

POLS 350: The Politics of Gender

Blogpost-style essay assignment guidelines

Your task is to write two short essays of not more than 1000 words each in a style that one might find on an academic or intellectual blog. That is, the essay should be written without a lot of technical language (or, at least, you define any terms that are not vernacular in English) and no jargon, in fairly short sentences with lots of paragraph breaks. There must be an engaging lead, and a clear message. Nonetheless, it should still reflect an intelligent comment on the difficult texts and ideas we are studying in class, and should aim to make them accessible to an educated but not specialist audience. Rather than only repeating lecture material or explaining texts (although doing that briefly, clearly, selectively, and accurately is a challenge in itself), it should also show the reader why ze should care about it: perhaps it ties in to some topical issue, or political problem, or trope of popular culture?

The assignment will be graded on the basis of accuracy in representing the class material, clarity in conveying complex ideas, and intellectual creativity in making it relevant or accessible to a wider audience.

Each blogpost must be submitted on paper: #1 is due Thursday November 20 by 1.50pm, and #2 is due December 2 (the last day of class) by 1.50pm.

You can write on *any* question raised by the course materials, referencing any topical issue or extra texts that are relevant. As the course progresses I'll suggest questions raised by the class that would make good fodder for blogposts.

Here are some examples of posts from the kind of blog I have in mind that I think are pretty good examples of this genre. (They vary in length, so don't take their length as a guide.)

1. Gordon Hull on privacy, feminism, and trolls (about the right length, updates an issue we've discussed):

<http://www.newappsblog.com/2014/08/feminism-privacy-actor-networks-and-the-jezebel-trolls.html#more>

2. Lisa Guenther on how to look at public space (longer, uses some quite technical philosophy to show how to connect the seemingly unconnected in a very practical way):

<http://www.newappsblog.com/2013/06/phenomenology-as-a-practice-of-liberation.html#more>

3. Catherine Clune-Taylor on the ethics of insisting that clients at sperm banks use donors "of the same race":

<http://impactethics.ca/2014/09/08/no-rainbow-families-and-the-problem-with-race-based-reproduction-policies/>

There is one example written by me, and one by 4th year student Madeline Smith on my website at <http://cressidaeyes.com/blog/>