



SALLY!

HIGHER EDUCATION MODULE

Inspire Activism

The documentary *Sally!* was born from a simple question:

**“How come you’ve never heard
of Sally Gearhart?”**

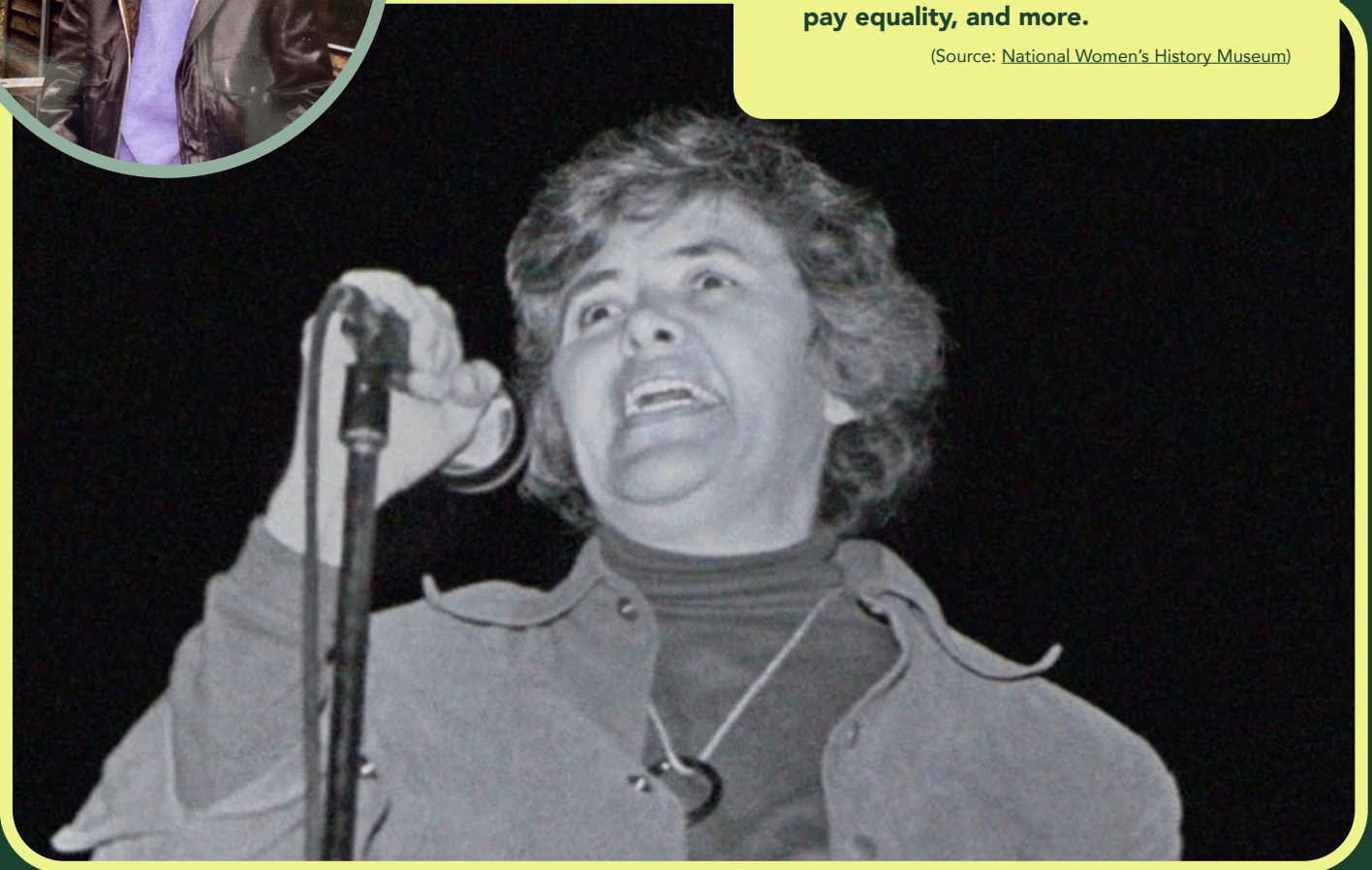
Now, these film-based modules extend that inquiry to undergraduate and graduate students, inspiring additional research, inviting critical thinking, and actively seeking to redress the historical omission of women and LGBTQ+ individuals from academic discourse.

