
Supervisor's Name	Dr. Julie E. Dowsett
Supervisor Email Address*	jdowsett@yorku.ca
Supervisor's Department	School of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies
Project Title	Edward Bernays, Doris Fleischman Bernays, and the History of "Commodity Feminist" Marketing

Description of Research Project (1500 characters maximum)

My book project "Feminism for Sale" explores the relationship between feminism and consumerism. I theorize the early twentieth century origins, development, and underlying politics of what I call "commodity feminism" (defined as the reduction of feminist activism to a commodity that can be bought and sold on the market). Central to these origins is public relations pioneer Edward Bernays and his wife and business partner Doris Fleischman Bernays, who developed a variety of commodity feminist campaigns from the 1910s to the late 1970s. In their most famous campaign, the "Torches of Freedom" (1929), the Bernays' used the image of American suffragettes to sell cigarettes to rebellious "modern" women. My book draws upon my extensive archival research at the Museum of Public Relations in New York City, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. It also draws upon my interviews with the Bernays' two daughters (Anne Bernays and Doris Held) and Edward Bernays' protégé (Shelley Spector). The archival research I have conducted for "Feminism for Sale" has been funded by Harvard University (2017-2018 Schlesinger Library Research Support Grant) and York University (2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Contract Faculty Major Research Grants).

Undergraduate Student Responsibilities (1500 characters maximum)

The undergraduate RA will help me with several tasks, particularly interview transcription (of my interviews with the Bernays' daughters) and cataloging archival research. On the latter, using the citation software Zotero, the RA will help me upload, catalogue and further organize the hundreds of files I have collected. These files include scans of pictures, advertisements, correspondence, business transactions, and other documents. They will also help write short descriptions of the files and help develop "tags" to further develop the search capacity of the Zotero catalogue. We will meet weekly on campus at a set time/day for co-working and supervision, and the rest of the hours will be completed by the RA on their own time.

Qualifications Required (750 characters maximum)

The ideal candidate will be an upper-year student in Gender and Women's Studies, Sexuality Studies, Communications, Political Science, or another field in the Social Sciences. Knowledge of feminist approaches and methods in the social sciences and a familiarity with Zotero preferred. If the student is unfamiliar with Zotero, they will have to attend a Scott library workshop to help them learn the program.
