UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Fall Semester 1990-91

HISTORY 902-2
Thurs. 1:00 - 3:00 P.M.
Professor Gerda Lerner

SYLLABUS

BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS HISTORY AND LITERATURE

WEEKS I. LITERATURE AS A SOURCE FOR HISTORY

1 - 2 Each student will read two biographies, one for each week.

Select ONE from this group:
Louise Meriwether, Daddy was a Number Runner
Anzia Yezierska, Breadgivers
Maya Angelou, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
Paule Marshall, Brown Girl, Brownstones

Select ONE from this group:
James Farrell, Studs Lonigan, Vol. 1
Claude Brown, Manchild in the Promised Land
James Baldwin, Go, Tell it on the Mountain
Henry Roth, Call it Sleep

II. HISTORY AS A SOURCE FOR LITERATURE - THE GREAT DEPRESSION

3 - 5 All students read entire John Steinbeck, Grapes of Wrath
Each student read any 100 pages of ONE of the following:
Studs Terkel, Hard Times
Caroline Bird, The Invisible Scar (on reserve) (HC)*
Milton Meltzer, Brother Can You Spare a Dime?

* (HC) denotes Hardcover.
6 - 7  III. THE "PERSONA" AS MORAL LEADER

All students read:

L. Labaree (ed.) The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
also:
the entry on Benjamin Franklin in the Dictionary of American
Biography (Reserve Room)

8  IV. THE PERILS OF HISTORIOGRAPHY: JOHN BROWN

Students will select one of the works listed under "John
Brown" in the attached bibliographic unit. Please
familiarize yourself with the books under this unit prior
to class 6, so that you can make an intelligent choice.
We will review your choices in class.

9-10-11  V. THE PROBLEMS OF THE BIOGRAPHER

All students read:

9  Gerda Lerner, The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers
for Women's Rights and Abolition

10  Read material in Xerox packet.
Read Alice Rossi, The Feminist Papers, pp. 282-322.

11  No reading assignment.

12-14  VI. CONTROVERSIAL INTERPRETATIONS

Assignment schedules will be made in class.

Each student select one person and read at least TWO of the books under
that person in the reading list.

See separate bibliography.
BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR UNITS IV AND VI

Unit IV: The Perils of Historiography

NOTE: These books are on reserve at The State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

JOHN BROWN

Louis Ruchames, John Brown, The Making of a Revolutionary (1901)
O. G. Villard, John Brown, 1800-1859 (1910)
F. B. Sanborn, Life and Letters of John Brown (1969)
S. B. Oates, To Purge This Land With Blood: A Biography of John Brown (1972)
H. Goldberg, American Radicals, chapter on John Brown.
Madison, Critics and Crusaders, chapter on John Brown.
H. D. Thoreau, A Plea for Captain John Brown in Thoreau’s Works
James Redpath, The Public Life of Capt. John Brown, with an Autobiography of His Childhood and Youth (Thayer & Eldridge, 1860)
Jules Abels, Man on Fire: John Brown and the Cause of Liberty (NY, Macmillan, 1971)
Richard Josiah Hinton, John Brown and His Men (Arno, 1968)

Unit V. Controversial Interpretations

NOTE: These books are NOT on reserve. You will find them in the general collections. There should be no problem with availability, since each book will be needed by only one student.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY

Katherine Anthony, Susan B. Anthony (Doubleday, 1944)
Rheta Childe Dorr, Susan B. Anthony: The Woman Who Changed the Nation (Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1920)
Ida Husted Harper, The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony (Hollenbeck Press, 1908)
Alma Lutz, Susan B. Anthony: Rebel, Crusader, Humanitarian (Beacon, 1959)
Kathleen Barry, Susan B. Anthony
CATHARINE BEECHER

Catharine Beecher, *The True Remedy for the Wrongs of Woman* (1851)
Barbara Cross, *The Educated Woman in America* (1965) [chapter on Catharine Beecher]
Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (1973)

EUGENE V. DEBS


W.E.B. DUBOIS

W.E. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn* (1940)

MARGARET FULLER

Bell Chevigny, *The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings* (1976)
J.J. Deiss, *The Roman Years of Margaret Fuller* (1969)
Katherine S. Anthony, *Margaret Fuller: A Psychological Biography* (NY: n.p., 1920)
Margaret Bell, *Margaret Fuller, a Biography* (NY: A&C Boni, 1930)
WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON:

Archibald H. Grimké, William L. Garrison the Abolitionist (NY: Funk and Wagnalls, 1891)

MARGARET MEAD

Margaret Mead, Blackberry Winter: My Earlier years (Morrow, 1972)
Mary Catherine Bateson, With a Daughter's Eye (Pocket Books, 1984)

