

Misericordia University
Department of History and Government

HIS 328: American Women's History

Course Credits: 3

Semester: Spring 2022 (#01)

Prerequisites: Completion of the History / Political Science Core

Dr. Jennifer M. Black, History Dept.

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Office: MER 339 / Phone: 570-674-1491

Office Hours: T/Th 9:30-11am, 3:30-4p

And by appointment Not sure what office hours are? [Check out this video.](#)

Class Meeting Time: TR 2:00-3:15pm, MER 404

Compressed Schedule: 3:00-4:00pm

Course Description:

From the University Catalog:

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.

Required Texts

Emerson W. Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). ISBN: 9780190627805

Keisha N. Blain, *Until I am free: Fannie Lou Hamer's enduring message to America* (Boston: Beacon, 2021). ISBN: 9780807061503

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017). ISBN: 9781501126413

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

*Additional readings as required in the syllabus, and posted on Blackboard.

Course Goals & Objectives

Course Objectives:	Program Learning Outcome	University Learning Outcome
1. Identify and explain select themes and issues in US women's history	Goal 1: Develop historical knowledge	UG #s 5, 6, 8
2. Critically examine primary and secondary texts, assessing their arguments and evidence	Goal 2: Evaluate and employ historical methods	UG #s 3, 4, 7, 8
3. Identify and explain select historiographic arguments related to US women's history	Goal: 3. Recognize the provisional nature of historical knowledge	UG#3, 4, 8
4. Develop effective written and verbal analyses that synthesize primary and secondary sources	Goal 4. Create historical arguments and narratives.	UG# 3, 4, 7, 8
5. Historicize select themes and issues related to women's contemporary experiences	Goal 5: Use historical perspective to inform active citizenship	UG #s 1, 2, 5

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Course Objectives:	In completing this course, students will:	Assessment Methods
1. Identify and explain select themes and issues in US women's history	1.A: Recognize and explain historical processes, continuity, and change. 1.B: Develop a body of historical knowledge with breadth of time and place—as well as depth of detail—in order to discern context.	Discussion; Exams
2. Critically examine primary & secondary texts, assessing their arguments & evidence	2.A: Recognize history as an interpretive account of the human past—one that historians create in the present from surviving evidence. 2.B: Collect, question, organize, synthesize, and interpret a variety of historical sources.	Discussion; Exams
3. Identify and explain select historiographic arguments related to US women's history	3.A: Describe past events from multiple perspectives. 3.B: Identify, summarize, appraise, and synthesize other scholars' historical arguments. 3.C: Evaluate historical arguments, explaining how they were constructed and might be improved.	Discussion; Exams
4. Develop effective written and verbal analyses that synthesize primary and secondary sources	2.C: Practice ethical historical inquiry through proper acknowledgement of sources. 4.a: Generate substantive, open-ended questions about the past and employ research strategies to answer them. 4.b: Craft well-supported historical narratives, arguments, and reports of research findings 4.c: Synthesize research with existing narratives, making an original argument.	Discussion lead; Research paper
5. Historicize select themes and issues related to women's contemporary experiences	5.a: Historicize contemporary issues by correlating them to the past 5.b: Practice civil discourse and respect for diverse perspectives	Discussion; Discussion lead

Evaluation Methods & Student Assignments

In this class, you will have two exams and a series of discussion assignments. The final course grade will be comprised of the following:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%
Participation	10%
Discussion Lead (1)	15%
Reading Responses (6)	30%
TOTAL	100%

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Discussions & Participation

In this course you will be graded on your active participation in class discussions. This gives you a chance to verbally demonstrate your understanding of the course material; participation thus includes raising your hand to ask or answer questions during lecture, and to respond to other students' comments and questions. Each class, I will calculate a grade for your participation points based on your contributions to class discussion, according to the following distribution: full participation (A) = 4pts; some participation (C-B range) = 2.5-3.5pts; present but no participation (D) = 2pts; absences beyond the two freebies = 0pts. Under this rubric, a student who attends all class meetings but does not contribute to class discussion will receive a D for participation.

