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Glory Daze: Gloria Steinem's Biography Untangles the Mystique of Feminism

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"Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities." Gloria Steinem

Introduction

Stories are written everyday. These life stories are the simplest form of biography. No one writer can describe the life of another completely, that is where imagination fills the white space.

Imagination is an important part of biography for both the writer and reader. Even when we write about our own lives we leave out events and interactions we do not feel are significant for our audience. Good writers leave enough to the reader's imagination so the reader is drawn in and wants to know more. Much autobiography is "just the good stuff." Writers do not often tell the intimate details of their hopes and fears in an account of their own life. Marginally famous people often use autobiography to glorify their own life. In either case, a story is told.

Why is Gloria Steinem not commonplace? ¹

A good biographer tells an interesting story of a person in a particular time and place. By making the reader aware of what happens to the central character and how this person is affected by and impacts the world around them, the reader can learn history. Textbooks often limit their coverage of history to the winners and forget the common man or woman who also plays an important role in shaping their surroundings. This investigation of a life by a biographer may yield more history than journals, letters and other artifacts. Gloria Steinem has been linked to feminism for the past forty years. Her story is one of a poor girl who was able to fulfill her dreams (and those of her mother) through journalism. It was through her writing assignments that Steinem was able to see the oppression of American women and begin her fight for equality. One can view her biography as a portrait with many layers of paint hiding the fears of a little girl from Toledo who looked to a bright future in a big city. This forward-looking mentality kept Steinem from living in the present but gave her the drive necessary to become one of the most prominent women in America today. She recently won the

Medal of Freedom, there is an HBO documentary about her life and yet she has become a forgotten feminist.

Overview

The Need for Women's Studies Before College

For the focus of my unit students will examine the genre of biography using Gloria Steinem, a poor child who went through many struggles to achieve her goal of becoming a prominent journalist. My students relate to authors who are not afraid to describe the poverty they were born into and spent many years trying to escape. Think about the most influential person in your life; is it a man or woman? The methods Ms. Steinem uses to achieve her goals make her a tragic hero in one sense and a clever survivalist in the other. Opposite her male counterparts, Steinem was forced to research and write only about women's issues. She took the opportunity to expand her skills and her influence beyond just a woman's world to humanity. Reproductive rights, female political equality and exploitation of women in pornography are some of the issues Steinem continues to herald through international media. Much of her focus past and present is absent from American History but can be fully explored through Women's Studies.

Susan Brownmiller reflects on her experience with the women's movement with *In Our Time*, and makes the case for continued action. She reminds a new, young audience how life was forty years ago. "Imagine a world...in which the Help Wanted columns were divided in to Male for the jobs with a future and Female for the dead-end positions..."² and yet many women compete to get these simple jobs. Imagine you are a woman looking for a job in 1963, you can pick from secretary, teacher, nurse or flight attendant (originally nurses were hired to make the airline passengers feel safe). My mother was a nurse who interviewed to be a stewardess but did not meet the height and natural hair color requirements so she landed a job in a hospital operating room. Her job was to smack the instruments into hands of the prominent doctor so he could quickly tighten his grip and proceed with his important work. When the job was not up to par the doctor would yell, "come on Blondie, hit the palm with the clamp" in a loud voice. Verbal abuse was considered a regular act by those in power toward their subordinates. There was no word for domestic abuse, it was called life. Women had few choices in their work and home and little recourse for any wrongdoing.

Women in the sixties were slowly expanding their power in the home but it was economic opportunity that would truly empower women to push for political freedom in America. "Imagine a time-or summon it back to memory-when a husband was required to countersign a wife's application for a credit card, a bank loan, or automobile insurance..."³ Working hard is seen by many as a traditional American value. For women, labor outside the home is something that helped them get the vote and greater inclusion in the American political process, but even now women still struggle for complete social equality. The chant "you've come a long way baby" has been replaced with the question "should women even try to have it all?" Gloria Steinem talks often about the need to recognize the work women do in the home but also questions why more men can't do the same work of caring for children and maintaining the home.

This unit will take the reader on a journey through the second wave of the women's movement in America starting with Gloria Steinem and spiraling out to her sisters in action over several decades then ending with the student as a modern feminist. I will not lay out an entire biography of Ms. Steinem but will show several examples to illustrate my arguments. Sources will include the autobiographical writings by Steinem and the

biographies by Carolyn Heilbrun (credited with enhancing women in biography) and Sydney Stern (unofficial Steinem biographer). Several articles written by Gloria Steinem in the sixties and seventies will show how women were given female friendly assignments but few career-making tasks. One piece, *Nylons in the Newsroom*, published in the *New York Times* on Sunday, November 7, 1965, was a commentary on women who made it in a man's world of television news. The article mentions more than a dozen women doing notable work in the field. Barbara Walters received the most network exposure but still covered women's issues. Steinem's writing is excellent and her purpose direct as she gives four steps to success for women who want to have a career in television. This piece is not considered worthy of the hard news section.

