

# Fairweather feminist

## Common phrase holds back women's movement

You know, I'm not passionate about too many things. I mean really, constantly passionate. So when something arises and I feel strongly about it, I feel very strongly.

Brace yourselves because we are going to talk about feminism. I can hear the groans. I can see eyes roaming elsewhere on the page. I understand. No one wants to hear the postmodern feminist spiel again. No one wants to listen while reams of double standards are listed or while I whine about equal pay for equal work and so on. I will spare you that jargon.

I do have a bone to pick, though. There is a little phrase I hear uttered here and there. The words are released from someone's lips, and they float on the air until reaching my ears. This little phrase has plagued our society and belittled the idea of feminism everywhere. This phrase consists of five little words that are, "I'm not a feminist, but..."

From here you fill in the blank. It doesn't matter much what comes after the "but." These five words hold back the dam that is feminism and all the bad stigma surrounding the word.

In my Webster's II New Riverside

University Dictionary it says that feminism is "a doctrine advocating for women the same rights granted men, as in political and economic status." By definition then, wouldn't a feminist be one who believes men and women should have equal rights?

According to my calculations, we are all some type of feminist. I am a feminist, and I proudly adopt the title because I believe men and women should have equal rights.

Do you believe men and women should have equal rights? If you answered yes to the defining question, then you could be labeled a feminist.

I know it is hard to accept, but try saying it quietly to yourself, "I am a feminist." Over time the fear will dissipate, and the words will form easily in your mind. Then maybe you could try saying it out loud.

Okay, I know that this isn't as simple as I have made it all seem. As with everything, there are varying degrees of feminism to take into account. The elusive "feminazi" haunts the dark recesses of feminism. I say feminist and the man-hating, hairy-legged, ugly, violent,

Birkenstock-wearing lesbian image forms in the minds of millions. I know, I've had the visual myself, but there is something you all should know. I am a feminist.

I also shave my legs (well, most of the time). I like to shop. I wear makeup. I like people of the male persuasion. I do own a pair of Birkenstocks, but I have never attended a violent rally while wearing them.

So where does this leave us? Can I end this by simply saying I don't ever, ever want to hear anyone ever say "I'm not a feminist, but..." ever again? I guess I could, but I fear I haven't really relayed why this little phrase needs to be banished.

The whole idea surrounding this word has gotten way out of hand. The word has become so obtrusive that nearly no woman wants to be labeled a feminist. It seems as if by saying "I'm not a feminist, but..." some women feel they have outsmarted the system. They are expressing a feminist thought but avoiding the controversial label.

In all reality, this phrase is a hoax. It is a trick. When a woman says these five words she

is proclaiming, "Yes, I am a feminist. I'm just too scared to admit it."

Well, guess what? I'm starting a crusade to end the use of "I'm not a feminist, but..." I'm enlisting volunteers for my cause. Volunteers need not apply in person or wear a badge. Remain where you are, but make a commitment to fight this phrase.

There are two things you need to do. First, never ever use the words "I'm not a feminist, but..." together in any sentence. And don't let anyone speak this phrase in your presence.

Second, banish all stereotypes from your mind. Tell yourself that feminists come in all shapes, colors and sizes with varying ideas on world hunger, race relations and the presidential race.

Like I said before, I don't feel too passionate about too many things. Overall, I can be very politically lazy, but this has got to stop. The fear of the word feminism has reigned for too long. It is time for us to reclaim what is our own. We should be able to use this word stigma-free and with pride.

Who's with me?

*Ann Abbott is a senior education major in English and theater arts and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.*

# College woes

## Columnist lists top five academic pet peeves

Welcome back, my fellow warriors of academia! I know, it's the first day of class, and we are all trying to get our brains back into first gear. So I thought (as I often do), let's have some fun! In this new millennium, college should be even MORE interesting and maybe even a little frolicsome (yes, that IS a word) or joyful if you prefer.

So, in the spirit of out with the old and in with the new, I was sure it would be great fun to come up with a list of the top five types of people none of us would miss if they got lost in the 20th century and never found their way to our 21st century college experience. And here they are...

#5 Anyone who ever reads this wonderfully professional and fabulously entertaining newspaper while in lecture.

These cannot be the brightest people on the planet. They get out of bed, get dressed and go to class to read the newspaper? WHY? With a computer, they could get the paper online, read it FROM bed and save themselves (and the rest of us) a lot of trouble.

If these people have to satisfy their insatiable thirst for reading material in class, they could try the syllabus or (God forbid) maybe even a textbook.

#4 People who wear shirts that say college on them. We've figured that much out. Thanks.

#3 People that try selling us things while we are minding our own business strolling through the Union. Let me get this straight. The homeless have to be restricted from our student union because they may try to beg away our spare change for food, but credit card companies and soft drink distributors should be given unfettered access to the student body. Makes perfect sense to me! Oh. Wait. No. No, it doesn't make ANY sense at all.

#2 That guy who comes in late every class period. You've seen this guy. Every class seems to require one of these guys (sometimes they are girls). The

SAME guy comes in late EVERY day. Is his clock malfunctioning? Does he suffer from some strange disease that keeps him from being on time like the rest of us? OH my GOD! Maybe this is a national crisis! We should form a task force and spend a few hundred billion dollars like we did with the Y2K bug. No. Then he (like the bug) wouldn't show up at all. More sleep. Good alarm clock. Works for us.

And finally,  
#1 Professors who give boring first-day speeches that practically put us to sleep.

"Here is your syllabus. Read the text. Go to lecture. Study." Yawn, yawn. I want FIRE and BRIMSTONE on the first day! Let's start class off with a BANG. I want professor X to jump up on top of his desk and scream, "You will ALL fail this class! Albert Einstein could not pass MY class!"

Then he (or she) could let out an evil Austin Powers-style cackle. "Wo ha ha ha..." This of course has nothing to do with quality education, but it would be fun to watch. I even know a couple

of professors in the history department that could show the rest of the faculty how this is done.

Unfortunately, even if all these people were thankfully deleted from our lives, we'd still be left with harsh reality. And that reality is that the best things we can do are get more sleep, read the syllabus and the text, go to lecture, try not to be late and study.

Those things don't make nearly as good a column, but that's life. The answers don't lay in other people's failings. It's up to us to make our own futures in academia and elsewhere. So, see ya in class.



*Michael Donley is a senior sociology major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.*

Delan Lonowski/DN