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Fall 2009 James F. Slevin Assignment Sequence Prize

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Assignment sequences in a writing course are built around a series of essay topics. These sequences probably represent work assigned during a portion of the course rather than all of the essay assignments distributed over an entire semester. Submissions should include a rationale and a description of your plans for eliciting and responding to student drafts and revisions, as well as a description of how you prepare students for each essay assignment, for example by engaging them in preparatory writing exercises, including informal writing designed to help students understand the material on which they subsequently write formal essays. Reflections on what worked well, and why, and what you would change another time, are welcome.

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Submissions are due in 101 McGraw Hall by Friday, December 11. No exceptions can be made.

Fall 2009 James F. Slevin Assignment Sequence Prize Application

-Please Print Clearly-

Instructor's name JULIE AJINKYA

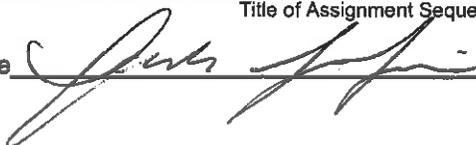
Department GOVT Course # and title 1101.01 - "Bad Girls: Feminism, Religion + Politics"

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"PERSUASION"

Title of Assignment Sequence

Instructor's signature



Date

12/9/09

**Assignment Sequence for GOVT 101.01 –
“Bad Grrls: Feminism, Religion and Politics”**

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

**Submitted for the Fall 2009 James F. Slevin Assignment Sequence Award
December 5, 2009**

The assignment sequence for my first year writing seminar, Govt 1101.01—Bad Grrls: Feminism, Religion and Politics,” consists of four formal writing assignments. The goal of my sequence was to ask students to choose a research topic at the beginning of the semester and to learn how to adapt their analytical writing to different audiences. Since the course focused on gender issues in all of the five major world religions, I asked students to identify one issue (e.g. marital law, domestic violence, etc.) that they were interested in researching as it pertained to only one of the religions. In order to help students choose a topic that they would be able to research adequately for the purposes of the course and this assignment sequence, I required individual conferences to go over proposals and assigned an initial research brief assignment that required students to summarize sources and present a survey of the scholarship available on their topic.

Given that I taught my writing seminar in the field of Political Science, my main goals for the semester were to teach my students how to a) collect evidence on both sides of a controversial topic and b) use this evidence to determine a position, construct an argument and write persuasively on the topic. I also emphasized the importance of adjusting analytical writing styles to different audiences, ranging from the academic classroom to the broader newspaper-reading public. Accordingly, the first assignment in my sequence asked students to compose a position paper on the research topic that they chose for their research brief, with an academic audience (myself as the instructor and classmates as peer editors) in mind. The second assignment was an opinion article, written with the newspaper-reading audience in mind. The third assignment asked students to write a creative monologue, adjusting their persuasive writing skills to the stage and communicating their scholarship to an audience that might be completely unfamiliar with their topic. The fourth and final assignment in my sequence was to create a team debate case around two central questions from our course—1) Are feminism and religion compatible systems of belief? 2) Is feminism dead?—using examples from students’ individual research topics as evidence for their position on the resolution.

This application includes a rationale for each assignment, the preparatory work I assigned in and out of class leading up to each assignment, a brief assessment of how the students felt about each assignment, a personal assessment of what I might do differently in the future, and, finally, a copy of each preparatory exercise and assignment.

1. POSITION PAPER

a. Rationale

The fundamental purpose behind this assignment is to teach my students how to write persuasively in the field of Political Science. We have spent a considerable amount of time in the classroom going over important preparatory steps for the most effective persuasive writing—collecting evidence, brainstorming and outlining—so I would now like to see how they use these skills to create a coherent position paper.

b. Preparation

♀ **Evidence:** I created an in-class exercise that went over common sources of evidence, how to evaluate the legitimacy of such evidence, and why we need evidence to support analytical, persuasive writing in Political Science. I created a handout that asked students to imagine both a ‘layperson’ and ‘contrarian’ reading their arguments, and to propose what evidence would satisfy each type of reader. I used sample sentences from the students’ research briefs that were presented without any substantive support and we brainstormed suggestions for evidence that would strengthen each argument as a class.

