

Syllabus: HIS 582W On-line
Topics in Women's History
CID 7086
Fall 2007

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Welcome to Topics in Women's History! This is a three-hour, graduate credit course in the Sam Houston State University History Department. Although this course will survey women's history as a field, the emphasis in this course will be on American women's history.

Course Description: This course will be conducted entirely on-line. The student will have no obligation to travel to the SHSU campus for any reason. Instead, we will use the Blackboard computer interface to read and comment on texts, to hold discussions about various assigned readings, to write and share reviews and essays, and to bring web resources to other members of the class.

In this course, we will focus on gender as a tool of historical analysis and then apply that approach to American women's history. We will start by reading some essays on the field of women's history. From there, we will survey women's roles and experiences in American history, beginning in the 18th c. and ending in the 1970s. The last paper will be on the topic of your choice, so that if you feel we did not get to cover an era or topic you are most interested in, you will have an opportunity to do so. In general, emphasis will be placed on a close, careful, analytical reading of the texts.

Required texts:

Many readings for this course will be journal articles or e-books available on-line through the SHSU Newton Gresham Library. To access journal articles, use JSTOR (see directions, below.)

In addition, you will need to purchase the following books or borrow them from a library. The Woloch book will serve as a narrative textbook surveying American women's history.

1. Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience: A Concise History* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002, 1996)
2. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (Vintage, 1991)
3. Catherine Allgor, *Parlor Politics: In Which The Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (University of Virginia Press, 2002)
4. Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (1999, 1988)

5. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2001, 1963).

Course Objectives: There are three main goals for this course. In this course, you will:

1. Gain knowledge of the field of American women's history from the colonial period to the 1990s. You will become familiar with the kinds of monographic work being done currently by historians of American women. (This is a readings course designed to familiarize students with current trends in American women's historiography. The emphasis is on reading in the field, not on primary research.)
2. Develop skill in expressing yourself through writing.
3. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Class Requirements:

This course is based on a seminar format. Successful seminars require full participation and careful preparation by every member. Careful preparation means that you have not only read the assignment but have taken notes and thought about the author's work. For every class, each of you **must complete all of the reading prior to the date for which it is due**. Your active participation is essential. As the instructor, I reserve the right to amend the syllabus (particularly the reading assignments) as I deem necessary throughout the semester. I am also open to suggestions; if you feel there is a topic we ought to read more about or a specific article you would like us to discuss, please let me know.

Book/article reviews: You will be expected to write 4 book/article reviews (3-5 pp. each). These reviews will count as 60% of your course grade; the lowest grade of the 4 reviews will be dropped, leaving 3 other reviews each worth 20% of the final grade. The book/article reviews will be due by the Monday following the week in which we discussed the reading you are reviewing; you may decide which weeks you would like to write a review of the readings.

Review Essay: The final writing assignment for the semester will involve writing one 5-7 pp. paper in which you review 3 articles of your choice, on the women's history topic of your choice. Through the Newton Gresham Library website, you will access JSTOR, which will allow you to browse through hundreds of scholarly journals to find articles of interest to you. A review essay is similar to a book review, except that a review essay reviews several items together. This is done as a way of taking stock of the state of scholarship on a particular topic or in a particular field. Further instructions on this assignment will be provided at a future date. In the meantime, if you would like to see what a review essay looks like, search JSTOR for examples. This final paper will be due no later than Monday, December 10. This review essay will be worth 20% of your final grade.

Class participation: Participation in the on-line discussion boards on Blackboard will count as 20% of your grade for the course. Participation (via the discussion boards on Blackboard) is essential for the success of this course. Each Tuesday, I will have a discussion board open and ready for our discussion of that week's reading; you **MUST** post your comments no later than Thursday evening. I will be reviewing the comments on

Friday (I may also participate in the discussions as they are unfolding Tuesday through Thursday). If you plan to write a review of one of the readings, you have the weekend to do so, and you must submit your paper by Monday.

The following criteria will be used to determine participation grades each week:

A= if you are participating and moving the discussion along with insights from the readings

B= if you are present, prepared, and participating

C= if you are present and prepared (brief, lackluster replies, but you seem to have done the reading)

D= if you are present but unprepared (monosyllabic replies, errors indicating that you did not do the reading)

F= if you are not present (in other words, silent)

How to access JSTOR:

1. Go to the Newton Gresham Library homepage.
2. Under “Research,” click on “Databases and Indexes.”
3. On the Databases and Indexes page, click on “Databases by Subject.”
4. Click on “History.”
5. Scroll down to “JSTOR.” Click on JSTOR.
6. Search JSTOR for specific titles, authors, or topics.

A note about movies: Frequently, I will recommend certain movies that you can watch if you wish to do so. This is intended to allow for a more in-depth experience for those who have the time and interest. Watching the movies is NOT required. All of the movies should be available through Netflix, and some may be available through your local library.

Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments

Week 1: Aug. 21

Introduction

Please read the syllabus and ask any questions you may have about the syllabus.

