



**Assignment:** In a three-page essay, make an argument about Liza Mundy’s “Why Is Silicon Valley So Awful to Women?” by using the film *Miss Representation*. To do so, focus on answering this question: “How does *Miss Representation* help us better understand why many women feel unwelcome among the high-tech leaders of Silicon Valley?” If it helps, you can also think of it like this: “Why do many women feel unwelcome in Silicon Valley, and how does the film help us better understand the issue?”

Strive for a clear, well-organized, and well-supported essay based on our two key sources for this assignment. (sources listed below)

In your essay,

- 1.) Summarize the two key sources.
- 2.) Apply ideas from the film to better understand the article.
- 3.) Synthesize by identifying connections between the film and the article and by explaining how they relate to one another.

**Note:** If “apply” and “synthesize” sound confusing, then it may help to start by thinking of the assignment as a comparison-type essay. Focus on connections.

#### KEY SOURCES:

- *Miss Representation* by Newsom
- “Why Is Silicon Valley So Awful to Women?” by Mundy

#### OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES:

- Essay on kids and gender beliefs by Yong
- Essay on women and computers by Bach

#### MORE DETAILS:

##### 1. Summarize the two key sources

In Newsom’s film, we learned how girls and women might feel limited and disempowered in some ways due to gender stereotypes, which are evident virtually everywhere in the media surrounding us. In Mundy’s article, we read that women today often feel unwelcome in what many would regard as the most influential career on earth--the technology industry that is radically re-shaping our daily lives.

- Briefly summarize both sources so your reader has a clear idea of their main points. This creates a good foundation for the rest of your essay, which involves applying and synthesizing ideas.

##### 2. Use the film to make an argument about the article on women in Silicon Valley

- Apply ideas from the film to better understand the article
- Synthesize by identifying and explaining connections

When you apply ideas from the film to the article, you’ll also be synthesizing ideas (combining different ideas into a coherent whole) because as soon as you’ve applied an idea, you’ve automatically begun synthesizing at the same time. “Applying” can mean putting one thing on another, like when someone “applies” a bandage to a wound or “applies” makeup to something. In this case, you’re taking ideas from the film and applying them to article. Try to find spots where the film’s ideas fit well to illuminate ideas in the article and make them clearer or make them stand out even brighter.

- How does the film help us better understand the essay? What ideas from the film give added depth to parts of the essay? What does the film teach us about our culture in *general* that can be applied to the *specific* issues in Silicon Valley today? Does the film reveal a “bigger picture”?

- **In other words, how is Silicon Valley an example of a bigger, wider, and deeper problem?**
- Tip: you might visualize this assignment’s main goal by thinking of heading in this direction:  
“The film helps us better understand the article because both deal with . . .”  
(OR) “The film helps us better understand the article by revealing . . .”

**WRITING GOALS:**

<b>FOCUS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a clear focus through “sign-posting” and organization strategies. This means <i>signaling</i> key points clearly by presenting your <b>thesis</b> and <b>topic sentences</b> effectively. It also means having <b>unified paragraphs</b> that stay centered on one main idea. Organizational strategies for this particular essay will be offered in class.</li> </ul>
<b>FLOW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use effective <b>transitions</b> to enhance organization as your essay moves from idea to idea.</li> <li>• Maintain tight connections by avoiding repetition and keeping related ideas together.</li> <li>• Handle quotes smoothly by using signal phrases to introduce them; avoid “dropped quotes.”</li> </ul>
<b>CONTENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support your main points with developed body paragraphs. Include strong <b>examples</b> and select relevant details. To enhance support, illustrate points with vivid and <b>engaging details</b>—the kind of details readers remember. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Give added strength to support by including <b>a minimum of two quotes and two statistics</b>. At least two sources need to be used and cited. Strategies on how to quote and cite accurately will be discussed in class.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Make your presentation engaging. Take advantage especially of the spots where engaging your readers matters the most: the title, the opening, and the conclusion. Create interest in the topic and leave readers feeling like the topic matters to them.</li> </ul>
<b>CLARITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish credibility by presenting academic-looking work. Make sure the type font, spacing, and margins are in <b>MLA format</b>, and be sure to carefully <b>proofread</b> your essay.</li> </ul>

**Avoid Plagiarism**—don’t let another source speak for you and rob you of a chance to express yourself; if you use outside sources, give them credit; acknowledge, quote, and cite them whenever necessary.

**Evaluation Criteria:** Papers will be evaluated on the effectiveness and clarity with which they address the assignment and meet its goals. See the online rubric for a checklist of goals for this essay.

**Note:** If you’d like to approach this assignment from a different angle, please talk with me beforehand.

**Format:** Three complete pages (approx. 1050 words), minimum. A little over three pages is fine. Use MLA style—that means typed, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1” margins, and double spaced.

**Rough Draft:** A rough draft for peer review is due before the final draft. Peer review includes two tasks:

- one out-of-class task credit earned for preparing two typed copies of a draft that’s a minimum of two complete pages. Students need to be in class, on time, ready to share drafts for task credit.
- one in-class task credit earned for being in class and providing helpful peer review for two students. Without a draft, one can’t participate in peer review since it leaves others without work to review.

**Due Dates:** See our Class Assignment Schedule.