

The Gender Binary

Due Friday, January 19

This is likely to take up about 1 page.

Our world is full of otherwise unnecessary arrangements that construct the gender binary. Separate men's and women's restrooms, for example (as discussed in Goffman's paper "The arrangement between the sexes"), are not strictly necessary but constitute a daily reminder of gender dimorphism, and embody central ideologies about male-female relations. The goal of this assignment is to get you to look at your environment with an eye to sites for the construction of the gender binary. Watch your environment for a few days and choose one interesting arrangement in which dimorphism is embedded. Describe the arrangement and the aspects of gender ideology that are exercised in this.

Beware: Do not choose something that's painfully obvious. It should be something you wouldn't have noticed if you hadn't been looking for it.