

SP.401 – Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies
Essay Assignment #3

Date Due: Thursday, May 12

Length: 5-7 pages, or approximately 1500-1800 words

Using examples from at least three different assigned readings (and/or films shown in class), choose **ONE** of the following topics and write a **5-7page 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.

1. What issues do women face in the workplace? How does the cultural association of women with motherhood impact their relationship to employment? Answer this in terms of hiring practices, job retention/promotion, and women’s decisions about childcare.
2. What is the cultural message for girls and women about sex and sexuality? How is it different for boys and men? How does this relate to the notion of “consent” and why does it foster a climate conducive to violence against women?
3. What are some problems associated with cultural biases about women and their bodies? How does sexism, racism, religious belief, and/or homophobia filter our view and understanding of the female body? Consider the implications of these biases for medical approaches to disability, illness, and reproductive health.
4. What is the state of feminism today? What access to power do women have? What concerns do Harriet Woods and Ellen Neuborne raise about the gains women have made? How do global issues impact feminism in the 21st century? Put your argument in context of the history of the women’s movement as discussed by Taylor, Whitter, & Fabrizio Pelak.