

History 313
Women in American History I: 1600-1875
Hyer 212, T/R 3:45-5:00

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Course Description:

This course will introduce you to women's experiences and the construction of gender in America from 1600 to 1875. As we explore women's lives, we will focus on several key themes: How have Americans understood gender? How has this understanding of gender shaped and been shaped by race, ethnicity, and class? How have women's lives affected and been affected by views of women's "place" and women's work? Throughout the course, you will meet both the "extraordinary" women who became prominent on the national and international levels, and the "ordinary" women who conducted their everyday lives in relative anonymity.

During the semester, you will learn both the "stuff" of women's history (names, dates, events) and the process of doing history (gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing information from historical sources). Although prior coursework in history is not required for this course, general knowledge of United States history before the Reconstruction will be helpful. Course readings include a textbook, which will provide you with a general background and help you frame the primary and secondary document readings. Class periods will focus on discussion and analysis of themes based on the readings.

Course Goals:

Throughout the semester, students will learn to:

- be active and engaged learners.
- examine how the concept of gender shaped and was shaped by the American experience from the Colonial period through Reconstruction.
- assess how race, ethnicity, and class have affected the concept of a "sisterhood" among women.
- evaluate the ways in which American societies have viewed women's labor, with particular focus on the distinctions between paid and unpaid labor.
- explore the role of women in relation to their families, their communities, and their nation.
- trace the development of women's political and legal rights.
- critically evaluate primary and secondary historical sources, including issues of authorship, audience, and context.
- synthesize material from primary sources into a coherent written argument that includes a clear thesis and relevant, documented supporting evidence.

Course Readings:

There are three required texts for the course:

Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 4th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart, *Women's America: Refocusing the Past* 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself* (1861).

The Woloch book is available through the textbook rental system. *Women's America* and Harriet Jacobs' book are available for purchase at the bookstore. Please note that while you may use any complete edition of the Jacobs' book, you will need the specified editions of the Woloch and Kerber/De Hart books. Additional readings will be posted on the course website on D2L; these readings are specified on the syllabus with **D2L**. You will also be using the on-line document collection, *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000*. Access is available through the UWW library website under "databases and indexes." Documents drawn from this collection are identified below as coming from *Women and Social Movements*.

Grading and Assignments:

20% Attendance and Participation
20% Document Analysis Paper
20% History Journal
20% Poster Project
20% Final Paper

The grading scale is: A (90-100, outstanding work); B (80-89, good work); C (70-79, average work); D (60-69, poor work); F (59 and below, failing work)

Attendance and Participation:

Participation involves three inter-related elements: preparation, attendance, and engaged participation in class. First, you are expected to prepare for class by critically reading assigned material and completing take-home assignments. I strongly recommend taking notes on the reading material and bringing them to class. Second, you need to attend class; you cannot participate if you are absent. I do understand that the unexpected can occur, and you are allowed one absence without it affecting your grade. More than one absence will lower your participation grade. If you know you need to miss a class ahead of time, please contact me as soon as possible so that we might arrange a make-up. Third, engaged participation includes thoughtfully contributing to the discussions and activities during class. Both the quantity and quality of your comments will be considered.

History Journal:

Your history journal will be comprised of 10 short writing assignments, including analysis of primary documents, critical reviews of secondary documents, thesis analysis, and discussion questions. Some will be completed in class and some will be completed out of class; those assignments done out of class will be distributed at least one week in advance. They will be graded on the basis of: + (exceeds expectations), √ (meets expectations), — (does not meet expectations). You should collect these assignments in a 3-ring binder through the semester. I will collect the binders at the end of the semester to complete an overall evaluation of your work and assess improvement over the course of the semester. You may replace **one** of the journal assignments during the semester with the "Hollywood does history" option. A handout on this option is available on D2L.

Document Analysis Paper

This 4-5 page paper involves a close study of one or two primary documents from the course readings concerning women in the Colonial and Revolutionary periods. You will choose the primary document(s) and the secondary sources used to place your document(s) in context. Additional specifics on the assignment will be distributed on 9/21, and you need to submit (via email) the document(s) and secondary sources you plan to use by the start of class on 9/26.

Poster Project: Women's Labor, Women's Lives

During the semester you will work in groups of 2-3 students to develop a poster and presentation that explores one type of work (either paid or unpaid) done by American women between 1600 and 1875. The

project consists of several parts, including: a proposal, a poster, a presentation, and a paper. More information on this assignment will be distributed in the coming weeks.

Final Paper

In your final paper for the course, you will be asked to synthesize primary and secondary documents in an analysis of one of the major themes of the course. The paper should be 6-7 pages long. The paper is due in a mandatory meeting held during the scheduled final exam time for the course; additional specifics on the assignment will be distributed two weeks before the due date.

