

Hi everyone.

You'll find on the next pages my *draft* syllabus for History 546 in the spring.

If you are planning to take the course, please note:

--there's reading assigned for the first class on January 13th, and we will have a visit from Kim LoPrete.

--I have NOT ordered books at the USC store, so you can purchase the books wherever you like.

Cheers,
JMB

HIST 546
Comparative History of Women and Gender in the West to 1800
 Spring 2010
 Wednesdays, 2-4:50
 THH 111

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Comparative history is a poor step-child in feminist history. Historians feel most comfortable within traditional divisions of time and place, and historians of women and gender are no different. Americanists know little about work on European women; Europeanists know little about work on U.S. women; and both are ignorant about the histories of women in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. In a similar way, few modern historians know much about the histories of medieval and ancient women, and most medievalists and classicists remain blissfully unaware of work on modern women. Since comparative history is so marginal in most departments of history, the failure of women's and gender historians to work comparatively might be understandable, but it is not defensible. All histories can benefit from comparative work, but women's and gender history (henceforth WGH)--tied less to "events" and more to "structures"--can perhaps especially profit from such endeavors. Thus, in this class, we'll try to do what very much needs to be done as part of the feminist scholarly project: we'll begin constructing a comparative WGH.

We will not compare willy nilly in this course, but will instead focus our attention on a relatively coherent set of possibilities, all drawn from European or part-European experiences before 1800. We will consider readings on women, gender, and sexuality in classical Greece; ancient Rome; the medieval West, Islam, and Byzantium; early modern Europe; and the Americas after 1492. This range allows us to look at diverse cultures that are not *too* diverse--that is, cultures that sometimes inherited from each other or otherwise shared important customs, beliefs, or traditions.

READINGS

You will want to buy these books:

- Lisa M. Bitel, *Landscape with Two Saints: How Genovefa of Paris and Brigit of Kilgare Built Christianity in Barbarian Europe* (2009).
- Mary S. Hartman, *The Household and the Making of History: A Subversive View of the Western Past* (2004).
- Derek G. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (2008).
- Alexandra Shephard and Garthine Walker, eds., *Gender and Change: Agency, Chronology, and Periodization* (2009).
- Bonnie Smith, ed., *Women's History in Global Perspective* (2005), vol. 2 only.
- Mary F. Thurlkill, *Chosen Among Women: Mary and Fatima in Medieval Christianity and Shi-ite Islam* (2007).

As to articles, many will be available electronically, and others will be on the shelf in the library (please always re-shelve so that your colleagues may get them too). We might agree to make still others generally available in yet another format, if that works best for all concerned. Searching out assigned reading is an important skill that embraces many of the most traditional (reliance on colleagues) and newest (computer expertise) aspects of the historian's craft. I'll do my best to facilitate your access to assigned readings, but the final responsibility will rest with you.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You might as well know from the outset that I expect a lot from students, especially graduate students. My expectations can probably best be summed up as *serious commitment*. I assume you'll attend all classes, complete all assignments on time, contribute to the course bibliography, and the like; and I assume that you'll do all these things to the very best of your ability. I'll push you, but I hope you'll push yourself too. This self-drive is, of course, an essential element of success in graduate school specifically and academic life more generally.

My working assumption going into this course is that most of you will have some background in women's history. If not, you should probably read a basic text in your main field. Here are some suggestions: Katherine L. French and Allyson M. Poska, *Women and Gender in the Western Past*; Carol Berkin, *First Generations: Women in Colonial America*; and Susan Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America*.

Blackboard will be an integral part of our course, essential for pre-circulating materials, for keeping in touch, and for constructing our bibliographic guide. I have re-listed each "student" as an "instructor" for the course, so each of us is fully empowered to navigate and control the website. Please be sure that you check daily the email address that Blackboard has listed for you; if any of us writes you at that address, we will be assuming that you have gotten the message. Blackboard is going to be part of university teaching for many years to come, so if you are unfamiliar with it, this is your chance to conquer this new technology.

When I assess your final grade in this course, I will equally weigh all of the categories below.

1. Class discussions.

In terms of class discussions, I expect you to attend all classes, to read with care all the materials assigned, to read pre-circulated papers with equal care, to think through the issues in the readings before we meet, and to contribute substantively to our in-class discussions.

That said, I recognize that each of us will bring different skills to the class. Some will speak more often than others. Some will break awkward silences. Some will offer fresh questions, rare insights, and supportive criticism. Our discussions will be a blend of all these skills and styles, not a series of individual tours-de-force. Our classes will work best when we think as a group, each of us aware of how we might make discussions more useful for ourselves and for others.

I will also consider as integral to our discussions your precirculated comments and annotations (as required for some classes), as well as your contributions to our collective construction of a bibliographic guide (about which, more below).