The article can be found thirty pages from where it is listed in the microfilm guide, in the entertainment section. One might expect an article on female television reporters to be in the "extra" section past the wedding announcements and "hard news." I found the placement of *Nylons in the Newsroom* to be more telling than the text of the article. While I was searching the first hundred pages of the Sunday paper I found a wedding announcement stating "Ruth L. Will Be Married to a Law Student" and a creative advertisement promoting "Four Frankly Feminine Reasons for Turning to the Times Everyday" a few pages away. *The New York Times* clearly wanted women to read the paper for food, fashion, family and furnishing news, not to gain the experience necessary to work in television. The arrangement of Steinem's sixth article, but first *New York Times* publication certainly fueled her future work in the women's movement. Barbara Walters was flattered by Steinem's report, especially the mention that Walters does her own research. Walters credits Steinem's article *Nylons* for leading to *Life* cover story that started her famous career. ⁴ Biographer Carolyn Heilbrun brings these events to light as a way to show Steinem's early desires for herself and others to break into the male dominated world of journalism.

This unit is written for a Women's Studies course in an urban public school system. The students will have studied the framework of feminism and started to explore the need for Women's Studies. Guiding questions include; How do you define feminism? Why do you think it is important to learn women's studies? How do historical events like the struggle for the political equality shape the women's movement?

Glory Daze will connect the details of Gloria Steinem's life with her work in the women's movement in the hopes of empowering young urban women to better their own lives. My goal is to empower the young woman finishing High School with one or more children, the single female trying to escape an abusive relationship and the young girl afraid of politics to mirror the traits that made Gloria Steinem successful. I will attempt to show the complex woman who continues to move others to act through her words and actions. The biographical comparisons will validate and challenge Ms. Steinem's own reflections of her "Outrageous Acts."

The image to the left is the staircase in the Yale Art Museum. At first glance it is unclear from what viewpoint the photo was taken. One needs to consider the light sources and the position of the railing to be sure. This staircase serves a purpose to move people up or down yet it is also a work of art. Biography is a work of art that can function like a spiral if the author starts in one place and winds up or down to get at the truth. The author may focus on particulars to show character traits then move to the big picture for common actions and zoom out to show the subject in a greater context. Biography is written from the perspective of the author with a particular goal in mind, often to write the subject into history. Many biographies of prominent men are included in curricula for American History. Few women appear. Changing our perspective about which stories are told in a history course may change the opinion of some who think men are the politicians and women are the mothers. Looking at the impact of one individual on history may encourage students to seek their own truth. Throughout her life, Gloria Steinem constantly provokes critical thinking to get at the truth. "The truth will set you free," Steinem says, "but first it will piss you off."

Biography in "Herstory"



My research has led me in many directions then back to the central point; Gloria Steinem is a catalyst for feminism. While reading the introduction to the book, *The F-Word; Feminism in Jeopardy*, by Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner I came across pencil graffiti. Where the author had written, "In the wake of Gloria Steinem, burned bras and cracked glass ceilings, a new generation of young women is shaping American culture," an enthusiastic reader wrote in the margin, "ok i need to write not *about* this generation but *from* this generation." The graffiti were asking for autobiographical support for the data provided by the author.⁵ Juxtaposition of academic papers with everyday experience sharing is common in feminism today. This pencil-packed critic seems to be sharing her thoughts with the world, perhaps proving the author's point. I think the pencil marks in the book will spur the discussion about feminism. I will leave them there for the next reader.

Why is Gloria Steinem's Biography Important?

I have always wondered why Gloria Steinem is not known by the current youth of America, especially young ladies a women's studies course. In preparation for this unit I showed the PBS series *Makers: Women Who Make America*⁶ to my Advanced Placement U.S. History class. They were excited and intrigued. Watching actual clips of feminists in action left many in awe. The students did not need a worksheet with questions to reflect on what they saw. Many students, male and female, were talking about the series as they moved from class to class. One essay question on the A.P. U.S. History exam prompted students to reflect on the Women's Movement as one of many storms of the 1960's. Most of my students who remembered the stories from *Makers* wrote profound essays from the heart. As I write this, I am interacting with people on the street who have misconceptions of Ms. Steinem's original mission as a young journalist. Gloria is remembered by some as "too pretty to be a feminist."

I heard a story of an HBO executive who asked her staff, in preparation for the upcoming documentary, *Gloria Steinem: In Her Own Words* to begin research on the subject and no one knew where to start. Few of the staffers in their twenties knew the name; "Gloria who?" My fascination with this prominent feminist started when my mother received a complimentary copy of *Ms.* magazine in the mail which was mistakenly delivered with the regularly subscribed *Multiple Sclerosis Magazine*. I discovered later that it was part of the mission of *Ms.* to send free copies to single women in hopes of empowering them. I read much of the magazine but was too young to comprehend the impact it would have on a young girl in the late seventies and early eighties. I

soon realized that my mother was a single-mother raising three children on her own with a debilitating illness. She rose above many challenges to educate herself with three nursing degrees while managing the household and slamming the door in the face of the male debt collectors looking for my father. All the time, keeping her hair perfectly styled. My mother, also named Gloria, was a feminist, but it would take me years to understand how. Even now, she would never use this f-word, but she was stronger and more capable than any person I knew. My mother taught me to be independent and value education. It is from the influence of strong women that I became a teacher in the hope of helping others.

