

# WS 315 Feminist Analysis

Portland State University  
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## Course Description

This course asks you to engage in feminist praxis, applying theory to practice. You will put your theoretical knowledge to work constructing a position paper from a feminist perspective on a topic relevant to the course materials. This summer we will be examining the construction, function and complexity of motherhood. We will use our 7 weeks together to examine various women's experiences with motherhood across identities and social positioning as well as how the feminist discourse has evolved around this very important, and some might argue universal, issue. In this course we will explore how sexuality and gender identity can make motherhood compulsorily for some women and a very expensive and arduous process for others.

This course is writing intensive with a strong research component. We only meet online which requires frequent access to the internet. All students must have an D2L account and be familiar with online learning. We will regularly hold discussions on the internet, additional assigned readings will be posted online and ALL assignments must be turned in on D2L on their posted due date.

## Reading Materials

[Baby Love: Choosing Motherhood After a Lifetime of Ambivalence](#) by Rebecca Walker  
[The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued](#) by Ann Crittenden

Additional readings will be posted on D2L.

## Assignments

**1) Intellectual Journal 25 points:** You will submit a 500 word reading response/journal entry each week throughout the term. The first entry is due Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, and every Thursday thereafter. Entries must be submitted on-line through the D2L discussions tool by Thursdays at 11:59pm. Each entry should substantively engage with the readings and videos for that particular week with relevant references to readings and videos assigned for that week. Explore themes, analyses, frameworks, perspectives, etc. which will allow you to treat all the materials synthetically. Attention to the mechanics of good writing is a must- PROOF READ!!

**\*\*The point of this assignment is to show you have thought about the readings and to let me know that you have completed ALL the readings and watched all the videos- make sure this comes across in your journal entries.**

**2) Group Work 20 points:** You will work with a small group on a topical question within the following categories: 1) Motherhood and Class, 2) Motherhood and Race, 3) Motherhood and sexuality and 4) The "choice" of Motherhood.

Each topic has its own discussion forum for you all to join and engage in dialog and planning for your project- please select a topic and log into that discussion forum to begin your planning. You may choose to hold your group meetings online or meet in person. Each of you must bring to the group process three research articles relevant to the group's research topic. Your group will select one of these articles for the rest of the class to read.

Finally, your group will facilitate web-based interactive learning activity (feel free to think creatively about how you would like to do this!) with the entire class around the topic and article you assigned to the class. Your group will disseminate the article you select to the class so you **must** provide me with a pdf copy of the reading **1 week** in advance so that I may post it on D2L.

**3) Two reflections on the course during the term 20 points:** 1) One informal written reflection (1-2 pages) on how the course is going for you, including what you like, problems you might be experiencing, and suggestions for making the class better—see syllabus for due date. 2) One written reflection (2-3 pages) and evaluation of your group work and class facilitation, including an evaluation of your contributions, what worked well in the group, how effective your group was at facilitating active learning on D2L, and ideas for making future group projects better. This is due one week after your group project is completed.

**4) Argument Paper 35 points:** You will write an argument paper (8 pages) using relevant materials from the course, sources by your group for the class facilitation project, additional research, class discussions, and your own engaged voice. You may either use the questions posed on the discussion board as the basis for your argument paper or design your own “problem” related to the course topics. **Formal citation of sources using APA style is required** (please visit <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> for direction)

In this paper you are stating your position- in a thesis statement format and then using the entirety of the paper to back up your thesis and prove your position. For more information on how craft this style of paper please visit: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/724/1/>

### Grading:

Reading Responses/Journal Entries (I average all 7 papers to get your final journal grade- each is worth 5 points)	25
Group work	20
Reflection Papers	20
Position Paper	35
Total	100

90-100 points = A

80-90 points = B

70-80 points = C

60-70 points = D

50-60 points fail/no pass

**Honor Code** You are expected to uphold Portland State University's student conduct code. This code prohibits cheating, fraud, and dishonesty (including, but not limited to plagiarism, buying and stealing course assignments and research papers, performing academic assignments for two or more classes without permission from all instructors, unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information, and other practices commonly understood to be academically dishonest). Any assignments found to be in violation of the code will receive a failing grade, and all participants will be subject to disciplinary action. Any questions about this policy may be directed to the Office of Student Affairs, Smith Memorial Student Union.

**Accessibility** Students with disabilities who may need disability-related classroom accommodations for this course are encouraged to contact Disability Services (ext. 5-4150), and to consult with the professor.

**Note:** Please keep in mind that this syllabus is subject to change (with reasonable notice). Readings, topics, and assignments may be added or removed depending on the needs and interests of the class as a whole. If you miss class, it is always your responsibility to find out what you missed, including changes in assignments or readings.

### Schedule of Assignments and Topics:

<p>Week 1 June 28 Introduction to Motherhood READING: Excepts posted from bell hooks, and April 8-May 12 in Baby Love</p>	<p>JOURNAL DUE- please write a 500 word introduction of yourself including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name</li> <li>- Major</li> <li>- Where you are from</li> <li>- What you know or believe about motherhood</li> </ul>
<p>Week 2 July 5 The “universality of motherhood” READING Baby Love- May 14-June 29<sup>th</sup> , article posted on D2L</p>	<p>JOURNAL DUE- please write 500 words reflecting on how different motherhood can be based on perspective and explore WHAT creates perspective- please make sure to address issues of race, class, gender and sexuality.</p>
<p>Week 3 July 12 Opting Out Baby Love- June 30-Sept 15, articles posted on D2L</p>	<p>JOURNAL DUE- please write 500 words on the feminist politics surrounding the issue of choosing NOT to parent and how you believe feminism has or has not influenced this decision for women. <b>Reflection Paper Due</b></p>
<p>Week 4 July 19 Baby Love- Sept 15- to end, articles posted on D2L</p>	<p>JOURNAL DUE- please write 500 words on the influence media has on your view of motherhood and whether you believe this is a positive or negative impact. <b>Group Article Due- email to Traci at <a href="mailto:traci.boyle@gmail.com">traci.boyle@gmail.com</a></b></p>
<p>Week 5 July 26 The Price of Motherhood- Chapter 5 &amp; 6, articles and video posted on D2L</p>	<p>JOURNAL DUE- please write 500 words on how class, sexuality and race impact who is encouraged and discouraged to parent.</p>
<p>Week 6 August 5 The Price of Motherhood- Chapter 10 &amp; 13</p>	<p>Position Paper Due</p>
<p>Week 7 August 12</p>	<p>Final Reflection Due</p>