Throughout the semester, each student will choose one week to lead our discussion (for one session that week, generally on Thursday). For that week, the student will create a discussion related to one of the topics assigned in the week's readings, and will prepare materials to help lead the discussion for the day. The goal of the discussion is to relate the historical content in the readings to current events / issues related to capitalism today. Detailed instructions on leading discussions will follow. You will have the opportunity to choose your session during the first week of class.

I will post discussion questions on the Blackboard each week (generally before Sunday), for our upcoming discussion of the assigned readings. I encourage you to prepare answers to these questions in advance of our Tuesday meeting, as they will be used to help guide our discussion and will be useful in preparing for the exams.

Reading Response Papers

You are required to submit six response papers throughout the semester, related to the course readings. You may self-select the weeks for which you'd like to submit a response, and you need not inform me in advance of your selection. When you'd like to submit a response paper, you should choose two of the discussion questions posted for that week on Blackboard, and formulate a written response to each question, of about 150-300 words each (for a total of 300-600 words), with citations. Please indicate the week number and questions you've selected on your paper. You should follow paper formatting guidelines as noted on the syllabus. As you submit them on Blackboard, please submit them in sequence (i.e. your first paper will be submitted as RR1, your second will be RR2, etc., regardless of when you complete them in the semester). **These papers are due at the beginning of class on Tuesday (both in hard copy and to Bb) and will not be accepted late.**

Assignment Policies:

Formatting: All written work you submit should be 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

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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). Reading response papers will not be accepted late.

Grading Scale for Course Grades:

<u>Superior:</u>	<u>Very Good:</u>	<u>Satisfactory:</u>	<u>Poor:</u>
A = 93-100%	B+= 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 65-69%
A- = 90-92%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	F = 64% & below
	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	

Course & Academic Policies

Each week we will spend part of our time discussing the assigned readings, some time looking at primary sources (which may include images and film), and some time relating the historical content to current events. Reading assignments should be completed each week before Tuesday’s class. You are encouraged to take notes on the texts as you read, and come to class prepared to offer your comments and questions. Bring materials necessary to take notes (pen / paper, laptop, etc.) and your document readers to class each week. Regular attendance is mandatory and will ensure your success in this course, as will your active participation in weekly discussions. Active participation includes listening to the material presented and thoughtfully engaging the class with your own observations or analyses. Our discussions will provide an opportunity for you to digest the course material—you are encouraged to question and think critically about the material presented and use class as a place for exchanging those thoughts and questions with other students.

If you have specific questions or concerns about the assignments or your performance in the class, please come to see me as soon as possible. Addressing these issues early in the semester is key to your success in this class and, more generally, as a student. I am happy to meet with students either in office hours or by appointment to discuss course assignments, paper drafts (within a reasonable time-frame), questions, concerns, writing mechanics, general history, or anything else you’d like to discuss.

Masking Policy

Per current university guidelines, **you are required to wear an approved mask at all times when indoors on campus**; this includes our classroom meetings and paper conferences. Please make arrangements to acquire a supply of approved masks for the duration of the semester, and make sure that you understand how and are able to wear the mask properly. If you have questions or concerns about this policy, including penalties for non-compliance, please visit <https://www.misericordia.edu/coronavirus/information/current-students>. A supply of approved masks will be available at various locations across campus for those in need; you may also retrieve a mask from campus safety when needed.