The biographies of Gloria Steinem are thoughtful, clever and dynamic. Perhaps they are interesting because the subject is so complex and shown in many settings to overcome challenges of class, gender and geography. I believe students should read, as I did, Heilbrun then Stern then go to the original source to check the facts from Ms. Steinem. Students will have their own revelations and may be surprised to see who prints the truth and who uses their imagination to fill in the details of the story. The use of biography as a first look at history may excite students to discover important events in their own lives which they can use to understand bigger historical themes.

By zooming in on this one woman, students will be able to see how the ordinary life of an average woman can have a profound impact on the world. Moving away from Gloria Steinem students will be able to explore women in journalism, women in advocacy groups and women who are not considered typical feminists but impact their environment in a positive way.

The first biography of Gloria Steinem was completed by Carolyn Heilbrun a prominent writer who championed for more women in biography. She saw autobiography as the discovery of a life, not simply a story, but an act of discovery. Steinem certainly went on her own journey of reflection in telling her story to the world through her various publications. Heilbrun believed biography is different from autobiography because biography has the imposition of the writer's perception upon the life of the subject. Heilbrun admits, "I, as the biographer of a feminist, begin from the desire to write the life of a woman who became, simultaneously, the epitome of female beauty and the quintessence of female revolution." ⁷ The author was hoping to use Gloria Steinem as a representation of the Women's Movement since she titled her work, *The Education of a Woman*, yet she believes each generation needs to continue to write or rewrite biographies. Throughout her work on Steinem, Heilbrun exposes many contradictions; a feminist in a miniskirt, a fiancée and never a wife, a successful journalist who tactfully shows positive views of women and a woman of courage who avoided direct personal conflict but constantly challenged patriarchy." ⁸

Heilbrun believes Steinem was not a feminist until she reported on the Redstockings group. It seems pretty clear that she was an advocate for women many years prior. "Her own epiphany, as she describes it, came in 1969, in the earliest stages of the abortion rights campaign. *New York* legislators held a hearing on a proposed liberalization of the state's abortion laws and invited witnesses - 12 men and one woman - a nun. ⁹ The Redstockings group held its own abortion hearings in the Washington Square Methodist Church and Steinem covered them for her *New York* magazine column. ¹⁰ Gloria Steinem had never seen women tell their stories in public yet she was more shocked by the number of women admitting to having an abortion and the current illegal status of the procedure. Her male counterparts would probably never cover this "women's issue" but they soon pulled her aside and warned her not to get involved with the "crazy women" as she had worked so hard to be taken seriously. ¹¹ Some of the stories Heilbrun recalls were picked up by Tom Brokaw to be included in an informal history of the Sixties. He may have included Steinem in the work anyway but since he admits to reading her biography I am sure her story was brought to life from Heilbrun's research.

Background: Steinem Build's Character

Gloria Steinem was born in Ohio and spent much of her childhood traveling the country in a trailer. She lacked many years of formal education but quickly learned street smarts. Her parents divorced when she was young and Steinem relied on her sister for guidance. Biographer Ms. Sydney Stern recounts how Steinem was forced to care for herself quite often. She uses stories from Steinem's childhood to show how the lack of a traditional family setting shaped her character in significant ways. The project was unauthorized but Stern did gain access to Steinem's friends and hours of interviews with Steinem. This biographer interviewed Steinem's friends, associates and boyfriends with the goal of showing all sides of feminism's "deadliest weapon." ¹²

Biographer Sydney Stern believes she was born to make the world a better place. "When Gloria Steinem became a feminist, she already had women's rights in her blood. Her grandmother Steinem was one of the most prominent suffragists in the state of Ohio." ¹³ Stern uses this line early in his book to foreshadow the transformation of Ms. Steinem from an average woman to an ardent feminist. She starts with her grandmother and the philosophy of the time that may have helped to promote equal rights. Stern throws out an interesting comparison, "Although Pauline [grandmother] was an ardent suffragists, it is not clear that she was an equally ardent feminist." By separating out the push for the 19th Amendment from a shift to a matriarchal society, he allows the activists to be more realistic in their goals. Gloria's grandmother was the first in her town to point out that history was written by men about men, something that Gloria would challenge throughout her life. ¹⁴

Stern implies Steinem's lonely upbringing taught her to create a public image and "happy face" to be able to hide a fragile personal self. ¹⁵ Steinem admits that she worked hard to impress those around her but never backed down from speaking her mind. It was her desire to bring fairness and justice to the world that attracted her to causes like the Black Panthers and Cesar Chavez's "La Causa." When other activists like Brownmiller were taking the lead on civil rights issues, Steinem was allowing men to influence her politically, economically and socially. As Steinem's writing career grew, so did the importance of the men in her life. She would be involved in campaigning, fund-raising and consciousness-raising within a decade of graduating from Smith College. Steinem cofounded Ms. magazine and the Ms. Foundation, the National Women's Political Caucus and Women's Action Alliance. This feminist legacy would not have been possible, according to Stern, without a challenging homelife and independent mindset from childhood.

