

WGS. 101 INTRO TO WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES FALL 2014
SESSION #14- IN-CLASS WRITING

Name _____

WRITE FOR FIVE MINUTES

MOVING BEYOND GENDER: OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

“It is only by undercutting the gender system of legal statuses, bureaucratic categories, and official and private allocation of tasks and roles that gender equality can be permanently achieved.”- Judith Lorber, *Breaking the Bowls*

“Hence legal protection for people whose cultural and physical genitals do not match is needed during the current transition to a more gender-diverse world. One easy step would be to eliminate the category of "gender" from official documents, such as driver's licenses and passports. Surely attributes both more visible (such as height, build and eye color) and less visible (fingerprints and genetic profiles) would be more expedient.”- Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes Revisited”

To promote social equality for people of all genders, some gender theorists--such as Judith Lorber and Anne Fausto-Sterling--advocate de-gendering society, that is, removing gender categories from all official documents and forms of identification. If this change were to occur, gender classifications would no longer appear on such official documents as birth certificates, drivers' licenses, passports, Social Security applications, immigration and naturalization documents, banking, loan and credit applications, college and employment applications and census forms.

For college admissions (e.g., at MIT) to be as gender-blind as possible, that would probably mean steps such as the following:

- 1) identifying applicants by first initial rather than first name (“A.Sanchez”)
- 2) instructing applicants to remove gender-identifiers in filling out information (e.g., “Varsity Soccer”, rather than “Boys’ Varsity Soccer”)
- 3) instructing recommenders to remove all references to gender (e.g., this might require avoiding the use of “Mr.” or “Ms.” and using gender-neutral pronouns such as “per” or “ze”).
- 4) requesting that applicants not send photos of themselves.

How do you respond to this idea? What are the implications of this change?

- 5) blocking out first names on transcripts or other official documents that reveal gender.

Lorber, Judith. *Breaking the Bowls: Degendering and Feminist Change*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2005. © W. W. Norton & Company. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <http://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. “The Five Sexes Revisited.” *The Sciences* 40, no. 4 (2000): 18-23. © The New York Academy of Sciences. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <http://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/>.

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