureau report to back up their exercise results

#### MACULINITY and FEMINITY

Instructions: Mark each characteristic with an “M” for masculine or an “F” for feminine depending on whether you think the characteristic is generally defined by society as a masculine or feminine characteristics.

- \_\_\_\_\_ achiever
- \_\_\_\_\_ aggressive
- \_\_\_\_\_ analytical
- \_\_\_\_\_ caring
- \_\_\_\_\_ confident
- \_\_\_\_\_ dynamic
- \_\_\_\_\_ deferential (defers to others, yields with courtesy)

- \_\_\_\_\_ devious
- \_\_\_\_\_ intuitive
- \_\_\_\_\_ loving
- \_\_\_\_\_ manipulative
- \_\_\_\_\_ nurturing
- \_\_\_\_\_ organized
- \_\_\_\_\_ passive
- \_\_\_\_\_ a planner
- \_\_\_\_\_ powerful
- \_\_\_\_\_ sensitive
- \_\_\_\_\_ strong
- \_\_\_\_\_ relationship oriented

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERS

Instructions: Mark an "X" by the 10 characteristics that you think are the most essential qualities for a leadership position in a complex organization (business, government, etc).

- \_\_\_\_\_ achiever
- \_\_\_\_\_ aggressive
- \_\_\_\_\_ analytical
- \_\_\_\_\_ caring
- \_\_\_\_\_ confident
- \_\_\_\_\_ dynamic
- \_\_\_\_\_ deferential (defers to others, yields with courtesy)
- \_\_\_\_\_ devious

- \_\_\_\_\_ intuitive
- \_\_\_\_\_ loving
- \_\_\_\_\_ manipulative
- \_\_\_\_\_ nurturing
- \_\_\_\_\_ organized
- \_\_\_\_\_ passive
- \_\_\_\_\_ a planner
- \_\_\_\_\_ powerful
- \_\_\_\_\_ sensitive
- \_\_\_\_\_ strong
- \_\_\_\_\_ relationship oriented

### Sexuality

Gay and Lesbian Speaker's Bureau

The following exercise is a quiz about students' sexuality. This is not a "real" quiz and students' privacy is kept by not turning in the quiz and keeping it to themselves. The "Heterosexual Questionnaire", found at [www.pinkpractice.com](http://www.pinkpractice.com) or other sources, is written by the Gay and Lesbian Speaker's Bureau. This questionnaire may be used as a handout, mock quiz, or exercise.

### Social Class

Use the questionnaire about social class from *Radical Teacher and Feminist Journal on the Theory and Practice of Teaching*, no. 46. This may be used as a handout, mock quiz, or exercise.

## **Group Exercises, Activities, and Discussions**

### **Poetry Exercise**

*Submitted by John Killermeier, SUNY Plattsburg*

Divide the class into groups of 4 or more and assign each group to read a feminist poem. Once they have read the poem have them carry out one of the following activities. (It works best if each group chooses different activities.)

1. Prepare a performance of the poem for the class.
2. Draw your emotional responses to the poem. Do not illustrate the poem, convey your feelings. After doing your individual drawing gather with the others in your group and share all the drawings. Decide how you want to present your group work to the class.
3. As a group, create a human sculpture, expressing your response to the poem. You can use anything in this room or anything you can find within an allotted time. Then you will present your sculpture to the other groups, including some of the process, thinking, and feelings that went into making it.
4. Write a poem about the poem. Your poem will probably express both the meaning of the poem for you and your attitude towards it. After writing your individual poems, join the others in your group and share your poems. Decide how you want to present what went on in your group to the other groups.
5. As a group plan how would you turn the poem into a music video? What type of music would you use? How would you want to use the poem as a performance? What special effects would you want to use? And so on. Decide how you want to present your plan to the other groups.
6. Write a headline for the poem. This should describe the poem and what makes it newsworthy. After writing your individual headlines, join the others in your group and share your headlines. Prepare for a presentation before the class.