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Attendance Policy

- You are expected to complete the readings on time, attend class regularly, and take notes.
- It is your responsibility to make sure you sign-in at each class.
- You will be allowed two absences without penalty. Additional absences will only be excused, at my discretion, for medical or other emergencies.
- Should you need to quarantine during the semester, please notify me immediately.
- Students may choose to withdraw from the course before 75% of the course has passed, without academic penalty (a “W” will appear on your transcript). The Withdrawal deadline is April 8, 2022. Students who stop attending class before this deadline but who do not officially withdraw will receive an “F” for the course. Students whose unexcused absences total more than 35% of the course meetings will receive an “F” for the course.
- If you find that you will be absent for more than three days, for any reason, please notify the Assoc. Dean of Students (crimpfel@misericordia.edu) and / or the VPAA’s office (swinsock@misericordia.edu) as soon as possible, as they can help coordinate accommodations with your professors.

Diversity & Classroom Etiquette

The Department of History & Government embraces cultural, linguistic, and individual diversity in students. We believe that our program will be enriched and enhanced by diversity that includes but is not limited to gender and gender identity, race, ethnicity and national origins, sexuality, class, and religion. In this course we will discuss potentially controversial issues having to do with race, gender, sexuality, class, and politics. Some of the readings and other course materials contain objectionable material, including language that is demeaning of certain racial groups. You are all adults; I expect you to deal with these materials in a mature fashion with the understanding that their content can help us to better understand the past, even if the language is out-of-date and / or offensive. This does not mean that you can repeat such language without being appropriately sensitive to its offensive nature. Use your best judgement: if you must quote such language, then quote it and move on. If a less offensive term will do to make your point, then rephrase as needed. We each need to strive to maintain a tolerant and respectful environment. Moreover, open disrespect of another classmate will not be tolerated. I reserve the right to ask any student who is disruptive or disrespectful to leave the online classroom.

Electronics Policy

Laptops are not required for this course, but will be permitted as long as they do not become a distraction. While there will be no assignments or examinations for which the laptop will be used; your use of a laptop is generally permitted as long as usage remains within the bounds of Code of Student Conduct and it conforms to the provisions of this course as laid out in this syllabus. There may be periods where laptop usage is forbidden and if that occurs, failure to comply with this direction will be viewed as a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

Cell phones should be turned off and put away during class. I reserve the right to ask students to leave the course should use of electronics become a distraction to me or the other students.

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Intellectual Property Disclaimer:

*Please note that notes or recordings made by students in this class based on my lectures and / or classroom discussions may only be made for the purposes of individual or group study. You must seek my formal permission to make any such recordings. Notes and / or recordings may not be exchanged or distributed for any commercial purpose or compensation. As the instructor of this course, I retain intellectual property rights in the lecture material pursuant to US copyright law and University Policy, as outlined here: misericordia.edu/IntellectualProperty. Misuse of course notes or recordings may subject you to legal proceedings.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism (i.e. submitting work for credit that is not your own) will not be tolerated. Students who violate the University's Academic Integrity policy will receive an "F" for the assignment and may be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. Multiple violations will result in your failing the course. It is your responsibility to read and understand the University's Academic Integrity policy and its consequences during your time at Misericordia. If you have questions about this policy or what constitutes plagiarism, contact me immediately. [The University's Academic Integrity policy can be found online in the University Catalog.](#)

Email / Blackboard:

You are expected to regularly check your MU email account for course updates and communications from me. I check my email regularly during the week and at least once a day on weekends, and generally will reply within 24hrs. However, emails sent after 7pm will not receive a response until the following morning. Additionally, I will not discuss grades via email—you need to meet with me personally in my office to address any concerns regarding your grade. As per the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA), all email correspondence between the instructor and students must be addressed to the student's institutional email address (@misericordia.edu) in order to maintain the student's privacy.

Additionally, please familiarize yourself with the Blackboard page for our course. I will use Blackboard to post supplementary materials, assignment information, announcements, and study guides. You can access Blackboard from the first page of the Misericordia portal.

Emergencies / MU Alerts

Should an alert be posted by the MU alert system, I will keep my cell phone on to receive such alerts. All student cell phones should be turned off or put away during class.

