

WRC TODAY

{ #RightToLactate }

As we enter a month of celebration for women, femininity, and feminism; one thinks of the mother, the parent, the nurturer. While parenthood is a choice and not definitively tied with a happy life many people, at one time or another, have identified as a mother or a parent. With the nurturing of an infant comes bottle feeding, milk expression, lactation, and/ or breast feeding.

The identity of a lactator, breast feeder, or chest feeder is culturally tied to femininity and, because of the context of our patriarchal society, these identities are oppressed along with other feminine traits. The breasts and the body are inherently personal parts of our lives and the personal is political. When we think of women's bodies and feminine bodies being used as a political platform, thoughts may wonder to reproductive and Trans rights. These are real and important truths. However, it is essential to highlight that the lactating experience, parenting, and breasts are used to oppress feminine people every day.

Our society has created a culture of sexual repression that has led to an unhealthy American relationship with sex, sexuality, and the body. One manifestation of this lies in breasts. Breasts are oversexualized by our media and the people who are socialized by the culture our media represents. We are both obsessed with and ashamed of breasts because they are presumably feminine and because they are oversexualized. This leads to shame and discrimination against parents as they struggle to navigate the world and feeding their child, something that should not be ridiculed, but celebrated.

There are so many barriers to a happy, successful lactation experience. Parents are told to cover up or leave spaces when they attempt to breast feed in public. People who struggle with lactation may internalize that they are bad parents and abstain from seeking help with breastfeeding. Employers sequester their parenting employees to a dirty bathroom stall to pump on their lunch break. Lactation is pushed to the background because of people's discomfort with a sexualized body being used as a tool of nourishment, nurturing, life, and love. This issue is layered and often amplified with people who hold additional marginalized identities. Trans and gender-non-conforming parents who choose to breast/ chest feed may struggle with body dysphoria as they lactate and tie their parenting with their identity. Furthermore, the ridicule associated with lactation is amplified for individuals who may not fit into our society's damaging gender binary. Women of color were historically employed or enslaved as wet nurses for wealthy, white children and may not have had ample supply to feed their own babies. The feminization of poverty can be tied with the 70-hour work week of a parents who spend excessive amounts of money on formula because they do not have the resources to pump or the time to breastfeed.

The instances above can be linked to the oppression of marginalized groups, especially those linked with a feminine identity. The warped and sexist views projected onto our society's nurturers create a hostile environment as they attempt to love and care for their children. It is essential that when we have discomfort with the feminine body and the practice of lactation, which is not necessarily just for feminine-identified people, we think about where this discomfort stems from. Is our judgment based on the television, advertising, pornography, and film industries that oversexualize female bodies and breasts? Is our judgment based on what we have learned from our fathers, mothers, aunts, grandparents, professor and mentors? Are we thinking critically about what the practice of lactation really entails?

Our community and campus need to move into a space of acceptance; of celebrating lactation and milk expression. Nourishing the minds, bodies and spirits of children is enough of a struggle. Let us normalize the narrative and create space for the beauty of nourishing life, however it manifests.

#RightToLactate #UNCOSupportsBreastfeeding #UNCOFeminism

Lily West

Program Specialist, Women's Resource Center



{ Feminist Snack Break }

Welcome to March everyone! March is a wonderful month because that means that it is now Women's History Month (and spring break is also right around the corner)! If you saw the February Newsletter then you may know that each month in the WRC Today we will be showcasing a staff recommended book that pertains to feminism, and women's and gender issues. In addition to having a monthly staff recommended book, we will also be showcasing a staff recommended book each week on the Women's Resource Center social media pages.

The book that was recommended for March was *Feminism is for Everybody* by bell hooks. This book is a really good introductory to feminism book that is a relatively short read (at only a little more than 100 pages) and covers a multitude of topics about feminism.

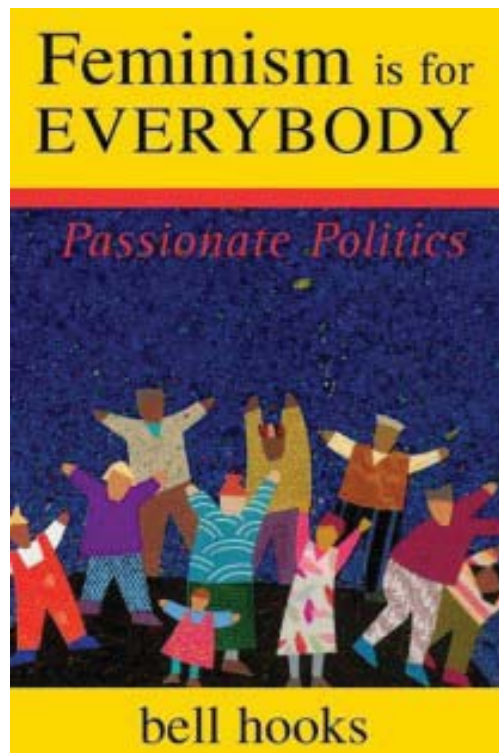
..about the book..