### **Social Privilege**

*Submitted by Christy Halbert of Western Kentucky University*

Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5, and for each group give them a sheet of paper with a social privilege written at the top. Have them brainstorm for privileges these groups have. After five minutes have the groups switch social privilege sheets with the other groups. Do this until every group has received every socially privileged group for five minutes. Examples of privileged groups include: White privilege, male privilege, heterosexual privilege, “able body” privilege, thin/ “attractive” privilege, and upper class privilege.

## **Group Discussion Guide**

*Source is unknown*

When dividing students into groups, assign each group member to a title that gives them certain responsibilities..

Connector: Offers connections between specific aspects of the readings and other readings, courses, or experiences. Describes 5 connections.

Artist: Offers a visual representation (drawing, collage, etc.) of a general theme derived from the reading or of a particularly significant aspect of the reading.

Discussion Director: Offers group questions/prompts to facilitate discussion of the assigned readings. Lists 5 questions of moderate length.

Passage Master: Picks specific passages to which to direct the group for discussion. They should provide page citation and paragraph number, a reason for choosing each passage (4-5 passages).

Summarizer: Sums up the main points presented in the readings. Makes a list of key points from each reading.

## **Cultural Diversity Awareness: Stereotypes and Generalizations**

*Submitted by Farrah Ferriell, Western Kentucky University*

Make cloth or paper headbands that students can easily tie around their heads. On each headband write in bold black ink a social or cultural identity. Cover the identities so students cannot see their own identity. Use Velcro and a second piece of cloth to cover the writing. Have the students help remove each other's cover piece from their headbands. Students should be able to see what is written on their peers' foreheads. Have students volunteer to come before the class and stand so everyone can see what is written on their headband. The student's goal is to guess what is written on their head. The class can give them non-verbal gestures and short verbal clues to get them to guess who they are. There are two rules: 1. Students cannot use a synonym as a clue. 2. They cannot tell students what is written on their head or the exercise will not work.

Have several students volunteer. This activity is usually very active, and students respond well. The class will have to rely on stereotypes and generalizations to give the clues. The point is to discuss how we all come into situations with preconceived notions and we all carry judgment towards others. Also, the point should be made that our society tends to compartmentalize everyone so people can be identified. Discuss how cultural and social groups are easier to identify than others, and explore how that is so or not so. Here are some social/cultural identity ideas to get you started. This list could be extended:

1. Black male
2. Black female
3. Welfare mother with 4 kids

4. Lesbian
5. Gay male
6. middle class person
7. lower class person
8. homeless person
9. black youth
10. politician

## **Social Identity**

*Submitted by Deborah Louis of UMBC*

This exercise is an in-class group discussion that explores our identities and misconceptions about our identities.

Starting with a discussion about how we all have multiple identities (woman, mom, teacher, Muslim, Hispanic, democrat, lesbian, etc.), have students choose ONE of their own identities that they feel is misperceived by those who don't share it (this way they are talking from their own experience, and they will select one they don't mind talking about). Then group the students into three's or four's and allot time for each to come up with one thing they would like to NEVER hear said about their identity group every again. Ideally, you could give each group poster board and a marker to write down their offending statements. Otherwise, have them write down their statements on one sheet of paper. Students should be directed to help each other come up with the "worst" or "most angering" statement in the small groups, and then present these, group by group, to the class as a whole at the end of the allotted time.

## **Other Exercises and Activities**

### **Body, Image, and Oppression**

*Submitted by Christy Halbert, Western Kentucky University*

Create a continuum on the board, and at the left end write "not severe" and at the other end write "severe." Ask students to call out ways that women's bodies are controlled, manipulated, and changed to meet standards of beauty and body social expectations. Ask the students where on the continuum the practice belongs. For example, students will call out genital mutilation and probably place it near "severe", but someone should call out "shaving legs", which may be seen as less severe.

