

History 499/388
Women and Gender in North American History through 1920
 Spring 2010

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Office hours: Wednesdays 9am-11am & by app't

Course Website or Blackboard: I use both Blackboard and the USC Confluence Server (wiki)

Time: TTh 9:30

Room: VKC 205

Class #: 37248R

Catalog Course Description: Investigation of the roles and relationships of women and men in North America from first contact to the 1920s, with special emphasis on race, marriage, and political culture.

Course Summary:

This course seeks to illuminate the commonalties and diversities of women's experiences over the course of the first few centuries of American history, from the colonial period through early twentieth century. It focuses on the ways women's lives affected and were affected by important social and legal institutions, particularly marriage and the family. We will address gender roles, women's work inside and outside the household, and their changing relationship to state authority. We will also consider how the regulation of the family serves to reproduce social differences of race and class.

One of the goals of this course is to introduce you to different types of historical writing. Another is to acquaint you with a range of primary sources used in the fields of women's and family history, and with some of the techniques you can employ in interpreting those sources. Historians rely heavily on written documents, as well as on material artifacts and oral history, to understand the past. Thus in addition to learning about women, gender, and the family in American history, we will be familiarizing ourselves with the historians' craft.

Required Readings: The following books should be purchased (at least one copy of each is also on reserve in the Leavey Library).

Sklar, Kathryn Kish. *Women's Rights Emerges within the Anti-Slavery Movement 1830-1870 : A Brief History with Documents*. (Bedford, 2000).

Woloch, Nancy. *Muller v. Oregon: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford, 1996).

Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. I will be using, and recommend that you purchase, the 2000 Harvard University Press edition, edited by Jean Fagan Yellin.

However, the original 1861 text is freely available for download from [Google Books](#).

****Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History With Documents* (New York: Bedford St. Martin's 2009). This textbook is *recommended but not required*.**

For citations to required journal articles and documents, see the Schedule of Classes below. In the first class meeting, we will discuss the use of JSTOR and various online databases.

Requirements:

1. Attendance and Participation (20%)

You are expected to have completed reading assigned for a given day before the class meets.

The success of this class depends on the active participation of all students. Participation represents a substantial portion of the grade, and will be evaluated in terms of preparation, participation in large and small group discussion, active listening, collaboration, and overall contributions to the class experience during the term. Your written and in-class feedback on each others' monograph reports (see requirement 5) is an important part of this grade. Additionally, I may require you to write short response papers before or during class, to take the occasional quiz (announced or unannounced) in class, or to send me your thoughts and questions through Blackboard.

2. Office Hours—(5%)--I require every student to meet with me outside of class at least once before the final paper topics are due. We can discuss possible final paper topics, ask questions about the course, etc.

3. Midterms (15% each)

There will be two in-class midterms consisting of short essay and identification questions.

3. Primary document analysis (10%) 1-2 pages due in class, [date TBA]

Students will choose a primary source from a group of documents and write a brief essay (2-3 pages double spaced) describing the document and analyzing what it reveals about the lives of American women.

4. Draft monograph paper (6-8 pages) (10%), due Thursday April 8 + 10 minute in-class presentation (5%)

A short description of your proposed topic will be **due in class, Thursday March 25**. I will assign presentation dates based on how well the readings fit together around themes or periods. How you *respond* to your classmates' presentations is at least as important as your presentation itself.

A monograph is a detailed, book-length study of a specific subject. Each student will read one monograph from a list provided of works that related to questions about women and power in the period preceding the 1920s. Students will then write a 6 to 8 page analysis of the work, and extract from it a **ten minute** presentation for class. Depending on the topics chosen, I will arrange students into groups of 3-4 to read and evaluate each others' drafts. I will then grade students' final revision of their paper, which will incorporate feedback from their presentation groups and from class discussions of their presentations (in person and/or on Blackboard).

In addition to the monograph itself, each student should read and discuss **at least two** other important secondary articles on the subject covered in their monograph. The purpose of this additional reading is to help situate the monograph historiographically (for you and your readers). If the book was published recently, you might read an older article or book chapter on the subject. For example, if you chose to read Kathleen Brown's *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* (1996), you might fruitfully pair it with a chapter from Edmund Morgan's book, *American Slavery, American Freedom: the Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (1975), or his 1972 essay, "[Slavery and Freedom: the American Paradox](#)." Conversely, if you were to write about a monograph that was published quite some time ago, such as Linda Kerber's *Women of the Republic* (1980), you might find a more recent publication that revisits and/or revises Kerber's material in some way. One extremely useful place to begin is the e-database [America: History and Life](#), accessible through the USC Library [US History Research Guide](#).

