Course Description
This graduate seminar delves into the questions and methods of gender history, primarily in the US after 1870, through the topic “Bodies and Things”. The late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the US saw the growth of consumer culture and a dramatic expansion in products and images circulating through daily life. This proliferating presence of things called upon people’s attention or action in various ways. It has become almost cliché to say that gender, race, class, sexuality, age, and other markers are “culturally constructed,” but what were the mechanisms for this? In part, they were constructed when an interaction with things transformed the body. The ‘self,’ then, both deployed things and was created by them (consider how smoking cigarettes is an action taken by a body that transforms that body through style, addiction, toxin). In addition, as Ellen Furlough and Victoria de Grazia suggested a decade ago, things themselves may take on sex, gender or race connotations within particular historical contexts (consider how “race records” or lipstick represent, or even confer, race and/or gender). The question of agency quickly becomes vexed when we consider bodies and things within the context of an increasingly transnational capitalism. This course will explore things and the body in the US through a variety of themes and methodologies. As we explore this particular topic, we will be reading in and discussing the characteristics of the field of U.S. gender and women’s history.

Required Texts
The following books are on sale at A Room of One’s Own Bookstore located at 307 W. Johnson:

- Margaret Finnegan, *Selling Suffrage: Consumer Culture and Votes for Women* (Columbia, 1999)
- Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown*, (California, 2001)

A Packet of required and essential readings is on informal reserve in the Historical Society Reading Room, SE Corner. Packet contents are listed near the end of the syllabus.
**Course Requirements**

1) Participation in Seminar Discussions (10%).

2) Thesis/Analysis Papers (60%) These are three page, *maximum*, 12 point, double-spaced essays on the week's readings. Everyone will write for the first three weeks (9/12; 9/19; 9/26). For the remainder of the semester, everyone will sign up for 3 times to write. (No one will write on 10/3; 10/17; 11/7; 12/12) For further information, see "Writing Thesis/Analyses Papers." Thesis/Analysis papers for each week are always due at the beginning of class. No late papers will be accepted.

3) Historical and Historiographical Questions (5%):
Students will sign up for two weeks in which they will be responsible for writing two discussion questions for the class: one historical and one historiographical. These questions must be well crafted to prompt students to engage central themes, debates or methods in the scholarship for that week. Students who write questions should also take responsibility to facilitate quality discussion that week. (No one will write discussion questions for 10/3; 10/17; 11/7; 12/12.) For further information, see "Creating Historical and Historiographical Discussion Questions."

4) For class periods held on 10/3; 10/17; 11/7; 12/12 no one will write papers or discussion questions. Instead, *everyone* will write one paragraph in response to that week’s reading that they post to the class listserv history937-1-f06@lists.wisc.edu by noon on Monday, the day before class. Paragraphs may pose a question, compare with another reading or discussion we’ve had, or present a thoughtful critique (positive or negative). Please be substantive-- do not simply tell us whether you liked the book or not or whether you found it well written. Everyone will be responsible for reading the paragraphs of all other class members before the seminar meeting. This aspect of the course will be counted within the participation grade.

5) Seminar Paper (25%). This 15-20 page paper represents historical research and analysis of a particular “thing” in relationship to gender and the body. Topic chosen by student in consultation with professor. Paper should engage theoretical and methodological concerns raised in the course. A proposal will be due Sunday November 5 by 5pm. Send via email to Nan and your assigned peer review group. Papers are due December 19 by 5:30 pm in my box--5002.

**Course Schedule:**

Week 1 9/5 Introductions
*Reading:*
   - Toni Morrison, excerpt from *The Bluest Eye* (distributed by email)

Week 2 9/12 How Bodies Became Commodities: Foundations of Consumer Culture
*Reading:*
   - Jennifer Morgan, excerpt from *Laboring Women* Packet
   - Walter Johnson, excerpt from *Soul by Soul* Packet

Week 3 9/19 Things and Imperial Desire
*Reading:*
   - Paige Raibmon, excerpt from *Authentic Indians* Packet
   - Kristin Hoganson, “Cosmopolitan Domesticity: Importing the Am Dream 1865-1920” Packet
   - Marilyn Maness Mehaffy, “Advertising Race/Racing Advertising” Packet
Week 4 9/26 Thing Theory, Gender Theory
   Reading:
   Bill Brown, “Thing Theory,” Packet
   Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis” Packet
   Denise Riley, “Does a Sex Have a History?” Packet
   Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African-Am Women’s History and Metalanguage…” Packet

Week 5 10/3 Beauty Culture I
   Reading:
   Noliwe Rooks, Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture and African American Women
   Davarian Baldwin, ”’Making Do’: Beauty, Enterprise and… Race Womanhood” Packet

Week 6 10/10 Beauty Culture II
   Reading:
   Peiss, Hope in a Jar: The Making of America’s Beauty Culture

Week 7 10/17 Style and Political Subjectivity
   Reading:
   Margaret Finnegan, Selling Suffrage: Consumer Culture and Votes for Women
   Lawrence B. Glickman, “‘Make Lisle the Style’: The Politics of Fashion…” Packet