♀ **Brainstorming:** I designed an in-class exercise for students to practice brainstorming techniques in the preparatory stages before writing their position paper. We went over three common approaches—free writing, clustering and listing—so that students could see which technique best suited their personal styles. Before going through these brainstorming techniques, I showed the class a series of three sexist Folgers Coffee commercials from the 1950s and asked them to pay close attention and take notes on each clip. We then went over each technique and I issued the following prompt: “Folgers Coffee perpetuated sexist attitudes in the 1950s through its television advertisements.” I asked the students to practice each brainstorming technique for 5 minutes, and then discussed as a class how they felt about each approach. This exercise was meant to demonstrate that students brainstorm writing assignments in different ways and should pursue

the approach that feels most comfortable and productive to them. The discussion appropriately revealed that there were enthusiasts for each approach.

♀ **Outlining:** Following the brainstorming exercise described above, I then asked two students to put their ‘clustering’ and ‘listing’ samples on the board. After going over my handout on ‘Outlining’ I went to the board and asked for the class to devise an outline based on the samples on the board and our group discussion. I facilitated the comments and turned their suggestions into a sample outline on the Folgers’ prompt to show them how to actually turn brainstorming ideas into a workable outline for position papers. This exercise was designed to prepare the students to compose their own outlines for their position papers, which were to be submitted to me a week before the position paper’s final deadline.

c. Student Assessment

Students reported that they appreciated the exposure to different brainstorming techniques in preparation for the position paper assignment—they said it helped them locate the main argument/thesis and then think through how sub-arguments fit together to ultimately support the main argument. They also said that it was a new experience for many of them to take a strong stance on *one* side of a topic, because high school writing assignments had required more synopsis and less analytical thinking.

d. Instructor Assessment

Ultimately, I thought that this assignment successfully accomplished my main goal of teaching my students how to construct a strong argument and present it in a persuasive writing style. In the future, I think I would design an in-class exercise on the different points of view in writing because many of my students mentioned that this was the first time they were told it was permissible (and even encouraged!) to write in the first person point of view. Since this perspective is rather common in Political Science, and most of my assignments ask students to speak from an individual point of view (except the team debate case, described below), I think an exercise demonstrating the merits of different perspectives would be useful.

2. OP-ED

Rationale

The purpose of this assignment is to build upon the position paper the students have already submitted by this point. While the position paper asked students to conduct careful academic research and argue a strong analytical position on the topic they’ve personally chosen, this

assignment is meant to encourage students to write about the same topic, but for a broader audience. I would like students to understand that the topics we address in the classroom are of relevance outside academia as well, and in order for their political positions to be taken seriously by friends, family or even strangers outside of classroom, they need to learn how to state their points succinctly and convincingly. I would like them to come away from this assignment learning that the same topic or subject matter can be addressed in various ways to suit different audiences and purposes.

Preparation

♀ **Writing Style:** I designed an in-class exercise that focused on adapting writing style to an audience that has had less exposure to academic discussions and sources on the topics that my students chose to research. The exercise presented one anonymous excerpt from an op-ed in *The Washington Post* and another anonymous excerpt from an academic book on the same topic—gender segregation in mosques—and asks the students to discuss similarities and differences between the two pieces in small groups. I suggested that they go over elements of both substance and style, such as jargon, vocabulary and tone, in their group discussions. We then came together as a class and debriefed the ideas that they discussed in their breakout groups. The purpose of this exercise was to a) demonstrate how the students can discuss the same research topic that was at the heart of their position paper with a different audience in mind, and b) propose how to employ different writing style elements to adjust their topic to a newspaper-reading audience.

♀ **Op-ed Workshop on Substance and Style:** I required my students to bring a copy of their first draft to class and they took part in a peer review workshop in which pairs of students used the rubrics on my handout to evaluate each other's work. The handout divided the evaluation process into two parts: substance and style. I asked students to indicate whether each writing element was 'excellent,' 'fair' or 'needs improvement' and told them to explain why any element received the latter two marks. I also required students to hand in this peer evaluation form with their final submission so that I could monitor how well they incorporated their partner's advice in their final product.

Student Assessment

The students reported that they found the exercise that presented two anonymous passages to be extremely revealing, in the sense that seeing two passages right next to each other exposed the academic piece to be full of jargon that unnecessarily complicates the topic and the opinion piece to be much more accessible to a broad range of readers. Ultimately, most students said that they enjoyed this assignment because it allowed them to rehearse a writing style that felt more colloquial and comfortable.

