

Assignments | WST383

DISCUSSION BOARD

Discussion board posts are your first responses to a reading or film, designed to help you develop ideas about your reading and share them with the class. You will receive full credit for your **careful, thorough, clear, well-written participation**, whether or not your answers about readings are “correct.” Your audience is your classmates and professor. A discussion board **might ask you to:**

- 1) express your personal responses to the work,
- 2) attempt to summarize main points of your reading or media viewing,
- 3) state what you believe the main points are that the work is trying to make,
- 4) explain your own ideas about it, and
- 5) relate what you have read to your personal life in some way.

TEST

The take-home test consists of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions. It requires knowledge, synthesis, application, and interpretation of course material. The essay questions require a thesis statement and traditional essay structure, for the purpose of clarity.

RESPONSE PAPERS

Critical Reflections

ASSIGNMENT

You will write two (2) response papers, choosing from any of the three (3) units in the course. For each paper, you write an engaging essay that responds to the unit and provides critical reflection. Most of our class readings offer critical perspectives on topics that can inspire your own original critical thought as you reflect on your own life.

OPTIONS (Choose 2):

Unit 1: “Whose Body Is It, Anyway?” | Unit 2: “Cultural History & Perspectives” | Unit 3: Bodies & Perspectives

REQUIREMENTS

- + Maximum of 3 pages, typed + Use the cover sheet template provided.
 - + Upload to Blackboard and submit hard copy in class for markups.
 - + Include a personal narrative that illuminates the unit’s topic and allows you to reflect on key class readings/media of your choice from that unit.
 - + Incorporate the readings/media of your choice from the unit to show your understanding of them.
 - + Adopt a critical perspective (i.e., perspective that questions the legitimacy of something, such as a belief, attitude, practice, etc.)-- see the class PowerPoint on Critical Writing: www.julietdavis.com/criticalwriting.pptx.
 - + Express your ideas with originality, coherency, complexity, and clarity.
- Develop your own insights rather than repeating those you have heard in class.
- + Reflect understanding of the key readings you chose (whether or not you support or refute them).
 - + Write for a college-educated audience that has not read or viewed the material in the same depth you have.

YOUR IDEAS

Your opinions per se will not be graded. We often have papers with opposing ideas earning equally high grades. There are no “right” or “wrong” ideas or experiences relating to course material. At the same time, the writing must reflect **understanding** of feminist perspectives, which means if you disagree with a particular lesson or feminist position you’ve learned, you need to be able to articulate what that perspective is and then carefully refute it, presenting clear support of your point of view.

While the autobiographical parts of your essay will be written in first-person, only insert yourself when your personal experience is relevant to the discussion. Avoid perfunctory use of first person (for example, “The main idea for my paper is . . .” or unnecessary use of “I think”).



RESPONSE PAPER SUBMISSION | Cover Sheet

Print out this cover sheet and staple it on the top of your submission.

