**A range of political movements and ideologies that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, social equality and to fight gender stereotypes.**

***The Four Waves of Feminism***

Martha Rampton, Professor of History with a specialty in the social history and activities and roles of women

**Pre-Wave:** Some thinkers have sought to locate the roots of feminism in **ancient Greece** with Sappho (**570 BCE**), the **medieval world** with Hildegard of Bingen (**1179**) or Christine de Pisan (**1434**) ….Mary Wollstonecraft (**1797**) (foremother of feminism).

**First Wave: Late 1800s and early 1900s**; urban industrialism and liberal, socialist politics; concerned with women’s suffrage (recognition as people and the vote); associated with **temperance** and **abolitionist** movements; activists such as Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”; seen as “un-lady like” ie. Public speaking, demonstrating, stints in jail). Mostly limited to upper and middle class, white, cisgender women.

**Second Wave: (your grandmothers!): 1960s to 1990s.** Concerned with sexuality and reproductive rights ( **the pill** was invented and freed women from domesticity). Became increasingly theoretical and academic; critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, normative heterosexuality; sex and gender were differentiated (Western perspective- not Indigenous); brought in “sisterhood” across ethnic and class lines; creation of women-only spaces; **ecofeminism**: biological connections to cycles meant women were natural advocates of environmentalism.

Sometimes criticized by current waves, but these feminists brought the following:

* More women in positions of power in education, politics, and business
* Abortion rights
* Access to the Pill
* Expression and acceptance of bodies (Burn your bra!)
* Greater public awareness of the need for equal rights
* Academic strides: Women’s Studies and Gender Studies departments
* Protection and support for abused women
* Industry of books by and for women
* Public discourse around Women’s Rights
* Critique of the patriarchy

**Third Wave: (Mz. Hope!). “GRRLS” - Mid- 1990s.** Informed by **post-colonial thinking and Intersectionality**. Re-adoption of things such as lipstick, high heels, cleavage which the first two waves had associated with male oppression (lack of choice); reclaimed “slut” and “bitch.”

Criticized for being overly optimistic with blind spots.

Contributions:

* **Intersectionality**
* **Acceptance of a sexualized body (sex positivity and body positivity)**
* **Understanding that suppression of rights in a context of marginalization of other groups**
* **Gender bending**
* **Leveling hierarchies**

**Fourth Wave: Right now! You!** Heavily informed and created by **the Internet**. Bringing Feminism back out of the Academic and into the public; sexual abuse, rape, violence against women, unequal pay, slut-shaming, female representation.

Some people have trouble with the word “Feminism” because of associations with the **gender binary**. People worry that this word raises the hackles of a broader audience. Feminism is no longer just for the struggles of women; it is a call for gender equity.

Fourth wave feminists bring the **teachings of Third Wave**: Intersectionality is much more commonly understood.

**There have always been many “feminisms”, not just one ideology.**