

**“Gender Online”
Intro to FGSS Class Plan, Tuesday October 28**

HOMEWORK: Reading, Internet exploration, note-taking

A) Reading: Students should print, read, and take notes on:

1) Hess, Amanda. 2014. “Why Women Aren’t Welcome on the Internet.” *Pacific Standard*. Posted Jan. 6. www.psmag.com/navigation/health-and-behavior/women-arent-welcome-internet-72170/

2) Tosenberger, Catherine. 2008. “Homosexuality at the Online Hogwarts: Harry Potter Slash Fanfiction.” *Children's Literature*, 36, 185-207.

B) Internet exploration: Students should take 30 minutes to explore the “Comments” section of the website of their choice, and take notes when Internet users use gender in their commentary.

LEARNING GOALS: By the end of Tuesday’s class, students should be able to:

A) Think critically about the different ways that people use gender in online communication and why they do so

B) Compare and contrast online and real world uses of gendered language

C) Debate the pros and cons of free speech, considering the implications for different demographic and special interest groups

D) Articulate a set of creative solutions to balance freedom of expression with protection from harassment

E) Develop flexibility of thinking through sensitivity for multiple viewpoints

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES:

A) Lesson Warm-up, Think-Pair-Share: “Online Speech Acts,” 20 minutes

Teacher will instruct students to take out their ‘Online exploration’ homework Assignment, and to spend 4 minutes writing on the following blackboard prompt, “Speech can say something and do something at the same time. On one level, it informs. But it can also label, greet, persuade, threaten, comfort, or affirm, among other many other possibilities. Using the notes that you took for homework, hypothesize as to how the different people in your examples are attempting to use gender as part of their arguments.

Now, take another 6 minutes to compare your findings with a classmate. What do your findings have in common? How do they differ? Did you find anything surprising? What might account for those peculiarities?

The teacher will then take 10 minutes to elicit findings from the class as a group.

B) Small and Large Group Work: “Conditions Affecting Communication,” 20 minutes

Each pair of students should meet with another pair to create groups of 4. Students should take 5 minutes to discuss how their online examples might have played out in the real world. Students should then take another 5 minutes to compose a list of conditions that affect the use of gender in communication, for example anonymity, speed of response, etc.

Teacher will create a list on the board, “Conditions Affecting Communication.” For the next five minutes, each group will add to this list (marking doubled items with checks).

In the final five minutes, the teacher will ask the different groups to explain why they selected the conditions they did, emphasizing the conditions with the most checks.

C) Individual, Pair, and Large Group Work: “Debating toward Solutions,” 35 minutes

Teacher will instruct students to take out “Why Women Aren’t Welcome on the Internet,” and free-write for 5 minutes on the pros and cons of online free speech, using examples from Amanda Hess’ and Catharine Tosenberger’s articles and from any other sources they choose, including their own lives.

Teacher will then divide the class, instructing half to write for 5 minutes on “We need more/less free speech online.”

Teacher will then instruct students to pair with a member of the opposite group, and to compare each others writing. Discuss which reasons, from both members, you find particularly compelling, and why. Try to think of at least 3 examples from politics, law, or popular culture to support or disprove these views. Now, refine the original reasons, and see if you can’t find some mutually beneficial solutions to satisfy both sides of the debate. (15 minutes total)

In the final 10 minutes of class, the teacher will elicit possible solutions from the class. We can then either vote on the most popular ones, or discuss how students might apply these lessons in their own lives and online.