Through the *Sally!* Modules for Higher Education, students in Gender Studies, Women Studies, LGBTQ+ Studies, Sociology, Political Science, Theology, Education, and more can engage and learn about the life and legacy of one of second-wave feminism’s* most cherished leaders through her voice and the testimonials and stories from her beloved community of colleagues and friends.



*** Second-wave feminism (1960s-1980s) fought for women’s issues, including preventing domestic violence, advancing racial justice, protecting reproductive rights, ensuring LGBTQ rights, gaining pay equality, and more.**

(Source: [National Women’s History Museum](#))

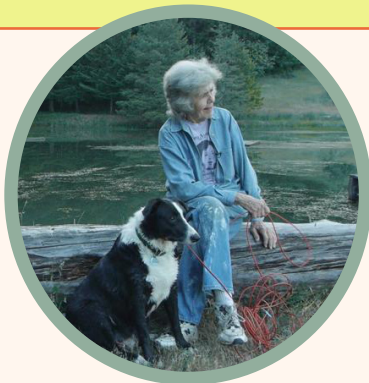


MODULE OVERVIEW

Each stand-alone module focuses on a key theme and includes:

Topic-focused discussion questions

open up each section of the module, prompting students to engage in active viewing of the film clips.



Sally! film clips

shine a spotlight on moments in the documentary that align with the module's topic. Each excerpt will range in length from 2 to 7 minutes.

A module exercise

is an aligned demonstration of students' understanding of the module's theme, considering the historical context of Sally's work, and connecting her to current social justice issues using multiple points of view.



Additional resources

at the end of each module include recommended and available scholarly articles, primary source documents, and relevant websites to help guide students in their research and discovery.

“INSPIRE ACTIVISM” MODULE

“Sally Gearhart, at a particular moment in our history, when it really mattered, stepped up and inspired tens of thousands of people and articulated the dreams of millions. She’s an extraordinary woman.”

- Cleve Jones, Author, Activist



The “Inspire Activism” Module aims to empower and inform students to become engaged and effective agents of social change by drawing inspiration and learning from the life and work of Sally Gearhart.

By engaging in this interactive learning, students will explore:

- How did Sally Gearhart inspire activism in others?
- What qualities did Sally Gearhart have that made her an effective activist and advocate for change?
- How can these strategies be applied to contemporary social justice movements?

Upon completion of the “Inspire Activism” Module, students will:

- Understand and analyze the historical context of second-wave feminism and the LGBTQ+ rights movement.
- Evaluate the contributions of Sally Gearhart to feminist theory and activism.
- Develop personal strategies for promoting inclusivity.

TOPIC 1

Sally: The Activist



QUESTIONS

- ? What personal qualities made Sally an effective activist?
- ? How did Sally inspire others to be activists?
- ? What did you learn from the documentary that inspired you to work for change?
- ? Can you identify the origin of Sally's activism?
- ? What role did the women in Sally's life and community play in her activism?
- ? How do you interpret Jewelle Gomez's metaphor of Sally as a "radical lesbian feminist lighthouse"?
- ? After watching the film, what do you think is Sally's legacy for activists today?



Watch *Sally!* Clip 1 5 minutes

Description: This clip introduces audiences to Sally Gearhart, showcasing her charisma, humor, bold self-acceptance, and how she was admired and loved within her community.

Start: 0:01:48 (Card: The late 1970s, San Francisco, CA. Jewelle Gomez: "Sally Gearhart, she was this radical lesbian feminist lighthouse.")

End: 0:06:36 (Corky Wick: "We have to put feminist ideas into the far future.")



Watch *Sally!* Clip 2 7 minutes

Description: This clip includes powerful testimonials on the creation of San Francisco State's radical Women Studies Program, including the founding faculty as well as students who were empowered and radicalized through this program.

Start: 0:47:02 (Corky Wick: "It was such an exciting time, the 70s at San Francisco State.")

End: 0:54:20 (Robin Song: "All of us had connections into the community.")

