

# History 354: Women and Gender in the United States Since 1870

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Class Meetings: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:05-12: 55  
Science Building, Room Number 360  
Lecturer: Doria D. Johnson  
Ddjohnson4@wisc.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesday, 11-1:00 and by appointment  
Location: Humanities 4218

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*"The feminine mystique has succeeded in burying millions of American women alive."*

**Betty Friedan**

*"We ask justice, we ask equality, we ask that all the civil and political rights that belong to citizens of the United States, be guaranteed to us and our daughters forever."*

**Declaration of Rights for Women, July 1876**

## **Course Description**

Many dramatic changes have occurred across the spectrum of women in the United States since 1870. This course seeks to understand these changes from the perspective of women and society through a cultural lens. Culture, for our purposes, is the shared values, goals and practices that help characterize a group, institution or nation. Moreover, symbolic thought and behaviors combine to produce an integrated system of knowledge that culminates into social learning and societal organizing or more succinctly, culture.

What did women want? What did society expect? These two questions examined over time, location, race and class are interesting tensions we can use to help us form opinions about the changes experienced through women's lives. We will examine women's work, domestic life and culture to help us understand how women lived, adapted to and changed their lives, their families, their homes, their communities, their work, and their country. In particular, examining marital and work relationships helps us to understand what expectations women had, what contestations developed over time, and what movements grew from their concerns. There are several ways historians measure change; such as studying the economy, the political landscape, race, class or social movements. We will use these same prisms, but will center cultural artifacts, traditions and practices as another bridge to the study of women and gender in the United States modern era. We will examine primary sources such as texts, articles, maps, cartoons, film, art, and objects to find out what concerns women had, and how their actions enriched and influenced the contemporary nation.

## **Participation Requirements:**

Women's history grew from the feminist movement, and thus this course will continue in the tradition of that collaborative effort. This means, quite simply, that our format is discussion based. Our mid-size environment allows us to share our unique perspectives of course materials; books, primary sources, personal observations and knowledge. That said, you are required to bring a written question or observation from the assigned readings to each class meeting on Mondays and Wednesdays. You do not need to turn this in, but you must be prepared to read the statement to the class occasionally when called upon, or if you feel compelled to volunteer your observation. Please bring your questions/observations to our Friday discussions, as well.

The success of this class is predicated on your attendance and readiness to engage the discussion and material. That said, you may only take notes on paper. **THERE ARE NO ELECTRONICS ALLOWED IN THIS CLASS.** (If there is a special need granted by the university, such as a disability, please see Doria individually.) If you have ideas on how I can adjust the teaching material to make note-taking more friendly, I am thrilled to hear your suggestions.

## **Required Texts:**

Glenda E. Gilmore, *Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996)

Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999)

Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002)

Mary Crow Dog, *Lakota Woman* (Harper Perennial, 1991)

Annelise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005)

*Major Problems in United States Women's History, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, ed. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007)

***Available at: A Room of One's Own Bookstore, 307 W Johnson St, Madison, WI***

## **Assignments, Absences and Grading:**

Students are required to attend class regularly and to contribute to discussions and to submit college-level, analytical papers that demonstrate command of the readings, lectures, sources, and discussions.

Excessive absences (2-3) will significantly affect your final grade, and may cause you to fail the course. Please contact me if you need to miss a class.

5-short papers (**3-4 pages each, double spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 point font, Times New Roman**): 15% each (worth 15-points each) Class attendance, participation and discussion: 25% (INCLUDING THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE). You will receive each essay question ten days before the due date. You must submit a hard copy of your papers-- only. NO EXCEPTIONS. Each late paper, with permission, will lose one grade per day.

***A note about grading:***

Your work for this class will be evaluated accordingly: An "A" denotes work of **unusually** outstanding quality. A "AB" is given for work that exceeds assignment expectations. A "B" is given for work that *exceeds most* assignment expectations. A "BC" is given for work that satisfactorily meets *all assignment expectations*. A "C" is given for work that **meets most** of the assignment expectations. A "CD or "D" is issued for work that falls short of meeting assignment expectations. An "F" represents incomplete or unacceptable work. If you are ever unclear about what is expected on any of the assignments please come and see me.