In this engaging and provocative volume, bell hooks introduces a popular theory of feminism rooted in common sense and the wisdom of experience. Hers is a vision of a beloved community that appeals to all those committed to equality, mutual respect, and justice.

hooks applies her critical analysis to the most contentious and challenging issues facing feminists today, including reproductive rights, violence, race, class, and work. With her customary insight and unsparing honesty, hooks calls for a feminism free from divisive barriers but rich with rigorous debate. In language both eye-opening and optimistic, hooks encourages us to demand alternatives to patriarchal, racist, and homophobic culture, and to imagine a different future.

hooks speaks to all those in search of true liberation, asking readers to take look at feminism in a new light, to see that it touches all lives. Issuing an invitation to participate fully in feminist movement and to benefit fully from it, hooks shows that feminism—far from being an outdated concept or one limited to an intellectual elite--is indeed for everybody.

bell hooks is the author of numerous critically acclaimed books on the politics of race, gender, class, and culture. A frequent lecturer in the United States and abroad, she is Distinguished Professor of English at City College, City University of New York.



Want more? Head over to our social media to find weekly staff suggested books!



student voices

Welcome to the Student Voices section of the WRC Today! This section may look a little different for some of you. If some of you remember, the Student Voices section of the WRC Today was actually launched in the Spring of 2016. We collaborated with Gender Studies to feature written pieces by students in the four newsletters we distributed last Spring semester. Student voices began as a space for students on campus to be able to discuss various topics relating to women's and gender issues, have their voices be heard and to get various perspectives on these topics. When initially launched, the Student Voices section was not open for all students on campus to submit pieces. However, that is changing this year!

While the purpose of Student Voices continues to be offering a space to heighten gender consciousness (being aware of what it means to have a gender identity and navigate from a gender place), we have decided to open up the section to allow all students on campus to submit not only written pieces, but also visual art, self-reflections, poetry and much more. If you want to join the Women's Resource Center in heightening gender awareness at the University of Northern Colorado, then submit your piece to us! Topics can vary anywhere from identity and intersectionality to injustice and gender.

If you are interested in submitting a reflection or piece (e.g. short story, poetry, visual art, etc.) to be featured in our monthly newsletter and online content, submit to, or for more information, contact Emily Hedstrom-Lieser at emily.hedstromlieser@unco.edu.

Toxic Masculinity and the Antidote

by Jack Fletcher

Not long ago, I was wearing a crop top at a Red Rocks concert. I looked pretty good in it, I thought, and I was dancing heavily, and it was a nice warm evening out, and my latest tattoo had just healed enough to where I could show it off. So I wore the top the whole night without giving it a second thought, until a guy in our group of friends asked me a question. "How can I wear that too, bro?" he asked. I wasn't really sure what to make of it, so I asked him to clarify a little bit.

"Well, I just mean that you obviously have the confidence to rock crop tops, and I'd like to wear them too, but I'm straight. And I know you're gay, but I really admire you for wearing that. So how do you get the confidence?"

It hadn't occurred to me that what I was doing was essentially a non-masculine act. There are kinds of clothing are almost exclusively worn by and marketed to women, crop tops being one of them, and I knew that at the time. Yet I was still shocked by what he said to me, because there I was paying no mind to my clothes, and there he was minding my clothes for me. For the first time in a long time, I felt like an outsider.

As a cisgender, openly gay man, I am comfortable both identifying my gender as male and my sexual and romantic tendencies being towards men. Needless to say, this puts me at odds with quite a few of us here in this country. Generally it's the case that gay men are seen less as "men" by our society: as a man, being intimate with another man just isn't something that I'm supposed to do. But oddly enough, that distinction, that partition between who I am and what I'm told to be, gives me freedom that I doubt I would have come across had I not been born at odds with heteronormativity.