Please read the assignment listed for NEXT WEEK – it is what we will discuss NEXT WEEK. This will be true for all assignments. They will always be listed for the date on which they will be discussed.

Buy your books! You should be able to purchase them from amazon.com or other on-line sources. If it looks like you will have problems obtaining any of them, please let me know as soon as possible.

Week 2: Aug. 28

Women's History as a Field

Woloch, chap. 1

(Note: as Woloch is intended to give you context and a historical narrative, we will usually not discuss Woloch. However, you are always welcome to raise any questions or make comments if you wish.)

Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1/2. (Autumn, 1975), pp. 5-14.

Melinda S. Zook, "Integrating Men's History into Women's History: A Proposition," *The History Teacher*, Vol. 35, No. 3. (May, 2002), pp. 373-387.

Week 3: Sept. 4

18th c. Women

Woloch, chap. 2

Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale*, pp. 3-203.

Week 4: Sept. 11

18th century Women, continued

Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale*, pp. 204-353.

Website: http://dohistory.org/book/100_aboutBook.html

Before coming to class, please spend at least 30 minutes exploring the website for *A Midwife's Tale*. Come to class prepared to offer your thoughts about what you found.

Recommended: Watch the documentary *A Midwife's Tale* (1997).

Week 5: Sept. 18
Women in the Early Republic

Woloch, chap. 3

Allgor, *Parlor Politics*, read all if you have time. If you are pressed for time, be sure to read the introduction, chapters 1, 2 and 5, and the conclusion.

Week 6: Sept. 25
Women and Slavery

Woloch, chap. 4

Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, chaps. 1, 2, 5-7, 10, 13, 15-22, 24, 32-41 (end of book). This book is available as an e-book on the Library's on-line catalogue; do a keyword search for Harriet Jacobs and the electronic version should be one of the results.

Jean Fagan Yellin, "Written by Herself: Harriet Jacobs' Slave Narrative," *American Literature*, vol. 53, no. 3 (Nov. 1981), pp. 479-486.

Jean Fagan Yellin, "Harriet Jacobs's Family History," *American Literature*, vol. 66, no. 4 (Dec. 1994), pp. 765-767.

Week 7: Oct. 2
Women in the West

Woloch, chap. 5

Joan M. Jensen and Darlis A. Miller, "The Gentle Tamers Revisited: New Approaches to the History of Women in the American West," in *The Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 49, no. 2 (May 1980), pp. 173-213. This is a long article, but it is very easy reading -- it is a review essay which is taking stock of the field and recommending new directions.

Joan Iversen, "Feminist Implications of Mormon Polygyny" in *Feminist Studies*, vol. 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1984), pp. 505-522.

Virginia Scharff, "Else Surely We Shall All Hang Separately: The Politics of Western Women's History," in *The Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 61, no. 4, *Western Women's History Revisited* (Nov. 1992), pp. 535-555. This is a review essay on the state of the field in 1992. Compare Scharff's conclusions with Jensen and Miller said in 1980.

Sarah Deutsch, "Connections," in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3 (1996), pp. 34-37. This is an extremely short piece that gives you a sense of Deutsch's work -- she is a major historian in the field of western women's history.

Week 8: Oct. 9

Women in the Antebellum and Civil War Era

Woloch, chap. 6

Alison M. Parker and Stephanie Cole, eds., *Women and the Unstable State in Nineteenth-century America* (Texas A&M, 2000). This book is available as an e-book on the Library's on-line catalogue; do a keyword search for the title and the electronic version should be one of the results. Choose three essays from this book to read and discuss.

OR, read the following three essays.

Robert E. May, "Reconsidering Antebellum U.S. Women's History: Gender, Filibustering, and America's Quest for Empire," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 4. (Dec., 2005), pp. 1155-1188.

Stephanie McCurry, "The Two Faces of Republicanism: Gender and Proslavery Politics in Antebellum South Carolina," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 78, No. 4. (Mar., 1992), pp. 1245-1264.

Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 76, No. 4. (Mar., 1990), pp. 1200-1228.

Week 9: Oct. 16

Woman Suffrage

Woloch, chap. 7

Jacob Katz Cogan and Lori D. Ginzberg, "1846 Petition for Woman's Suffrage, New York State Constitutional Convention," *Signs*, Vol. 22, No. 2. (Winter, 1997), pp. 427-439.

Gretchen Ritter, "Jury Service and Women's Citizenship before and after the Nineteenth Amendment," *Law and History Review*, vol. 20, no. 3 (Autumn 2002), pp. 479-515.

Ellen Dubois, "Woman Suffrage: The View from the Pacific," *The Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 69, no. 4, Woman Suffrage: The View from the Pacific (Nov. 2000), pp. 539-551.

Read either Gayle Gullet OR John Putnam:

Gayle Gullett, "Constructing the Woman Citizen and Struggling for the Vote in California, 1896-1911," *The Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 69, no. 4, Woman Suffrage: The View from the Pacific (Nov. 2000), pp. 573-593.