Please note: all paper page lengths are exclusive of endnotes and title page. Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style documentation is required in each paper.

During the semester, I encourage you to stay in contact with me outside class. E-mail is generally the fastest way to get in touch with me; I check my e-mail at least once a day. You may also call me at home at (608) 242-9734. Please do not call before 8:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. My office hours are T/R 2:00-3:30. If those times do not work for you, I would be happy to set up an appointment for another time.

Academic Honesty Policy:

Learning in this course takes place both in and out of our classroom, including discussions outside of class regarding course material and assignments. Collaboration is an important part of the learning process, and I encourage you to form study groups and assist each other in proof reading papers. However, each assignment you hand in should reflect your own learning and labor.

Plagiarism or any other form of cheating will result in a zero for the assignment and may result in an “F” for the course. Cases will also be referred to the appropriate university officials. All papers must be properly cited using the Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style format. Papers that have incomplete or incorrect citation are at risk of being considered plagiarized.

Course Schedule

9/5 Introduction to the Course

Women and the Colonial Experiment

9/7 Women’s History and the Construction of Gender

Readings:

“Introduction: Gender and the New Women’s History” and Mary Beth Norton, “‘Searchers again Assembled’: Gender Distinctions in Seventeenth-Century America” in *Women’s America*, 1-24 and 69-78

9/12 Cross Cultural Encounters in the New World

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 1-14, 31-36

“Traditional America”; Ann Marie Plane, “Creating a Blended Household: Christian Indian Women and English Domestic Life in Colonial Massachusetts”; and James F. Brooks, “This Evil Extends Especially. . .to the Feminine Sex”: Negotiating Captivity in the New Mexico Borderlands” in *Women’s America*, 25-45

Mary Rowlandson, “A New England Captivity” and Mary Jemison, “Life Among the Seneca,” in Nancy Woloch, *Early American Women: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002), 14-22. **D2L.**

9/14 Family and the Colonial Household

Journal #1 due

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 15-31

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "The Ways of Her Household" and "Documents: The Law of Domestic Relations" in *Women's America*, 45-59.

9/19 God and the Devil in New England

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 36-50

"Document: The Trial of Anne Hutchinson, 1637" and Carol F. Karlsen, "The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: The Economic Basis of Witchcraft" in *Women's America*, 79-96.

"The Trial of Ann Hibbens" and "Susanna Martin on Trial for Witchcraft" in Nancy Cott, et. al., eds., *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996). **D2L.**

9/21 Slavery and Gender in the Colonies

Journal #2 due

Readings:

Carol Berkin, "African American Women in Colonial Society" and "Documents: The Law of Slavery" in *Women's America*, 59-68.

Revolutions

9/26 The Rise of the Market Economy

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 51-80

"Diary of Mary Cooper" and "Learning by Doing Women's Work" in *Root of Bitterness* pp 61-66 and 82-90, **D2L.**

"Home Work" and "Change Work and the Whang" in Rosalyn Baxandall and Linda Gordon, eds., *America's Working Women: A Documentary History 1600 to the Present*, revised and updated (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1995), 14-16. **D2L.**

Documents for document essay due via email.

9/28 Women and the Revolution: "Mary Silliman's War"(video)

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 81-88.

10/3 Women and the Revolution: "Mary Silliman's War" (con't)

Journal #3 due

Readings:

"Documents: Supporting the Revolution" in Kerber, 114-118.

10/5 Reproduction and Childbirth

Document Essay due

Readings:

James C. Mohr, "Abortion in America" in Kerber, 183-192

"A Midwife of Many Trades," *America's Working Women*, 8-11. **D2L**

"A Law for Regulating Midwives," *Root of Bitterness*, 44-46. **D2L.**

10/10 Republican Motherhood and Republican Manhood

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 88-99.

Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother and the Woman Citizen" in *Women's America*, 119-128.

"Remember the Ladies," in Woloch, *Early American Women*, 127-129. **D2L.**

10/12 Poster Group Meeting Day: Research Resources

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 100-133.

Domesticity and its Challenges

10/17 Middle Class Women and the Cult of Domesticity

Journal #4 due

Readings:

Jeanne Boydston, "The Pastoralization of Housework" and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" in *Women's America*, 153-182.

"The Middle Class: Domestic Lives" in Woloch, *Early American Women*, 141-160. **D2L.**

10/19 Paid Labor and Working Class Women

Poster Proposal Due

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 133-138

Mary Blewett, "Women Shoeworkers and Domestic Ideology: Rural Outwork in Early Nineteenth-Century Essex County," *The New England Quarterly* 60:3 (Sept., 1987): 403-428. **D2L.**

10/24 Factory Work and Protest

Readings:

"Document: Working Conditions in Early Factories, 1865" in *Women's America*, 165-167.

