**Assignment Descriptions**

Short paper #1

For the first short paper, you will write 2-3 pages which expand the in-class writing activity that will be conducted during the second class of the semester. The essay should address the following:

*Discuss privilege in your life. How has it benefited you? How has it hurt you?*

The aim of the exercise is to encourage students to understand the ways in which different factors and identities create a complex relationship to privilege and oppression in each person’s life. In addition, students are encouraged to recognize that most likely, they have been privileged in some ways; this assignment asks them to acknowledge this fact and think critically about how it has affected them.

Students will be assessed based on the thoroughness of their analysis of their own experience, their use of specific examples to illustrate the points that they are making, their demonstration of the basic theoretic and conceptual concepts introduced in the first few classes, and the general polish of the essay (e.g. lack of spelling/grammar/mechanical errors, employment of interesting language, lack of awkward style, etc.).

Short paper #2

The second short paper (2-3 pages) will ask students to engage with one or both of the Ursula LeGuin short stories that we read in class: “Mountain Ways” and “Coming of Age in Karhide.” These stories engage with gender identity and sexual orientation using a unique perspective. For this paper, students are asked to find news articles discussing current events which also relate to issues of gender identity and/or sexual orientation (these articles should be cited using any citation style of the student’s choosing).

Students should write an essay which analyzes and discusses how the short stories may be commenting on/engaging with the types of issues found in the news items. In other words, what types of real-life issues, problems, or conflicts might LeGuin have been analyzing/critiquing in her stories? What might she say about the events in your news story? What assumptions about gender/sexuality are made in each?

Students will be assessed based on the relevance/timeliness of the articles they choose, their explanation/analysis of the similarities and differences between the stories and the article, their demonstration of the concepts relating to gender/sexuality discussed in class, the accuracy, complexity, and depth of their analysis, and the general polish of the essay (e.g. lack of spelling/grammar/mechanical errors, employment of interesting language, lack of awkward style, etc.).

Final Project

For the final project, students will be working in groups of 6-7. The groups will be assigned by the instructor. For this project, it is important that all group members are contributing to the progress of the project as the groups will be assessed as a unit and not individually. The students will present their projects on the assigned days. Presentations should be approximately 20 minutes in length.

Each group should begin by selecting a cultural artifact (an ad, scene from a TV show/movie, song, toy, comic, etc.) which could be considered “sexist”; in other words, it might depict problematic gender stereotypes, sexualize/fetishize women, etc. After selecting an artifact, the group should use lengthy discussion along with the concepts in the textbook and discussed in class in order to analyze the sexist issues at play (groups can also discuss issues of race, sexual orientation, religion, etc. if they are relevant). Based on these discussions, the group should draft a well-composed presentation which discusses and analyzes the issues present.

For the second part of the project, the group’s task is to recreate the artifact, eliminating the sexist components. The general message/goal should remain the same, but without the sexist content. This could involve photoshopping or creating an entirely new item. \*\*Keep in mind that if you choose a video, you should make sure that you have access to the necessary equipment and the skill with which to operate it. This new version will be presented after the analysis of the original artifact, along with a discussion of how the new item eliminates the issues that existed in the original.

In summary, the final presentation will consist of the following:

1. Display the original cultural artifact.

2. Discuss the sexist issues that exist in the artifact, asking questions to get the class talking.

3. Display the revised artifact.

4. Discuss how the new artifact eliminates the issues in the original and creates a more positive message.

Students will be assessed based on the thoroughness, complexity, and depth of their analyses, the quality of their revised artifact, their understanding/demonstration of the concepts discussed in class and in the textbook, their ability to get the class actively engaged, the equality with which the group members participate, and their general preparation and professionalism during the presentation.