

HIS 328: American Women's History

Course Credits: 3

Semester: Spring 2016

Prerequisites: Two semesters of History / Political Science Survey

Dr. Jennifer M. Black

Course Description:

This course explores women's experiences in the United States from Colonial times to the present. It surveys women of different ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds, exploring how women were affected by, and how they themselves influenced the historic events of the nation.

Introduction

This service-learning course aims to present American history from the perspective of women, and focuses on the voices and contributions of women from different racial, classed, and sexual minorities from the colonial period forward. Through this material, the course will challenge traditional assumptions about gender. It will investigate the ways that gender and sexuality have influenced social understandings of citizenship, freedom, and equality, especially in the ways that gender has intersected with race, class, and sexuality to determine the relative social position of various peoples. Finally, the course attempts to go beyond the simple "add women and stir" approach to women's history by critically engaging with the ways that both the law and American culture have shaped women's social experiences and their political positions as US citizens (or not).

Course Goals / Objectives:

- ❖ This course contributes to the following University Learning Goals:
 2. Contribute to communities through service and leadership.
 3. Consider ethical issues and values and make reasoned judgments about them.
 4. Think independently and creatively, analyze information critically, and solve problems.
 5. Respect and understand cultural differences.
 7. Communicate and interact effectively.

- ❖ This course contributes to the following Departmental Goals and Objectives:
 1. Students will identify major events and issues in local, national, and international history and/or politics
 2. Students will identify different historical and theoretical perspectives
 3. Students will be able to analyze primary and secondary sources
 4. Students will be able to use primary and secondary sources to make an argument
 7. Majors will identify key attributes of global regions

- ❖ Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:
 1. Identify major themes and issues pertinent to the history of women and gender in the US, including how those themes / issues have changed over time
 2. Explicate, through written and verbal analyses, the ways that gender and sexuality shaped changing notions of citizenship, freedom, and equality in US history

3. Critically examine primary and secondary texts, making reasoned assessments of the arguments and evidence presented within
4. Develop effective written and verbal analyses that synthesize primary and secondary sources

*These goals will be assessed through exams, written assignments, and class participation.

Required Readings:

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York: Dover, 2001). ISBN: 9780486419312

Linda Kerber et al., *Women's America* 8th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Miriam Schneir, *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings* (New York: Vintage, 1994). ISBN: 9780679753810

Susan Ware, *Very Short Introduction to American Women's History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). ISBN: 9780199328338

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (New York: Harcourt, 2005 [1929]). ISBN: 9780156030410

Course Assignments & Evaluation:

This service-learning course requires 10-12 service hours. Participation in the service project is required, as is your attendance at scheduled service days (see calendar below). In addition to this service work, students will also be assessed through a research essay, a book-review essay, a series of discussion posts and classroom participation. Thus the final course grade will be comprised of the following:

Research essay:	25%
Participation / Discussion posts:	30%
Book Review essay:	25%
Oral History Summary	10%
Service project & Reflection Paper	10%

Participation & Discussion Posts: In this course, you will be graded on your active weekly participation to class discussions and the online discussion board. This includes coming to class on-time and prepared (with readings, notes, etc.), ready to ask questions, analyze images, and digest the authors' arguments.

Students will also be required to post a primary source to the online discussion board three times during the semester (a sign-up sheet will circulate the first week). For this assignment, the designated student will research and find one primary source related to the week's readings / themes. The student will then post the source, with comment (or a question) designed to encourage discussion, to the week's discussion board by Sunday at 12pm. Detailed instructions on where to find these sources will be given the first week of class. Students may not reproduce a source from lecture or from the course readings as part of their post. The remaining students in the class are required to post a response to one of the sources before Wednesday's class each week. Failure to regularly participate on a weekly basis, and / or missing more than two class meetings will negatively affect your grade in the course.

Book Review Essay: please read and analyze one of the following books in a 5-7 page (1250-1750 words) essay. The following books are all available from Amazon.com and other online booksellers (they have not been ordered for the bookstore). Separate instructions detailing the format and content for your book review will follow.

Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

Emerson W. Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (New York: Vintage, 2014).

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History* (New York: Vintage, 2007).

Leigh Ann Wheeler, *How Sex Became A Civil Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy A Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: WW Norton, 1999).

Service Project / Oral Histories: We have partnered with the Center for Nursing History to assist in processing archival collections, and collecting oral histories about the nursing schools of the Wyoming Valley. Students will work in teams to prepare for and conduct two oral histories. This will include preparing a list of about 10 questions to fuel discussion. Students will undergo training sessions in class as part of the preparation. Participation in the training sessions and service dates is essential and required as part of the course grade (see calendar below for dates). Students will each write a summary and compose a table of contents for one oral history taken by their team, and will write reflections on the service experience. Detailed instructions will be distributed later in the term.

Assignment Policies:

Formatting: please be sure that your essays are typed, on plain white paper, with all the margins set to one-inch. You should double space the body of the paper only (not the headings and title). Please use Times New-Roman 12-point font size. You will be graded on both the style and content of your papers; thus, please be sure to proofread for correct grammar and spelling. Make sure your paper is clearly organized with an introduction, argument (thesis statement), topic sentences, evidence, and conclusion. Papers must meet the minimum word-count requirement to receive full credit; however no penalty will be given for papers exceeding the suggested limit.