Patriarchy, I've come to learn, cannot exist without our permission. The patriarchy we all live under tells men that they should be attracted to women instead of other men. Patriarchy tells men that the styles we wear, the way we speak, the entertainment we enjoy, everything must be For Men™ and For Men™ only. Why? Because "that's just the way it is"? The problem with this polarized conception of maleness is that in order to extoll maleness, it devalues women and the feminine. Femininity is shamed to the point that men are subject to ridicule and violence if they perform their gender in a feminine way. And this is in no way bound to only fashion. Men aren't manly unless they are strong, brutish, authoritative, or powerful. Men aren't allowed by patriarchy to feel emotions like we're meant to. Men aren't allowed to appreciate the beauty and softness of life. On the other hand, as soon as women aren't beauty and softness embodied, then they're breaking the rules of today's femininity. If we do not understand the harm that this gender dichotomy creates, we perpetuate it. That's why feminism isn't just for women.

See, the truth is, I feel very little personal benefit from obeying gender norms like I should. When I go shopping, I do feel perfectly comfortable picking out shirts from the women's section if I like them. I wear jewelry every day. I've sometimes filled my eyebrows in with a makeup pencil, and I certainly don't believe I am any less of a man for doing so. By choosing to let go of patriarchal rules of how men look, I have more room in my life for self-expression. Crop tops are girly because we choose to believe they are. Makeup is girly because we choose to believe it is. Sports are manly because we choose to believe they are. Everything in the world that is gendered is gendered by our own permission.

My answer to the question of confidence is this: if you like it, wear it. If you feel as though you cannot make a choice about your outfit because you lack the genital requirements, make the choice anyway. If you feel like you can't be who you really want to be because you have to follow patriarchy's rules, don't follow them anymore. Any rules given to you that make you someone you're not simply are not rules that are worth following. We all owe it to ourselves. We all deserve it. I ask anyone reading this article, especially men: is your gender expression authentically and comfortably yours, or do you perform your gender the way you do because you feel like you have to?



Jack is currently a student at the School of Theatre Arts and Dance, University of Northern Colorado

Why I am a feminist

by Madison Knight

I am a Feminist.

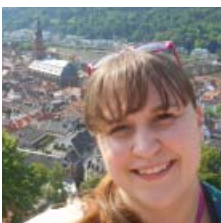
I believe that I should have the equal rights and opportunities like any other man.

I believe that I should be protected from the government or organization that tries to tell me how I should live or what I can or can't do with my body.

I refuse to be content sweeping floors, cooking dinner, or keeping quiet while my master "most probably a man" is free to embrace the world and have the world embrace him.

I am a feminist because I deserve to walk down the street at night and not be afraid of every shadow that might be someone thinking that I deserve to be raped because of my clothes.

I am a feminist because I wish to live in a world that doesn't care if I am a woman but cares about my education and my skills. I am a feminist because I wish to move forward to a place where men don't need to feel like they can't cry, where men feel secure in their masculinity, where children can go to school and not be painted pink or blue but can simply exist together. These are the reasons why I am a feminist.



I am a sophomore studying history at UNCO Greeley. I have a profound respect for gender studies and anthropology. I am a vocal feminist because it is becomes important in helping change society for the better.

WOMEN'S HISTORY • MONTH 2017 •

tues, march 7th

Film Screening: A Womb of Their Own

5:00 - 8:00 pm (dinner provided)

Scott-Willcoxon Hall

Cosponsored by the Gender & Sexuality Resource Center

tues, march 7th & thurs, march 9th

A Day Without A Woman

Solidarity. Community. Consciousness Raising.

March 7th

8:30 - 9:30

11:00 - 1:00

2:00 - 3:00

March 9th

11:30 - 1:30

*Lunch will be provided at the
11:00 consciousness raisings.
Refreshments will be provided
at the 8:00 and 2:00
consciousness raisings.*

Join us for support, conversation and community.
Women's Resource Center (Scott-Willcoxon Hall)

wed, march 8th

International Women's Day

"A call for women and our allies to act together for equity, justice, and the human rights of women through a one day demonstration of economic solidarity."

*A Day Without A Woman, International Women's Strike
For more information, visit womensmarch.com*

thurs, march 30th

Consciousness Raising Luncheon

12:00 - 1:30 pm (lunch provided)

Scott-Willcoxon Hall

march 1st - 31st

Check out our **Lactation Poster Campaign** around campus!

A Womb Of Their Own



Tuesday, 3.7.17

5:00 - 8:00 pm

Scott-Willcoxon Hall



Dinner will be provided. Discussion with Cyn Lubow, film director, following the film.

A Womb of Their Own introduces a charismatic, funny, thoughtful group of masculine-of-center-identified people who experience pregnancy. Each individual and couple navigate gender expectations even from the LGBT community that don't fit their experience of themselves. Follow their stories as they establish their own unique gender, develop their definition of family, grow a baby in their bodies, and birth, chestfeed and parent their children as non-binary masculine people.