Week 8 10/24 Commodities, Immigration, Nationalism
   Reading:
   Erica Rand, The Ellis Island Snow Globe

Week 9 10/31 Germs, Drugs, and the Definitions of Vice
   Reading:
   Nayan Shah, Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown
   David Herzberg, “‘The Pill You Love Can Turn on You’: Feminism, Tranquilizers…” Packet

Week 10 11/7 Cigarettes: Freedom, Mobility, Toxicity
   Reading:
   Allan M. Brandt, “Engineering Consumer Confidence in the Twentieth Century” Packet
   Sarah S. Lochlann Jain, “’Come Up to the Kool Taste’” Packet
   FINAL PAPER PROPOSALS DUE SUNDAY 11/5 BY 5PM. SEND TO NAN AND GROUP.

Week 11 11/14 Bodies and Technology I: Contraceptives
   Reading:
   Andrea Tone, Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America

Week 12 11/21 Bodies and Technology II: Hormones
   Reading:
   Joanne Meyerowitz, How Sex Changed: A History of Transexuality in the United States

Week 13 11/28 Food and Nation
   Reading:
   Ji-Yeon Yuh, Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America
   Amy Bentley, “Meat and Sugar: Consumption, Rationing, and Wartime Food…” Packet
Week 14 12/5 Food, Religion and Self
     Reading:
     R Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity*

Week 15 12/12 Sacred and Profane in the Production of Raced Music Markets
     Reading:
     Sherrie Tucker, *Swing Shift: "All Girl" Bands of the 1940s*
     Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “Rethinking Vernacular Culture: Black Religion…” Packet
     Joan W. Scott, “Feminism's History” Packet

Seminar Papers are due December 19 by 5:30 pm in my box--5002
**Packet Contents:**


Denise Riley, “Does a Sex Have a History?” in “Am I That Name?: Feminism and the Category of “Women” in History” (1988).


Writing Thesis/Analysis Papers

Thesis/analysis papers may not exceed three pages, typed, double spaced, 12 pt.

As their name indicates, thesis/analysis papers have two parts. First, write the thesis of the main book or article in your own words, without using quotations from the book. This should take up no more than 1/2 of the first page of your paper. Being specific, complete and succinct in stating the thesis or main argument of the work is the goal of this part of the assignment.

Second, write an analysis of the book and/or articles. Since you have already stated the thesis of the central piece, there is no reason for further summary. Rather, here YOU critically engage the works and tell me your analysis of it/them. You do not need to "cover" each reading or part of the reading but should focus on what most interests you. Your analysis can take a number of forms. You may ask questions about and discuss the author's purpose or guiding research questions, method, use of sources, particular innovations, and problems or shortcomings. In doing so, you may critically consider historical phenomenon raised by the work. It is often useful to ask yourself what this work contributes to historical studies, and what problems remain. Make sure that this part of the paper is analysis (defined as your thoughts/opinions + reasoning/evidence), not summary. (Another useful definition of "analysis" likens it to taking apart a clock to reveal its mechanisms and explain how it works. You might think of "taking apart" a book's argument to reveal its components and their functions. Then tell me what you think about this and why.)

Creating Historical and Historiographical Discussion Questions

A crucial part of becoming skilled at critical thinking and analysis is learning to ask good questions. Because of this, I will ask you to write TWO questions for two different weeks of the semester (sign up the first week). When you write questions, you should come to class early to put them up on the board. Discussion will begin with question writers explaining what motivated their questions. Question writers should also take responsibility for facilitating discussion that week by being ready with follow-up questions and by relating student comments to each other.

The two questions: The purposes of the questions are to direct the class to delve into the central issues and concerns in the reading for that week. They will be graded by how well they do so. One question will engage the historical material presented by the author. For example, for Eric Foner's A Short History of Reconstruction, the historical question will engage some aspect of Reconstruction that he talks about (e.g. questions about the effects of Black political participation). The other question will engage historiographical concerns, that is, it will engage not the history itself per se, but how the history was crafted and written. Again, using Foner's book as an example, historiographical questions will engage some aspect of how Foner shaped his book, analyzed his sources or intervened in the established historical debates about Reconstruction, African American history or other fields (e.g. questions about the difference between Foner and the Dunning School, or the place of African Americans in his study, or how he integrates considerations of culture with considerations of politics, or the implications of his study for future studies of reconstruction, etc.).

Some tips: Questions that begin with "who" "what" "where" and "when" can often be answered with specific information. For this reason, they often do not make good discussion questions. Questions that begin with "how" or "why" ask for explanations. They are usually the analytical questions and tend to make for better discussion questions. If you have identified an issue that interests you but do not have a question, try asking "how" and "why" about it and see what happens.

Questions that identify controversies or ambiguities or paradoxes tend to work well.

Make sure that you do not ask a "more information" question that can only be answered with knowledge outside of that in class readings. Perhaps someone will have that information, but it will not make for a good discussion.