HIST-630-001
U.S. Women's History
Spring 2018

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Robinson B343 ~~ Office Hours: W 1:00-3:00, or by appointment

This course is designed to introduce students to both the history and historiography of women and gender in America (i.e., the United States), from the colonial period through the twentieth century. Because choosing a handful of books and articles to represent *all* of women's history is clearly an impossible task, some topics and themes are more fully represented on this syllabus than others. If you have a particular interest that did not make the cut, you may read intensively in that area for your final project.

Course Requirements: This class meets once weekly, unless otherwise noted. Students should do assigned reading beforehand and come to class prepared to participate in seminar-style discussions.

Written requirements are three short papers chosen from the assignments listed below, and one longer historiographical essay. Short papers should be 3 to 5 pages, double-spaced, and generally do not require notes or bibliographies. For the final essay, students should choose a topic or issue pertinent to the course material and draw on both the assigned reading (where applicable) and other relevant secondary literature to write a historiographical essay (15 pages minimum, excluding required notes and bibliography).

Detailed instructions and advice about how to write a historiographical essay appear on the last page of this syllabus. Please note also that many of the assigned books include small-scale historiographical essays, typically embedded in their introductions. The articles we read for our first introductory session are also (extremely sophisticated) examples of historiographical essays.

Due dates for all written work are noted in the course schedule below. Students must submit written work (as Word files, via email) on or before scheduled due dates. For all assignments, late papers will be penalized a minimum of one letter-grade.

Oral requirements consist of attendance and participation in weekly discussions, an informal presentation of the final paper, and leadership (or co-leadership) of class discussion for one predetermined week during the semester. Each week, class leaders should be prepared to raise questions about the assigned reading to spur debate and discussion, thoroughly covering the contents of both books and articles. (I will be there to help, but ideally student leaders should generate and guide the class discussion.)

All assigned books should be available at the university bookstore, as well as at amazon.com and other online booksellers. All journal articles are available at Fenwick Library in electronic format via JSTOR or other databases.

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

- Short papers (3 x 15%) 45%
- Final essay 40%
- Participation (including leading discussion) 15%

Course Schedule:

Mon. 22 Jan.: Introduction. Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History, *Journal of American History*, 75 (1988): 9-39; Jeanne Boydston, "Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis," *Gender & History*, 20 (2008): 558-83 pre-circulated pdfs).

Mon. 29 Jan.: Women and Religion in Early America. Read Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*; Amanda E. Herbert, "Companions in Preaching and Suffering: Itinerant Female Quakers in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World," *Early American Studies*, 9 (2011): 73-113.

> Paper: Did religious belief and practice constrain or empower women in early English colonial America?

Mon. 5 Feb.: Making Gender and Race in Colonial America. Read Kirsten Fischer, *Suspect Relations: Sex, Race, and Resistance in Colonial North Carolina*; Kathleen M. Brown, "Brave New Worlds: Women and Gender History," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 50 (1993): 311-28.

> Paper: Explain the concept of "gender frontiers" and give at least three examples of how this idea is applicable to the early history of the North Carolina colony.

Mon. 12 Feb.: Women, Work, and Politics in Revolutionary America. Read Marla L. Miller, *Betsy Ross and the Making of America*; Rosemarie Zagarri, "The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 55 (1998): 203-30.

> Paper: To what extent did Betsy Ross's life, after 1776, conform to what Rosemarie Zagarri calls the post-revolutionary "gendered division of rights?" What was the relevance of the "rights talk" among elites to the lived experience of less privileged Americans?

Mon. 19 Feb.: Individual meetings to discuss final papers.

Mon. 26 Feb.: Gender, Education, and Public Life in the Early Republic. Read Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic*; Susan E. Klepp, "Revolutionary Bodies: Women and the Fertility Transition in the Mid-Atlantic Region, 1760-1820," *Journal of American History*, 85 (1998): 910-45; Ruth H. Bloch, "The American Revolution, Wife Beating, and the Emergent Value of Privacy," *Early American Studies*, 5 (2007): 223-51.

Paper: Drawing on all three of the assigned readings, write an essay explaining how and why the always blurry lines between public and private evolved in post-revolutionary America.

Mon. 5 Mar.: Slavery and Abolition. Read Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*; Carol Lasser, "Voyeuristic Abolitionism: Sex, Gender, and the Transformation of Antislavery Rhetoric," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 28 (2008): 83-114.

