

History 354: Women and Gender in the U.S. Since 1870

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What is “women’s history”? Is it the story of famous women who impacted history, and the progress that women made from oppression in the past to freedom today? Or is it about ordinary women and how they lived? The failure of progress and the continued struggles of women? While we will talk about *all* of these themes (famous and ordinary women; progress and renewed inequalities), the central focus of the course is different. The past 130 years have seen dramatic changes in the ways people think about and live gender from day to day—perhaps the most dramatic change ever in such a short period of time! In addition, ideas and experiences of gender have changed in tandem with race and sexuality. We will explore a diversity of women’s experiences with gender, race and sexuality over time, and while we do this we will ask: what was the gender and race system that ordered society? How was it challenged, why did it change, and what took its place? What gender and race system do we live with today? How did it develop and how does it work? And how did women, famous and ordinary, create this history (at least in part) and, when it hurt them, challenge it and/or endure it?

A goal Abby, Michael and I have for this course is to make the big lecture format an engaging learning experience. We believe that learning happens best not by passively listening or reading, but by interacting with the material, forming your own opinions and arguments, AND interacting with others who are doing the same thing. Lecture will not just function to relay historical facts. Skills taught in lecture will be implemented in section; discussions in section will determine future lectures; lectures will involve some participation; exams will build on skills built in BOTH lecture and section. If you miss a key lecture, you may have problems with assignments. You are responsible for all of what happens in lecture: content, of course, but also skills and discussions that we have. Some of this is hard to take good notes on—you just have to experience it. (This is because the highest form of learning is an experience that changes you; it’s not just cataloguing information.) Our hope is that all the components of the course will work together to be an engaging and active learning experience for you. If this sounds like a drag to you, then we urge you to drop the course. Because of this course structure, your attendance and preparation are especially important to your ability to succeed.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

(books available at Room Of One's Own Bookstore)

Linda Kerber and Jane De Hart, Women's America, 5th ed.

Margaret Charles Smith and Linda Janet Holmes, Listen to Me Good: The Life Story of an Alabama Midwife

Mary Crow Dog, Lakota Woman.

Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America

Note: you will also be required to read materials on three websites, listed in syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

We expect you to attend all classes and all discussion sections, to complete assignments on time, and to participate in discussions.

1. Section work (portfolio 10% and participation 10%):

Participation is based on quality and quantity of your contributions to section discussions. The portfolio will be comprised of a variety of kinds of short assignments that are done for section. These assignments are designed to teach you skills necessary for the exams and the paper, and will often be shared via peer review or group work. They are ungraded when you initially complete them (though your TA will record that they are completed on time). In week 10, you will select and compile some of them into a portfolio that you will turn in for a grade. More information on this to come.

2. Two Take-Home Exams (20% each):

Exams will be essays, source analyses, and definitions of terms. Exams will be related to the portfolios.

3. Poster Project (15%)

This project will allow you to conduct primary historical research on a topic related to activism in the post 1960 era. There is no paper attached to this assignment; research will be presented on a poster in discussion section and mounted in a public display in Ingraham.

4. Final Paper (25%)

This 4-6 page paper will be based on Barbara Ehrenreich's Nickel and Dimed; it will ask you to make historical connections and analyze the relationship of the book to changing gender/race systems.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

UNIT ONE

ANTI-LYNCHING MOVEMENTS 1880-1923:

THE VICTORIAN GENDER/RACE SYSTEM AND EFFORTS TO OPPOSE IT

Week 1

1/21 Introduction. No Reading Assignment

1/23 <http://womhist.binghamton.edu/aswpl/doclist.htm> Introduction and docs 1-4.

Week 2

1/28 Pascoe, "Ophelia Paquet" Women's America pp. 278-282

<http://womhist.binghamton.edu/wctu2/doclist.htm> Read the introduction, and documents 10, 25, 26, 27, 33.

1/30 <http://womhist.binghamton.edu/aswpl/doclist.htm> Documents 16, 20, 21; also choose 3 other documents from docs #10-22.