### **Media and Popular Culture: Images of Feminism**

*Submitted by Christy Halbert, Western Kentucky University*

Create a blank continuum on the board, and on the far left end write "Pro-feminist" and at the other end write, "Anti-feminist". Have students brainstorm and call out media and pop culture representations of women. Have them decide where on the continuum the

idea belongs. Examples include: Oprah's talk show, Jerry Springer's talk show, *Ms. Magazine*, *Playboy*, Power Puff Girls (cartoon), Southpark (cartoon), and movies like *Erin Brockovich* and James Bond flicks.

## **Gender, Body, and Media Representations**

*Submitted by Christy Halbert of Western Kentucky University*

Bring in muscle magazines that have images of both women and men. Ask the students to look through the magazines and take notice of the poses that men and women take. Ask a group of women in the class to stand up and pose as men do in the magazine, and ask a group of men in the class to stand up and pose as women do in the magazine. After they have observed their classmates poses, ask them how the poses made them feel and point out the differences.

# PROJECTS

## Semester Projects

### **Political Platform**

*Submitted by Jane Olmsted, Western Kentucky University*

Divide your class into groups and give them the following instructions:

You are assigned to develop a political platform that will change the lives of women. A political platform can be whatever you like, including: a program that will educate women about violence, health care, or sex for example; an organization that will offer women a social service that is beneficial to their lives; a campaign for a female presidential candidate; or create a fictive strike that provokes positive results for women. The possibilities are vast! Once you've created your political platform, work as a group to prepare a professional presentation for the class. This presentation should be designed as if you really created your platform. For example, if you design a program that will educate college students about rapes on campus come to class as if you are actually presenting a workshop as professional educators.

### **Websites**

*Submitted by Farrah Ferriell of Western Kentucky University*

Have students create a website about feminism or a feminist issue as a group semester project. Have them view the website [blackpeopleloveus.com](http://blackpeopleloveus.com), which is a critical yet amusing look at how racism exists and works in our society, especially racism.

## **Semester Papers: Panel Presentations**

*Submitted by Molly Kerby*

Assign students to write a semester research paper, and spice it up a bit by having the students present their papers in topic panels.

## **Interview/Fieldwork Projects**

### **Three Generations**

*Submitted by Christine Smith*

1. Assign your students to interview women from three different generations (they may interview women 10 years apart) about a theme they wish to address (sexuality, body, work, family, etc).
2. Assign them to write a 4-5 page report about the interview results. They can write their report in the form of an analytical essay, poetry, creative essay, or short story.
3. Have the class act as editors to critique each other's work and combine their essays to create a zine.
4. If the class is willing, have each student donate a dollar or two to have the zines copied for each individual in class.

### **Interview An Older Woman**

*Submitted by Kathleen Waits, University of Tulsa*

Give the following instructions to your students:

Interview a woman who is 50 or older. She should be someone who you think will be reasonably honest with you and will take time to talk to you. It can be a family member. The interview may be conducted over the phone, although you'll get more information from an in-person interview.

Ask the interviewee about gender roles from her childhood and adulthood, how she felt about them at the time, and how she feels about them now. Explore not only family issues, but school, community, religious, and other issues. What were expected gender roles and behaviors for boys/men/girls/women? Remember to get as many specific details as you can.

Ask her about issues that are of interest to feminists. Possible areas to explore might include: reproductive freedom (birth control and abortion), education and athletics, child

care (maternity leave, men's/father's involvement and daycare), women working outside the home, employment discrimination, women's economic status and independence, sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape, and men's roles. You do not have to explore all these issues and feel free to go beyond this list.

What changes of gender roles does she perceive as having occurred during her lifetime? How does she feel—good, bad, mixed—about those changes?

Write a report, 3-5 double spaced pages, about the interview. Report both on what the interviewee said and on your reaction to what she said. What did you learn from talking to her? What, if anything, surprised you? Did her experiences parallel the course readings/class discussions?