Her mother, Ruth, aspired to be a journalist. It was the abandonment of this dream that Steinem believes caused her mother's depression. In *Ruth's Song* she reflects on these struggles but does not let them take over her life. ¹⁶ Steinem had a sense of right and wrong even at a young age. Her morality may have been fine tuned after she spent two years in India. In the history of the women's movement, Betty Friedan's publication of the *Feminine Mystique* in 1963 was the catalyst for the second wave. "Having nothing in common with the suburban college graduates of whom Friedan wrote, Steinem struggled on alone, not yet conscious of the pattern of oppression that would reveal itself to her in 1969." ¹⁷ The National Organization for Women (NOW) was formed in 1966 by Friedan and twenty-eight other women to pressure the government for women to have full inclusion into society. Other radical groups also formed around women's issues. Steinem joined NOW but desired to transform American culture, not merely to allow women greater access to a man's world. ¹⁸

Although Steinem was not seen as a radical reformer, she did not believe NOW should maintain a hierarchy like other male dominated groups. Rotating leadership seemed like true democracy in her eyes. This challenge to the existing leadership led to tension in the women's movement. Nora Ephron, journalist and screenwriter, recently recanted these struggle to Tom Brokaw, "The rivalry was not helpful...Steinem was so much more

representative of the new generation, with her perfect straight blond hair, her hip wardrobe, and her svelte figure. She was a natural on television." ¹⁹ The look Steinem had through the sixties would stay with her; aviator glasses, fashionable clothing and a thin frame. It amazes me even now that people are concerned with the way female journalist present themselves and not what they are reporting. If Steinem had fit the proper mold of the male journalist she may have had better story leads but she would not be where she is today.

Steinem may not have been completely conscious of her activism in the early days, but she knew she was pushing her way into a man's world and striving for equality. In 1962 she took an *Esquire* assignment from Clay Felker to write about the effects of the Pill on the behavior of college women. ²⁰ Biographer Heilbrun documents the interaction between Felker and Steinem for several pages leaving the reader to wonder how the article on birth control was received. This article was seen by many at the time as Steinem's big break into a popular magazine. Although Felker would make Steinem rewrite the article he would go on to help fund her future ventures. It may seem like Steinem got many of her leads or political work from the men in her life. She understood who had the power and that it would take years of hard work and proving herself to change this dynamic.

According to biographer Heilbrun, Steinem's 1960s can be grasped under three headings: the articles she wrote, the men in her life, and the causes she gave her time and money but was unable to publicize through the press as she would have wished. ²¹ The version Stern gives is more of a free lance journalist living her life and having fun while being influenced by social ills around her. The version Stern tells over several chapters shows Steinem as a confident young woman with a constant air of mystery which is really a cover up for a terrible childhood. Steinem's lonely upbringing taught her to create a public image and "happy face" to be able to hide a fragile personal self. ²² Steinem admits that she worked hard to impress those around her but never backed down from speaking her mind. Both authors hint at Steinem's lack of introspection and desire to live in the future. Steinem admits to this in her 1992 publication, *Revolution from Within*, and acknowledges the strength it took to keep up a public persona.

Why would anyone want to study feminism from a former Playboy bunny?

Gloria Steinem details her struggles in her first book, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. This autobiography covers the same content as her biographies but avoids past struggles to focus on future reforms. The title shows the author's subtle humor she sustains throughout all her books. Women need to laugh at themselves to be able to deal with the stresses of a patriarchal world. Steinem's first book is a collection of essays she wrote for various audiences from 1963 through 1983. I urge readers to go to their public libraries and seek out the text in the original print. Some articles may be available as online sources accessible with a library card. Steinem puts the "Bunny Article" ²³ first as a way to open the readers' eyes to her personal experiences. Sure, she was a mere muckraker going through the motions to be able to share her experience with future generations of women; what a powerful way to argue. In the first few pages she sets her goals, softens up the reader and becomes likable. Steinem sets out to dispel the myth that "Bunnies have glamorous jobs" with wages near "300 a week," then she builds anticipation with the story of her ruse. She later reflects, "the thing took on a life of its own" ²⁴

What I notice first is her choice of undercover name, Marie Ochs, since it is "to square to be phony," as if *Playboy* was inundated with Ida Tarbell imitators. ²⁵ Ms. Steinem was actually paying tribute to her grandmother, a fighter for women's right to vote. The article was a two part spread in a publication called *Show* May & June 1963. I had trouble finding Bunny Story Part 1, but since I have the resources of Yale

