Reading Guide – Culture Wars II: Pornography, Representation, and Sexual Harassment/Violence

This week we close out our unit on the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s. Our focus this week is on a series of “sex scandals,” and battles over language, representation, and sexual harassment and violence. As you read this week, try to connect 1990s battles over gender and sexuality to our own historical moment two decades into the twenty-first century. What has changed? What hasn’t? Which debates remain unsolved?

Assigned Materials


Questions to Consider

The readings for this week can be grouped into three main themes: Public debates over Sexual Harassment (Lakoff, Meritor v Vinson, and the optional Lefkovitz article and NPR podcast); Battles over pornography and censorship (Duggan and Dworking); and The emergence of a “third wave” of feminism (Bordo, Walker, and Bitch Magazine). As you read, try to make connections between these themes, and also between this week’s readings and earlier units of the class.