

WRC TODAY

Our Unspoken Thoughts About Summer...

By: Tara Anderson & Savana Griego

Often, while at work at the Women's Resource Center, we have conversations about gender issues and what it means to be a woman. Our conversation quickly turned into body image reflections and all of the messages and images we are bombarded with as the summer season approaches. Our reflections below emerged from these conversations....

Sometimes I spend more minutes than needed looking in the mirror, trying on a swim suits, shorts, and shirts. Rotating in circles looking from each angle, wondering how I got so out of shape or why nothing seems to look good. Comparing myself to friends, family, or my old photos. Media infiltration of the ideal body image is so pervasive that these stereotypical definitions of beauty are invisible in the sense we do not automatically realize we are comparing ourselves to the stereotypical definitions of beauty. I do not even compare myself to media representations of women consciously, yet as I reflect, this idea of the perfect body is embedded in our subconscious and affects how we navigate through society. Every woman I know is held to the standards of beauty based on the stereotypical image presented in advertising, magazines, or various representations of the ideal body.

As a Sports and Exercise Science Major with a concentration in Physical Education and K-12 Teaching, I often think about the purpose and importance of physical activity and the health and performance related components of fitness. Physical fitness is the "ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, with undue fatigue." Health related to components of physical fitness include cardiorespiratory endurance, skeletal muscle endurance and strength, body composition, and flexibility while performance related aspects include skeletal muscle power, speed of movement, agility, balance, and reaction time. My body is amazing and can do these things, so I am going to try to appreciate what my body can do and focus on the improvement of health related or performance related tasks, instead of comparing myself to the ideal body image presented in fitness magazines. The notion of being physically fit and healthy is often replaced by the perceptions of 'looking good'. Physical fitness allows

our bodies to build strength and endurance, balance, flexibility, or speed and should not be confused with how our body appears to look. Fitness does not have a specific body type.

As I go into summer, I think about these things... why do women worry about their size and looks? I start to be stressed about my own body and compare myself to my high school body. Media has such an impact on the way women are portrayed in society and we may not even realize it until we catch ourselves saying things like "have to start working out to get ready for summer" or realizing that complimenting a woman for looking good for her age or just having a baby reflects back on the ideal image of a woman. We have to stop analyzing our bodies and other's bodies. Think about when a woman walks into a room. We instantly have a thought on her appearance. Now, imagine what it would be like if we didn't actively judge a woman's appearance as the first sign of her worth? If it was not an automatic response to her presence.

A woman walks in and we do not even think about what she looks like. It amazes me to think that even I, who has a relatively positive self-body image, constantly think about my body, other people's bodies, or how others perceive me. Making these simple observations (judgements) about the way a women looks is due

to misrepresentations of women in the media. I am going to challenge myself to be more aware of the various ways societal ideals that pop up in conversations or media and continue to remind myself that the ideal body image is not something to strive for and allow my body to be as it is. Feel free to join me in this challenge!

--Tara Anderson, Student Assistant Women's Resource Center



The semester is coming to an end and we all know what that means... it is finally swimming season! Or at least that is one thing that I look forward to at the end of a long school year and especially after long days spent at work over the summer. However, when thinking about the swimming season I also have to keep in mind that with that comes swimsuits. Having to decide which swimsuit to wear has always been an issue for me: two-piece, one-piece, showing too much skin, too little skin, is the swimsuit fashionable enough, and the list of things to think about continues. Why should I care so much about what to wear? When reflecting on this question I noticed how every morning (or whatever time I wake up) I spend way too much time trying on several outfits and taking them off again in order to decide what to wear for the day, not to mention too much time making sure that my face and hair are presentable for the world that is outside my door. Often I feel like I put in so much effort to try and make myself look good so that I am able feel good about myself, but when pondering more on why I spend so much time getting ready in the morning I realize that I do not do it for myself at all. The fact of the matter is that I care what other people think about me. I never knew why I was spending so much time “fixing” myself because I never really had to think about it. I just always thought that I was doing it for myself, and that was never the case.