Instructor Assessment

In the future, I think I would ask students to take a more active role in assigning reading for the weeks we cover opinion pieces. I already asked them to look at the ‘On Faith’ section of *The Washington Post* online and select a piece that they believed was written particularly persuasively; they posted their submissions individually on our class Blackboard site, and we went over why they chose their pieces in class. I think it would be helpful for students to read other students’ submissions as well, so that they have more exposure to a variety of opinion piece writing styles as well.

3. CREATIVE MONOLOGUE

Rationale

The purpose of this assignment is to build upon the position paper and opinion piece by promoting empathy among the students on their research topics while asking them to write for yet another audience. Often, while conducting academic research and revising analytical arguments, we as researchers can lose sight of the personal stories at stake in the scenarios we study. By trying to compose the imagined thoughts of a character that deal with issues of gender discrimination in his/her own faith communities, students will hopefully learn how to communicate the implications of their research topics to an audience that might otherwise not engage in such political issues. They will also be exposed to a set of interior monologues (The Hijabi Monologues, Bad Grrrls, and Women Can’t Wait) that use this writing style to advocate for women’s rights in one-woman shows that effectively fundraise for campaigns through performances.

Preparation

♀ **Conference Simulation:** I distributed copies of political speeches that were delivered at real-life international conferences on women’s rights and asked students, in pairs, to take part in a simulated amalgamation of the conferences. I facilitated as the head organizer and simply had each pair read their speech out loud when it was their turn. The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate to the

students how creative monologues are very similar to political speeches, in that they must effectively adjust the writing style to one that pleases listeners instead of readers and both still rely on substantial research and evidence to make their argument convincing.

♀ **Monologues' Readings:** In a similar exercise to the simulated conference above, I asked students to look over the 'scripts' of two sets of monologues—*The Hijabi Monologues* and *Bad Grrrls*—and prepare to volunteer to read individual monologues out loud in class. The purpose behind this exercise was to make them more comfortable with reading in front of the class, but also to expose them to monologues that were written for the stage instead of political conferences.

♀ **Character Profile:** In order to help students adjust their writing style to not only another audience, but also another perspective (the perspective of a real or imaginary individual who would have first hand experience with their research topic), I distributed a handout that prompted students to create character profiles. The purpose of this exercise was to encourage the students to really put themselves in their characters' shoes and imagine how they would respond to certain questions as those characters, instead of themselves.

Student Assessment

We held a student performance in class the day that the monologues were due. I brought in some treats (donuts and bagels) and we all enjoyed watching each student become their characters and give an impassioned monologue about their research topic. The students said that they really enjoyed hearing each other's pieces and they were incredibly supportive and constructive about one another's work. We debriefed the session in our next class and discussed which writing elements stood out strongest amongst the different monologues.

Instructor Assessment

If I were to repeat this assignment in the future, I might demonstrate a monologue myself to put the students at ease and give them an idea of what a monologue in this class might sound/look like. I showed them a clip of Sarah Jones *Women Can't Wait* online, but it might help to actually see their instructor demonstrate a class-specific monologue. Otherwise, I was very pleased with how they internalized their characters and still demonstrated a great deal of research in each piece.

4. TEAM DEBATE CASE

Rationale

I want the last assignment in this sequence to force students to use the research they have thus far conducted on their individual topics to return to two central questions in our course: 1) Are feminism and religion compatible systems of belief? 2) Is feminism dead? I designed a team debate assignment because I wanted the students to discuss their research with one another and think of ways that their work could be used as evidence in a collective team argument that would take a particular position on the debate resolution. Given that I wanted each student to practice constructing arguments on both sides of the resolution, I required outlines (as they had submitted for the position paper assignment at the beginning of this sequence) from *each* student for *both* sides of the resolution that he/she had been assigned. I asked them to discuss their outlines with one another in small groups in class and then I randomly assigned each student to an affirmative or negative side of his/her resolution. I chose to teach the Lincoln-Douglas style of debate because I had four years of experience debating that specific style in high school. The fundamental purpose of this exercise was to combine the skills of collecting evidence and writing persuasively, succinctly and with an oral audience in mind that the previous assignments in the sequence stressed.

Preparation

♀ **Peer Brainstorming Workshop:** As described above in my rationale, I split the students into two groups (one for each resolution) and had them discuss their affirmative *and* negative outlines with one another. I asked them to go over evidence, logical argumentation, and variety of sources for 25 minutes, before arbitrarily dividing them into affirmative and negative teams within each resolution group. Then I gave them the rest of class to work on outlines for their team cases.