University I did find the original print bound, advertisements and all. Part 1 of the article was in the May issue, after a long article on JFK but The "Bunny Tale, Part 2" seemed to be filler for a cultural issue on Japan. In addition to the placement, I noticed the advertisements. Prior to this research I may have laughed but after reading Steinem's piece *Sex, Lies and Advertising* I have a critical eye. *Show* was for theater-goers and people of culture and yet the text is surrounded by ads for Perm-a-lift panties (actually a girdle) and Vegas showgirls. Both ads take attention away from Steinem in her bunny suit, but tell me the publisher of *Show* was much the same as other publishers of the time, focused on product placement. This is the equivalent of spam email or ads on Pandora. Once companies know where you are from Google earth and what you like they slam you with ads for specific products thinking you are a captive audience. The average woman sees four hundred to six hundred advertisements per day, and by the age of seventeen, the average person will have been exposed to about 250,000 commercial messages.²⁶ I find the placement of these ads typical of the time and perhaps a basis for the work Gloria Steinem would go on to do in challenging big advertising firms. In *Moving Beyond Words*, her fourth book, Steinem details her struggle with corporate advertising in her magazine, *Ms.* One can imagine the realities of women in the workplace as shown in the AMC series *Mad Men* holding true throughout the 1970's and 1980's.

As Steinem describes the challenge of getting through the interview and bunny orientation. I keep thinking where did she keep her diary? There was no room in the bunny suit, it was two sizes too small? How does one go through a life-changing experience and just sit down and write about it in a way that has a profound impact on the reader? I wish I could get my students to write like her. While she writes and reflects on the degrading comments and exploitive acts she still pushes herself through the experience. The article was well received in the entertainment world but not by Hefner, Playboy or the "bunny girls". No action was taken to change the working conditions but several years later the girls no longer needed a full physical and gynecological exam to be a waitress in the Playboy Club. Steinem was seen as a disgruntled bunny, a privileged journalist, and a snitch. She continued to hold her beliefs despite a million dollar libel suit, testimony to the New York State Liquor Authority and many threatening phone calls. It was the stigma of being a Playboy bunny, she believes, that stalled her journalistic career.²⁷ Serious stories would go to male reporters and Steinem would continue to report on women's issues. Steinem wrote a piece for *New York Magazine*, "After Black Power, Women's Liberation" in 1969 showing her willingness to take on compelling issues like the lack of women in politics.

Frustrated with the lack of reporting on serious women's issues, Steinem founded *Ms.* Magazine in 1972. She worked with the five founding editors; Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Mary Thom, Patricia Carbine, Joanne Edgar, Nina Finkelstein, and Mary Peacock to counter patriarchy in the media. "Part of the problem was that the mainstream media were in the hands of middle-aged white male members of the establishment who were more amused than enlighten by women's rising consciousness about their rightful place in business, politics, education and the professions." Brokaw writes in his history of the sixties. "Those editorial gatekeepers too often treated women's issues as a bra-burning sideshow, always good for some entertainment but not serious enough for the front page or the lead story in the network newscast."²⁸

One year after *Newsweek* ran a cover story calling Steinem the "unlikely guru" of the Women's Movement, she increased the level of activism on many fronts.²⁹ By encouraging women to write about women's issues for women the magazine was able to influence women who did not have time to take to the streets in protest. Steinem says *Ms.* Became a kind of group therapy for women across the country who wrote to share their stories. She says the common theme was "At least I know I'm not alone. And I'm not crazy the system is crazy."³⁰ Heilbrun says *Ms.* Was one of the most successful magazine start ups of the time³¹. Sure, she had help from her male friends at *New York Magazine* but Steinem continued to finance the venture for the next

twenty years through creative means. This system of patriarchal government and money-driven media is something Steinem still rallies against. She continues to help with the editing of Ms. Magazine.

Beyonce is on the cover of the Spring 2013 issue of *Ms.* Magazine. There is much talk and criticism over a pop culture icon being a strong representative of feminism. The question seems to be similar to one that Steinem faced in the sixties, "how can a pretty woman be a feminist?" Beyonce is a powerful African-American woman with her own view of feminism as women doing what they want and defining their lives in their own terms.³² When women acquire money they have power to influence the world. Beyonce does not want to limit her definition of feminism to academic talk. "I love being a woman," she says "and I love being a friend to other women." Steinem had a similar mantra in the seventies when asked about increasing activism she said just take another woman with you.

The HBO documentary *Gloria: In Her Own Words* originally aired in 2011 will play again August 30, 2013 on HBO Signature. This video will allow a television audience to be able to hear the stories from directly from Steinem that were previously available in biography, autobiography or oral history. There is a small media blitz on YouTube with interviews and recent speeches. One clip from HARDtalk on BBC from February 26, 2013 shows Steinem's tenacity to get at the truth. The interviewer ask the wrong questions so Ms. Steinem gives an answer to tell the facts and reminds the interviewer what he should have asked initially.³³ Steinem directs the interview as if she was the person charged with getting the scoop. When questioned if women are better off now, Steinem says it will take one hundred years to gain full equality and we are only forty years into the fight. Her fashion style may have changed with the times but her tenacity to lift women to higher places remains.

