



THOMAS

Common Read 2021

Instructions

The Thomas College Common Read is our invitation to join our academic community of individuals who share and explore ideas together.

After reading and reflecting on this year's selection, *We Should All Be Feminists* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, create a written response from one of the options listed below. During your first-year experience course, you will have an opportunity to discuss what you have written along with other students in your class.

Option 1

Adichie's *We Should All Be Feminists* examines the power of gender stereotypes and argues that "We have evolved. But our ideas about gender have not evolved very much" (18). She concludes that "the problem with gender is that it prescribes how we *should* be rather than recognizing how we are. Imagine how much happier we would be, how much freer to be our true individualized selves, if we didn't have the weight of gender expectations" (34).

For this writing option, identify a time in your life where gender expectations may have impacted you or your choices. Describe a time where your genuine self may have conflicted with how others expected you "should" be. What were those expectations, and how did you respond?

Consider the following when outlining your essay:

- Describe the specific situation in which you realized that your unique identity may not have aligned with the gender expectations of others. What aspects of your identity were perhaps overlooked in that process?
- How did you choose to respond in this situation, and how did others react? Were you ultimately freer or truer to yourself in the process? In what way?

Option 2

In looking at gender roles in culture, Adichie identifies that many men "do not actively think about gender or notice gender" (42), but that "if it is true that the full humanity of women is not our culture, then we can and must make it our culture" (46).

For this writing option, choose a time when someone—male or female—helped you overcome a gender stereotype. What were those stereotypes, and how did this individual encourage you to overcome them?

Consider the following when outlining your essay:

- Identify the specific situation where gender assumptions impacted you. Who may have helped you in that situation?
- Were you able ultimately to challenge those assumptions with that person's help? How?

(continued on back)

A word about writing. . .

Write at least 500 words (two typed double-spaced pages). Provide illustrations or examples from your life to support your work. Since your response will also be read by your first-year experience course instructor and your faculty advisor, you should demonstrate your understanding of appropriate sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and word choice.

Please return your essay by Friday, August 6th to

Dr. Thomas Edwards
Provost
Thomas College
180 West River Road
Waterville, ME 04901
Tel (207) 859-1362
Email: thomas.edwards@thomas.edu

If you email your essay, please save it as a Microsoft Word document or PDF.

If you have any questions about the Common Read project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Edwards or Dr. Debbie Cunningham, Vice President of Student Success. Debbie's telephone number and email address are (207) 859-1297 and debbie.cunningham@thomas.edu. She will be happy to help you in any way she can.

We are looking forward to receiving your project, and to welcoming you on campus this fall.

Our best wishes to you this summer and for the coming semester!