Class Activities

Chapter 12: Feminist Theories of Crime

**Class Activity 1: Key Terms**

**Key Terms (*sex, gender, chivalry, paternalism,* and *patriarchy*) (Single or Paired Activity)**

**Instructions:** Please define the following key terms: *sex, gender, chivalry, paternalism,* and *patriarchy*. Answer the following questions.

1. Discuss how gender affects the sanctions or punishments men and women receive. Do you think men receive harsher punishments than women? If so, why do you think men receive harsher punishments?
2. Discuss what role chivalry might play in the sanctions or punishment women might receive. Do you think chivalry still exists in our society or is it an outdated idea? Explain your answer.
3. Give an example of paternalism in American society. Do you think there are some groups of people (such as women) who need to be protected? If so, explain why you think this group needs to be protected. If not, explain why you feel this way.
4. Do you think Americans live in a patriarchal society? Give some examples to support your claim. Think about other countries. Can you give an example of another country that is patriarchal? Give some examples to support your claim.

**Class Activity 2: Feminist Perspectives on Gender**

**Defining Feminist Theories (Single or Paired Activity)**

**Instructions:** Use the table below to identify the key components of feminist theories (up to postmodern feminism) discussed in the textbook.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Feminist Theory** | **Key Components** | **Arguments in Favor of the Theory** | **Arguments in Opposition of the Theory** |
| **Traditional or Conservative Perspective** |  |  |  |
| **Liberal Feminism** |  |  |  |
| **Radical Feminism** |  |  |  |
| **Marxist and Socialist Feminism** |  |  |  |
| **Postmodern Feminism** |  |  |  |

**Class Activity 3: Feminist Critiques of Previous Research Studying Women and Crime**

**Case Studies: Compare and Contrast (Paired or Group Activity)**

**Instructions:** Define the following terms: *add and stir*, and *sex roles*. Keep these two concepts in mind while reading the following scenario. Answer the questions below.

**Virginia High School Teacher Arrested for Sexting Student**

A 27-year-old high school teacher in Virginia was busted for sexting a former student after his parents found nude pictures of her on his cell phone, police said.

Cara Alexander, an English teacher at Woodside High School in Newport News, was arrested Friday and charged with several offenses, including contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

The 17-year-old student told his parents that he was also in a sexual relationship with Alexander, a full-time ninth-grade teacher at the school since 2010, reported [ABC affiliate WVEC-TV](http://www.wvec.com/my-city/nnews/Newport-News-teacher-charged-with--204921651.html).

While the teen was previously under Alexander’s watch, he currently attends a different school, a Newport News Public Schools spokeswoman told [*The Virginian-Pilot*](http://hamptonroads.com/2013/04/teacher-charged-after-nude-photo-found-phone).

Officials didn’t immediately say how long Alexander had allegedly been sexting the teen, although they don’t believe they engaged in any inappropriate activity on school grounds.

1. Do you think the “add and stir” approach can explain the behavior of the female teacher? Why or why not?
2. Do you think sex roles can explain the behavior of the female teacher?
3. Do you think she committed a crime? Does she deserve to be punished? If so, what type of punishment should she receive?
4. If you were the parent of the student, how would you feel about her behavior?

**Davenport High School Teacher Arrested for Sexting**   
  
A second-year high school teacher faced a judge for the first time late Thursday afternoon on 47 charges that would get any parent fired up.

Dale Pennington is accused of using his position as a teacher at Ridge Community High School in Davenport to engage in a highly inappropriate relationship with a 16-year-old girl. Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said it started last spring when the girl was in Pennington’s world history class.

“She’s a student and he began to text with her,” he said. “And it went from texting to sexting.”

Then from sexting to e-mailing porn videos and discussing their fantasies of having sex together, Judd said. As of now, there’s no evidence the two actually had sex, but investigators say Pennington told them he would have had sex with her, if they could have arranged it.

"I'm just to the point of being numb," said Judd at a news conference Thursday afternoon. “We want to do our best to make sure this guy goes to prison. He needs to go to prison on his own accord for this conduct."

Parents at Ridge Community High School learned of the arrest through a message from the school.

“A big surprise,” said Lourdes Albizu, whose daughter, Diana, had Pennington as a teacher last year and thought he was a good teacher.

She said she's never had a problem with the school, but this case does raise more questions.

“I was asking her, how did he get (the student’s) phone number?” she said.

A judge granted Pennington $5,000 bond, but his wife already told investigators she has no intention of bailing him out.

Now detectives are turning their focus on what the sheriff called a “rumor” that the 16-year-old student is not the only victim.

“We’re searching for other victims because you see we don't think you wake up at 36 years of age and do this for the very first time,” Judd said.

The Polk County School Board put Pennington on administrative leave pending the outcome of its own investigation.

1. Do you think he committed a crime? Does he deserve to be punished? If so, what type of punishment should he receive?
2. If you were the parent of the student, how would you feel about his behavior?
3. Compare you answers with the answers from the first case. Did your feelings about the seriousness of the crime change?

4. Do you feel differently about the alleged perpetrator based on gender? Do you think we consider crimes against young males as seriously as we do young females? Explain your answer.

**Class Activity 4: Policies Based on Feminist Theories of Crime: Read the section on Policies Based on Feminist Theories of Crime**

**Policy (Paired or Group Activity)**

1. How do the ideas of “the personal is the political,” praxis, and gender-specific programming influence the way in which policies focus to prevent crime against women?
2. How do the ideas of “the personal is the political,” praxis, and gender-specific programming influence the way in which policies focus to address women who commit crime?
3. Which of the ideas above is most important in responding to women in crime? Why?