YOUR NAME: _____ Class: _____ Days/Time: _____

UNIT # _____ PAPER TITLE: _____ Submission Date: _____

Criteria	PTS	Above Average	Average/Satisfactory	Below Average
Auto-ethnography	10	The paper includes an engaging narrative of personal experience that illuminates the topic and adds depth to the analysis.	The paper includes a narrative of personal experience that is meaningfully related to the topic.	The narrative of personal experience is missing or needs to be more meaningfully related to the topic.
Coherency & Accuracy	10	The paper reflects accurate, clearly articulated knowledge of key readings/media viewed in class. Descriptions and summaries are clear, thorough, and carefully worded. The paper is well structured and flows coherently.	The paper reflects foundational knowledge of the readings/media viewed in class. Descriptions and summaries are fairly clear. The paper is fairly well structured and coherent.	The paper may be difficult to follow and/or may reflect misunderstandings about the readings/media and what the authors are communicating. Descriptions/summaries may not be not entirely clear or complete.
Critical Perspective & Complexity	10	The paper adopts a clear critical perspective. Ideas are developed, compared, evaluated, and supported. The ideas push the dialogue far outside of the expected realm, reflecting originality and complexity that would be thought-provoking to a larger audience (beyond the classroom).	The paper adopts a clear critical perspective and demonstrates fairly strong development, complexity, and original thinking. The ideas would be thought-provoking to a larger audience (beyond the classroom).	The paper is largely limited to simple summaries; critical perspectives need to be substantially more detailed and development. More original thinking, and/or complexity is needed.
Language, Style, Grammar	10	The paper uses advanced rhetoric, analysis, and vocabulary for the course level. Grammar and style communicate clearly and vividly.	The paper uses college-level rhetoric, analysis, and vocabulary, appropriate for the course level. Grammar and style are solid.	The rhetoric, analysis, and/or vocabulary seem to be simplistic. Grammar and/or style errors hinder the communication of ideas.
Citations	10	References to in-class texts/media are meaningfully included to illuminate the topic. These resources are clearly cited using either journalistic attribution or formal MLA, APA, or CMS style.	Citations of text/media are sparse but adequate and clearly cited using either journalistic attribution or formal MLA, APA, or CMS style.	Citations of text/media are missing, sparse, and/or difficult to follow.
TOTAL	50			
<p>Submission Requirements Checklist (-1 point for missing either of the first two)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> submitted in hard copy and on Blackboard with this cover page on top <input type="checkbox"/> stapled or binder clipped (no paper clips, loose-leaf, dog-ears, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> The paper is backed up on a cloud server (e.g., Dropbox; MS OneDrive, or Google Docs) as well as your hard drive. <input type="checkbox"/> The paper includes the word "REVISION" across the top if it is a revision. 				

NOTES:

Final Group Project | Formal Paper+Oral Presentation

ASSIGNMENT

(Use cover sheet template designed for final project.) Individually, or in a group of two or three, create a field experience related to any topic of interest related to women’s studies. This field experience might be a “street” experience, an event, an interview, a conference, a club, etc. (see sample ideas below). Then, write a paper **(approximately 6-10 pages in length)** that describes and analyzes the field experience, shows informed personal perspective, and reports on research from **at least three sources outside the class** (MLA, APA or CMS documentation is required for citations). Your paper should contain an **arguable, thought-provoking, well-reasoned thesis statement that contains a critical perspective**. Create an **oral presentation** of your project, including some sort of **visual elements** you create (e.g., PowerPoint, video, etc.). Write for a college-educated audience that has not read or viewed the material in the same depth you have. Incorporate **critical perspectives**, as you have in your response papers. You will need **IRB approval if you are conducting research involving human subjects** (see [U.T.’s IRB info](#) and the IRB definition of “research”). This includes interviews with subjects.

WRITING STRATEGY

There is no single “right” strategy for writing the paper. Some students have broken it down into three sections (first-person experience, third-person formal research, and conclusions), while others combine first-person point of view with formal research throughout. As with the essay responses, we are looking for thought-provoking, insightful, complex ideas written with clarity and organization. However, beyond those requirements, the final project is a more thorough, thoughtful, formal project that includes substantial outside research, properly documented.

Sample Topics From Past Students (You can Use One Or Come Up with Your Own)