♀ **Debate Elements:** In order to demonstrate the particular rules in Lincoln-Douglas debate and explain why it is called ‘values debate,’ I prepared a powerpoint presentation on different debate elements and then distributed a handout that described a) how the cross-examination works, b) how the round proceeds, and c) how judges choose a winning team.

Student Assessment

The students were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about debating in class and, by all accounts, put a great deal of effort into coming up with strong cases, meeting with me as teams to practice

arguments, and incorporating examples and evidence from every team member's research. I was incredibly impressed with how eager they were to work in teams, given my past experience with group projects in sections as a teaching assistant. In order to prevent unfair work allocation, I did require that each team submit a synopsis of members' contributions with their final debate case. The rigid back and forth structure of Lincoln-Douglas debate received mixed feedback—some students appreciated having set time limits and restrictions against interruptions during speeches and rebuttals, while others felt that the rigidity was stifling and wanted more interaction between debaters. We did, however, debrief as a class after each debate, which allowed the latter group to insert ideas they couldn't during the actual debate round and students reported that this post-debate session was a good way to end the debate class period (and include the other resolution's students, who served as judges in that session).

Instructor Assessment

I felt that this was a very successful final assignment with which to end the sequence, because students effectively combined all of the skills the previous assignments stressed and really impressed me with their ability to use their individual research to think collectively about central questions in our course. In the future, I do think it would be immensely helpful to the students to screen a demonstration of Lincoln-Douglas debate (I only showed them a clip of a sample cross-examination).



Govt 1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

Sept 8, 2009: EVIDENCE (In-class exercise)

What is evidence?

Evidence is the group of sources you use to support your written argument. In a political science course, for instance, evidence could be a quotation from the text that helps you make your point (e.g. scholarly authority on the relationship between the Church and State, selective media coverage, or interviews with relevant respondents) or statistics that back up factual statements (e.g. survey data on the percentage of women who vote).

Why do we need evidence?

Evidence is central to any written argument because it provides the facts around which you create your argument. Without evidence, an argument is a flimsy statement of one person's opinion. With evidence, an argument is grounded in facts and given shape. Consider your role as writer analogous to that of a lawyer in a court of law. When you introduce evidence, you must tell the jury--your readers--why this evidence supports your argument. Evidence must be analyzed and interpreted. What does the evidence say and how should your reader understand it? How does the evidence support the larger ideas at work in the paper? You need to make these connections for your reader.

What are some common types of evidence?

- facts
- authoritative opinions (e.g. scholarship, experts from the field, etc.)
- primary and secondary sources
- clarifying examples.

The Layperson and The Contrarian

When gathering evidence for your own arguments in this class, I would like you to assume that two types of readers are always going to be reading your assignments: the **layperson** and the **contrarian**. The *layperson* is the naïve reader who doesn't know much about your paper topic and thus needs to be educated with legitimate evidence. The *contrarian* is prone to opposing your argument and thus needs to be persuaded with legitimate evidence. In order to practice anticipating these readers' questions, as well as gathering evidence that would satiate their inquisitiveness, I've pulled sections from some of your essays. All of your papers required work on using evidence properly; however, in the interest of time, I have only extracted a handful of examples.

Take the next few minutes to fill out the exercises below. In each example, propose a question that the layperson and contrarian might ask of the statement's author. Next, suggest a piece of evidence (feel free to be creative, but not unrealistic!) that would have strengthened the same statement.

Ex 1: "Religions stating the inferiority of women must be reconsidered, and the mindset of the whole population must be challenged" (Anonymous 2009).

Layperson: _____

Contrarian: _____

Evidence: _____

Ex 2: "Hillary Rodham Clinton's story shows that while she was obviously capable, she still did not receive the same amount of support that a less experienced male did" (Anonymous 2009).

Layperson: _____

Contrarian: _____

Evidence: _____

Ex 3: "In a country where 33% of women over 25 years old hold at least a bachelor's degree, the fight for equality may seem outdated or even overrated" (Anonymous 2009).