You are required to submit a hard copy in class AND upload a copy to the Blackboard (assignments listed under "Content") by the due date and time.

Late Policy: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date due. Late penalties begin at the end of class, and papers will incur a grade deduction of five points for each day late with a maximum penalty of 25 points (i.e. if the original grade is 85/100 and the paper was submitted one day late, it drops to an 80/100).

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Grading Scale for Course Grades:

A = 93-100%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	F = 64% and below
A- = 90-92%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	
B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 65-69%	

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 18-22): Introduction to Women's History

Reading: VSI intro (5p)
Schneir intro (10p)
WA Intro (p1-9)

Week 2 (Jan 25-29): Life in the Colonies

Reading: VSI chapter 1 (19p)
WA: Brown on Natives (p12-23), Karlson on witches (p53-65), Laws
(p84-86, 106-108)

Week 3 (Feb 1-5): Sex in Early America

Reading: WA: Norton (p34-42), Gordon-Reed (97-104)
VSI p24-36

Cornelia Hughes Dayton, "Taking the Trade," *William & Mary Quarterly*
3rd series, 48, no. 1 (1991): 19-49. **Available on Bb.**

Week 4 (Feb 8-12): Women & Gender in the New Republic

Reading: Schneir: Abigail Adams (p2-5), Grimké (p35-48)
WA: Kerber (p117-125), Glymph (p147-155)
VSI p37-49

Book Review Essay Due in class, Friday 2/12

Week 5 (Feb 15-19) Slavery I

Reading: Jacobs, p8-80

**Oral History training sessions this week, in class

**Oral History Day Saturday, 2/20 from 10am to 5pm
Please be available all day until interview schedule is set **

Week 6 (Feb 22-26): Slavery II

Reading: Jacobs, p80-164

Week 7 (Feb 29-Mar 4): Marriage, Sex, & the Law in Victorian America

Reading: WA Rosenberg (p189-200), Mohr on abortion (p202-211), Comstock Act (p212), Suffrage docs (p247-251)

Schneir, Stanton (p110-121), Truth "Ain't I a Woman?" (p93-95)

(Mar 7-11): NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (Mar 14): Reconstruction / Jim Crow

Reading: VSI chapter 3 (34p)
WA: Hunter (p276-286)

No Class 3/16-18 Dr. Black away at a conference

Week 10 (Mar 21-23): GAPE

Reading: WA: Laws (p290-295), Gilmore (p300-308), Sklar (p350-360)

Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All its Phases* (New York, 1892). [Available free online here.](#) (18p)

No Class 3/25 Easter Recess

Week 11 (Mar 28-30): Turn of the Century Feminism & Suffrage

Reading: Schneir: Woodhull & Claflin (p143-151), Catt (p286-292), Goldman (p308-317), Sanger (p325-334)

VSI p84-96

Sally Hunter Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Woman Suffrage Movement," *Political Science Quarterly* 98, no. 4 (1983-4): 665-679. **Available on Bb.**

**No class Friday, April 1—Dr. Black at a conference

Week 12 (Apr 4-8): Twentieth-Century Feminism I

Reading: Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (114p)

*WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE: Monday April 4th—Last day to withdraw without academic penalty

**Oral History Day Saturday, 4/9 from 10am to 5pm

Please be available all day until interview schedule is set**

Week 13 (Apr 11-15): Twentieth-Century Feminism II

Reading: WA: Yung (p337-344), Reagan (p451-457), Cott on ERA (p503-511),
WWII (p530-547)
VSI p97-118

Research papers due Friday, 4/15/16, in class and on Bb

Week 14 (Apr 18-22): Cold War

Reading: WA: Cahn (p550-558), Horowitz (p569-580), Friedan & Schlafly (p606-614), Meyerowitz (p615-627), Bailey (p629-637)

Week 15 (Apr 25-29): Post-1960s Feminism

Reading: WA: Docs (p658-677, 731-758), Zahedi (p775-784)

Reflection Paper due, 4/29/16 in class and to Bb

Week 16 (May 2-4): Wrap-Up: Women & Feminism Today

Reading: WA: Baxandall (p705-718)

Nancy Fraser, How Feminism became Capitalism's Handmaiden

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/14/feminism-capitalist-handmaiden-neoliberal>

Review of *Lean-In* from the *New York Times*: <http://nyti.ms/1FUICnV>

Browse "Lean-in" online: <http://leanin.org/>

Susan Faludi, "Sandberg Left Single Mothers Behind," CNN 13 March 2013: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/03/13/opinion/faludi-poor-single-mothers-sandberg/>

Gary Cutting, "A Feminism where Leaning in means Leaning on Others," NY Times (15 Oct 2015), online at:

<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/15/a-feminism-where-leaning-in-means-leaning-on-others/?mwrsm=Email&r=0>

**Oral History Summaries Due Monday 5/2