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Eleanor Roosevelt, My Day (1938)
Eleanor Roosevelt, This I Remember (1949)
Eleanor Roosevelt, On My Own: The Years Since the White House (1958)
Eleanor Roosevelt, You Learn By Living (1960)
Lorena A. Hickok, Reluctant First Lady (Dodd-Mead, 1962)
Joseph P. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin, the Story of Their Relationship, based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers (Norton, 1971)
Eleanor Roosevelt, Mother and Daughter: the Letters of Eleanor and Anna Roosevelt, (ed. Barnard Askell), (NY: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1982)

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences, 2 vols. (1922)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More (1898), (Schocken reprint, 1972)
Alma Lutz, Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (John Day & Co., 1940)
Lois W. Banner, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a Radical for Women's Rights, (Little, Brown, 1980)
Mary Ann B. Oakley, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, (Feminist Press, 1972)
Elizabeth Griffiths, *In Her Own Right*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1984)

**THADDEUS STEVENS**
Alphonse Miller, *Thaddeus Stevens* (1939)
Ralph Korngold, *Thaddeus Stevens* (1955)
Fawn Brodie, *Thaddeus Stevens. Scourge of the South* (1959)

**M. CARRIE THOMAS**
Edith Finch, *Carrie Thomas of Bryn Mawr*

**FRANCES E. WILLARD**
Frances E. Willard, *A Woman of the Century, 1470 Biographical Sketches* (Moulton, 1893)
Mary Earhart, *Frances Willard. From Prayers to Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 1944)

**MALCOLM X**
Peter L. Goldman, *The Death and Life of Malcolm X* (University of Illinois, 1979)
All written assignments are to be typed, double-spaced with 2 inch margins all around. Cover page should state your name, the topic, date, and Assignment 1, 2, etc.

**Assignment 1** (Given Week 1, due Week 2)

Select one theme of the four below and write a brief account (no more than four pages):

- a) a turning point in my life
- b) a painful experience in my life
- c) a joyful experience in my life
- d) a significant experience in my life

**Assignment 2** (Given Week 2, due Week 4)

Specifications will be given in class.

Week 5 Read assignments 1 and 2 in class.

**Assignment 3** (Given Week 5, due Week 6)

Write a 4-6 page book review of any of the books you have read under assignments 1 and 2.

**Assignment 4** (Given Week 9, due Week 11)

Read in chronological order.

Read all the material assigned for Week 10. Compare the interpretations by historians with the evidence from primary sources you have available. On the basis on what you have read, write a 4-6 page interpretation of the relationship of the two sisters with each other (and, if you wish, with Theodore Weld) and the impact the relationship had on their development as feminists.

**Assignment 5** (Given Week 10, due by schedule beginning Week 12)

Pick a person from the list available. This will automatically put you in an appropriate group. Read the person's biography in DAB or NAW. Read the person's autobiography or letters as available, and at least two other biographies. Then write a 10 page essay - either your interpretation of that person's life or a discussion of the various interpretations you have read.

Meet with the people in your group; exchange essays and discuss, critique and improve the essays. Then offer a ½ hour class presentation on the group of people you have all studied. This can take any form you wish – dramatization, panel discussion, synthesis of issues and interpretations, critique of the books read. The main aim is to achieve some sort of coherence - what do these figures have in common? Is there anything that characterizes the interpretations they have received? (How does the autobiography relate to the biographies?) By what process would you arrive at an interpretation, considering the historiography? Discuss one or more (but not all) of these questions.
BOOKS REQUIRED:

Most of the books required for this course are available in paperback. The publishers are listed in parentheses. Students do not have to buy these books, but they may want to own one or more of them. All books on this list are on reserve at the State Historical Society or Helen C. White Library reserve section.

Books for Section VI will all be in the general collections, not on reserve. There should be no problem of availability, since each book will be needed by only one student.

Required Reading, suggested for purchase:


Additional Reading:

Maya Angelou, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (NY: Bantam, 1971)
James Baldwin, Go Tell It on the Mountain (NY: Dell, 1985)
Caroline Bird, The Invisible Scar (out of print)
Claude Brown, Manchild in the Promised Land (New American Library, 1966)
James Farrell, Studs Lonigan (Avon) (out of print)
Henry Roth, Call It Sleep (NY: Avon, 1976)
Studs Terkel, Hard Times (NY: Pantheon, 1986)
Anzia Yezierska, Breadgivers (Persea, 1975)

Please do not buy any books except those under Week 1 until after the first class.

REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to do their reading assignments IN ADVANCE of the classes for which the assignment is made. In units where several weeks are allotted for one unit, students may read one book each week in preparation.

There will be several short written papers, but no final exam or paper.