2. Discussion papers/Book reviews.

Each of you will take responsibility for preparing the class for two discussions during the term. In each instance, please prepare a discussion paper that (a) *briefly* summarizes the assigned reading for the week, (b) provides some historiographic context, and (c) suggests 2-4 substantive or methodological questions for further discussion. This discussion paper should be 750 words in length (i.e., 3-4 pages). Please post your paper on Blackboard by noon on the Tuesday before class.

If there are insufficient slots for two discussion papers each, some of you might undertake book reviews for your second short paper. You'll need to choose (and confirm with me) a book that will add to the comparative material available for discussion. In the review, you should (a) summarize the author's topic and thesis, (b) describe the author's sources and methods, (c) relate the book to other readings done by the class for the topic, and (d) offer a critique of the book (this critique should be your own, but you may also draw, if you like, on published reviews of the book in question). Your book review should be about 1000 words in length (i.e., 5 pages). Please post your book review on Blackboard by 5 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the class meeting.

3. Comparative project.

Each of you will work on a comparative project that will entail creation of an annotated bibliography and organization of a class discussion. Some of you might proceed on your own; others of you might work collaboratively; the choice will be yours. The annotated bibliography need not be entirely comprehensive, but it should include all standard works and all recent works (as a general rule, a collaborative bibliography should contain 40-50 items). Annotations should (a) state the author's topic and thesis, (b) comment briefly on sources and method, (c) comment on historiographic context (if appropriate), and (d) note the initials of the person responsible for the annotation (if appropriate). Annotations should be brief and concise--about three to six sentences. The annotated bibliography may be organized according to any logical rationale, but please state your rationale in a prefatory note (note: the one non-admissible rationale is to organize according to collaborators).

The class presentations will occur in April. You or your group will run the class or part of a class. In advance of the class meeting, please (a) select one or possibly two articles for us to read, give me one copy and place another on reserve at least one week in advance; (b) post your annotated bibliography on Blackboard by noon on the Tuesday before the class meeting in which we will discuss it, and (c) also post on Blackboard by noon any summations, questions, or other teaching materials that you would like us to consider in advance of class. Aside from these expectations, you are free to organize your presentation as you see fit. You may, of course, choose to pre-circulate discussion papers or other materials to your colleagues. You may also wish to organize the discussion in a manner that helps you think through your essay.

4. Essay from independent/collaborative project.

Finally, each of you will separately prepare a historiographic essay from your comparative project. In this essay, you should look at (a) how your topic has been treated by historians working in your own particular region or era, and (b) how a comparative perspective might enhance work in the field. The essay should run about 2000 words (8

pages), and I will not read essays longer than 2500 words (10 pages). I suggest that you hand in this essay as soon as possible after your class presentation, but the essays are due no later than noon on Monday, April 30th.

This is what my grades mean:

- A Excellent Work. Just what you should be doing.
- A- Very good work, but you should aim higher.
- B+ Acceptable, but you need to be doing better.
- B Not up to standard.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WE JAN 13: GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND A GUEST

First, we'll get ourselves organized, and then at 3:30, Professor Kimberly LoPrete from the National University of Ireland University of Galway will join us to discuss two of her articles: I know this is early in the semester; I know the subject is not comparative; but the opportunity seemed too good to miss.

- Kimberly Loprete, "Women, Gender and Lordship in France, c. 1050-1250," *History Compass* 5/6 (2007). PDF via Blackboard
- Kimberly Loprete,, 'The Gender of Lordly Women: The Case of Adela of Blois', in C. Meek and C. Lawless, eds., *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women: Pawns or Players* (2003), 90-110. [PDF via Blackboard](#)
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WE JAN 20: COMPARATIVE HISTORY

- Raymond Grew, "The Case for Comparing Histories," *American Historical Review* 85 (1980), 763-778. Available online.
- Deborah Cohen, "Comparative History: Buyer Beware," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 29 (Fall, 2001), 23-33. Available online.
- Sarah C. Chambers and Lisa Norling, "Choosing to be a Subject: Loyalist Women in the Revolutionary Atlantic World," *Journal of Women's History* 20:1 (2008), 39-62. PDF via Blackboard.
- Bonnie G. Smith, ed., *Women's History in Global Perspective*, vol. 2 (2005), chapters 1 (Hughes & Hughes on ancient civilizations), 4 (Bennett on medieval), 5 (Twinam on colonial Latin America), and 6 (Brown on U.S. to 1865). [Read these for basic background.]

WE JAN 27: COMPARING CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

- Julia Clancy-Smith, "Exemplary Women and Sacred Journeys: Women and Gender in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam from Late Antiquity to the Eve of Modernity," in Bonnie Smith, ed., *Women's History in Global Perspective*, vol 1 (2004), 92-144. PDF via Blackboard.
- Mary F. Thurlkill, *Chosen Among Women: Mary and Fatima in Medieval Christianity and Shi-ite Islam* (2007).