Gloria Steinem was recently awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, for her work in feminism and human rights. She accepted the award and accolades while maintaining her focus on bettering women's lives.

When asked by Heilbrun what she wants to accomplish, Steinem said, "what I wish for on this day is that women would treat ourselves as well and take ourselves as seriously as we do others."³⁴

Objectives

After completing this unit, students will be changed. They will know more about women, feminism and themselves. Analyzing documents across time will allow students to reach their own interpretation of these events and their significance. The goal is to get students to understand the process by which historians use complex materials to get at the facts. Students sometimes have a hard time understanding how interpretations of events can be modified to show only one side. Biography can show many sides of a person. The biographer becomes the historian who hopes their subject is long remembered. Students should gain an appreciation for the historical process after close examination of primary sources and deconstruction of secondary sources.

Essential Questions

Throughout this unit students will be exploring their own interests in Women's Studies.

Instead of just considering the what, where and how of the Women's Liberation movement in the mid-sixties and seventies, students will take a close look at who and why. The strategies these women used to force women's equality in a patriarchy are imbedded in the experiences of the activists.

Strategies

This unit will put *herstory* into history. By utilizing simple images like advertisements from the sixties, I hope to encourage student thought about the subject, author, objective, purpose and intended audience. This unit will connect primary sources, images and biographical works to evoke emotions and spur action, as it did for Gloria Steinem.

One reason for writing this curriculum unit is to increase knowledge of the need for Women's Studies. By identifying themes across various sources, both the art of writing and the subject can be critiqued. Students will see the importance of telling the whole story, including *herstory*, to create a unified account of events. Timelines will be used to ask "what do we know here?" Many women's issues are the same across various time periods. After much thinking, planning, research and writing students may interview women in the community to gain a local perspective on the need for Women's Studies. One goal of this unit is to examine the biographies of Gloria Steinem both to cover the form those works take and the function of a feminist in formation. Students will gain an historical perspective about women's issues that evolve into a mass movement. This unit will have key concepts, skill sets and learning objectives for use in the Women's Studies course for my district. Adaptations for Advanced Placement U.S. History will be made as the course is one of two required in the junior year. Some strategies may be used in AP English Language and composition as my students in the AP U.S. History section will often have this course. Cross curricular work should boost student achievement and increase teacher collaboration. The ultimate goal is to promote literacy using Steinem's life and work as a template the students can follow to change their life and the world around them. Hopefully Gloria Steinem's biography will give students renewed faith in the public schools and the continued desire to educate themselves.

Since this is a semester class, content will be condensed and students will be asked to process information quickly, come up with more questions and solve them together with guidance from the teacher. Collaboration will be encouraged through various technologies but students will also be encouraged to read printed text in the original form to gain full comprehension. Students should use the course to gain content knowledge, learn to work effectively with others and increase their awareness of inequalities. One goal of the teacher is to provoke activism by presenting words and images which highlight gender differences.

Students can work together to draft questions which will provoke juicy details. Flip cams and iPhones may be used to record two minute clips as an elevator pitch or promotion of the class. Students will have to use an extensive selection process to edit their array of interview questions and notes to a few minutes of tape. Presentations may be made at Open House or other classes to promote the Women's Studies course in the school. The next step can be for students to document their own lives. Like a time capsule, what will the record of your life reflect? Students will be asked to state why they are in the class, and perhaps why they are not somewhere else. What is unique about you? What can you bring to the Women's Studies course?

A Note on the Common Core Standards

Language Arts and Social Studies Standards emphasize analyzing, evaluating, and critically writing about history by using evidence and information from various sources. This kind of rigorous work aligns with college expectations. A great deal of time must be devoted to teaching students how to investigate and analyze historical writing before they can do it successfully on their own. Using life stories saves time.

Classroom Activities

Lesson One : Gathering Archives

Document analysis will be an important skill students continue to develop throughout the unit and the course. For starters, the students will select (no advice given at first) a photo of themselves to use as a template for examining graphic documents. Students may take a photo of themselves the day the assignment is given or select one from their social media postings or family archives. Directions may be given to print, scan or email so the teacher can scan show all photos from all students. The goal of the exercise is to have student use a template from www.nara.gov to examine their document as a historian would, hopefully altering the sheet in the end. In this case, I will have them explain the selection process more than the detail of the people, things, place, or time of the photo. Why did they select this one photo? Why not others? What does this photograph say about them , their family, or friends. When I used that assignment in U.S. History one student each year would pick a portrait and give me an encyclopedic entry for the president or prominent man, without analyzing what was actually in the painting. I hope to have kids zoom in and zoom out to begin to tell their story.

In AP U.S. History I use Eric Rothchild's Pic-a-picture assignment where students selected a graphic from a popular textbook and write 1,000 words describing the historical significance of all things connected to the photo in a well organized informative essay. Now, I would like them to write persuasively. Part of their narrative should include "what brought you to this point...this class, why now?" Forcing students to think about their goals in the class will make them think about their own learning and future goals.