I will admit, I thought that college was going to be a cake-walk because no one ever told me how much work you actually put into the classes that you take. Because of this I never had a good way of dealing with the stress that came with the increasingly harder classes that I was taking every year. I could see that the stress was affecting not only my emotions but my body as well. I felt like I had no time to exercise or eat a decent meal and because of that the “freshman fifteen” (which a totally B.S. concept) caught up to me. Reflecting on my swimsuit choices that I have made four years ago compared to now I can definitely see a change because I tend to gravitate towards buying and wearing one-piece swimsuits now compared to two-piece ones four years ago. Now, there is nothing wrong with a one-piece. The issue is with my choice to wear a one-piece. I never really had a choice to wear a one-piece at all. I feel that society has put me into a “one-piece swimsuit” category because I do not have the “ideal body type” to wear a two-piece. Our society glorifies beautiful, skinny women all the time and this can be seen especially in the media. The media puts down and bashes female celebrities over and over again for not having this “ideal body type” or they glorify them for having what they think is what all females should look like. I mean just look at some of the magazines that we are exposed to everyday. The media feeds us all of these ideas of how we should look and should not look and how to “fix” yourself or get that “bikini body” if you do not conform to their ideals of what beauty looks like.



The more I think about how much emphasis our society puts on this “ideal body type” the more I realize how much of an impact that it has had on my life. It is a little scary to think about how much pull and influence the media has in our society. It makes me question how I can challenge these ideals that have been fed to me all of my life. I think being aware and having conversations about the ideals that our society holds and challenging those views is the first step to taking back our bodies and allowing them to exist how they are.

-- Savana Griego, Student Assistant Women's Resource Center

Do you have thoughts about these issues? Share them with us through social media! #UNCOFeminism



Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month! Support the Assault Survivors Advocacy Program (ASAP) as they host events throughout April. Together let's end sexual violence! For more information, please stop by the ASAP office located on the second floor of Cassidy Hall or contact Assistant Director Angie Makomenaw at Angelyn.makomenaw@unco.edu.

APRIL 4TH

RELATIONSHIPS PRESENTATION

Come learn about the values of a healthy relationship.
Butler Hancock-Champions Rm 222, 6:30pm

APRIL 11TH-13TH

CLOTHING & HOUSEHOLD ITEMS DRIVE

Help provide supplies for both the SANE program at the local hospital and Greeley's A Women's Place.

Items can be donated from 10:00-1:30, lower level UC or at the ASAP office

APRIL 18TH-22ND

CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

Honoring victims and survivors of gender violence in a public display of shirts designed by survivors to represent their experiences.

UC and Michener Library

APRIL 19TH

HUNTING GROUNDS

A documentary that explores the impact and repercussions of sexual assault on college campuses throughout the United States.

Lindou Auditorium, 8pm

APRIL 27TH

DENIM DAY

Wear denim on April 27th in support of victim survivors and as a symbol of protest against sexual assault.

Check out our social media:
Instagram: @uncbearadvocate
Twitter: @UNCBearAdvocate
Facebook: UNCBearAdvocate

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING LUNCHEONS

Come and join the Women's Resource Center all semester long for our Consciousness Raising Luncheons! There will be free food provided, but this is only while food lasts so be sure to come early!

I need
**Feminism
Because...**
UNC Women's Resource Center

Last Luncheon for the semester!!

April 26

12 PM-1:30 PM:

STUDENT VOICES

This semester, the Women's Resource Center is proud to launch the *Student Voices* section of the newsletter. We will use this space to feature the written work of various students in the UNC community.

Are you interested in writing a piece and submitting it to be in our newsletter? Please contact the Women's Resource Center at 970-351-1492 for more information or contact Emily Hedstrom-Lieser at emily.hedstromlieser@unco.edu

Muslim Women: In the backdrop of Feminism and Orientalism

By: Olivia Martinez

The stereotype that women from the Middle East are oppressed is perhaps one of the most salient notions in the Western society. Many consider the veil or headscarves that Muslim women wear as a mark of oppression without fully understanding how this apparel is significant for Muslim women. Many women in Islamic countries feel that their coverings allow them greater mobility in the patriarchal public sphere. In this context, Western feminism needs to recognize the varied ways in which women exist and become agentive across the globe.