International Women's Strike

A Day Without A Woman

3.8.17

"On International Women's Day, March 8th, women and our allies will act together for equity, justice and the human rights of women, through a one-day demonstration of economic solidarity. Let's raise our voices together to say that women's rights are human rights, regardless of a woman's race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, sexual identity, gender expression, economic status, age or disability."

www.womensmarch.com

Choose to strike.

Women take the day off, from paid and unpaid labor

Avoid shopping for one day (with exceptions for small, women- and minority-owned businesses).

Wear RED in solidarity with A Day Without A Woman

Stop by the WRC to make a button

Tuesday, March 7 & Thursday, March 9

A Day Without A Woman. Solidarity. Community. Consciousness Raising.

March 7th

8:30 - 9:30
11:00 - 1:00
2:00 - 3:00

March 9th

11:30-1:30

*Lunch will be provided
at the 11:00 & 11:30
gatherings. Refreshments
will be provided at the
8:30 and 2:00 gatherings.*

Join us at Scott-Willcoxon Hall for support, conversation and community.

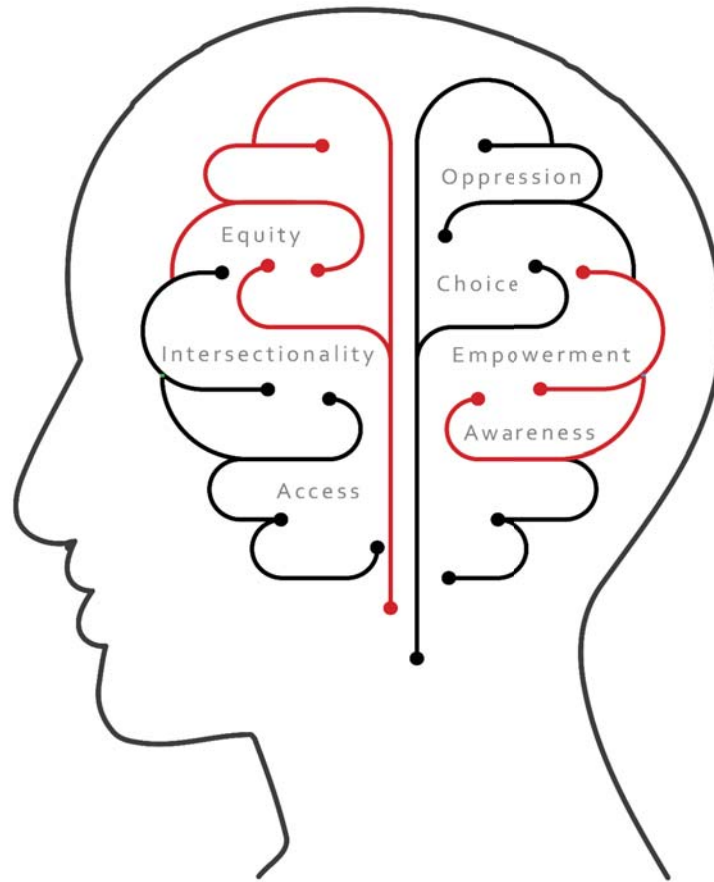
For those unable to strike, we see you. We hear you. Individuals who choose to participate, the Women's Resource Center is here and will provide a space, as well as resources, for participation and solidarity in this movement. We want to acknowledge that not all individuals have the ability to strike, for fear of losing ones job, intimidation, loss of wages, etc. For more information about leave practices associated with the Strike, contact UNC Human Resources at 970.351.2718.

In observance of the International Women's Strike, and the integral presence and contributions of women at UNC, the Women's Resource Center will close our doors on 3.8.17.

Tuesday, March 7

Pick up your free shirt on March 7th at Scott-Willcoxon Hall!

{ iNFB... Consciousness Raising Luncheons }



Throughout each month of the spring semester the Women's Resource Center will be hosting Consciousness Raising Luncheons. These luncheons are an opportunity for students, faculty and staff to engage in conversations about feminism. Each luncheon will host a different topic that will be based on current and prevelant issues that are occuring in our society. Lunch will be provided while food lasts so join us and activate your activism! For more information or questions about this event please contact the Women's Resource Center at 970-351-1492. Any person requesting disability accomodations for these events please contact 970-351-2289 at least 3 business days in advance.

FEBRUARY 22



MARCH 30



APRIL 19

Free Food!!
(While food lasts)

12 PM — 1:30 PM

Women's Resource Center
@ Scott-Willcoxon Hall

Come Early!



Contact Us!

970.351.1492

www.unco.edu/womens-resource-center