John Putman, "A 'Test of Chiffon Politics': Gender Politics in Seattle, 1897-1917,

The Pacific Historical Review, vol. 69, no. 4, Woman Suffrage: The View from the Pacific (Nov. 2000), pp. 595-616.

Recommended: Watch either the respectable documentary *One Woman, One Vote* (1995) or the lurid, made-for-HBO *Iron-Jawed Angels* (2004). Watching both, then comparing and contrasting the two can be highly entertaining!

Week 10: Oct. 23

Women and the Progressive Era, part 1

Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 75, no. 1, (June 1988), pp. 9-39.

Laura Briggs, "The Race of Hysteria: 'Overcivilization' and the 'Savage' in Late Nineteenth-Century Obstetrics and Gynecology," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2. (Jun., 2000), pp. 246-273.

Ann R. Gabbert, "Prostitution and Moral Reform in the Borderlands: El Paso, 1890-1920," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 12, no. 4 (Oct. 2003), pp. 575-604.

Michael Willrich, "Home Slackers: Men, the State, and Welfare in Modern America," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 87, No. 2. (Sep., 2000), pp. 460-489.

Week 11: Oct. 30

Women and the Progressive Era, part 2

Woloch, chap. 8

Paul A. Lombardo, "Facing Carrie Buck," *The Hastings Center Report*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Mar., 2003), pp. 14-17.

Peggy Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of 'Race' in Twentieth-Century America," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 83, no. 1 (June 1996), pp. 44-69.

Kathleen M. Blee, "Women in the 1920s' Ku Klux Klan Movement," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1. (Spring, 1991), pp. 57-77.

Mark Dyreson, "Icons of Liberty or Objects of Desire? American Women Olympians and the Politics of Consumption," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 38, no. 3, Sport and Politics. (July 2003), pp. 435-460.

Week 12: Nov. 6

Gender, the State and Politics in the 1930s and 1940s

Woloch, chap. 9

Alice Kessler-Harris, "In the Nation's Image: The Gendered Limits of Social Citizenship in the Depression Era," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 86, no. 3, The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History: A Special Issue. (Dec. 1999), pp. 1251-1279.

Margaret Paton-Walsh, "Women's Organizations, U.S. Foreign Policy, and the Far Eastern Crisis, 1937-1941," *The Pacific Historical Review*, vol. 70, no. 4 (Nov. 2001), pp. 601-626.

Ruth Milkman, "Redefining 'Women's Work': The Sexual Division of Labor in the Auto Industry during World War II," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Women and Work. (Summer, 1982), pp. 336-372.

Valerie Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women during World War II," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1. (1984), pp. 6-14.

Week 13: Nov. 13

Gender in the Cold War Era

Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (1999, 1988)

Frank Costigliola, "'Unceasing Pressure for Penetration': Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George Kennan's Formation of the Cold War," *The Journal of American History* (March 1997), 1309-39.

Bernice McNair Barnett, "Invisible Southern Black Women Leaders in the Civil Rights Movement: The Triple Constraints of Gender, Race, and Class," *Gender and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2. (Jun., 1993), pp. 162-182.

Week 14: Nov. 20

Woloch, chap. 10

Start reading Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (2001, 1963).

No discussion for this week (week of Nov. 20) due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Week 15: Nov. 27

Women's Activism in the 1960s

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (2001, 1963).

Rebecca E. Klatch, "The Formation of Feminist Consciousness among Left- and Right-Wing Activists of the 1960s," *Gender and Society*, Vol. 15, No. 6. (Dec., 2001), pp. 791-815.

Week 16: Dec. 4

The Late 1960s-1970s: Feminism and Backlash

Woloch, chap. 11

Rosalyn Baxandall, “ Re-Visioning the Women's Liberation Movement's Narrative: Early Second Wave African American Feminists,” *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1. (Spring, 2001), pp. 225-245.

David E. Kyvig, “ Historical Misunderstandings and the Defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 18, No. 1. (Winter, 1996), pp. 45-63.

Susan K. Freeman, “From the Lesbian Nation to the Cincinnati Lesbian Community: Moving Towards a Politics of Location,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 9, no. ½ (Jan. – April 2000), pp. 137-174.

Rebecca Klatch , “Coalition and Conflict among Women of the New Right,” *Signs*, vol. 13, No. 4. (Summer, 1988), pp. 671-694.

Recommended: Watch the documentary *Chisholm '72: Unbought and Unbossed* (2005).

Monday, Dec. 10: Final Paper due

This is based on three journal articles of your choice on the women's history topic of your choice.

COURSE POLICIES

NOTE: Student enrollment in this course confirms that you have read and accepted these policies.

Student Syllabus Guidelines: You may find online a more detailed description of the following policies. These guidelines will also provide you with a link to the specific university policy or procedure:

<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*

Classroom Rules of Conduct: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and students with respect. Students are to turn off all cell phones while in the classroom. Under no circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*

Students with Disabilities Policy: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*

Visitors in the Classroom: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

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