Other Academic Policies

All Misericordia University courses follow standard academic policies, described [here](#), or on the portal under the students tab. Policies include: Credit Hour Statement, Disability Statement, Tutorial Assistance, Laptop Policies, Equipment requirements and support. Credit hour statements are specific to course format.

***NOTE:** *It is your responsibility to understand the guidelines for this course. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me as soon as possible. Failure to address such issues connotes your implicit acceptance and agreement with these guidelines. I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus, if necessary.*

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 18-20): Introduction to Women's History

1/18: Class introduction, review of assignments & NAWLD

1/20: Reading: Baker Introduction (p1-13)

Joan W. Scott, "[Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis.](#)"
American Historical Review 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075.

Constance Grady, "[The waves of feminism, and why people keep fighting over them, explained.](#)" *Vox* (7/20/2018).

Week 2 (Jan 25-27) Puritan Women in the Colonial Period

Reading: Baker chapters 1-3 (p14-97)
Discussion

Week 3 (Feb 1-3): Witches in their Midst

Reading: Baker chapters 4-6 (p98-193)
Discussion

Week 4 (Feb 8-10): A Storm of Witchcraft

Reading: Baker chapters 7-9 (p194-286)
Discussion

Week 5 (Feb 15-17): Women's Slavery in the American South

Readings: Dunbar, p.xi-60
Discussion

Week 6 (Feb 22-24): Escaping Slavery

Readings: Dunbar, p.61-134
Discussion

Week 7 (Mar 1-3): Free at Last

Readings: Dunbar, p. 135-198

*EXAM 1 in class, 3/3/22

Week 8 (Mar 7-11): NO CLASS / SPRING BREAK

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Week 9 (Mar 15-17): Gender and Sex in the Nineteenth Century

Readings: Rachel Hope Cleves, "[Charity & Sylvia](#)," on *Ben Franklin's World*, podcast (2015).

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "[The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America](#)," *Signs* 1, no. 1 (1975): 1-29.

Discussion

Week 10 (Mar 22-24): The Impact of Women's Suffrage

Readings: Forum on the impact of the 19th Amendment, [from Journal of Women's History, 32 no. 1 \(Spring 2020\)](#): p.11-61. (**NOTE: read all articles in the forum, about 50p)

Discussion

Week 11 (Mar 27-29): "If Shakespeare Had a Sister"

Readings: Woolf, intro and p1-77

Discussion

Week 12 (Apr 5): A Room of One's Own

Readings: Woolf p78-112

*NO CLASS April 7 / Dr. Black away at a conference

*WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE: April 8th—Last day to withdraw without academic penalty

Week 13 (Apr 12): Civil Rights in the 20th Century

Readings: Blain, intro-ch 2 (p ix-39)

*NO CLASS April 14 / Easter Recess

*NO CLASS April 19 / Dr. Black away at a conference

Week 14 (Apr 21): Fannie Lou Hamer's Crusade

Readings: Blain, chs 3-5 (p 40-107)

Week 15 (Apr 26-28): Moving Civil Rights Forward

Readings: Blain, ch 6-concl. (p108-136)

Discussion

Week 16 (May 3): Women & Feminism Today

Readings: Danielle McGuire, "[Recy Taylor, Oprah Winfrey, and the Long History of #MeToo](#)" *Washington Post* (January 2018)

Catharine McKinnon, "[What #MeToo Has Changed](#)," *The Atlantic* (March 2019)

Instructions for Leading Discussion

Due date: Rolling

Each student will lead discussion once during the semester. For that week, the student will create a discussion related to a topic from women's history (see list below), and will prepare materials to help lead the discussion for the day. The goal of the discussion is to relate the historical content to current events / issues related to women in society today. Students will research and obtain a primary source from the online database, North American Women's Letters and Diaries (NAWLD), and will link it to contemporary events by finding a related news article today (i.e. abortion in the past, abortion today). After researching and preparing summaries and questions of the materials you've found you will be responsible for generating and leading discussion for the day's class. You are also welcome to bring visual aids to further generate discussion.

