**Discussion Questions**: *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)

1. What is “the problem that has no name," and why does it have no name?
2. According to Friedan, despite positive trends in the direction of gender equality after the Nineteenth Amendment (rise in women’s employment, education, etc.), what factors contributed to the return of women back to the home between the first and second waves? Think about historical, social, *and* psychological factors Friedan discusses.
3. Do you see Friedan offering a capitalist critique within her discussion of the forces that sustain the feminine mystique? Consider the class(es) of the women her book is addressing. How does gender identity intersect with capitalist interests in this chapter?
4. Friedan argues, “The feminine mystique says that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfillment of their own femininity,” and then points to the fears of the “masculinization” of women in America (9). What does it mean to “be feminine,” or what are the qualities of femininity in the U.S. at this time? What assumptions about gender and sex are implicit in these claims? [*Hint:* Think back to our discussion of “sex” vs. “gender.”]
5. Friedan draws upon her own background as a mother and a housewife, in her argumentation, as a form of expertise. What are the pros and cons of this approach or position? Are there gaps in her argument?
6. Whose experiences is Friedan addressing and representing in her book? Compare/contrast Friedan’s representations of women’s experiences to Lorraine Hansberry’s representations.
7. Why do you think the medium of print had such an impact on the women’s movement? Why is print an important tool for social change? Can you think of other texts that have inspired social change?