### **Interview a Feminist**

*Submitted by Kathleen Waits, University of Tulsa*

Give students the following instructions:

Interview a person of any age or gender who self-identifies as a feminist. The interviewee cannot be another student taking this class this semester. Ask the interviewee the questions such as the following: How does she/he define feminism? How long has she/he embraced feminism? Were there particular events in her/his life that led her/him to feminism? What does she/he enjoy or not enjoy about being feminist? Has being identified as a feminist caused her/him problems? Has she/he found feminism and feminists to be "fun"? Is she/he "out" to the world as a feminist? To what extent? Why/Why not?

Think about what kind of feminist this person is. Look at the various categories of feminists (liberal, radical, etc.) the textbook discusses. Does the interviewee clearly fit into one of these categories? Why? Why not? How do you feel about this person's feminism?

Write a report, 3-5 double-spaced pages, about the interview. Report both on what the interviewee said and on your analysis and reaction to what she/he said. In addition to discussing the questions above, incorporate other course material as you see fit. For instance, what might bell hooks or Allan Johnson say about this person's feminism?

# OTHER PROJECTS

## **Acting Outside Your Gender**

*Submitted by Kathleen Waits, University of Tulsa*

Gloria Steinem has written *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. Do an activity that is somehow “outrageous” in terms of gender on that you expect might lead to “gender policing.” (That is, people expressing to you—verbally or through their actions—that they considered your activity gender inappropriate).

Write a brief (500 words) report, addressing the following questions. In addition, everyone will report on his or her acts before the class for 5 minutes. This project is divided into three parts:

1. Pre act: What is your outrageous act? What stereotype are you challenging? What is the setting of the act, and who is your audience? What are your expectations? How do you feel, and what do you learn about yourself as you plan the act?
2. Act: Describe the act, reactions of the audience, and your feelings.
3. Post act: Did you learn anything from your own reactions and feelings of those of the audience after you completed the act? What did you learn about yourself, others, and gender stereotyping?

The action must be something new to you, and must be performed this semester (you cannot report on previous experiences and acts). It should not be an act that will harm others or yourself.

## **Pro-Woman Activity**

*Submitted by Kathleen Waits, University of Tulsa*

Think about a social or personal problem related to gender that you would like to see changed. Then think about something you can do to effectuate some change on this issue. Your actions must be new to you and the activity must be “pro-woman.” It could be something that helps women collectively, or it can be more personal. Don’t hesitate to think of “pro-woman” broadly, activities that fight racism, homophobia, ageism, etc. can qualify as pro-woman.

You are free to engage other people outside of class in your activity and you are free to tell them that you’re doing this for class. You must truly believe in the “righteousness” of the activity you are conducting.

If you work in a group, be sure to use the talents of each group member effectively. One group member may be a good writer, another may be good at convincing others to take actions, etc.

Write a 500 word report based on the following questions. There are three parts to this project:

1. Pre act: What is your pro-woman act? Why does the problem addressed concern you? What do you plan to do? Why do you think your actions will help? What are your expectations? How did you feel, and what did you learn about yourself as you planned the act?
2. Act: Describe the act. Your responses? Feelings?
3. Post act: Did you learn anything about the value of pro-woman acts? Are you encouraged or discouraged? If you acted in a group, how did that go?

# REFERENCES and PEDAGOGY RESEARCH TOOLS

## *WOMEN'S STUDIES: Departmental Research Guide*

Western Kentucky University

This research guide relays some basic information on library and information resources pertaining to the concerns of this department, as provided by University Libraries and/or sites on the World Wide Web.

### 1. **Main Library of Congress Subject Divisions and Call Number Ranges**

HQ: family, marriage, women, Feminism

HN: social history and condition

PS: literature, women's writing, and feminist literature

### 2. **Indexing/Abstracting/Full-Text Databases (to find journal and magazine articles)**

MLA (Modern Languages Association): A WWW-based database available through FirstSearch which exhaustively indexes all literature of the field of Literature, Languages, Linguistics, and Folklore, including feminism and feminist topics, and the use of women in literature

ArticleFirst: This all-subject FirstSearch-based database indexes almost 13,000 journals and magazines from 1990 onward, including some 90% of the ones University Libraries carries in hardcopy.