Layperson: _____

Contrarian: _____

Evidence: _____

BRAINSTORMING

Before you sit down at your computer to complete written assignments and papers, it often helps to brainstorm your ideas. Brainstorming can take place in a number of ways—from the very loosely-structured free-association involved in freewriting and clustering to the more linearly organized approach of listing. We are going to practice these three techniques in class today. [Note: You should refer to C3-11 in *A Writer's Reference* for more guidance at home when you're brainstorming your writing assignments for this class.]

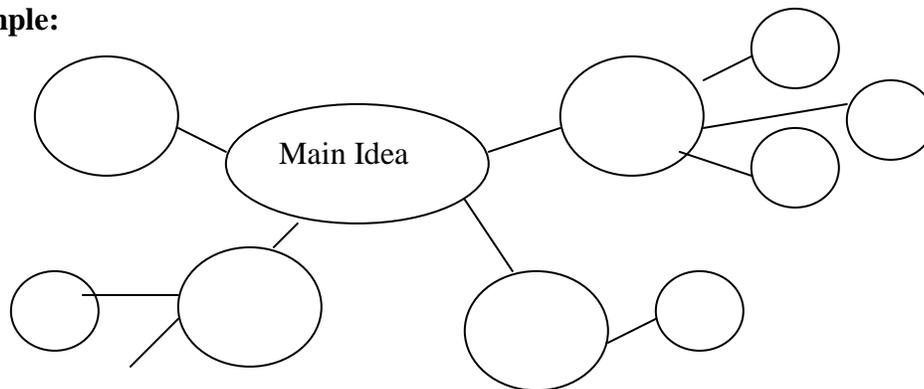
1- Freewriting

Freewriting simply means nonstop writing during an allotted amount of time. You use this time to write whatever comes to you, without stopping to check spelling, grammar, or word choice. For the purposes of brainstorming written assignments in this class, it may help to use a technique called *focused freewriting*, where you focus on your paper topic/argument.

2- Clustering

Clustering is a technique that highlights the relationships between ideas. You start by writing your topic in the center of the paper, draw a circle around it, and then brainstorm related ideas around it that connect to the main idea with lines. If you think of details concerning any of the satellite ideas, draw a line to another circle from the satellite idea itself... and so on.

Example:



3- Listing

Listing is yet another variation on the brainstorming techniques listed above. You can simply write down your ideas as they occur to you or even questions you may have about the topic. Don't think of this as an outline, just list what comes to you.

DIRECTIONS:

I will give you a position prompt and I want you to take 5 minutes to try each of these brainstorming techniques on a separate sheet of paper. Then we will come together as a class and discuss the ideas you produced.

Govt1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

September 17, 2009: OUTLINES (In-class exercise)

OUTLINES

After you've brainstormed ideas that might help you support your thesis statement, writing an outline can help you organize these ideas into the skeleton of your paper. Remember that you should be willing to revise your outlines as your writing progresses, just as you should be willing to revise your central thesis statement as well. As you continue these revisions and do more research, you should 'plug in' additional details and insert pieces of evidence (e.g. sources, quotes, statistics, etc.) directly into the outline to show how you will support your thesis statement. Always keep in mind the following guidelines:

- 1- Your thesis statement should be at the top.
- 2- Use the conventional system of numbers and letters as your headings and subheadings.
- 3- Use complete sentences so that the meaning of headings and subheadings is clear.
- 4- You want parallelism in your outline structure, so your headings should be at the same level of generality as one another—same goes for your subheadings.
- 5- Always use at least two subdivisions under each heading/category (e.g. an "A" and "B")
- 6- Everything in your outline should relate back to your thesis statement.

Example:

Thesis: [...]

I. First main supporting argument

A. Detail

B. Detail

II. Second main supporting argument

A. Detail

B. Detail

Govt1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

Assignment #3a— The Position Paper

September 17, 2009

POSITION PAPER OUTLINE

Before your final position paper is due to me on Thursday, October 1, I want you to complete a detailed outline telling me how you intend you argue your position. **First**, I want you to think about the brainstorming exercises we did in class—did the method you practiced on your thesis statement work for you? If not, try another one of the three techniques we practiced as a class. **Second**, I want you to use the ideas you brainstormed to construct an outline for your position paper. This outline must be detailed and include the pieces of evidence (e.g. quotes, sources, etc.) that you intend to use to support your argument. **Finally**, I want you to submit your brainstorming notes—either the brainstorming you completed in class on your topic or the brainstorming you did at home—with the outline itself.