The first step in developing a research agenda is often assessing the state of the secondary literature on a given subject. Apart from getting you into the library and pursuing a subject that interests you, part of the purpose of this assignment is to familiarize you with how to conduct secondary source research in history. For some of you, this paper could lay the groundwork for future research projects.

6. Final Monograph Paper (10-12 pages). Due May 11. (20%)

This last assignment is a revision of your monograph report, incorporating the suggestions from your classmates and myself.

*****All written work must be submitted electronically, ideally as pdf files, spellchecked, double spaced, and in 12 point-sized type in a standard font like Times New Roman and with standard 1.25 inch left and right margins. Please name the file you send me "Lastname.pdf"***

*Written assignments that are submitted late will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late (weekends included). In rare cases, extensions will be granted only in case of emergency, and they must be cleared before the deadline. Please develop a reliable strategy for backing up your work; computer problems (unless they affect the entire campus grid) are not unpredictable emergencies and are not an excuse for late work. ***

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in [Appendix A](#). Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The review process can be found [here](#).

Schedule of Classes

Part I. First Contact to the Early Republic

Part II. Early Republic to the Civil War

Part III. From Black (Women's) Emancipation to (White) Woman Suffrage

Part IV. Student Presentations

Week 1: Introductions

1st meeting: Historiography: A Brief History of Women's History, Gender History and the History of the Family

PART ONE: First Contact through the Age of Revolutions

2nd meeting: *First Contacts Part I: The Native American Experience*

Readings:

Barr, Juliana. "A Diplomacy of Gender: Rituals of First Contact in the 'Land of the Tejas.'" *The William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 61, no. 3 (July 2004): 393-434.

Week 2 *First Contacts Part II: Gender and Slavery in Colonial America*

1st meeting:

Readings:

Barr, Juliana. "From Captives to Slaves: Commodifying Indian Women in the Borderlands." *Journal of American History* 92, no. 1 (2005): 19-46.

Brown, Kathleen. "Engendering Racial Difference, 1640-1670," chapter four of *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996), p. 107-136 (E-reserve)

2d meeting:

Assignment: Primary Source Analysis

Go to the [American Journeys database](#) (developed by the Wisconsin Historical Society). Using your own keywords or the pre-defined "topical" search engine under "Advanced Search," **identify a passage or image that concerns women, gender, and/or the family in early America.** (*For the purposes of this assignment I ask that you *not* choose the Letter of John Rolfe.*)

Be sure to print out the relevant passage (you may need to read some preceding and subsequent pages), along with the document description, and to read the document summary prepared by the site's editors, and to **post your choice on Blackboard** (hopefully to avoid excessive duplication) **no later than 8pm the evening before the 2nd meeting.**

Come to class discussion the following day prepared to explain (1) what the document is, who produced it and when, and (2) what *you* think it shows about women in this time period. The first writing assignment may draw from some of the documents you choose. Part of the purpose of this assignment is to make you aware of the process involved in wresting a historical narrative from a historical document.

Week 3 Colonial Worlds, 1607-1750s

1st meeting: Deviancy in the Colonies

Readings:

Karlsen, Carol. "The Economic Basis of Witchcraft," from *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* (E-Reserve)

Dayton, Cornelia Hughes. "Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village." [*William & Mary Quarterly* 48, no. 1 \(1991\): 19-49.](#)

Documents: "Ordinary Dealings at Colonial County Courts," from *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women*, ed. Cott et al., p. 17-23. (E-Reserve)

2nd meeting: Gender, Marriage, and Labor

Readings:

Wulf, Karin. *Not All Wives: the Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (2000), p. 119-121, 130-148. (E-Reserve)

Clark, Emily. "Patrimony Without Pater: The New Orleans Ursuline Community and the Creation of a Material Culture," in *French Colonial Louisiana and the Atlantic World*, ed. Bradley Bond (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2005), 95-110. (E-Reserve)

Week 4 Towards Revolution

1st meeting:

Readings:

Kerber, Linda. "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—An American Perspective." [*American Quarterly* 28.2 \(1976\): p. 187-205.](#)

Document: Esther DeBerdt Reed, "Sentiments of an American Woman" (1780)

PART II: North American Women from the Early Republic to the Civil War

2nd meeting: Revolutions & Constitution-Making

Lewis, Jan. "Why the Constitution includes Women," in [*Common-Place* 2, no 4 \(2002\).](#)

Lewis, Jan. "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic." [*The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 \(1987\) 689-721.](#)

Week 5 The New Republic

1st meeting: Midterm I (Tuesday, February 9)

2nd meeting: Toward Separate Spheres?

