

## Reading Guide – Culture Wars II: Pornography, Representation, and Sexual Harassment/Violence

This week we close out our unit on the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s. Our focus this week is on a series of “sex scandals,” and battles over language, representation, and sexual harassment and violence. As you read this week, try to connect 1990s battles over gender and sexuality to our own historical moment two decades into the twenty-first century. What has changed? What hasn’t? Which debates remain unsolved?

### Assigned Materials

- Robin Tolmach Lakoff, “Sexual Harassment on Trial: The Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas Narrative(s),” in *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, Kerber, ed. (2004) 670-676.
- Lisa Duggan, Nan Hunter, and Carole Vance, “False Promises: Feminist Anti-Pornography Legislation,” *New York Law School Review* 38 (1993) 133-163.
- Susan Bordo, “Material Girl: Madonna as Postmodern Heroine” in *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, Kerber, ed. (2004) 660-663.
- Meritor Savings Bank v. Mechelle Vinson et al. 1986, in *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, Kerber, ed. (2004) 643-645.
- Andrea Dworkin, “Pornography: Men Possessing Women,” *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, WWII to the Present*, Schneir, ed. (1994) 419-427.
- Rebecca Walker, “Becoming the Third Wave,” *Ms.* (Jan 1992) 39-41.
- [skim entire issue] *Bitch: A Feminist Response to Popular Culture*, v.2 (Spring 1996)
- [Optional] Alison Lefkowitz, “‘Sodomy is not Adultery’: The Clinton Sex Scandal as Queer History,” *Notches* (April 7, 2016) ~4pp.
- [Recommended!] NPR Podcast, “The Real Story Behind HBO’s ‘Confirmation’ From The NPR Reporter Who Broke The Story,” April 13, 2016.

### Questions to Consider

The readings for this week can be grouped into three main themes: Public debates over Sexual Harassment (Lakoff, Meritor v Vinson, and the optional Lefkowitz article and NPR podcast); Battles over pornography and censorship (Duggan and Dworking); and The emergence of a “third wave” of feminism (Bordo, Walker, and Bitch Magazine). As you read, try to make connections between these themes, and also between this week’s readings and earlier units of the class.

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