[*Special note*: I will be holding extra office hours next week and you are *required* to meet with me to discuss your outline. Please bring a hard copy of your outline to this meeting. The hours will be Monday, September 21 (1-3pm) and Tuesday, September 22 (12-2pm) in my office (White Hall B12). Please sign up for a slot on my office door.]

This outline will be due no later than the beginning of class on Thursday, September 24. You should bring 1 copy to class and ALSO email me a copy by 10:10 am the day of class.

[Keep in mind that the *final draft* of the position paper will be due on Thursday, October 1.]

Govt1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

September 24, 2009: ASSIGNMENT: Position Paper

TAKING A STANCE

Now that you have had the opportunity to workshop your paper with a partner in class, I would like you to put your outline to work and write a position paper on the topic you have been researching. Your paper should incorporate all of the elements we have gone over in class thus far: choosing evidence, anticipating questions from the layperson and contrarian, and persuasive writing. While writing your paper, make sure you address the following questions:

- ❖ Have you taken a clear stance on your topic?
- ❖ Have you successfully used evidence to support your argument?
- ❖ Have you successfully anticipated and engaged with positions opposite to yours?

This assignment should be **5-6 double-spaced pages** and a hard copy is due no later than the beginning of class on **Thursday, October 1.**

Govt 1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

October 8, 2009: WRITING STYLE (In-class exercise)

WRITING FOR AN AUDIENCE

Political Scientists often refer to a variety of sources when discussing any given topic in their discipline—these sources include academic journals or books, policy journals, newspapers, and news magazines. While these sources may overlap in the substance they address, each usually employs its own style of writing. Below are excerpts from two different types of sources that discuss gender segregation and worship. First read each excerpt on your own and then take 10 minutes in your assigned small groups to discuss any differences you noticed in the excerpts’ styles of writing. Make sure to take notes so we can discuss your ideas as a class. To help you get started, consider the following questions:

- ❖ What differences do you notice in word choice, formality or sentence structure?
- ❖ Who do you think was the intended audience for each piece?
- ❖ How do you think different audiences may influence the writing style?
- ❖ Which piece did you find easier to read? Why?

EXCERPT 1:

“For the vast majority of Muslims who do not consider such gender inclusiveness permissible, their arguments are selectively grounded on firm religious rationale using only those *fiqh*¹ opinions that support gender separation in ritual worship primarily as reflections of social and historical customs as they developed after the advent of Islam in seventh-century Arabia. There is no single Qur’anic passage to support these arguments and nothing but extensive misinterpretation of the *sunnah*² by generalizing exclusive principles or minimizing explicit examples to the contrary. The evidence constructed to support gender separation, especially in ritual worship, is always and only a reflection of social customs and in many cases of social customs as they developed after the advent of Islam in seventh-century Arabia. Since such practices of gender disparity reflect social praxis, not theological

¹ jurisprudence in Muslim law

² the way of life prescribed as normative for Muslims on the basis of the teachings and practices of Muhammad and interpretations of the Qur’an

rationale, then all legal codification of such rationales were built upon the status quo and can be reformed by the collective and conscientious alterations in the status quo.”

EXCERPT 2:

“Today, somewhere in New York, a Muslim woman will give the sermon that precedes the congregational noon prayers, called Jum'ah, that mark the highlight of the Muslim week. She will then lead men and women in prayer, becoming the first woman on record to lead a public, mixed-gender Friday prayer. I can't tell you where the prayer will be held because I don't know yet. The location is being kept secret because the original venue backed out after it received threats for opening its doors to such a service.

But I can tell you that the courage of Amina Wadud, a professor of Islamic studies at Virginia Commonwealth University who will lead us all, is impossible to describe. And I can tell you what a thrill it will be to stand before God as the spiritual equal of the male congregants -- praying together, not behind the men and not in another room -- with a woman leading us.

There is nothing in Islam that bars a woman from giving the Friday sermon or from leading a mixed-gender prayer. The fact that only men have done both for centuries is one of many things that Muslims have rarely questioned. We have wasted time and energy circling the same old subjects: Just how much of woman's body should be covered; can men and women shake hands, etc.

By standing behind Amina Wadud today, we will be clearing the deck of distractions and acknowledging the egalitarianism that permeates Islam. My faith resides deep in my heart, but it has been hard at times to reconcile my heart with my mind, which too often recoils at the blatant misogyny that centuries of male-dominated interpretation of my religion have wrought.