Sample Topic	Sample Research Ideas	Field Experience Idea
Nudism	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Visit a nudist resort and write about your experience
Sexual Orientation and/or Practices	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Seek an experience that exposes you to people whose sexual orientations and/or practices locate them outside of the mainstream and write about that experience, as well as your own sexual orientation/practices.
Gender Identity	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Seek an experience that exposes you to people whose gender identity locates them outside of the mainstream, and write about that experience, as well as your own gender identity. For example, interview someone transgendered and/or a doctor who performs sex reassignment surgery.
Veiling	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Visit a mosque and/or interview someone who covers in an Islamic tradition, and write about your experience, as well as your own clothing practices.
Police Women	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Ride along with a female police officer; interview her about how gender affects her job and how the physical nature of her job becomes part of her identity.
Sex Workers	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Seek an experience that exposes you to sex workers (people who make a living through sexual services), and write about that experience
Domestic Violence	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Visit a battered women’s shelter, interview subjects, write about personal experiences, set up an info table in Vaughn Center, etc.
Women Doctors	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Shadow a female doctor; interview her about how gender affects her job.
Cosmetic Surgery	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Interview doctor(s) and/or subject(s) and offer your own perspectives
Life Online	Theory, Practices, Representations	Join online forum or experiment in a MMORPG and recount your experience.
Rape	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Visit a rape crisis center, interview someone who has been date-raped, and/or set up an info table in Vaughn Center. Write about your experiences, etc.
Female Artist/Filmmaker	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Work with a female artist/filmmaker; pursue a creative project; recount the experience.
Blogging/Publishing	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Create your own blog or publication on a topic relating to the course.
Art / Performance	History, Theory, Practices, Representations	Visit artwork or performance related to course subject matter—or create your own artwork or performance.
Your Own Topic		

SUGGESTED PROMPTS & PROCESS

1. *Brainstorm, Freewrite*

You might want to brainstorm some of the beliefs, attitudes, practices, and personal history that have formed your understanding of gender and sexuality. Or you might start listing burning questions you have about gender and culture. Think about the attitudes about women, gender, and sexuality that you grew up with, for example. Who or what influenced your own beliefs, attitudes, and practices most? How would you describe your own attitudes and experiences? What are some of the problems you see for your generation and social group of women? What are some of the benefits you see? What problems would you like to see solved? Then, consider what type of field experience would help you learn about this topic and which articles/media seem to be most relevant to your brainstorming.

For example, if you are most concerned with representation of women, you might start by looking for thought-provoking images of interest related to themes of the course. Freewrite about how you react to these images personally. Then brainstorm what you see (description), as well as ways the image might be interpreted based on that evidence. Who is the intended audience? What messages are being communicated and how? What theories come to mind that you might apply?

2. *Get Inspired*

Read outside resources that inspire you. These might include bloggers, researchers, news reporters, nonfiction writers, etc. You might be inspired by other women's stories at <http://imaginingourselves.imow.org/pb/Welcome.aspx>. Everyone has original, thought-provoking perspectives to share, just by virtue of being individuals with unique life experiences. Freewrite about these experiences.

3. *Research*

Research peer-reviewed sources (e.g., using Google Scholar and our online library). Explore a wide range of perspectives.

4. *Get a Main Idea and Organize Others*

Write possible main ideas for your paper (typically an arguable thesis statement). Then, jot down points about why you believe your main idea is true. Those can be supporting points of your paper that you explore, research, and detail. Collect research, personal narratives, explanations, descriptions, definitions, logic, statistics, comparisons, etc., under each main point so that you might use them for support.

5. *Draft and Revise*

A common misconception is that a first or second draft of a paper is a final draft. A paper in this stage is not ready to submit for a grade and needs about 80% more time devoted to it in revisions and edits (the "80-20 rule" is alive and well here). Plan for most of your time to be spent *after* you have your first draft. Reorganize ideas, rewrite sections that could be stronger, refine your writing style. As you're revising, take a look at the grading rubrics for this assignment to make sure you're meeting criteria.

6. *Final Edits*

Save the small stuff for last. If you have difficulty with grammar, style, and/or mechanics, visit the Saunders Writing Center to receive help. Allow yourself the necessary time during this phase. Proofreading is most effectively done with two people. Each of you has a copy of your essay, and one reads aloud to the other. Each time one of you catches an error, you correct it. When students read their papers aloud, they often hear all sorts of issues they would never see otherwise.