*\* denotes articles are available at Learn@ UW*

**Week 1 (January, 18<sup>th</sup>) The Study of (Little) Women's History**

Wednesday

*Introduction, no reading.*

Friday: Lecture/Discussion

*Reading: Major Problems in American Women's History, Chapter 1 and \*Elsa Barkley Brown, "Polyrhythms and Improvisation: Lessons for Women's History."*

**Week 2 (January, 24<sup>th</sup>) Race AND Gender**

Monday: Lecture

*Reading: \*Louise M. Newman, "Women's Rights, Race and Imperialism in U.S. History, 1870-1920"*

Wednesday: Lecture

*Reading: Gender and Jim Crow, Intro, Chapters 1-4.*

Friday: DISCUSSION

**Week 3 (January 31) Jim Crow was Married (with siblings and offspring!)**

Monday: FILM—Ida B. Wells: Passion for Justice

*Reading: CLASS HANDOUT*

Wednesday: Lecture—Anti-Lynching

*Reading: Gender and Jim Crow, Chapters 5-end.*

Friday: DISCUSSION

**Week 4 ( February 7th) Women and Work**

Monday: Lecture

Reading: *Major Problems, Chapter 10. \*Tara W. Hunter, "Work that Body": African American Women, Work, and Leisure in Atlanta and the New South"*

Wednesday: Lecture

Reading: *Ladies of Labor, Intro, and Chapters 1-3*

Friday: DISCUSSION

**\*FIRST PAPER DUE, FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>**

**Week 5 (February 14<sup>th</sup>) Reading Culture**

Monday: Lecture

Reading: *\*Jennifer Guglielmo, "Transnational Feminism's Radical Past: Lessons from Italian Women Anarchists in Industrializing America."*

Wednesday: Lecture

Reading: *Ladies of Labor: Chapters 4-conclusion.*

Friday: DISCUSSION

**Week 6 (February, 21<sup>st</sup>) Clubs, Organizing and Politics**

Monday: Lecture. *\*Reading: Judy Yung, "Unbound Feet: Chinese Women in the Public Sphere."*

Wednesday: Lecture, Reading: *Major Problems, Chapter 11.*

Friday: DISCUSSION

**\*SECOND PAPER DUE, FEBRUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>**

**Week 7 (February, 28<sup>th</sup>) The Roaring 20's**

Monday: Lecture, Reading: *\*Kathy Peiss, Making Faces: The Cosmetics Industry and the Cultural Construction of Gender, 1890-1930.*

Wednesday: Lecture, Reading: *Major Problems, Chapter 12, \* Vicki L. Ruiz, "Star Struck": Acculturation, Adolescence, and the Mexican American Woman, 1920-1950."*

Friday DISCUSSION

**Week 8 (March 7<sup>th</sup>) Killing Mother: Prescriptive Dilemmas and American Film**

Monday: Film, Imitation of Life. Reading: *Major Problems, Chapters 13 and 14.*

Wednesday: Conclusion, Imitation of Life .

Friday: DISCUSSION

**\*SPRING BREAK MARCH 13-17<sup>TH</sup>**

**Week 9 (March 21<sup>st</sup>) Marriage**

Monday: Lecture. Reading: *\*Alice Yang Murray, "Ilse Women and the Early Korean American Community: Redefining the Origins of the Feminist Movement"* and class handout.

Wednesday: *Reading: Beyond the Shadow of Camptown, Introduction, Chapters 1-2.*  
Friday DISCUSSION

**THIRD PAPER DUE, MARCH 25TH**

**Week 10 (March 28<sup>th</sup>) The Fabulous Fifties**

Monday: Lecture. Reading: TBA.

Wednesday: *Reading: Beyond the Shadow of Camptown, Chapters 3-end.*

Friday DISCUSSION

**Week 11 (April 4<sup>th</sup>) Wounded Knees**

Monday, Lecture. *Reading: Lakota Woman, Chapters 1-9*

Wednesday: Lecture. *Reading: Lakota Woman, Chapters 10-end.*

Friday DISCUSSION

**FOURTH PAPER DUE, APRIL 8TH**

**Week 12 (April 11<sup>th</sup>) Liberation**

Monday: Lecture. *Reading: \*Danielle McGuire, "It Was like All of Us Had Been Raped": Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle*

Wednesday: *Reading, \*Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor."*

Friday DISCUSSION

**Week 13 (April 18<sup>th</sup>) Freedom Moves**

Monday: *Reading: Storming Caesar's Palace: Introduction, Chapters 1-5.*

Wednesday: Lecture.

Friday DISCUSSION

**Week 14 (April 25<sup>th</sup>) The Welfare Queen?**

Monday: *Reading: Storming Caesar's Palace: Chapters 6-end.*

Wednesday: Lecture.

Friday DISCUSSION

**Week 15 (May 2<sup>nd</sup>) WOMEN'S HISTORY CONFERENCE**

**FINAL PAPER DUE: Saturday, May 14, 7:45-9:45 AM.  
Humanities, Room number 4218**