Week 3

2/4 Gilmore, "Forging Interracial Links" Women's America pp. 283-293

<http://womhist.binghamton.edu/lynch/doclist.htm> Introduction and documents 6, 7, 8, 9, 18, 19

UNIT TWO

PARADOXES OF EMPOWERMENT 1890-1940:
THE VICTORIAN GENDER/RACE SYSTEM DECLINES BUT A NEW ONE EMERGES

2/6 Sklar, "Florence Kelley and Women's Activism..." Women's America pp. 312-324.

Week 4

2/11 Orleck, "From the Russian" Women's America pp. 294-309; Hall, "Disorderly Women" Women's America pp. 387-400.

2/13 document: Sanger, "I resolved..." Women's America pp. 355-363; document: Tape, "What right!..." Women's America pp. 310-312.

Week 5

2/18 DuBois, "Harriot Stanton Blatch" Women's America pp. 327-337; Documents: Dimensions of Citizenship (first two docs) pp. 338-341; Listen to Me Good pp 1-34.

2/20 Brumberg, "Fasting Girls" Women's America pp. 363-372; Listen to Me Good pp 35-62.

Week 6

2/25 Listen to Me Good pp. 63-112.

(Take Home Exam I handed out in lecture.)

2/27 Gordan, "Black and White Visions of Welfare," Women's America pp. 343-354; Yung, "Coping with the Great Depression," Women's America pp. 414-417; Jones, "Harder Times: The Great Depression" Women's America pp. 410-413.

Week 7

3/4 Listen to Me Good pp. 113-159.

3/6 **TAKE HOME EXAM I DUE IN LECTURE**

UNIT THREE
BEYOND ROSIE AND JUNE:
GENDER BENDING AND HYPERBOLE IN WWII AND THE FIFTIES

Week 8

NOTE: Choose groups and topics for Poster assignment in section this week!

3/11 Bailey and Farber, "Prostitutes on Strike," Women's America pp. 426-435

Matsumoto, "Japanese-American Women" Women's America pp. 436-441

3/13 McEnaney, "Atomic Age Motherhood" Women's America pp. 448-454

Swerdlow, "Ladies' Day" Women's America pp. 471-485

3/18 and 3/20: SPRING BREAK!

Week 9

3/25 Freedman, "Miriam Van Waters" Women's America pp. 455-461

Cahn, "Mannishness" Women's America pp. 462-470.

3/27 Horowitz, "Betty Friedan" Women's America pp. 486-500

UNIT FOUR

VARIETIES OF WOMEN'S ACTIVISM:
THE BURIAL OF THE VICTORIAN GENDER/RACE SYSTEM 1960-1980

Week 10

PORTFOLIOS DUE THIS WEEK IN SECTION

4/1 Lakota Woman pp. 3-54; documents, Women's America pp. 508-521.

4/3 Lakota Woman pp. 55-91; documents, Women's America pp. 532-542

Week 11

POSTERS DUE THIS WEEK IN SECTION

4/8 Lakota Woman pp. 92-143.

Rymph, "Neither Neutral" Women's America pp. 501-507.

4/10 Lakota Woman pp. 144-198

Week 12

4/15 Lakota Woman pp. 199-263

(Take Home Exam II handed out in lecture.)

UNIT FIVE
WHERE ARE WE NOW?:
THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY GENDER/RACE SYSTEM

4/17 Ginsburg, "Women Divided" Women's America pp. 553-563
documents, Women's America pp. 547-552

Week 13

4/22 Nickel and Dimed pp.1-49

4/24 **TAKE HOME EXAM II DUE IN LECTURE**

Week 14

4/29 Nickel and Dimed pp. 51-119; Kornbluh, "A Human Right" Women's America pp. 523-531.

5/1 Nickel and Dimed pp. 121-191.

Week 15

5/6 Nickel and Dimed pp. 193-221; Document: Fu Lee "After Working..." Women's America pp 580-582.

5/8 Documents: "We were the first..." and "Rostker v. Goldberg 1981" Women's America pp 564-570.

FINAL PAPER DUE: TUESDAY 5/13 BY 5PM IN YOUR TA's BOX.