Writing about the photo will allow students to begin to discover how to fill in historical gaps by telling the biographies of the people in the photos. Writing about this lesson reminds me that women's history is American History.

Lesson Two : Web of Women



This exercise shows Connectedness of women before, during and after the second wave of feminism. Students realize they are in the discussion. They suddenly become part of the dialog. What happens when someone drops out? It takes a community of women working together to hold the web together and yet we often teach history of individuals of events in isolation.

For the Web-weaving activity: Get a large skein of yarn to have on hand. Each student is assigned an important woman in the field of women's studies. Depending on the age, the teacher can give more direction on how to find background research based on occupation or activities. A quick but detailed background should be compiled by each student for each character. They may want to make name tags. The teacher who gave me this idea, Susan Pingel, had her students make elaborate name tags to serve as a visual representation of the *character* of each person. For example, Bella Abzug's tag may be a hat similar to one she always wore. Steinem's name in aviator glasses, or Sarah Weddington's name may adorn a coat hanger. In some cases, the name tag may tell a great deal about the person but of course it has no emotion, that comes from the student portraying the character.

This list is just a sample of the women I found to be left out of history. This list of possible characters for students to research includes doctors, lawyers, activists and average women who made a mark on history with *herstory*. Carla Hills ³⁵ , Joan Didion, Dr. Judith Rodin, Muriel Kraszewski, Joan Crowe, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Mary Thom, Patricia Carbine, Joanne Edgar, Nina Finkelstein, Mary Peacock, Helen Reddy, Nora Ephron, Betty Friedan, Susan Brownmiller, Bella Abzug, Jane Pauley, Anne Taylor Fleming, Linda Greenhouse, Dorothy Rabinowitz, Dr. Ruth Simmons, Dr. Susan Miller, Barbara Walters, Flo Kennedy, Marcia Ann Gillespie, Shirley Chisholm, Hilary Clinton, Alice Walker, Barbara Jordan, Frances Tarlton "Sissy" Farenthold. The teacher may want to have a template for the research to help guide students through primary sources. The Quick Biography the students create should be a supplement to the popular view presented in mainstream textbooks so it should go beyond who, what, where to include a character analysis good, bad or ugly. Selection of what to leave in and what to leave out may be challenging at first. Further selection will take place when the students share out to the other "characters."

After two days, students will come to class with their "character" name tag and Quick Biography notes. In groups of 6 to 8 students should form a circle and explain Once who they are to the other "Characters." Once all characters complete their initial introduction the task becomes to visually connect each woman. Students form one large circle and pass the yarn from one character to another stating how they are related to each other. "I am Gloria Steinem, key member of NOW with friend Letty Cottin Pogrebin..." (Pass yarn to student playing Letty) then student catches the yarn and thinks of who they are connected to in the circle. "I am woman" is not enough, they need to state the political organization, or social circle or even shared philosophy. They may need to take time to think where they would have crossed paths with the other characters. The lesson will show (after 15 to 20 minutes of yarn tossing), a visual web of connectedness.

In this yarn tossing exercise, the students who do more extensive research will have more things to say and more relationships to map out with string. Teachers may extend the activity to include a ranking of the top women with the most "points" for a Hall of Fame. If students think the activity is too fast, the teacher can rewind the yarn and reconnect each character. Students can write a biography of one prominent person in the movement for women's rights. The assignment sheet may say, "Biography - if you could only write one, state who and why". This is important as the AP U.S. History exam recently asked students to analyze change in the Sixties by picking two movements and discussing the reasons for the social change. In the future the AP U.S. Exam will ask questions around themes which the students must recognize in a larger context. Students were asked to analyze reasons for the rise of protest movements in the post WWII era through the Ford administration. The task required an understanding of the question and the ability of students to select two of four choices. Most writers selected college students and women yet most history books give more treatment to the reasons for Black Power and Cesar Chavez's movement for Latino equality.

Appendix

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Source: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/11-12>

Student Resources

<http://2020vision.org> empowers citizens to take a progressive stance on issues

<http://www.aclu.org> ACLU works to preserve personal liberties and Constitutional rights

<http://www.aaiusa.org> Arab American Institute works on civic and political empowerment of Arab Americans

<http://www.aaweonline.org> African American Women Evolving increases leadership

<http://www.crlp.org> Center for Reproductive Rights is a nonprofit, nonpartisan group that conducts research on public policy in the United States and worldwide.

For 20 years, the Center for Reproductive Rights has used the law to advance reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right that all governments are legally obligated to protect, respect, and fulfill.

<http://www.emilyslist.org> Emily's List raises funds for pro-choice Democratic candidates. The goal is to have a female president soon.

<http://www.feminist.com> Founder & Executive Director Marianne Schnall

<http://www.feminist.org> Feminist Majority Foundation

"Instead of what the media and many scholars think women have been doing, find out what women have really been doing for the past four decades: read *The Feminist Chronicles*. Expanding outward from NOW, the largest feminist organization in the world, this provides a breadth, depth, and diversity that should be on every historian's desk, and every bedside table for a nightly dose of, 'I didn't know that!'"Gloria Steinem

<http://www.genderads.com/> The genderads project shows women exploited in ads

<http://www.ms magazine.com> Available through various apps.

