

Unit 2: Gender Rights Movements

In this unit, you will write an essay about a social justice issue based on your interviews of two people from different generations about their experiences with social justice issues. You may write about daily-life issues such as women's treatment at work or life in immigrant communities, or you may focus on social justice activism. You can use themes and analyses from your prior essay for this paper.



In addition to your paper, you may want to write one of the two reviews of campus events that you are required to write this semester. You may want to get one of those one-page response papers done in this unit to use an event to interview speakers, activists, or others for your paper.

- **2/12: Interview questions are due in class.**
- **2/12-2/24: Conduct interviews.**
- **2/29: Outline and introduction are due by midnight.**
- **3/3: Drafts of interview essay are due by 9:00 AM.**
- **3/7: Revision of interview essay is due by midnight.**

Readings in the Unit 2 packet are in red. [Download the Unit 2 packet here](#)

The readings that are to be accessed on line appear below as **highlighted links**.

2/10: What do the four waves of feminism teach us about changes in attitudes to social justice?

At the beginning of this class, you will talk about the issues you want to address in your interviews. We will form groups from your shared interests. As in the first unit, we will then begin this unit with an article on how historical efforts to claim human rights have evolved in tandem with broader social attitudes: Grady's "[The waves of feminism, and why people keep fighting over them.](#)" To prepare for our discussion of feminism, identify one of the definitions of feminism you identify with in "A Feminist?" from 1975, a pivotal time in the history of feminism.

2/12: How does your generation perceive women's rights in ways that differ from earlier generations?

To help you develop your interview questions, read Glesne's "[Making Words Fly: Developing Understanding Through Interviewing.](#)" Bring a list of ten interview questions to work on in your group. To help you think about the broader issues you want to address in your interviews, we will follow up on our discussion of the generations of feminists to consider how the social attitudes of your generation have been shaped by your distinctive historical experience. As you read "[6 demographic trends shaping the US and world,](#)" think about the questions you want to ask in your interviews. If your interviews will focus on issues related to national origin, race, or ethnicity, you should take a few minutes to watch the short videos that are included here. What questions do the videos raise, and how can you get people talking about them in your interviews? These questions may also be helpful for your interviews: [Life Interview Questions](#) and [Civil Rights Questions](#).

- [Submit your interview questions and your interview subjects at the end of class. You should identify your interviewees without names by gender, ethnicity, and generation.](#)

Generations defined

Post-Millennial generation

Born: 1997 and later

Age of adults in 2018: 18 to 21

Share of adult population: 5%

Share non-Hispanic white: 53%^

Millennial generation

Born: 1981 to 1996

Age in 2018: 22 to 37

Share of adult population: 28%

Share non-Hispanic white: 56%

Generation X

Born: 1965 to 1980

Age in 2018: 38 to 53

Share of adult population: 26%

Share non-Hispanic white: 61%

Baby Boom generation

Born: 1946 to 1964

Age in 2018: 54 to 72

Share of adult population: 29%

Share non-Hispanic white: 72%

Silent Generation

Born: 1928 to 1945

Age in 2018: 73 to 90

Share of adult population: 11%*

Share non-Hispanic white: 79%*

Greatest Generation

Born: 1901 to 1927

Age in 2018: 91 and older

- [A Conversation about Growing Up Black](#)
- [A Conversation with Latinos on Race](#)
- [The Struggles of Being an Asian American](#)
- [A Conversation with White People on Race](#)
- [Growing Up Undocumented in America](#)
- [A Conversation with Black Women on Race](#)
- [A Conversation with My Black Son](#)
- ["We are Still Here": Growing up Native](#)

2/17 How has the LGBTQ+ community evolved along with related changes in attitudes?

To help us continue our discussions of how marginalized groups have developed their collective consciousness to claim their rights, we will explore generational differences in the LGBTQ+ community. To prepare for our discussion, view [The LGBTQ+ Generation Gap](#) and scan GenForward's [Millennial Attitudes on LGBT Issues: Race, Identity, and Experience](#), which includes survey questions like those you will use in your interviews. We will pay particular attention to the bulleted items on the first pages of the survey. We will also continue our discussions of Glesne's "[Making Words Fly: Developing Understanding Through Interviewing](#)," so you should review it for class.

2/19 How can we frame social justice issues in engaging and equitable ways?

This class will be devoting to exploring how we frame issues: consider the different discussions that follow from framing people as undocumented workers, illegal aliens, and migrants. Such frames tap into cognitive networks to motivate people to take action. We will discuss how frames trigger unconscious biases and how frames are used to mobilize social movements. We will also discuss how gender issues are framed in these two surveys: "[Gaps . . . on Gender Equality](#)" and "[Deep Divides about . . . LGBT Issues](#)." As with previous surveys, these studies will help you consider how rights issues are viewed by the different demographic groups you will be interviewing and writing about in your essay.