Thomas Dublin, "Women, Work, and Protest in the Early Lowell Mills: 'The Oppressing Hand of Avarice Would Enslave Us'" in Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, eds., *Women and Power in American History, Volume One—To 1880*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002) 140-153. **D2L.**

Document Project: "How Did Sarah Bagley Contribute to the Ten-Hour Movement in Lowell and How Did her Labor Activism Flow into Other Reform Movements, 1836-1870?" *Women and Social Movements*. See handout for selections.

10/26 Domesticity and Western Expansion

Journal #5 due

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 138-152.

Susan Lee Johnson, "'Domestic' Life in the Diggins: The Southern Mines in the California Gold Rush" in Vicki L. Ruiz & Ellen Carol DuBois, *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U. S. Women's History* 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 105-123. **D2L.**

"Western Frontiers" documents in Woloch, *Early American Women*, 185-208. **D2L.**

10/31 Poster Group Meeting Day

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 153-174

Reform and Gender in Antebellum America

11/2 Women and the Impulse of Reform

Journal #6 due

Readings:

Document Project: "What Was the Appeal of Moral Reform to Antebellum Northern Women, 1835-1842?" *Women and Social Movements*.

11/7 Female Education and the Common School Movement

Readings:

"Female Networks and Educational Reform," in David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1982): 63-72.

Catherine Beecher, "Remedy for Wrongs to Women," in Nancy Hoffman, ed., *Women's "True Profession": Voices from the History of Teaching* (Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1981): 36-40; 45-51. **D2L**.

11/9 Women and Abolitionism

Journal #7 due

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 174-186

"Documents: Claiming Rights I" in *Women's America*, 193-197.

Document Projects: "How Did Lucretia Mott Combine Her Commitments to Antislavery and Women's Rights, 1840-1860?" and "How Did Abolitionist Women and Their Slaveholding Relatives Negotiate Their Conflict over the Issue of Slavery?" *Women and Social Movements*. See handout for document selections.

11/14 **Poster Presentations**

11/16 **Poster Presentations**

11/21 Reform and the Dawn of the Women's Movement

Journal #8 due

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 186-200

"Documents: Claiming Rights I"; Judith Wellman, "The Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention: A Study of Social Networks"; "Documents: Claiming Rights II"; and Nell Irvin Painter, "Sojourner Truth's Defense of the Rights of Women" in *Women's America*, 198-219.

11/23 **Thanksgiving Break**

Slavery

11/28 Race and Gender in the Antebellum South I

Readings:

Sharon Block, "Lines of Color, Sex, and Service: Sexual Coercion in the Early Republic" in *Women's America*, 135-144.

Stephanie McCurry, "Women's Work: The Gender Division of Labor in Yeoman Households of South Carolina before the Civil War" in *Women's America*, 145-152.

Deborah G. White, "Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status in the Antebellum South" in Sklar and Dublin, 154-166. **D2L**.

11/30 Race and Gender in the Antebellum South II

Journal #9 due

Readings:

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

Civil Wars

12/5 Choosing Sides

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 216-226

Drew Gilpin Faust, "Enemies in Our Households: Confederate Women and Slavery" in *Women's America*, 220-232

12/7 Reconstructing Gender

Journal #10 due

Readings:

Tera W. Hunter, "Reconstruction and the Meanings of Freedom" and "Documents: After the Civil War: Reconsidering the Law" in *Women's America*, 235-252

12/12 Women and Civil Rights

Journal booklet due

Readings:

Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 326-332

"Document: The Women's Centennial Agenda, 1876" in *Women's America*, 265-268

Final Paper due at 3:15 on Wednesday, December 20th.

Please note that the above policies and schedules are subject to change; in the event that life is unpredictable and slight changes in readings or lecture topics are necessary, they will be announced in class as soon as is feasible. However, no substantial alterations to assignments or course policies will be made without agreement of both instructor and the majority of students.

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is dedicated to a safe, supportive and non-discriminatory learning environment. It is the responsibility of all undergraduate and graduate students to familiarize themselves with University policies regarding Special Accommodations, Misconduct, Religious Beliefs Accommodation, Discrimination and Absence for University Sponsored Events. (For details please refer to the Undergraduate and Graduate Timetables; the "Rights and Responsibilities" section of the Undergraduate Bulletin; the Academic Requirements and Policies and the Facilities and Services sections of the Graduate Bulletin; and the "Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures" [UWS Chapter 14]; and the "Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures" [UWS Chapter 17]).