Sociological Abstracts: This abstract only database in EBSCOHost is an excellent resource for finding articles in women's studies.

### **Full-Text Databases**

Sociological Collection and the Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection: These full text databases in EBSCOHost are both excellent places for a student to look for materials on women's studies.

Academic Search Premier and MasterFILE Premier: These two all-subject WWW-based services (part of the EBSCOHost system) feature indexing and abstracting of many journals and magazines WKU Libraries receives in hardcopy, plus a large selection of articles in full-text. Both databases have a somewhat limited range of materials concerning women's studies or feminism, but they do have some full-text journals in the areas which are scholarly and useful for the undergraduate researcher.

### 3. Monographic and Other Materials (in Helm Library, unless specifically noted)

The following are recommended and found in the reference section:

*American Women's History*: HQ 1115 .W4 1994  
*Anthologies By and About Women*: HQ1111 .C35 1998  
*Encyclopedia of Birth Control*: HQ 766 .E52 2001  
*Encyclopedia of American Women and Religion*: BL 2525 .B45 1998  
*Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion*: BL 458 .E53 1999  
*Encyclopedia of Women's Associations World Wide*: HQ 1883 .E53 1993  
*Encyclopedia of Women's History in America*: HQ 1410 .C85 2000  
*From the Goddess to the Glass Ceiling, A Dictionary of Feminism*: HQ 1115 .L37 1996  
*From Suffrage to the Senate, An Encyclopedia of Women in Politics*: HQ 1236 .5 232 1991  
*Kentucky Women*: HQ 1458 .K4 D68 1997  
*The Nature of Women, An Encyclopedia and Guide to Literature*: HQ 1115 .W37  
*The Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women*: HQ 115 R69 2000  
*Women in World History*: HA 1115 .W6 1999  
*Women's Sourcebook*: HQ 1101 .I 64 1995  
*Women of Strength*: HQ 1123 .B35 1996  
*Women's Roles in Ancient Civilization*: HA 1127 .W654 1999

#### **Feminism**

*Dictionary of Feminist Theory*: HQ 1115 .H86 1995  
*A Feminist Dictionary*: HQ 1115 .K73 1991  
*Encyclopedia of Feminism*: HQ 1115 .B65 1996  
*Historical Dictionary of Feminism*: HQ 1115 .B65 1996  
*Routledge Critical Dictionary of Feminism*: HQ 115 .R68 2000

#### **Women's Studies**

*Directory of Women's Studies Programs and Library Resources*: HQ 1181 .v5 D57 1990  
*Women's Studies Encyclopedia*: HQ 1115 .W645 1989

#### **Women's Writing**

*Women Writers in the United States*: PS 147 .D38 1996  
*Women's Writing in the United States*: PS 147 .O94 1995

### 4. Women's Studies Programs and Faculty

Women's Studies Program, Western Kentucky University  
<http://www.wku.edu/womensstudies>

Women's Studies Programs, Departments and Research Centers (Women's Studies World Wide)

<http://www-unix.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/programs.html>

Artemis Guide to Women's Studies in the U.S.

<http://users.rcn.com/kater.interport/>

## **5. Related Professional Societies/Organizations with Web Pages**

American Association of University Women & American Association of Women Education Foundation

[www.aauw.org/index.html](http://www.aauw.org/index.html)

American Association for Women in Community Colleges

[www.pc.maricopa.edu/aawcc](http://www.pc.maricopa.edu/aawcc)

Center for American Women and Politics

[www.rci.rutgers.edu](http://www.rci.rutgers.edu)

Center for Women's Studies (CWPS)

[www.centerwomenpolicy.org](http://www.centerwomenpolicy.org)

Feminist Majority Foundation

[www.feminist.org](http://www.feminist.org)

