SP. 401 – Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies  
Essay Assignment #1  Fall 2010  

Length: 5-7 pages, typed, double-spaced (Times, New Roman, 12pt.)

Choose ONE of the following two questions and write a 5-7 page essay in response to it. You will need to draw specific examples from the texts we have read to support your points; use parenthetical citations to document the sources you use. Be sure that you are introducing your quotes adequately, creating smooth transitions between your own writing and that of your sources. Your essay should include a clear thesis statement in which you make an argument in answer to the question you choose.

1. Compare the rhetorical strategies used by Angelina Grimke, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell and/or Sojourner Truth (choose at least two of these) to argue for gender change. What did they do in their writing or speeches to try to convince the people they were addressing? Who was their intended audience? How did their use of language and types of argument appeal to this audience? Explain what each writer or speaker was trying to achieve and how their arguments helped them accomplish their goals.

Readings to Consider:
Angelina Grimke- “Human Rights Not Founded on Sex”
Elizabeth Cady Stanton – “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions”
    “Our Costume”
Frederick Douglass- “Why I Became a Women’s Rights Man”
Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell- “Marriage Agreement”
Sojourner Truth- “Ain’t I A Woman?”
    Note that, in the essay, you may also want to weave in references to lectures and readings such as Boydston and Davis that can help set a context for your close reading of the primary texts.

2. By closely analyzing each text, compare the rhetorical strategy of the “Declaration of Independence” with that of the “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions.” How does each document ground claims of equality and build its case with evidence of injustice? To what extent is the “Declaration of Sentiments” appealing to the “sacred” nature of the Declaration of Independence? To what degree is the “Declaration of Sentiments” critiquing the Declaration of Independence? Which, if any, “sentiments”, seem most relevant today? Why?