MODULE EXERCISE: "NOTES FROM A RECOVERING ACTIVIST"

- Read Sally Gearhart's "[Notes From A Recovering Activist](#)."[©]

TOPIC 2

The Briggs Initiative: Standing Up to Hate



QUESTIONS

- ? What organizing strategies were successfully used to defeat Proposition 6, also known as the Briggs Initiative?
- ? How did Sally Gearhart and Harvey Milk work together? Why was their collaboration and dynamic so successful?
- ? How did Sally address the fear and misinformation surrounding LGBTQ+ people during the No on 6 campaign?
- ? What can contemporary activists learn from the success of the No on 6 campaign?
- ? What are contemporary parallels to the Briggs Initiative? (e.g., LGBTQ+ rights? Parental rights in schools?, etc.)

MODULE EXERCISE: PARALLEL'S TODAY

Students can choose one of these two options:

1. Research and write an article about a contemporary issue's scope, intent, sponsors, and current status, and compare and contrast it to the Briggs Initiative in no more than 800 words. Students will prepare their article for submission to a scholarly journal of their choice.
2. Create a social media campaign to raise awareness about the contemporary issue, drawing connections to its roots in the 1978 Briggs Initiative.



Watch Sally! Clip 3 7 minutes

Description: This clip focuses on Sally's role in fighting the [Briggs Initiative](#), or Proposition 6, which aimed to ban LGBTQ+ teachers from California schools.

Start: 0:10:35 (Announcer: "The hottest issue in next November's elections will be the Briggs Initiative.")

End: 0:17:23 (Jim Mitulski: "The Briggs Initiative was the learning place for a lot of that.")



Watch Sally! Clip 4 3 minutes

Description: This clip discusses the omission of Sally in the acclaimed film, *Milk*.

Start: 0:20:53 (2008, shot of Castro theatre with *Milk* on the marquis.)

End: 0:23:31 (Dorothy Haecker: "Anything that leaves out relationships is not real.")

Here are several journals to consider for submissions:

[Gender and Society](#)

[GLO: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies](#)

[Journal of Women's History](#)

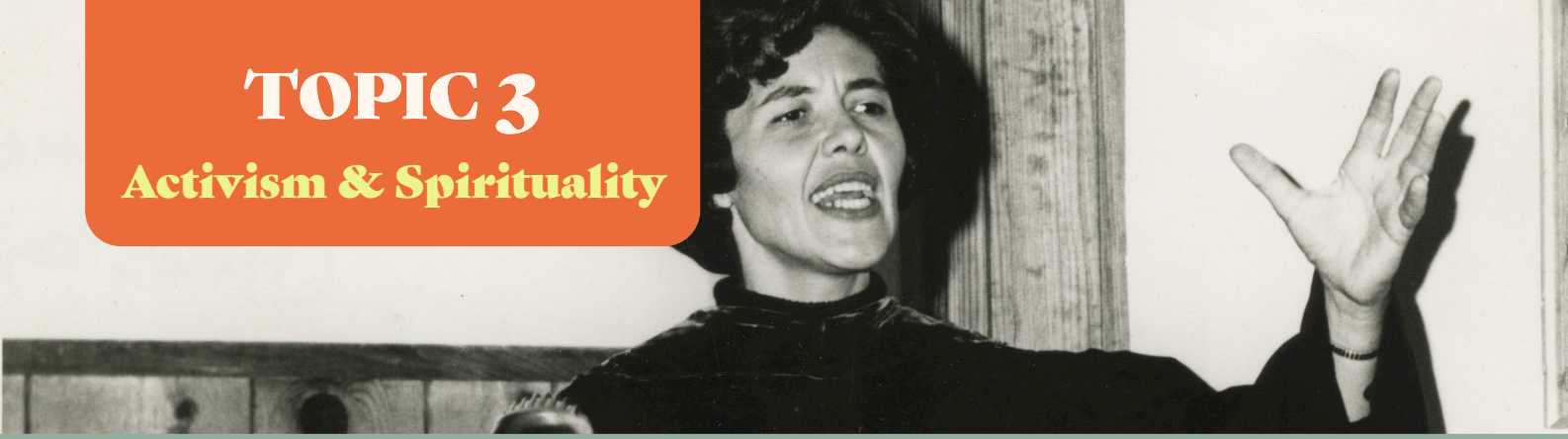
[Journal of Lesbian Studies](#)

[Women's Studies Quarterly](#)

[Journal of Homosexuality](#)

TOPIC 3

Activism & Spirituality



QUESTIONS

- ❓ How did Sally navigate the contradictions between her lesbianism and her Christianity?
- ❓ What were some of the specific teachings or actions of Jesus that Sally directly connected with?
- ❓ How did Sally's activism impact her participation in Glide Memorial Church and the broader San Francisco Christian community?
- ❓ What lessons can you draw from Sally's experience that are relevant to interfaith dialogue and social justice work today?