WE FEB 3: CURRENT ISSUES IN THE FIELD

- Alexandra Shephard and Garthine Walker, eds., *Gender and Change: Agency, Chronology, and Periodization* (2009). Read all but the essays by Anagol, Abrams, and Passmore. FYI, this volume is based on *Gender & History* 20:3 (2008).

- Please also flip through the post-2000 volumes of *Gender and History* and *Journal of Women's History* to get a feel for what they are publishing in pre-1800 history. It won't take you long; there's not much there. Be sure to re-shelve the volumes once you are done. By noon on Tuesday, please post a brief comment (250-500 words) on what you found.

WE FEB 10: COMPARING SAINTS

- Lisa M. Bitel, *Landscape with Two Saints: How Genovefa of Paris and Brigit of Kilgare Built Christianity in Barbarian Europe* (2009).
- Find, read, and annotate a related, comparative article; post your annotation on Blackboard by noon on Tuesday.

WE FEB 17: GENDER BENDING

- Evelyn Blackwood, "Sexuality and Gender in Certain Native American Tribes: The Case of Cross-Gender Females," *Signs* 10 (1984), 27-42. Available online.
- Raymond Hauser, "The Berdache and the Illinois Indian Tribe during the Last Half of the Seventeenth Century," *Ethnohistory* 37 (Winter 1990), 47-58. PDF via Blackboard.
- Carol J. Clover, "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women and Power in Early Northern Europe," *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 68:2 (1993), 363-387. Available online.
- Kathleen Brown, "'Changed . . . into the fashion of a man': The Politics of Sexual Difference in a Seventeenth-century Anglo-American settlement," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6 (1995), 171-193. PDF via Blackboard.
- Kathleen Ann Myers, "The Lieutenant Nun: Catalina de Erauso (1592?-1650)—Soldiers' Tales and Virginity," *Neither Saints nor Sinners: Writing the Lives of Women in Spanish America* (2003), 140-163. PDF via Blackboard.

WE FEB 24: SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

- Mary S. Hartman, *The Household and the Making of History: A Subversive View of the Western Past* (2004).
- Find, read, and annotate a related, comparative article; post your annotation on Blackboard by noon on Tuesday.

WE MAR 3: COMPARING MASCULINITIES

- Derek G. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (2008).
- Find, read, and annotate a related, comparative article; post your annotation on Blackboard by noon on Tuesday.

WE MAR 10: COMPARING RAPE, ALL EARLY MODERN

- Sharon Block, "Lines of Color, Sex, and Service: Comparative Sexual Coercion in Early America," in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries of North American History*, ed. Martha Hoes (1993), 141-163. PDF via Blackboard.
- Antonia I. Castañeda, "Sexual Violence in the Politics and Policies of Conquest: Amerindian Women and the Spanish Conquest of Alta California," *Building with Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies*, ed. Adela de la Torre and Beatriz M. Pesquera (1993), 15-33. PDF via Blackboard.

- Matthew Restall, “‘He Wished it in Vain’: Subordination and Resistance Among Maya Women in Post-Conquest Yucatan,” *Ethnohistory* 42 (1995), 577-94.
- Garthine Walker, “Rereading Rape and Sexual Violence in Early Modern England,” *Gender and History* 10 (1998), 1-25. Available online.
- James Homer Williams, “Coerced Sex and Gendered Violence in New Netherland,” in Merril D. Smith, ed., *Sex Without Consent: Rape and Sexual Coercion in America* (2001), 61-80. [PDF via Blackboard.](#)

[WE MAR 17 SPRING BREAK]

After spring break, we’ll read on some topics we've selected together. We'll negotiate what these topics will be; you'll then suggest readings; and it'll be my job to finalize the reading lists. Some topics are so understudied that they will not be suitable for comparative reading, but aside from this proviso, we're free to outline our collective intellectual agenda. Also, during these weeks, each of you will present your comparative project.

WE MAR 24: TOPIC TBA/PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

WE MAR 31: TOPIC TBA/PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

WE APR 7: TOPIC TBA/PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

WE APR 14: TOPIC TBA/PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

WE APR 21: TOPIC TBA/PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

WE APR 28: TOPIC TBA AND WRAP-UP

CONSTRUCTING A BIBLIOGRAPHIC GUIDE

Since no single person can be proficient in the bibliographies of all the regions and eras we'll be covering, we need to rely on each other. So we will together create a bibliographic guide to the comparative study of Europe in Europe and the Americas before 1800. I have set up on Blackboard a preliminary listing of bibliographic sources.

Please review my inchoate list as soon as possible; then please add to or emend what's there, both now and as you find new resources during the semester; and finally, please revisit the site often to see what's new. Whenever you add to the list, please put your initials in parenthesis, so all of us can know to whom we should be grateful. As you'll see, my initials are already attached to the opening entries. If you emend an entry please note that, too (e.g., JMB, emended by NLR).