We are taught that Islam gave women rights more than 1,400 years ago that made them the envy of women in Europe's Dark Ages. When European women were mere chattel, Muslim women gained the right to inherit and own property. But now the descendants of those women who envied Muslim women in the seventh century have moved far ahead. Where is that spirit of the early days of Islam?

One of my favorite stories from Islamic history -- apocryphal or not -- goes like this: Women at the time of the prophet Muhammad complained that the revelations he had received so far addressed "believing men." What about us, they asked? Soon after, the prophet began receiving revelations that addressed both "believing men" and "believing women."

If God included us in the narrative, who has kept us out?"

Mona Eltahawy, Washington Post, Friday, March 18, 2005

Govt 1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

October 20, 2009: OP-ED WORKSHOP (In-class exercise)

OP-ED WORKSHOP

Now that we've gone over numerous 'best practices' in opinion writing, I want you to help each other with your own opinion drafts. Read your partner's op-ed closely and then use the rubrics below to evaluate your partner's attentiveness to both substance and style. If you indicate that your partner has done a 'fair' job or 'needs improvement' on any feature, I want you to explain *why* in your own words. After filling out this evaluation form, you and your partner should go through the forms with one another. *Please note that you will hand your completed form to the author at the end of our session and each author must attach this evaluation form to his/her **final version due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, October 27th, 2009.***

AUTHOR _____ EVALUATOR _____

SUBSTANCE

| | Excellent | Fair | Needs Improvement |
|---|------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Is it clear why an American audience would care? | | | |
| Does it have a single point? | | | |
| Why should the reader care? | | | |
| Has the author made specific recommendations? | | | |
| How well is the argument bolstered | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| by evidence? | | | |
| Has the author engaged with the other side? | | | |

STYLE

| | Excellent | Fair | Needs Improvement |
|---|------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Is the main point up top? | | | |
| Is it written with short sentences and paragraphs? | | | |
| Has the author avoided jargon? | | | |
| Has the author used an active voice? | | | |
| Does it have an effective conclusion? | | | |

Govt1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

October 6, 2009: ASSIGNMENT: OP-ED

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Now it's time to see if you can adapt your writing style to a different audience. Consider how the opinion piece we went over in class tries to communicate the issue of gender segregation to a broader, newspaper-reading audience and brainstorm how you would communicate your research topic to a similar audience. I would like you to then write your own opinion piece, according to the submission guidelines on The Washington Post's "On Faith" section; most importantly, the piece should be no longer than 800 words. Remember that this piece is meant to communicate the topic that you have researched carefully to individuals who have not had the same access to the readings or discussion we have had in our class. In writing your piece, think carefully about the following questions:

- ❖ Have you clearly communicated a personal stance on your issue?
- ❖ Have you checked—and cross-checked—the evidence you cite in your piece?
- ❖ Have you written about your topic in a way that would engage individuals outside of our class?
- ❖ Have you made it clear to your audience why this issue must be discussed outside of the academic classroom?

This assignment should be **no longer than 800 words** and will be due no later than the beginning of class on **Tuesday, October 27th**.

Govt 1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

October 29, 2009: CHARACTER PROFILES (In-class exercise)

Character Profile

Use this sheet to help you construct a character who lays at the heart of the research you have been doing on your individual topic thus far this semester. The only additional information you need to know is that your character has been invited to speak at the 25th Annual International Conference on Feminism and Religion, to be held on December 9, 2009 in New York City.

Name:

Ancestry:

Current state of mind:

Occupation:

Appearance:

Age:

Distinguishing characteristic:

Why are you at this conference?

What is your greatest accomplishment (thus far)?

What's your greatest fear?

What do most people not know about you?

What do you want everyone here to leave knowing?

Govt1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

November 5, 2009: ASSIGNMENT: CREATIVE MONOLOGUE

IMAGINING A MONOLOGUE

As we research our different topics that address gender discrimination in communities of faith, we must remain conscious of the fact that individuals live through these conflicts and these same issues are anything but abstract in their every day experiences. In order to remind ourselves of the personal stories embedded in all of our research topics and to promote a sense of empathy in our academic work, I would like you to imagine the thoughts of any one individual you could imagine personally struggling with your issue area and create your own interior monologue from his or her point of view. As you write your monologue, make sure you address the following questions:

- ❖ Have you written your monologue from another individual's (first person) point of view?
- ❖ Have you successfully incorporated the research you've conducted thus far in the semester into your monologue?
- ❖ In portraying your character's imagined thoughts, have you successfully refrained from perpetuating unsubstantiated stereotypes regarding your issue?