Foundation for Women's Resources

[www.womensresources.org](http://www.womensresources.org)

Global Fund for Women

[www.globalfundforwomen.org](http://www.globalfundforwomen.org)

National Association for Women in Education

[www.nawe.org](http://www.nawe.org)

National Network for Women Readers

[www.acenet.edu](http://www.acenet.edu)

National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)

[www.nwsa.org](http://www.nwsa.org)

Women's College Coalition (WCC)

[www.womenscollege.org](http://www.womenscollege.org)

Women's Funding Network (WFN)

[www.wfnet.org](http://www.wfnet.org)

Women of the World  
[www.wownow.org](http://www.wownow.org)

## 6. Women's Studies Websites

### Feminism

The English Server-Feminism and Women's Studies  
<http://eserver.org/feminism/>

Feminist.com  
[www.feminist.com](http://www.feminist.com)

Feminist Theory Website  
<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/>

Internet Guide for the Feminist Activist  
<http://www.igc.apc.org/women/feminist.html>

### Women's Studies

Women's Studies Database  
<http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/WomensStudies/>

Women's Studies Information Sources  
<http://www.york.ac.uk/services/library/subjects/womenint.htm>

Women's Studies/Women's Resource Sites  
[http://libraries/mit.edu/humanities/WomensStudies/wscd.html](http://libraries.mit.edu/humanities/WomensStudies/wscd.html)

Women's Studies Resources  
<http://bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/wstudies/>

Academic Info: Women's Studies  
<http://www.academicinfo.net/women.html>

Women's Studies Programs and Campus Women's Centers in the US  
<http://creativefolk.com/directories.html>

Women's Studies E-Sources on the Web  
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/women/cyber/html>

Women's Resource Project  
<http://metalab.unc.edu/cheryb/women/wresources.html>

Women of Color Web

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/grhf/WoC/>

### **Gender and Sexuality Sites**

COLAGE: Children of Lesbian and Gays Everywhere

<http://www.colage.org/>

Gay/Lesbian Politics and Law:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~gtbtpol>

Gender and Sexuality

<http://eserver.org/gender/default.html>

International Gender Studies Resources

<http://globtrotter.berkeley.edu/GlobalGender/>

Lesbian.org

[www.lesbian.org](http://www.lesbian.org)

Partners Task Force for Gay and Lesbian Couples

<http://www.buddybuddy.com/toc.html>

Queer Resources Directory

[www.qrd.org](http://www.qrd.org)

The Rainbow Page

[www.mtholyoke.edu/~maclayto/rainbow.html](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~maclayto/rainbow.html)

## **7. Feminist Pedagogy**

*Getting Smart : Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern*/Lather: HQ 1190 .L38 1991

*Teaching introduction to women's studies : expectations and strategies*/Winkler and Dipalma: HQ 1181 U5 T43 1999

*Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom* / Bell Hooks: LC196 H66 1994

*Pedagogy of the oppressed* / Paulo Freire ; translated by Myra Bergman Ramos: LB880 .F73 P4313 2000

### **Pedagogy Bibliography Links**

Women's Studies Database:

<http://www.mith2.umd.edu/WomensStudies/Development+Support/pedagogy-biblio.html>

Feminist Pedagogy and Research Methods:

<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~hcohen/Theory/pedres.html>

Laurie Finke, Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio: <http://enhanced-learning.org/prox/finkebib.htm>

Feminist Pedagogy: <http://pers-www.wlv.ac.uk/~le1810/femped.htm>

Women's Studies and Women's Issues Internet Resources (WMST L):  
<http://research.umbc.edu/~Korenman/wmst/.html>

NAU Women's Studies Program:

<http://www.nau.edu/~wst/access/fped/fpedsub.html>

Core Lists in Women's Studies:

<http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/core/coremain.htm>

Southern Poverty Law Center/ Teaching Tolerance:

[www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org)

Ohio State University Women's Studies Program:

<http://womens-studies.ohio-state.edu/pedagogy/default.html>