

HIST-389-002  
American Women's History to 1877  
Fall 2011

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Robinson B343 ~~ Office Hours: W 1-2:30, or by appointment

This course examines the experiences of women in the territory that became the United States, from the era of European colonization through the aftermath of the Civil War. Special emphasis is placed on the evolution of gender ideals and women's public roles, as well as on the relative impact of race, class, and region in shaping women's lives.

**Course Requirements**

This class meets twice a week, unless otherwise noted. Students are expected to adhere to the course schedule, below. Daily reading assignments are noted in parentheses in the course schedule. Required texts for this course are:

- Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron DeHart, eds., *Women's America*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., vol. 1
- John Ruston Pagan, *Anne Orthwood's Bastard: Sex and Law in Early America*
- Susan Branson, *Those Fiery Frenchified Dames: Women and Political Culture in Early National Philadelphia*
- Lori D. Ginzberg, *Untidy Origins: A Story of Women's Rights in Antebellum New York*
- Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household*

Course grades will be computed as follows:

- *Short-answer quizzes (40% total)*. There will be 6 unannounced quizzes given in class over the course of the semester. Your 4 highest quiz grades will count toward your final grade for the course. There will be no make-ups given (which means that you can miss no more than 2 quizzes without penalty). Quizzes will draw primarily on the assigned course reading.
- *Paper (20%)*. Papers will be 8-10 pages, double-spaced, and due via email on Wednesday 16 November. Late submissions will be penalized one letter grade. Students will write an analytical essay using one of the assigned books (Pagan, Branson, Ginzberg, or Glymph) and two other scholarly monographs on a related topic. Extra readings and overall topics must be submitted for approval by Wednesday 19 October. (For more guidance on papers and topics, see the last page of this syllabus.)
- *Final examination (40%)*. All essay, blue books; open notes; Wednesday 14 December, 10:30-1:15.

Please note that all students are subject to the George Mason University Honor Code (see <http://jju.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/honor.htm>). The penalty for cheating or plagiarism on any assignment will be—at a minimum—a grade of F for this course.

## Course Schedule:

**Mon. 29 Aug.:** Introductory meeting.

**Wed. 31 Aug.:** Gender and the New Women's History (*Women's America*, 1-23)

~ ~ **Labor Day (Do some work?)** ~ ~

**Wed. 7 Sept.:** Gender Frontiers at Jamestown and Beyond (*Women's America*, 28-46)

**Mon. 12 Sept.:** Plantations, Servants, and Slaves in the Southern Colonies (*Women's America*, 98-102; *Anne Orthwood's Bastard*, 11-25)

**Wed. 15 Sept.:** Sex and Law in Early America, I (*Anne Orthwood's Bastard*, 3-11, 27-37, 65-145)

**Mon. 19 Sept.:** "The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America"—Lecture by Prof. Kate Haulman of George Washington University is part of this year's Fall for the Book Festival. It will be held in room 116 of the Johnson Center during our class's regular meeting time (10:30-11:45)

**Wed. 21 Sept.:** Family, Church, and Community in the Northern Colonies (*Women's America*, 57-75)

**Mon. 26 Sept.:** Witchcraft (*Women's America*, 76-89)

**Wed. 28 Sept.:** Sex and Law in Early America, II (*Women's America*, 116-33, 164-73)

**Mon. 3 Oct.:** Gender, Class, and Race in Late Colonial America (*Women's America*, 90-97)

**Wed. 5 Oct.:** Women and the Coming of the American Revolution

~ ~ **Fall Break** (A great time to think about that paper.) ~ ~

**Wed. 12 Oct.:** Film "Mary Silliman's War"

**Mon. 17 Oct.:** Revolution (*Women's America*, 134-38, and discussion of film)

**Wed. 19 Oct.:** Gender and Citizenship in the Early Republic (*Women's America*, 147-58)

**\*\*Deadline for submission of paper topics and supplementary reading (via email).\*\***

**Mon. 24 Oct.:** Salon Ladies and Female Politicians (*Those Fiery Frenchified Dames*, whole book)

**Wed. 26 Oct.:** Film "The Midwife's Tale," pt. 1

**Mon. 31 Oct.:** Film "The Midwife's Tale," pt. 2 (*Women's America*, 205-13, and discussion of film)

**Wed. 2 Nov.: Social Change, 1800-1860** (*Women's America*, 174-85)

**Mon. 7 Nov.: Women in Public** (*Untidy Origins*, 1-106)

**Wed. 9 Nov.: Women and Work in Modernizing America** (*Women's America*, 186-88)

**Mon. 14 Nov.: Marriage and Domesticity** (*Women's America*, 189-204)

**Wed. 16 Nov.: Religion and Reform** (*Women's America*, 214-23)

**\*\*Papers due via email by 10:30 a.m.\*\***

**Mon. 21 Nov.: Seneca Falls** (*Women's America*, 257-66; *Untidy Origins*, 107-71)

~ ~ **Thanksgiving Break** ~ ~

**Mon. 28 Nov.: Abolitionism and Feminism** (*Women's America*, 233-40)

**Wed. 30 Nov.: Black Women and Slavery in Antebellum America** (*Women's America*, 139-46, 161-63; *Out of the House of Bondage*, 1-96)

**Mon. 5 Dec.: Civil War, North and South** (*Women's America*, 283-94; *Out of the House of Bondage*, 97-146)

**Wed. 7 Dec.: Reconstruction and Its Consequences** (*Out of the House of Bondage*, 137-236)

**Final Examination: Wednesday 14 December, 10:30-1:15**

**Papers, due Wednesday 16 November.** Students will write an 8-10-page analytical essay using one of the assigned books and two other scholarly monographs on a related topic. (You may think of this a lit review with just three sources, focused on a single topic.) For the purpose of this assignment, a "scholarly monograph" is defined as a book based on documented research in primary sources, and one that is a minimum of 150 pages excluding notes and bibliography. Possible paper topics include:

- For *Anne Orthwood's Bastard*: indentured servants, legal regulation of sexuality, women's experience in the early Chesapeake, women and the courts in colonial Virginia
- For *Those Fiery Frenchified Dames*: women and the French Revolution, women and partisan politics, fashion in the early republic, social life in the American capital(s)
- For *Untidy Origins*: women and citizenship; origins of the women's suffrage movement; antebellum women and reform; married women's property rights
- For *Out of the House of Bondage*: gender and slave resistance, white women and slavery, Civil War homefront, black families and emancipation