This assignment should be **2-3 double-spaced pages** and is due no later than the beginning of class on **Thursday, November 10th**.

Govt 1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

Instructor: Julie Ajinkya

November 24, 2009: LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE ELEMENTS (In-class exercise)

Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Lincoln-Douglas Debate is a style of debate often used in high schools. In contrast to what is called *policy debate*, L-D focuses mostly on questions of logic, philosophy, politics, and ethics—for this reason it is sometimes called *values debate*. A Lincoln-Douglas debate is an argument over what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is not.

The debate proceeds along the following timetable.

| AC (5 min.) | CROSS-X #1 (3 min.) | NC (5 min.) | CROSS-X #2 (3 min.) | AR (3 min.) | NR (3 min.) | AffClosing (4 min.) | NegClosing (4 min.) |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| Opening arguments from the affirmative side (the AC) | The negative side asks questions of the affirmative side. | The negative side presents its opening arguments. | The affirmative side asks questions of the negative side. | The affirmative side rebuts the NC and arguments raised by the Cross X. | The negative side rebuts the rebuttal of the rebuttal and arguments raised by the Cross X. | The affirmative side sums up position and new arguments raised in the debate. | The negative side sums up position and new arguments raised in the debate. |

****There will be 2 minutes of group prep time between each event.**

POSITIONS:

Each side has 5 jobs. Since each of your groups has 4 members, one person will be required to be the Closer on top of his/her other role. You are free to divide the tasks up as you like.

| AFFIRMATIVE | NEGATIVE |
|---|--|
| Affirmative Lead Debater CROSS-X 1 Answerer CROSS-X 2 Asker Affirmative Rebutter Affirmative Closer | Negative Lead Debater CROSS-X 1 Asker CROSS-X 2 Answerer Negative Rebutter Negative Closer |

DEBATE ELEMENTS

CROSS-EXAMINATION (CROSS-X)

Objective(s):

1. Clarification: _____
2. Logical demonstrations: _____

FLOWING

Objective(s):

1. Keep track of the debate

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| AFFIRMATIVE CASE | <u>Aff CC(5)</u> | <u>Neg CX(3)</u> | <u>AffReb(3)</u> | | <u>AffClose(4)</u> | |
| | VP- | → | | | | |
| | C#1- | → | | | | |
| | C#2- | → | | | | |
| NEGATIVE CASE | | <u>Neg CC(5)</u> | <u>Aff CX(3)</u> | <u>Neg Reb(3)</u> | | <u>NegClose(4)</u> |
| | | VP- | → DROP | | | → |
| | | C#1- | | | | |
| | | C#2- | | | | |

JUDGING

Objective(s):

1. Evaluate the stylistic performance of each team member (e.g. eye contact, volume, etc.).
2. Evaluate the substantive performance of each team member (e.g. was the team member prepared? Did the team member cite adequate source to support his/her side of the resolution?)

3. Which team most effectively convinced you of their position on the resolution in question?

Govt 1101: Feminism, Religion and Politics

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November 17, 2009: ASSIGNMENT: DEBATE CASES

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

We will wrap up this course by returning to two of the original questions we tackled at the beginning of the semester. We attend to these questions in the form of debate resolutions that will ask you to think carefully about the merits of both sides to each question. You have been randomly assigned to one of the following resolutions:

Resolved₁: Feminism and religion are incompatible systems of belief.

Resolved₂: Feminism is dead.

I would like you to now outline BOTH an Affirmative and Negative constructive case for your resolution. While outlining your argument, make sure you attend to the crucial elements of a constructive case that were discussed in class today (i.e. 1) value premise, 2) 2-3 contentions explaining your argument, and 3) evidence to support your contentions). You should also make use of the research you conducted for your own research topic and think about how to incorporate this knowledge as contentions or supporting evidence.

You should bring a hard copy of your TWO outlines to class on Thursday, November 19.

You will be required to share your outlines and come up with team cases in class on that day; if you fail to bring in your outline, you will be asked to leave and will receive an unexcused absence. *[Note: You will not know which side (Affirmative or Negative) you will have to debate in class until Thursday, so it is important that you make each case as convincing as possible.]*