SOME WRITING RESOURCES

Juliet's Reading, Grammar & Style Resources

- Millennial Speak (.pdf)
- Grammar Tips (.pdf | videos)
- Style Tips (.pdf | videos)
- Visual Analysis Language Tips (.pdf)
- Juliet's Proofreading Marks (.pdf | video)

Juliet's Critical Reading and Writing Handouts

- Juliet's PPT on Critical Writing (PPT)
- Juliet's videos on writing Help (PPT | videos)
- Citing Outside Resources (video) | (OWL Lab)
- Review the handout "[How to Read Critically and Respond to Texts.](#)"



FINAL PROJECT | Grading Rubric

Criteria	PTS	Above Average	Average/Satisfactory	Below Average
Auto-ethnography	10	The paper includes an engaging narrative of personal experience that illuminates the topic and adds depth to the analysis.	The paper includes a narrative of personal experience that is meaningfully related to the topic.	The narrative of personal experience is missing or needs to be more meaningfully related to the topic.
Coherency & Accuracy	10	The paper reflects accurate, clearly articulated knowledge of the topic. The paper is well structured and flows coherently.	The paper reflects foundational knowledge of the topic. The paper is fairly well structured and coherent.	The paper may be difficult to follow and/or may reflect misunderstandings about the readings/media.
Critical Perspective & Complexity	10	The paper adopts a clear critical perspective. Ideas are developed, compared, evaluated, and supported. The ideas push the dialogue far outside of the expected realm, reflecting originality and complexity that would be thought-provoking to a larger audience (beyond the classroom).	The paper adopts a clear critical perspective and demonstrates fairly strong development, complexity, and original thinking. The ideas would be thought-provoking to a larger audience (beyond the classroom).	The paper is largely limited to simple summaries; critical perspectives need to be substantially more detailed and development. More original thinking, and/or complexity is needed.
Language, Style, Grammar	10	Grammar, language, and style are nearly flawless. The paper uses advanced rhetoric, analysis, and vocabulary for the course level.	Grammar, language, and style are satisfactory. The paper uses college-level rhetoric, analysis, and vocabulary.	The rhetoric, analysis, and/or vocabulary seem to be simplistic. Excessive grammar and/or style errors hinder the communication of ideas.
Research & Citations	10	Engaging research is used to effectively support the paper's perspectives. Sources are properly cited using MLA, APA, or CMS style.	Research is meaningfully incorporated. With some exceptions, sources are properly cited using MLA, APA, or CMS style.	Research/citations are missing, sparse, and/or in error.
TOTAL	50			
<p>Submission Requirements Checklist (-1 point for missing either of the first two)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> submitted in hard copy and on Blackboard with this cover page on top <input type="checkbox"/> stapled or binder clipped (no paper clips, loose-leaf, dog-ears, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> The paper is backed up on a cloud server (e.g., Dropbox; MS OneDrive, or Google Docs) as well as your hard drive. <input type="checkbox"/> The paper includes the word "REVISION" across the top if it is a revision. 				

NOTES:

Basic Writing Skill Rubric | Juliet Davis

Criteria	Excellent/Outstanding	Average	Below Average
Content	The paper demonstrates originality and complexity, exceptional understanding of subject matter, insightful critical analysis, highly effective rhetoric. The paper pushes dialogue beyond predictable fare and could be interesting to larger audiences.	The paper demonstrates strong understanding of subject matter, fairly insightful critical analysis, and some complexity in ideas and rhetoric. The paper is fairly predictable in its points, but solid.	The paper may reflect misconceptions about the subject matter, lack critical analysis in favor of overly simplistic summaries/descriptions, and/or be overly simplistic in its ideas and rhetoric.
Structure, Organization	The paper is strongly structured. For example, conventionally structured essays contain an engaging introduction and clear thesis statement. Each body paragraph presents a main idea that supports the thesis statement and is well supported by evidence/examples. The paper's conclusion is not merely redundant but reflects thoughtfully on the topic that has unfolded. Unconventionally structured essays utilize creative alternatives to advance a main idea, but the ideas can be clearly followed.	The paper is fairly well structured but shows some weaknesses. For example, the introduction and/or conclusion may be perfunctory rather than particularly engaging. A thesis statement is clear. Body paragraphs are fairly well organized and supported but perhaps could be more so. Unconventionally structured essays may appear to be a bit disorganized rather than easy to follow.	The paper needs structure. For example, there may be no clear thesis—or the thesis may be hard to find. Body paragraph(s) may not have clear main ideas or be strategically organized to advance the thesis statement. A conclusion may need more substantive ideas or may not be present. Unconventionally structured essays may be hard to follow.
Clarity, Coherency	Ideas are clearly developed and thoroughly explained. One idea flows eloquently to the next, with clear transitions as needed. The paper stays on topic.	Most ideas are clearly developed and thoroughly explained. Some could be more so. Ideas may be a bit disjointed or need transitions to eloquently flow.	More clarity and/or coherency is needed. For example, a substantial number of ideas need to be more clearly explained and/or need to flow much more clearly and smoothly into others. The paper may stray from topic.
Language, Style, Grammar, Mechanics, Spelling	The writing is flawless in its grammar, mechanics—and adept in its use of language and vocabulary. Language is precise, concise, vivid, engaging. Sentence structures are varied and eloquent.	The paper is fairly solid in language, grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Vocabulary may be average rather than particularly adept. Language may demonstrate some redundancy, unfounded generalizations, and/or vagueness. Sentence structures may be somewhat redundant and/or inellegant.	The paper reflects substantial need for improvement in style, grammar, mechanics, and/or spelling.
Format	MLA, APA, or CMS format is used. Outside resources (if assigned/referenced) are properly cited and effectively incorporated to advance the student's own ideas. See http://owl.english.purdue.edu .	MLA, APA, or CMS format is used. Outside resources (if assigned/referenced) are properly cited; however, they could be utilized more appropriately/effectively.	Errors in MLA format impede readability. Outside resources may not be properly cited and/or need to be incorporated into the text more effectively.

Basic Writing Skill Checklist

- MLA, APA, or CMS style format and documentation: see <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.
- Are outside resources (if any) properly cited and incorporated to support your ideas?

Content

- Does the paper reflect accurate knowledge of the readings/media/topic assigned, or do there seem to be misunderstandings about the subject matter?
- Does the paper demonstrate insightful critical analysis, or is it limited to simple summaries and obvious descriptions?
- Does the paper demonstrate college-level complexity in rhetoric, analysis, and language? Or are the language and ideas simplistic?
- Do these ideas push this dialogue outside of the expected realm? Would they be interesting to a larger audience? Or is this predictable fare?
- Does the paper reflect an understanding of the lessons featured in class?

Structure and Organization

- Is there a clear thesis statement or main idea that serves as central focus of the essay? (In conventional essays, the thesis statement appears at the end of the introduction.)
- Does each body paragraph have a clear main idea? (Usually, the first sentence of the paragraph contains it.)
- Is each idea supported (e.g., by evidence, examples, description)?
- Is there an appropriate introduction and conclusion?

Clarity and Coherency

- Are the ideas fully developed and explained, or are they vague or confusing?
- Are supporting points explained thoroughly, or is there important information missing?
- Does one idea flow to the next, or do the ideas seem disjointed?
- Did the paper stay on topic, or did it stray at points?

Language, Style, Grammar, Mechanics

- Have you used standard English, or do you find slang/vernacular that might not be appropriate? Are you utilizing sophisticated vocabulary when it could be effective?
- Have you used precise, careful language, or do you find hyperbole, connotative language, unfounded generalizations?
- Is your language vivid and specific or do you see words that might be vague or bland?
- Is your writing concise (economical), or do you need to edit/cut words? Have you checked your work for redundancy?
- Have you varied your sentence structure, or do you find that many sentences are similar? (Avoid redundant subject-verb beginnings to sentences.)
- Have you run spell-check? Have you checked your grammar? Proofread ALOUD, slowly?