WOST 20003

Spring 2014

TCU Women’s Studies Program

**Assignment Sheet: Service Learning Project**

**Project Overview:** Since community and social activism play an important role in the evolution of feminism and women’s experiences, we will spend a significant part of this semester engaging and reflecting upon work we do in partnership with young women in the Fort Worth community. We’ll partner with the Young Women’s Leadership Academy. In addition to the work you will perform with this organization, you will share your experiences with classmates and the TCU community and engage in critical reflection about your work’s connection to gender analysis and theory.

This project has two parts: you’ll work with student partners at the Young Women’s Leadership Academy to create a video project about mentorship, and you will work individually to create a portfolio of research and reflective writing on working with young women at a public single-sex high school.

As stated on the syllabus, the service-learning project is 20% of your final grade and will require a significant time commitment from you in terms of work with the class and on your own. Although this is a challenging project, it’s meant to generate inspiration for you and the YWLA students and to enrich your connection to the Fort Worth community.

**Co-operative Project Description:** On February 6, a group of students from the YWLA will visit our classroom for a short discussion, and then you will break out into small groups and help the students brainstorm interview subjects and questions on the topic of mentorship. During your conversation in small groups, both you and each YWLA student will identify a mentor in their own community/family/school and prepare to interview that person. You can define mentorship broadly: who has helped you come to a decision about your major, develop a career path, or meet academic goals? Who has been a source of support or inspiration for you as you moved from college to high school? Whose ideals and values have you tried to emulate?

Over the next two weeks, you and the YWLA students will conduct interviews and document them digitally: you may decide on the proportion of image, video and audio recording you want to use to record the interview. When you meet with the YWLA students again on March 6, you’ll use iMovie, Movie Maker, or a video production software of your choice to create a short (2-3 minute) film integrating words and images from yours and your YWLA partner’s interviews.

Finally, our class will have an evening meeting after Spring Break to present the videos you and your partners create to an audience of parents and teachers at the YWLA. Our class will work together with the other section of WOST 20003 to set up and clean up for this event.

**Portfolio Project Description:** In addition to the work you do with the YWLA students, you will put together an individual portfolio made up of 6 documents, described below. Documents 1-3 will be due as one document in the Dropbox by midnight on February 25; the rest of the portfolio will be due in the Dropbox by midnight on March 20.

1. **Scholarly reflection on articles discussing women’s education** (2-3 pages): After doing the reading for February 4 on single-sex education, write a two page reflection in which you support a thesis about what you see as the value of single-sex education using evidence from the assigned reading.
2. **Personal reflection on the role of a mentor figure in your own life** (2 pages): In preparation for your meeting with the YWLA students on February 6, write a short paper in which you define what mentorship means to you and describe the person you have chosen as your mentor.
3. **Interview questions and plan for interview**: This section of your portfolio will be created in collaboration with the YWLA student(s) you work with on February 6; you will turn in the questions you plan to ask your mentor during your interview, as well as the questions you and your YWLA student came up with for her interview.
4. **Video project created in collaboration with YWLA students:** This will be submitted in as a .mov file or similar anytime after our work day on February 27.
5. **Reflection on your work process and the final product** (2 pages): In this personal reflection, you’ll describe your own process of collaborating with the YWLA students and the members of our class. What were the challenges and successes that stood out to you? What did you learn about mentorship? About working with high school students in Fort Worth? About collaborative digital media projects?
6. **Final reflection paper incorporating personal reflection and research into women’s education** (approx. 5 pages): In this final paper, you’ll use your experience with this project as well as TCU library databases to perform research backing up an argument about challenges and opportunities in young women’s education. As part of this paper, you might answer 1-2 of the following questions:
   * What are specific challenges facing high school and college aged women in terms of their academic achievement (you might look particularly at women whose goals are to succeed in male dominated fields like STEM or business)?
   * What tools or strategies have schools or outside groups used to build young women’s educational success?
   * What values or goals do you think schools and community groups should adopt in promoting young women’s educational success?
   * What can young women themselves do to further their academic success? What limitations are there on individual action, for all young women or for young women in certain socioeconomic groups?
   * What role does leadership and mentorship play in the young women’s academic success?

**Grading:** The following are descriptions of grading criteria for this assignment.

**A (90-99):** Scholarly and personal reflections thoughtfully incorporate class discussion, your own experiences and impressions, and (where appropriate) outside research, and each piece of writing makes a compelling, focused, and substantially original argument. Writing is well-edited with attention to paragraph organization and citations (MLA or APA style). The interview, the video project, and all evidence of work with the YWLA show professionalism and engagement with the assignment’s goals through attention to detail and valuable contributions to the success of the group as a whole. The final reflection paper successfully synthesizes required readings, class discussion, your experiences, and library research into a persuasive and well-written argument about women’s education.

**B (80-89):** Scholarly and personal reflections thoughtfully incorporate class discussion, your own experiences and impressions, and (where appropriate) outside research, and each piece of writing makes an identifiable, coherent argument. Writing is mostly well-edited with attention to paragraph organization and citations (MLA or APA style). The interview, the video project, and all evidence of work with the YWLA show professionalism and engagement with the assignment’s goals through visible contributions to the success of the group as a whole. The final reflection paper synthesizes required readings, class discussion, your experiences, and library research into an argument about women’s education, though minor problems with the thesis, evidence, or organization may mar the final result.

**C (70-79):** Scholarly and personal reflections unevenly incorporate class discussion, your own experiences and impressions, and (where appropriate) outside research; each piece of writing makes an argument, but may have problems with clarity or use of evidence. Writing is inadequately edited, with less attention to organization—citations (MLA or APA style) are used correctly. The interview, the video project, and evidence of work with the YWLA may show gaps in understanding or commitment to the project’s goals, and contributions to the success of the group as a whole may be less visible or consistent. The final reflection paper attempts to synthesize required readings, class discussion, your experiences, and library research into an argument about women’s education, though there may be substantive issues with thesis, evidence, or organization.

**D (60-69):** Scholarly and personal reflections do not successfully incorporate class discussion, your own experiences and impressions, and outside research—the portfolio may suggest the student did not complete required readings or follow through on the assignment requirements. Writing is inadequately edited, and there may be problems with citations. The interview, video, and work with the YWLA show a lack of engagement with the project’s goals and a lack of commitment to the group’s success. The final reflection paper shows serious problems in argument, structure, or use of evidence.

**F (0-50):** The portfolio is turned in incomplete or overly late; the portfolio does not follow the format given in the assignment sheet; the portfolio shows evidence of academic dishonesty.