Paper: How did gender shape both slavery and abolitionism in antebellum America?

** Spring Break--No Class **

Mon. 19 Mar.: Reconstructing the South. Read Jane Turner Censer, *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood, 1865-1895*; Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War.*

Paper: What were the most significant challenges facing freedwomen and their former slave mistresses after the Civil War, and how did they address them?

Mon. 26 Mar.: Women, Migration, and Citizenship. Read Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1865*; Donna R. Gabaccia, "Spatializing Gender and Migration: The Periodization of Atlantic Studies, 1500 to the Present," *Atlantic Studies*, 11 (2014): 7-27.

Paper: Why does Martha Gardner contend that the history of the "regulation of belonging" via immigration and naturalization law is "as much about those inside [the U.S.] as those who remained outside?" How did the criteria for belonging, for women, change between 1870 and 1965?

Mon. 2 Apr.: Public Women and Popular Culture. Read Jill Lepore, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*; Robyn Muncy, "Women, Gender, and Politics in the New Deal Government: Josephine Roche and the Federal Security Agency," *Journal of Women's History*, 21 (2009): 60-83.

Paper: To what extent were the Depression and New Deal eras significant turning points in U.S. women's history?

Mon. 9 Apr: Domestic Revival. Read Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*; Landon T. Y. Storrs, "Attacking the Washington 'Femmocracy': Antifeminism in the Cold War Campaign against 'Communists in Government,'" *Feminist Studies*, 33 (2007): 118-52.

Paper: Why, according to Elaine Tyler May, did so many Americans embrace marriage, parenthood, and domestic life generally with such fervor in the post-World War II era? Do you find these contentions persuasive?

Mon. 16 Apr.: Civil Rights, Women's Fights. Read Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance--A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*; Debbie Z. Harwell, "Wednesdays in Mississippi: Uniting Women across Regional and Racial Lines, Summer 1964," *Journal of Southern History*, 76 (2010): 617-54.

Paper: Drawing on both of the assigned readings, write an essay explaining how and why the history of the civil rights movement looks different from the perspective of women's experiences and actions.

Mon. 23 Apr.: Feminism. Read Estelle Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*, chaps. 1, 4-14.

> Paper: Define "feminism" and the "feminist movement," and write an essay reviewing the most significant achievements and shortcomings of the latter in the United States from the 1930s to the 1980s (i.e., "Second Wave feminism").

Mon. 30 Apr.: Oral presentations.

****Final Papers due on Monday 7 May by 5:00 p.m.**

Instructions for the final paper (15 pages, minimum, excluding notes and bibliography)

A **historiographical essay** summarizes and analyzes **scholarly interpretations** of a specific historical issue or topic. For this assignment, students should choose a topic relevant to the course, and analyze a minimum of *ten* high-quality secondary sources on that topic, in addition to any pertinent readings from the course syllabus. Selecting excellent and relevant sources is essential to the successful completion of this project.

Arguably the hardest part of this assignment is finding an appealing and viable topic. One way to do so would be to browse the assigned course reading to find questions and issues in the existing literature. An ideal topic should be fairly specific--at least initially--to allow you to compare the authors' approaches and to assess the persuasiveness of their arguments. You must have at least a general idea for a topic by the time you meet with me during the week of Monday 19 February.

The objective of this assignment is to critically examine scholarly debates and approaches to a particular event or issue, and *not* to describe or narrate an event or process. For instance, if you chose to write on the topic of white southern women during the Civil War, you would devote at most a paragraph or two to describing the actions and experiences of such women, instead focusing on scholarly assessments of whether the war changed their roles in the short and longer terms, and why it did (of did not) transform the place of white women in southern culture and society.

Given this ultimate objective, as you read your sources, your note-taking should focus on the authors' arguments, evidence, and methodologies. You should read your sources critically and assess the persuasiveness of the authors' interpretations and approaches. Your paper should explain the evolution of the best scholarly thinking on your topic/issue, as well as the current state of the field. You should also note gaps in the existing literature and suggest opportunities for further study.

Your final paper must include notes--either footnotes or endnotes--formatted correctly according to the Chicago (Turabian) style. It must also include a properly formatted bibliography. For examples of the Chicago (Turabian) citations that historians use, go to http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. Use of a different or incorrect citation format will be penalized. You can find many more examples of properly formatted footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographies in the required course readings.