

FINAL ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS: Re-framing Gender, Race and Nation in the Museum

Grade weight: 35% of your overall course grade

Assignment length: 6-8 pages or approx. 1500-2000 words + relevant illustrations

Due Monday, December 12, 2016*

The objective of the Final Assignment is both to demonstrate your understanding of the course materials and to cultivate your research-creation skills by imagining alternative framings for an existing exhibit at a local or virtual museum of national scope (e.g. Canadian Museum for Human Rights, virtualmuseum.ca). Building on the mid-term assignment and drawing again on key concepts and readings from the course, re-frame the exhibit with your own ideas for objects, images, narratives, text labels, interactive technologies, placement/location. This involves describing the original exhibition, introducing your own proposed designs, and explaining how your designs would bring the concepts of gender, race and nation into conversation with one another in a way that somehow critically re-frames the exhibit (or some aspect of its original significance). During the final class meeting on Monday, December 5, students will have an opportunity to informally report on their work towards this assignment.

*Please note that since the due date is after classes have ended, you will hand in a hardcopy of your assignment to the Women's and Gender Studies office. The office is 4G09 (4th floor Graham Hall) and is open regular office hours (call to confirm: 204-786-9878). Our Departmental Assistant, Nyala Ali, will ensure your assignment is date-stamped and placed in my secure mailbox. Your assignments will be available for pick up at the start of January.

ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA:

1. Choose an individual exhibit and briefly describe how gender, race, and nation (or other categories of social difference) are framed in the exhibit. (The Museum Ethnography Prompt Sheet handed out with the mid-term assignment will be helpful toward collecting this data).
2. Highlight the strengths and limitations of the exhibit with respect to its attention to intersectionality. Make sure that you provide an explanation of intersectionality based on the course materials (e.g. cite Crenshaw, Roberts, Dhamoon, and/or Failler lectures) before applying it to your analysis.
3. Introduce your proposed designs to re-frame the exhibit. These can include re-arranging or adding objects, images, narratives, text labels, interactive technologies, or changing the exhibit's placement/location, etc. Explain how these designs would bring the concepts of gender, race and nation into conversation with one another in a way that somehow critically re-frames the exhibit. In other words, explain how your re-framing of the exhibit might help visitors experience it in ways that deepen common-sense or surface level interpretations of gender, race and nation.
4. You **MUST** refer to course concepts and materials in this assignment. External sources (beyond your chosen exhibit) are not required. I am looking for you to apply specific ideas and critiques from the course readings and lectures. For example, in her article on the (in)visibility of Indigenous women in obituaries from national newspapers, Jasmin Yiwani asks "How are the stories that the nation tells itself about its inhabitants buttressing its identity as a nation?" (388). Drawing on Yiwani, a productive adaptation of this question for your assignment might be: How are the stories that the national museum tells itself and its visitors about the inhabitants of Canada buttressing the identity of Canada as a nation? Or, how do the museum's exhibits reinforce a sense of the nation as an "imagined community" (Yiwani 388)? Whose bodies are centered and whose are marginalized in this imagined community, and what does this say about the nation as a gendered and raced project (Yiwani 387)?
5. You may attach to your assignment relevant illustrations (i.e. photo images, transcripts of exhibit labels, museum takeaways) that you feel help give context to or describe the original exhibit and/or your re-framing designs. These will not be counted in your assignment's page length but will constitute an "Appendix."