Proposal for the 10th Annual Women, Gender, and Sexuality Student Conference

Friday, March 23, 2018        University of Redlands        Daniel Kiefer

Feminist Theory

Round Table Discussion with Members of English 403:
Contemporary Literary Criticism and Theory

For the WGS Student Conference, we students in English 403, Contemporary Literary Criticism and Theory, would like to offer a round-table discussion of feminist theory. In this course we’re studying a number of critical theorists, focusing especially on feminist thinkers, with forays into deconstruction, psychoanalytic theory, and theories of minority culture. We’re also studying Shakespeare’s comedy Twelfth Night, stories by Flannery O’Connor, and poems by Johnston graduate Craig Santos Perez.

For the Conference we propose to concentrate on the essays we’re reading by Gloria Anzaldúa, Gayle Rubin, Judith Butler, Lauren Berlant & Michael Warner, Julia Kristeva, Joan Riviere, and Laura Mulvey. The variety of feminist viewpoints in these essays is very strong, and we’re attentive to the intersections and divergences among them. Our own responses to their form and content are varied, as well.

Our overall questions for this round table are these: “How far does feminist theory reach? What moments of contention among feminist thinkers are most helpful to readers, artists in different media, and activists?” In preparation for the Conference we will develop more specific questions in order to address more specific issues.

We would like to start off with a discussion among ourselves about what we’ve been studying, and then open up the conversation to others in attendance. In this way we hope to demonstrate a feminist collective method of discourse, less hierarchical, more open to insurrection, while considering some abstract ideas along with some practical expectations, too.