2/24 Looking both ways before crossing the intersections

To frame your interview essay, you will use information from the surveys and the experiences you wrote about in the first unit. Survey data can provide generalizations that can be useful, but also superficial. To help deepen our discussions, we will read three pieces by a noted black feminist poet and lesbian intellectual: Audre Lorde's "[Black Mother Woman](#)," "[Man Child](#)," and "[The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action](#)." Lorde's poem on her mother, her essay on her son, and her argument for the power of reflective language in action will help us bridge our reflections in the first and second units, including our discussions of the interconnectedness of social justice concerns and personal experiences. We will build that bridgework upon Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of *intersectionality*.

Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LGBTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things.

[Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality](#)

2/26 How do different generations view the #MeToo Movement?

As noted in the first reading in this unit, differing generations view the #MeToo movement through their own experiences. For class, read "[The #Me Too generation gap is a myth](#)" by Anna North. North examines the question of whether "millennials at war with older women over #MeToo." We will also discuss "[The #MeToo Movement: The Power of Narrative](#)." To locate that movement in the realm of the sort of personal experiences you will be interviewing people about, review the [Time magazine webpage](#) devoted to "Silence Breakers" and view the five-minute video with snippets of interviews on people's experiences with sexual harassment.



➤ [2/29 by midnight you will submit an outline and rough draft of your introduction to our Discussion page in D2L.](#)

3/2: Roughing out the interview essay

To help you draft the opening paragraphs for your essay, read [How to Write an Introduction from an Interview](#) and [Feminism, Past and Present: An Interview with My Mom](#). We will use these pieces to set up the group discussions that will provide you with time to talk through your interview essay. Please read the notes and introductory paragraphs of your group members before class. We will use the [Handouts on Style and Development](#).

➤ [3/3: You will submit your rough draft before 9AM to our Discussions page on D2L](#)

3/4 Reflecting on Our Own Unconscious Assumptions

We will devote this class to workshopping your intergenerational essay using [Handouts on Style and Development](#) we discussed in the last class. We will also do a group activity on unconscious bias to help us reflect on our work in this unit.

➤ [3/7: You will submit your revision by midnight to our Discussions page on D2L](#)

Preparing for Your Interviews

In developing your interview questions, you should focus on the dreams and successes rather than assuming that civil rights issues are concerned with how people have suffered from prejudice. You can find examples of such lines of discussion in the [LGBTQ+ Generation Gap](#) interview video that we will discuss on 9/26. While you may want to consider the restrictions and biases that women, people of color, and others have faced, you will likely find that you will have more engaging and insightful interviews if you focus on the successes and resilience that people have showed in confronting adversity.

To succeed in your interviews, you will need to practice deep listening and suspend judgment. That will require that you be prepared and flexible. You need to have several lines of discussion to find the most generative topics for discussion, and you need to be flexible enough to follow up on interesting responses to your questions. Here are some examples that may help you start thinking about the lines of discussion you want to develop

What's your experience with immigrants?

- Have you interacted with Americans born in other countries—have you lived or worked with immigrants?
- How do you think immigrants strengthen or weaken our country?
- How would you feel if more immigrants moved into your neighborhood?
- Why do you think people of differing views cannot talk about immigration?
- What is your own background: do you have family members or ancestors who were born abroad?

How have views of gender and sexual orientation affected your life?

- How have views of gender and sexual orientation changed over your lifetime?
- Do you remember moments when you witnessed or experienced such changes?
- Do you remember events or conversations that shaped how you understand what it means to be LGBTQ+?
- On gender issues, how did your parents' experiences differ from yours?
- How do your views and experience differ from the generations who are younger than you?

The Intergenerational Essay

For this essay, you will interview two people from different generations (and different genders, ethnicities, national origins, and/or sexual orientations—if possible and relevant). Details on the interview process are provided on the next page. The ages of different generations are included in our daily assignments to guide you in identifying several potential interviewees. The essay should be about seven pages long. Here is a simple and rather undeveloped example: [Feminism, Past and Present: An Interview with My Mom](#), which we will discuss in class. This sample essay is a simple report of an interview and lacks the framing analysis that is required for this assignment. You will develop that analysis from the readings in the unit, and your own research if needed.

The daily assignments in this unit should help you move through the process of developing your framework. We will read and talk about how the social and political views of different generations have been shaped by their distinctive historical experiences. As we have discussed, comparative analyses of generations can help us bridge the personal and the political by helping us explore how people's historical experiences have shaped their political outlooks.

In your essay, you will use our readings to consider how people's attitudes have evolved in tandem with their experiences and their reflections on their own development. You may focus on issues related to race, ethnicity, and national origin; gender and sexual orientation; or other issues such as differences in religion or political orientation.

Your essay may adopt a narrative or expository line of development. Either way, you should consider these points, and you may do so in this order in the paragraphs in your essay:

- How can you use the readings in class to frame the issues you examine in your interviews?
- What are the main factors or considerations that you will draw from our readings and discussions?
- Why did you select these interviewees, and how did the interviews go? How are the issues in your introductory paragraphs relevant to your own interests and the experiences of your interviewees?
- Will your essay discuss each interview in turn, or will you discuss the major points from all the interviews?
- How will you loop back to your opening framing to highlight the lessons you have learned from the interviews, readings, and your own reflections?