CRH
The Council
on Religion
and the Homosexual

Watch *Sally!* Clip 5
4 minutes

Description: Sally's feminism, lesbianism, and faith were core to her activism. Her personal journey took her from the traditional teachings of the Bible to practicing new and more liberal versions of her faith, and even to questioning the church itself. This clip highlights her efforts to make the church more inclusive of women and LGBTQ+ individuals, and shows how her spirituality helped sustain her activism.

Start: 0:39:36 (Jean Crosby: "I was working at Glide Memorial United Methodist Church...")

End: 0:43:48 (Jean Crosby: "It was impressive to see.")

MODULE EXERCISE: INTEGRATING BELIEFS, IDENTITY, AND SPIRITUALITY

Description: In this exercise, students will identify a belief system that is central to their identity and has had a significant influence on their sense of self. This can be religious, philosophical, political, etc. Once identified, they will then create a piece of written, visual, or performance-based art that explores the evolution of their beliefs, identity, and spirituality over time. Students should focus on moments of integration, conflict, and transformation in the spirit of, or similar to, the idea of Sally preaching at Glide Memorial Church. A 250-500-word reflection should accompany the piece, analyzing key influences and turning points.

Once their artwork/creative expression is complete, have students share their creations with the class either by presenting or organizing a gallery exhibition. After sharing or exhibiting, debrief with students on the challenges and rewards of integrating their beliefs and values with their activism.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Scholarly Articles

Collins, Patricia Hill. "[Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory](#)," *Sociological Theory*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1-21.

Foss, Karen A., et al. [Feminist Rhetorical Theories](#). 1st ed., SAGE Publications, 1999.

Gearhart, Sally. "[The Future—If There Is One—Is Female](#)." *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence*, edited by Pam McAllister, New Society Publishers, 1982, pp. 266-284.

Gearhart, Sally. "Toward a Feminist Theory of Power." [Feminist Theory: A Reader](#), edited by Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski, 3rd ed., McGraw-Hill, 2005, pp. 150-163.

Gosse, Van. "The Second-Wave and Beyond: Recent Historiography of U.S. Feminism." [Journal of Women's History](#), vol. 26, no. 4, 2014, pp. 175-187.

Jeffreys, Sheila. "The Importance of Lesbian Feminist Theory and Scholarship." [Journal of Lesbian Studies](#), vol. 21, no. 3, 2017, pp. 275-289.

Nash, Jennifer C. "Re-thinking Intersectionality." [Feminist Review](#), no. 89, 2008, pp. 1-15.

Rubin, Gayle. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." [Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality](#), edited Carole S. Vance, Routledge, 1984, pp. 267-319.

Primary Source Documents

[The Sally Miller Gearhart Papers](#) are located at the University of Oregon. The collection is open to the public and must be used in Special Collections and University Archives Reading Room.

- Explore speeches and writings by Sally Gearhart
- Interviews with Sally Gearhart. See audio files
- Newspaper articles and media coverage of Sally Gearhart's activism

[The Wanderground](#), by Sally Gearhart. Gain access with a free account through the [Internet Archive](#).

Documents related to the Briggs Initiative. See [Primary Source Set: The Briggs Initiative](#), GLBT Historical Society.

KQED Interview: "[Meet Sally Gearhart: The Most Famous LGBTQ Activist You've Never Heard Of](#)."

Relevant Websites

The Sally Gearhart Film Website: sallygearhartfilm.com

The Sally Miller Gearhart Website: sallymillergearhart.net

The GLBT Historical Society: glbthistory.org

The Feminist Majority Foundation: feminist.org

GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation): glaad.org

The Human Rights Campaign: www.hrc.org

Consortium of Higher Education: LGBT Resource Professionals: lgbtcampus.org



SALLY!

SallyGearhartFilm.com