Readings:

Boydston, Jeanne. "The Pastoralization of Housework" in *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (Oxford, 1990). (E-reserve)

Boylan, Anne M. "Women and Politics in the Era before Seneca Falls." [*Journal of the Early Republic* 10, no. 3 \(1990\): 363-82.](#)

Week 6—Gender, Race, and the Household

1st & 2^d meetings:

Readings:

Paul E. Johnson, "The Modernization of Mayo Greenleaf Patch: Land, Family, and Marginality in New England," *New England Quarterly* 55.4 (1982), p. 488-516. **(To access this article, use the [USC Library Citation Linker](#).)**

Stephanie McCurry, "The Politics of Yeomen Households in South Carolina," in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* **(E-reserve)**

Harriet Jacobs, [*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*](#), preface, intro, & chapters 1-18.

Week 7—Marriage, the Household, and Politics

1st & 2^d meetings:

Readings:

Harriet Jacobs, [*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*](#), chapter 19-end.

Maria Raquel Casas, "Victoria Reid and the Politics of Identity," in *Latina Legacies: Identity Biography, and Community*. **(Ebrary)**

Adrienne Davis, "The Private Law of Race and Sex: An Antebellum Perspective," *Stanford Law Review* 51, no. 2 (1999): 221-88

Week 8—The Abolitionist origins of the Woman Suffrage Movement

1st & 2^d meetings:

Readings:

Sklar, Kathryn Kish. *Women's Rights Emerges within the Anti-Slavery Movement 1830-1870 : A Brief History with Documents*. (Bedford, 2000).

Part III. From Black (Women's) Emancipation to (White) Woman Suffrage

Week 9—Voting in the Age of Emancipation

1st meeting: Midterm II (Tuesday, March 9)

2nd meeting:

Readings:

Brown, Elsa Barkley. "To Catch the Vision of Freedom: Reconstructing Black Women's Political History, 1865-1880," in *Unequal Sisters*, 4th. ed., ed. Vicki Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois (New York: Routledge, 2008), pps.156-177 **(E-Reserve)**

Basch, Norma. "Reconstructing Female Citizenship: *Minor v. Happersett*." In *The Constitution, Law, and American Life: Critical Aspects of the Nineteenth-Century Experience*, edited by Donald G. Nieman, 52-66. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992. **(E-Reserve)**

Week 10— Voting in the Age of Emancipation II

1st meeting: In-Class Library Research Skills Workshop with Sue Tyson, Doheny Reference and Instruction

2d meeting: (proposed monograph paper topic due)

Readings:

Gordon, Sarah Barringer. "The Liberty of Self Degradation: Polygamy, Woman Suffrage, and Consent in Nineteenth Century America," [*The Journal of American History* 83, no. 3 \(1996\)](#), 815-47.

Week 11—Manifest Domesticity

1st & 2nd meetings:

Readings:

Abrams, Kerry. "Polygamy, Prostitution, and the Federalization of Immigration Law," 105 *Columbia Law Review* 641 (2005). (E-Reserve)

Yung, Judy. "Unbound Feet: From China to San Francisco's Chinatown," in *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, ed. Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart, p. 302-310 (Oxford, 2004). (E-Reserve)

Sneider, Allison L. *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870-1929* (Oxford, 2008), selections TBA (E-Reserve)

Week 12--Women, Work, and the State

1st & 2nd meetings

Readings: Nancy Woloch, *Muller v. Oregon: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford, 1996).

Week 13—Women, "Welfare", and the State

1st & 2nd meetings:

Readings:

McClintock, Megan J. "Civil War Pensions and the Reconstruction of Union Families." *Journal of American History* 83, no. 2 (1996): 456-80.

Gordon, Linda. "Social Insurance and Public Assistance: The Influence of Gender in Welfare Thought in the United States, 1890-1935." *American Historical Review* 97, no. 1 (1992): 19-54.

Week 14—Sexuality, Consumer Culture, and Power

1st meeting:

Reading:

Peiss, Kathy. "Putting on Style," from *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (e-reserves)

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." [*Signs* 1:1 \(1975\), 1-30](#).

Gill, Tiffany Melissa. "'I Had My Own Business . . . So I Didn't Have to Worry': Beauty Salons, Beauty Culturists, and Black Community Life," (Hewitt, vol. 2, ch. 5) (E-reserves)

2nd meeting: Film: Iron-Jawed Angels

Part IV. Student Presentations Begin

Week 15**May 11: Final Papers (Revised Monograph Reports) Due**