<http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/gloria-in-her-own-words> Available on HBO Signature after August 30, 2013. Should be available on demand in September 2013.

Annotated Bibliography

Baker, Christina Looper, and Christina Baker Kline. *The conversation begins: mothers and daughters talk about living feminism*. New York: Bantam Books, 1996. Great personal reflections on issues spanning several generations.

Coontz, Stephanie. *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s*. New York: Basic Books, 2011. One of the best writers on the history of the American housewife. She breaks apart myths and tells compelling stories.

Heilbrun, Carolyn G.. *The education of a woman: the life of Gloria Steinem*. New York: Dial Press, 1995. The author gives the facts with some connections to how, but not why. Steinem's story is told with reverence from the author. Some negative qualities are not investigated.

Henretta, James A.. *America's history*. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2009. Not popular in AP U.S. History courses. Expensive.

Horowitz, Daniel. *Betty Friedan and the making of The feminine mystique the American left, the cold war, and modern feminism*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998.

I was a teenage feminist. DVD. Directed by Therese Shechter. New York, NY: Distributed by Women Make Movies, 2005.

Lovelace, Linda, and Mike McGrady. *Ordeal*. Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1980. Gloria Steinem does not recommend reading this as it is a traumatic story of torture and abuse. I read several chapters then went back to Steinem's six page summary in *Outrageous Acts* for the bigger picture. There is now a movie on Cinemax called *Lovelace* which touches on some of the issues Linda faced.

Richardson, Diane, and Victoria Robinson. *Introducing Gender and Women's Studies*. 3rd rev. ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Rowe-Finkbeiner, Kristin. *The F-word: feminism in jeopardy : women, politics, and the future*. Emeryville, Calif.: Seal Press, 2004.

Shaw, Susan M., and Janet Lee. *Women's voices, feminist visions: classic and contemporary readings*. 4th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2009. College textbook for Women's Studies Course.

Stalcup, Brenda. *The women's rights movement: opposing viewpoints*. San Diego, Calif.: Greenhaven Press, 1996. Several issues with diverse opinions expressed in primary sources.

Steinem, Gloria. "A Bunny's Tale, Show's First Expose' for Intelligent People." *Show*, May 1963. Worth seeking from Microfilm collection at a University. Unique advertisements accompany article.

Steinem, Gloria. *Outrageous acts and everyday rebellions*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1983. Gloria writes a series of anecdotes from her memory which show her trials and tribulations in a witty way. She carefully reveals her inner motivations which lead her to be a key player in the women's movement for equality.

Steinem, Gloria. *Revolution from within: a book of self-esteem*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1992. More biographical than one would expect. Shows how her own empowerment helped build a movement for women's rights.

Steinem, Gloria. *Moving beyond words*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994. Much reflection by Steinem on her past, present and future work.

Steinem, Gloria. "The Official Website of Author and Activist Gloria Steinem - Home." The Official Website of Author and Activist Gloria Steinem - Home. <http://www.gloriasteinem.com> (accessed July 10, 2013). Has links to a few articles like, Bunny Tale part 2, but only a few.

Stern, Sydney Ladensohn. *Gloria Steinem: her passions, politics, and mystique*. Secaucus, N.J.: Carol Pub. Group, 1997. Excellent overview of early life with references and explanations to later life decisions, including analysis of leadership qualities and rise to fame. Many insights to her political action which are unique. He goes back to her childhood at several points in the book to give meaning to her actions.

Chicago formatting by BibMe.org.

Notes

1. Things that are known and understood in the vernacular.
2. Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time*. 3
3. *ibid* 4
4. Carolyn Heilbrun. *The Education of a Woman*. 272
5. Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, *The F-Word*.17

6. <http://www.pbs.org/makers/home/>
7. Heilbrun xviii
8. ibid xix
9. Tom Brokaw, Boom: Voices of the Sixties. 205
10. ibid 206
11. ibid 206
12. Sydney Stern, Gloria Steinem; Her Passions, Politics and Mystique.215
13. Stern 7
14. Stern 9
15. ibid 134
16. Steinem. Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions. 145
17. Heilbrun 164
18. ibid 101
19. Brokaw. Boom. 200
20. Heilbrun 95
21. ibid 101
22. Stern 146
23. A Bunny's Tale: Show's First Expose for Intelligent People. Show May 1,1963
24. Heilbrun 105
25. Steinem. Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions. 34
26. Arianna Huffington. Fearless, 39
27. Steinem. Outrageous Acts. 76
28. Boom 196
29. Brownmiller 165
30. Boom 207
31. Heilbrun 210

32. Ms. Magazine Spring 2013, 45

33. HARDtalk 2/26/13 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKIoNweSEbl>

34. Heilbrun 413

35. Boom 230 "hard work, not protest, was the most effective vehicle for the women's movement"

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