Overgeneralization and misrepresentations of people and cultures have dangerous ramifications and they can become tools for perpetuating ethnocentric dominations. The stereotype of the Middle Eastern women has also been used as a political tool to propagate the ideals of Western society. For example after the 9/11 attack in 2001, Laura Bush erroneously conflated the war on terror and the fight for Muslim women's rights. In spawning the stereotype of an oppressed Muslim woman, the Western world often creates a need to fix these cultures; maybe because we as Americans are sensitive to human rights violations and want to right by the world. This kind of political attitude has paved way for greater public support for political, economical, and military intervention in the Middle East whether they need it or not.

In order to understand Muslim women and Eastern culture, I would suggest the to study "Orientalism", a theory proposed by Edward Said (1978). Orientalism paves way for a Western student to understand how our culture observes Eastern cultures and how we often deem them as static and underdeveloped. The study of Orientalism can greatly benefit a Gender studies student in understanding Muslim women in the backdrop of their own cultures and trace other forms of feminisms. Since Western feminism is beginning to notice that women's experience are not universal, the theory of Orientalism offers a clear lens in how to rectify the way we understand Muslim women. Edward Said may not have had the intentions of being read as a feminist, but his interrogation of the political history between East and West makes him the perfect teacher of cross cultural feminism, and which will of great benefit for Gender studies.



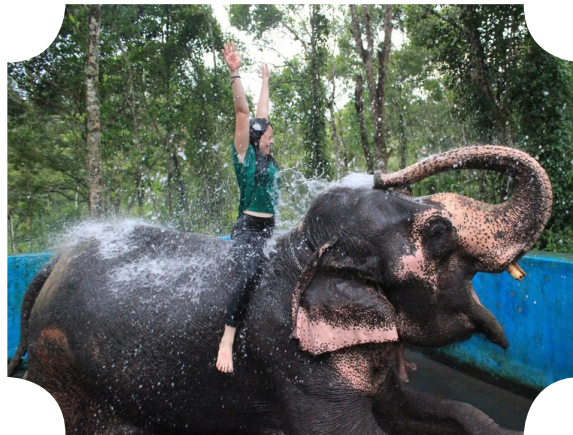
About Olivia Martinez: She is a Greeley native studying political science and gender studies. She enjoys reading political philosophy, hiking, and hanging out her pet rats, Buddha and Chowder.

STUDENT VOICES

Why I Need Feminism

By: Emily Suzanne Doerner

I was born and raised in Greeley, Colorado, but have traveled extensively throughout India, China, Mongolia, the US, and Central America. Growing up in Greeley, I saw feminism was synonymous with hippie, vegan, and liberal. All revolting things in a conservative community. So in adolescence, I adopted all these titles to justify calling myself a rebel. It wasn't until I left Greeley to explore the rest of the world on my own that I discovered what it meant to be a feminist. It took losing a lot of my privilege and living in a place with completely different social norms to understand how important and necessary Feminism is. It wasn't until I really needed a feminist way of thinking, and noticed that others need it too, that Feminism became more than a word or an ideology. Feminism became a way of life; of touching the heights that I was made to fear. Feminism was taking charge of my self and identity. . Feminism became being good to myself and to other women and understanding men. And most of all, it became always, always speaking my mind.



Feminism gave me my autonomy and the strength to continue to explore all of the world's wonders. Now that I have returned to Greeley, to attend the University of Northern Colorado, I have worked to support others in speaking their mind, to exploring what feminism means to them, and to embrace feminism in their everyday lives. Through a feminist lifestyle, we can all empower discourse, foster awareness, and resist harmful social norms. Feminism has the ability transform our community into a better, safer place for all people. UNC provides dozens of opportunities for students to explore and express privilege, gender identity, sexuality, and much more. I encourage everyone to take advantage of these opportunities so that we can all work towards making Greeley a feminist community. A community where no child believes that feminism, that fighting for their rights, is something to be ashamed of.

Consulting Editor: Dr. Ather Zia, Lecturer in Gender Studies and Anthropology.

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Women's Resource Center



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You can also find
our newsletter on
our website!