

Sally Boland Essay Prize

Awarded by the Plymouth State University
Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Council



The Sally Boland Essay Prize is to be awarded in the Spring for the best scholarly essay or paper which addresses a topic or theme related to Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies as a discipline and/or to the lives and work of women.

\$150 will be awarded to the first-place recipient; \$100 for second place.

An essay need not to have been written for a specific course, and may be from any area or discipline, so long as its scholarly focus is connected to and/or informed by women, gender, and sexuality studies. By “scholarly,” we mean to indicate work which is research-based, or analytical, or thesis driven – work which contributes in some way to academic discourse. Examples of such essays might include: literary analysis of the major work of a woman writer; research paper about the biology of gender; a media analysis paper focusing on women’s roles in film and television; historical research paper focusing on women in the United States Senate. Many possibilities exist, of course; if you are uncertain about whether your essay meets the criteria for “scholarship,” submit it nonetheless.

Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and carefully edited. One clean copy should be submitted. The essays are blind-reviewed by a team of faculty members; the faculty members will not know the names of the authors when they are evaluating and judging the papers. Therefore, the paper must have a separate title page with the title of the paper, name of the author, and contact information. The first page of the paper should have the title repeated at the top of the page. The author’s name should appear no place in the paper except the title page. Essay authors must be currently enrolled undergraduate PSU students. If you have previously submitted work for the Sally Boland Scholarly Essay Prize, please do not resubmit it unless extensive revisions have been made. Rubrics can be found on the next page.

Spring 2023 Submission Deadline: Sunday, April 16 at 11:59 pm

Papers may be submitted electronically to ajpearman@plymouth.edu with the subject heading “Sally Boland Essay Contest”. If you have any questions, you may contact Professor Pearman via email or contact any member of the Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Council.

Sally Boland Essay Prize Rubrics

Topic/Relevance (50 points)

- The essay makes a contribution to the field of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.
- The essay directly acknowledges the field of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.
- The essay raises provocative issues that deal with topics in Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.
- The essay demonstrates an understanding of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.
- The purpose and topic of the essay relate directly to Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.

Focus/Meaning (20 points)

- The essay has a main idea or main point. All information relates to this main theme.
- The essay doesn't leave loose ends or unanswered questions.
- The essay displays unity, purpose, and tension so the audience wants to read on.
- The essay introduces a new perspective, but not necessarily a new idea.
- The meaning draws readers in and makes them care about what happens.
- There is significant, original subject and purpose, which avoid cliché.

Interest (10 points)

- The essay has specific details, examples, facts, etc. to back up generalizations.
- The details are carefully selected and appropriate to the focus of the piece.
- The subject is interesting and evokes a strong emotional or thoughtful response.
- The tone is clear and appropriate for the topic; the tone and style are consistent.

Form/Mechanics (10 points)

- The essay is without errors.
- Words are chosen well, with strong action verbs, specific nouns, and clear language.
- The essay follows the format guidelines and/or the format for its field: APA, MLA, etc.
- The author's name is on the cover page but does not appear anywhere else in the essay.
- The essay is scholarly, indicating research-based, thesis-based, or analytical work.

Clarity (5 points)

- The essay flows easily from paragraph to paragraph, and thought to thought.
- Logical sequencing makes the essay easy to read and understand.
- The subject is developed and expanded throughout the text.

Title/Lead/Ending (5 points)

- The lead grabs readers, draws them in, relates to what follows, and is honest.
- The ending leaves the reader with something to think about, and follows the piece naturally.
- The title catches the readers' attention and makes them want to read the piece.