

**SP. 401 – Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies
Essay Assignment #2**

Due: One day after Ses #16 over email to the professor (as a Word, PDF or RTF file).

Length: 5-7 pages, typed, double-spaced (Times, New Roman, 12pt.)

Choose **ONE** of the following topics and write a **5-7 page essay** in response to it. You will need to draw examples from the texts we have read to support your points; use parenthetical citations to document the sources you use. Be sure that you are introducing your quotes adequately, creating smooth transitions between your own writing and that of your sources. Your essay should include a clear **thesis statement** in which you make an argument in answer to the question you choose.

Note: This essay does not have a draft/revision formal process. However, there is the option of revising this essay and resubmitting it by the last day of class.

1. Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* and Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper* are widely considered classic texts of American feminism. Compare these two texts in terms of: their ability to reflect upon life experience, their engagement with ideologies of domesticity, their persuasive and literary power, and their visions of individual and social change. In the contemporary era, do either or both of these texts continue to have personal and political relevance? If “yes”, in what way? If “no”, why not?
2. Analyze the gender socialization of a person in your age range that you know well, using the following approach. First, describe this individual’s future vision of life 15 years from now. Some issues to include: future occupation/profession, personal life, core values. In other words, what does this person imagine as a future occupation? Does this individual see herself or himself living alone, with a spouse/partner, having a child (ren)? What values (moral, social, religious) are most important in this person’s life? Your analysis will explain the origins of this individual’s future vision in past gender socialization: e.g., influences of parents and other significant adults, socialization “props” (e.g. books, toys, games), schooling, influence of peers, etc. Draw explicitly upon at least FOUR course readings that address socialization (e.g., Friedan, Lorber, Thorne, Kimmel, Richardson). Please note that your socialization analysis may fit some patterns described in the readings, and contradict others. Also keep in mind that “socialization” cannot be reduced to “gender socialization” and that gender socialization interacts with ethnicity, race and class. **If you choose to write about yourself, use a pseudonym!**