

Assignment: Book Reviews for Libraries & Classrooms

This assignment serves multiple purposes. (1) It should be fun – “Not all fun is learning, but all learning should be fun” (Art Pearl, always). And plus, “If we couldn’t laugh we would all go insane” (Jimmy Buffet, 1977). (2) It gives you a chance to practice your new analyzing the patriarchy / flexing your patriarchy-smashing chops on a real-life young adult literature. (3) You will hopefully find something you will be able to use in your classes in the future. (4) You will DEFINITELY learn how to critically evaluate what you use in your classes in the future.

We will assemble everyone’s book reviews into a resource for current teachers, who I’m guessing don’t have time to read 20+ YA novels and will be grateful to hear your perspectives and recommendations.

You will complete this assignment individually, but you are encouraged to share, discuss, troubleshoot, with your reading group / book club members and classmates. We’ll also have a class period to work with art materials in the classroom.

Your final product will be FOUR 8 1/2 x 11 pieces of paper (separate, not two sided). The first will have some kind of artistic visual representation of your novel; the second will have the basic information listed below (and other info you decide belongs in “basic info”); the third page will have your written review, including all of the elements listed below, and perhaps others, but no more than one page; finally... the fourth page will have the YA Feminist Fiction rubric and your comments about the book in relation to the rubric’s categories.

Basic Info and Written Review (draft): due Tuesday Week 8 in class
Final Project due Thursday Week 10 in Class for SHOWCASE!!

BASIC INFO:

Title: Author: Publisher and Year:

Main Character & brief description: (e.g. Joanna, a 16-yo trans-girl who lives with her strict dad and goes to a (very!) traditional school since last year when they moved to a small town.)

Supporting Characters & brief descriptions: (e.g. Dad, also known as Jim, also known as Mr. Gordon, a single dad who loves his child but cannot seem to understand what he

calls “this whole being a girl all of a sudden thing” and “Roxie” Joanna’s BFF and #1 fan, furry, long tail.)

Setting: (in narrative style, not a list, include place, time, description (you can quote from the book!). You can note the season or change of seasons, add depth to your description by showing how the setting is important to the development of the character or how it is otherwise effective to the development of the story.

Story summary: (*with spoilers* – don’t leave something to surprise the teacher they are reading the book together with their whole class!)

YOUR REVIEW:

Why this book is a great feminist novel for young adults (or not, using our rubric to explain):

What interpersonal elements of sexism/misogyny/patriarchy are addressed in the novel? How are they portrayed,

How are sexists/misogynists and their survivors/victims and resisters portrayed by the writer? What about bystanders? Upstanders? Authority figures such as teachers, other school people, parents? What stereotypes or tropes are upheld? Which are questioned / upended?

How is structural patriarchy portrayed and addressed in the novel? Would this be a good book to use when talking to teenagers about patriarchy? What about misogyny and/or sexism?

How does this book fit in with our larger work as social justice teachers? In other words: how does it help us, and our students, understand the intersectional nature of systems of oppression? ** You can and should refer to readings from class (using APA style of course!) as I will be making a References page for the end of our final product. But avoid being too wordy/philosophical. We don’t want to put more work on our colleagues!