1. The week before:

- a. Carefully read the assigned reading for the following week, considering the information it gives you on the time period we're discussing. What ancillary topics come through in this reading? How does the reading shed light on women's place in society in this time period?
- b. Next, research and find a primary source in NAWLD related to the time period we're studying for the week, and ideally related to one of the ancillary themes you found in the reading (search instructions will be shared the first week of class). Consider picking a topic from the list of potential themes below. **You may reopen, but should not duplicate, any previous discussions in the class.** For example, if someone else has already discussed slavery, you may cover a different topic related to slavery but you should not, in any way, duplicate what the other student has covered in their previous discussion. Once you've found a source, print or save a PDF of it.
- c. Next, you will need to find a recent news article (i.e. last 5-10 years) that relates to the topic addressed in your primary source. You may use any reputable news source (i.e. *New York Times*, *CNN*, *Washington Post*, *Huffington Post*, local news stations / newspapers, etc.—NO blogs or Wikipedia articles). If you have questions about whether your source is reputable, please consult with me first. Once you've found the news article, print or save a PDF of it.
- d. Next, carefully read and annotate your primary source, and the news article you've found. For the primary source: How does it depict the topic? What challenges did women face in this regard? What benefits or rewards did they have? For the news article: What's the situation for women in this regard today? What challenges do women still face? What benefits / rewards have emerged? How have things changed in the years / decades between your primary source and your contemporary news article?
- e. Once you have selected your primary source and news article, read them thoroughly and prepare a short summary of the primary source, and comment on how the issue stands today (about two paragraphs). You may also wish to construct bullet points for yourself of the ideas you wish to cover in class, since you will be summarizing

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these sources aloud for the group. If either piece turns out to be a dud (i.e. uninteresting, too short, or irrelevant), then choose a new source / article.

- f. Then prepare a list of 6-8 questions designed to spark discussion. These questions should not be answerable with a one-word answer (i.e. name, event, or “yes / no”)—but should be substantive and intended to provoke a connection between the historical events we’re discussing and current trends today (i.e. How did this current event evolve out of the historical antecedents you found? How might this story be different if x or y had (or hadn’t) happened? What is missing from this story, and why do you think it’s missing?).
 - g. By 10am the day before your presentation: Post your NAWLD source (with a citation) on Blackboard with a short synopsis, add some comments about the issue today (with a link to your news article), and include your questions. Contact me if you would like to make any handouts for the class. Feel free to bring in any additional visual aids (powerpoints, etc.) that you would like to use to generate discussion.
 - h. EVERYONE ELSE: the rest of the class should read the materials posted to the blackboard in preparation for Thursday’s discussion. Use the discussion board to pose any initial questions, comments, points of confusion, etc.
2. During class: Spend about 5-10 minutes briefly summarizing the primary source you found, and relate it back to the readings for the week if possible. Provide any broad commentary that might help frame our discussion. Then move into your discussion questions, as a way to generate discussion with the class members. Once we’ve fully digested the primary source, we will move on to your news article (same process). Again, concentrate on connecting the historical content to the same theme today. Bring hard-copies of your source, article, summaries, and questions to turn in.

Grading: Discussion Lead is worth 15% of your final grade. Your submissions will be evaluated on the accuracy of the summary, critical evaluation of the authors’ arguments, and quality of the discussion questions. Failure to complete any component of your discussion lead will result in a deduction of points. Failure to participate regularly in our class discussions (as an audience member) will also result in a deduction of points.

Potential Topics:

Birth control / Family Planning
Creative expression (art, literature, music,
etc.)
Education
Familial / domestic obligations
Gender ideals / separate spheres
Health & medicine
Immigration
Marriage / marital rights
Motherhood / childrearing

Philanthropy / Volunteer work / Activism
Pregnancy / Abortion
Racial identity
Relationships (hetero and homo, social and
sexual)
Sexuality
Working women
*Any other topics you wish, with instructor
approval