Discussion 11: Militarism and Gender

General Discussion:
- What is militarized in our environment? How do things become militarized?
- Is the military a hyper-masculinized environment?
- What are the pros and cons to discussing this topic in a feminist theory class?
- Would you include this subject in such a class? Why or why not?
- If one chooses to make the sameness argument about men and women, which area is still a “test case”? For example, can women be mothers and soldiers?
- How is competence defined in male terms?
- How would you compare the articles read for today’s class?
- Which piece did you prefer? Why?

Refer to the chapters in Cynthia Enloe’s book The Curious Feminist:
- Is this a satisfactory piece?
- Are her small segments substantive? Clear?
- Does Enloe exaggerate her argument in implying that everything is militarized in our communities?
- What is the danger of essentialism? If one categorizes women as more gentle how can women be more equally represented in the military?
- Can you list pros and cons to essentializing gender in the military?
- In what areas do we see militarism played out in our lives?
- Is militarism as gendered now as it has been in the past?
- What does nationalism mean to you?
- What do we need to be curious about?
- Why did Borislav rape?
- Are his potential motives/reasons tied into nationalism? If so, how?
- Did he feel a threat of demasculinization if he did not fulfill orders and succeed in the eyes of the Serbian militiamen?
- Is there a difference between attacking mothers because of the mothering role in society versus anonymously attacking people?
- How were the militias formed?
- Does Enloe draw a connection between rape and prostitution?
- Does the army try to normalize male sexual behaviour overseas in combat?
- What is normalized? Is militarism camouflaged in our society?
- For instance, when did the War in Iraq stop making frontpage news and transition to a place of less importance in the newspapers?
- What gender dichotomy is created by citizenship?
- How does language aid/abet militarization of society?
- What perks does the ROTC program provide for its participants?

Refer to the Carol Cohn article, “Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals”:
- What is Cohn arguing?
- How does she use language as an effective example of sexualized militarism?
• How does language make the destruction of nuclear weapons seem abstract? How is this tactic used elsewhere in the military?
• In what context do advisors talk about the subject? As a weapon? As a child? As a toy?
• In terms of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombings, how does where one chooses to start and end the story affect one’s understanding of nuclear damage?
• Is nuclear war a secret club? How does this relate to Enloe’s article and the need of Borislav Herak to feel included in the nationalist community?
• Can one be a part of the “elite club” and keep one’s perspective, an open mind?
• Is Cohn aware of the impact of the sexualized nuclear language and how it is has changed the way she speaks?
• Does Cohn imply that she thinks the men around her are aware of their sexualized language?
• Is Cohn expected to learn “their” language? Why, why not?
• Who is privileged enough to be monolingual versus bilingual in our society? Do minority groups need to learn to speak “white” English to succeed? Why, why not?
• What effect do prestige and rank have in the military? How do they affect the decisions top advisors make?
• How are euphemisms used in the military?
• How do contractors affect the military?
• Does the US military speak of taking on a paternal role in comparison to its relations with other states? Who is the mother?
• Does the American public question American wars? Why, why not?