

HISTORY 384 (MNS)
Women in American History I:
Colonial to Antebellum Period

Spring 2008
9:35-10:50 MW Room 224 CCC

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Office Hours: 9:00 T, 11:00 R, or by appointment

The purpose of this course is to explore the lives of women in North America from the time of European colonization through approximately the first half of the 19th century. The history of women in America is not a history of white, middle-class women. It includes a wide variety of women whose experiences were affected by race, class, ethnicity, geographic location, and sexual orientation. We will look at how all women--those of European, African, Native American, and Mexican descent--interacted with and perceived each other. We will also explore how and why women's gender has made them a minority (culturally and socially, rather than numerically).

Other specific topics included in the course are women's work both within and outside of the home, gender roles, and marriage and family. There will be a special focus on the relationship between ideas and action, and on image versus reality.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Sara Evans, *Born for Liberty*

Mary Beth Norton and Ruth Alexander, eds., *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2nd Edition

Both books are available at Text Rental.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Ann Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England*

Jean Fagan Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*

All available for purchase at the bookstore. Both the Jacobs and Hawthorne books can be found in any library. Any edition is acceptable.

EXAMS

There are two essay exams. You will be graded not only on the facts that you have been able to memorize but on interpretation and argument as well.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

There are two papers, each about 7 pages long. One will focus on the Plane and Hawthorne books, the other on Yellin and Jacobs. Details will follow. All papers must include footnotes and a bibliography that follow the Turabian format, and they must represent your own, individual work. **Plagiarism is grounds for failing the class.**

I am willing to read any rough drafts that are submitted to me at least **one week** before the due date.

IN-CLASS DISCUSSIONS

There are three discussions (dates are listed in the syllabus) of assigned readings and other course materials. Guidelines will be distributed in class.

Grading Criteria

Essay exams and papers are graded roughly as follows:

A: (90-100) demonstrates **both** a fine command of historical knowledge (ideas, names, places, dates, etc.) and an informed interpretation of that information

B: (80-89) demonstrates a command of historical knowledge but contains a weak interpretation

C: (70-79) demonstrates competent/average historical knowledge but completely lacks an interpretation

D: (60-69) shows deficiency of historical knowledge and lacks an interpretation

F: (50-59) shows inaccurate historical knowledge and lacks an interpretation, and/or is incomplete

0: non-existent or incomplete work

Any assignment that is not turned in or exam that is not taken will earn a zero. This will result in failing the course.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

2 essay exams: 25% each
Paper #1: 20%
Paper #2: 20%
3 in-class discussions: 10%

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required. After 4 unexcused absences (**excused absences** require documentation for a death in the family, serious illness, or a class-related trip) your final grade will be docked a third of a letter grade.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

WEEK 1: Jan. 23

Introduction
Historiography: The History of Women's History
Reading: Norton, ch. 1

WEEK 2: Jan. 28-Feb. 1

European Contact and Native American Women
European Women in a New Land: Work and Family
Readings: Evans, chs. 1-2; Norton, ch. 2; Plane, Introduction, chs. 1-2; Begin Hawthorne (skip the Customs House section)

WEEK 3: Feb. 4-8

Religion, Women, and Colonization
Puritans, Anglicans, and Others
Readings: Plane, chs. 3-4; Hawthorne, remainder

WEEK 4: Feb. 11-15

Race, Gender and Witchcraft
Medical Practices in the Colonial Period
Readings: Norton, ch. 3

WEEK 5: Feb. 18-22

Three Sovereigns for Sarah
Discussion
Readings: Plane, chs. 5-6, Conclusion

WEEK 6: Feb. 25-29

Black Women in Early America
Indian Captivity Narratives

Readings: Norton, pp. 145-155; Yellin, Introduction and Part One (chs. 1-5)

Paper #1 due: by Friday, Feb. 29

WEEK 7: March 3-7

Revolution: Sacrifice, Survival, and Patriotism

Readings: Evans, ch. 3; Norton, ch. 4

WEEK 8: March 10-14

Mary Silliman's War

Exam # 1: Wednesday, March 12

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9: March 24-28

Education and Motherhood in the Early Republic

A Midwife's Tale

WEEK 10: March 31-April 4

Public and Private Lives in the 19th Century

Discussion

Readings: Evans, ch. 4; Norton, ch. 5

WEEK 11: April 7-11

Working Women: Early Industrialization

Immigration, Class, and Ethnicity

Readings: Norton, pp. 161-166; 169-177; 239-246

WEEK 12: April 14-18

Benevolence and Reform

Readings: Evans, ch. 5; Norton, pp. 167-169; 177-188; Begin reading Jacobs

WEEK 13: April 21-25

Abolition: A Black & White Struggle

Native American Women & Missionaries

Readings: Yellin, Part Two; Continue reading Jacobs

WEEK 14: April 28-May 2

Slavery

Readings: Norton, pp. 138-144, 155-160; 246-252; Yellin, Part Three, Afterword; Jacobs, remainder

WEEK 15: May 5-9

The Spanish-American Frontier and Euro-Native Encounters
Discussion

Readings: Norton, pp. 199-204

Paper #2 due: Monday, May 9

Exam #2: Thursday, May 15 at 10:15

NOTE: Lecture topics are subject to change without notice.