

## HISTORY 520: WOMEN IN AMERICAN SOCIETY TO 1870

Spring 1989

Professor: Jeanne Boydston                            Teaching Assistant: Lisa Peck  
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                 and by appointment

This course surveys the history of women in the United States from the colonial period to 1870. Tracing the rise of a distinctly Euro-American, middle-class concept of "womanhood" as a central element of the economic and social structure of the new nation, we will examine the strategies through which women of different races, ethnicities, and classes struggled both to assert their own identities and to protect the interests of their families and communities.

The course will proceed through a combination of lectures and discussion sections. You are responsible for reading all assigned materials carefully, for regular attendance at and thoughtful participation in lecture and discussion sections, and for the following written assignments:

February 9: a 1-page summary of Jordan's "Fruits of Passion"

March 2: a 2-3 page comparison of Crane's "When More Means Less" and Soderlund's "Black Women in Colonial Pennsylvania"

March 16: an in-class essay mid-term

April 18: a 5-7 page analytical research paper on a topic approved by either Boydston or Peck

May 11: an in-class essay examination on the second half of the course

Papers are due at the beginning of the lecture on the date listed. Written work may be turned in late only with the approval of the teaching assistant.

I have ordered the following books for you to purchase:

Nancy Hewitt, Women's Activism and Social Change

Linda Kerber, Women of the Republic

Christine Stansell, City of Women

Laurel Ulrich, Good Wives

Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman?

Additional assigned readings for the lectures are on reserve in the Historical Society. You are also responsible for supplemental primary documents, which will be assigned in your discussion section.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Course participation:	20%
1 page summary:	10%
2-3 page comparison:	10%
5-7 page paper:	20%
First in-class examination:	20%
Second in-class examination:	20%

## CLASS SCHEDULE:

Introduction

Jan. 24: Some Thoughts on the History of Women's History

Before Colonization

Jan. 26: Women in Native American Societies

Reading: Judith K. Brown, "Iroquois Women: An Ethnohistoric Note" in Reiter, ed., Toward an Anthropology of Women (Reserve)

Jan. 31: Women in African Societies

Reading: Christie Farnham, "Sapphire? The Issue of Dominance in the Slave Family, 1830-1865" in Groneman and Norton, eds., "To Toil the Livelong Day" (Reserve)

Feb. 2: Women in Europe

Reading: Merry E. Wiesner, "Women's Work in the Changing City Economy, 1500-1650" in Boxer and Quataert, eds., Connecting Spheres (Reserve)

Race and Gender in the Southern Colonies

Feb. 7: Work, Reproduction, and Slavery

Reading: Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife" in Cott and Pleck, eds., A Heritage of Her Own (Reserve)  
Winthrop Jordan, "'Unthinking Decision': The Enslavement of Negroes in America to 1700" in Weinstein and Gatell, eds., American Negro Slavery, 2nd ed. (Reserve)

Feb. 9: Slavery and Sexuality

Reading: Winthrop Jordan, "Fruits of Passion" in Friedman and Shade, eds., Our American Sisters, 1st ed. (Reserve)

\*\*One-Page Summary of Jordan Due

Race, Gender and Religion in the Northern Colonies

Feb. 14: Patterns of Work and Authority

Reading: Laurel Ulrich, Good Wives, Ch. 1-3 & 5  
Mary Maples Dunn, "Women of Light" in Berkin and Norton, eds., Women of America (Reserve)

Feb. 16: Witchcraft

Feb. 21: Europeans and Native Americans

Reading: Laurel Ulrich, Good Wives, Ch. 9-11

Economic Expansion in the Eighteenth Century:

Feb. 23: The Institutionalization of Plantation Life

Reading: Carol Shammas, "Black Women's Work and the Evolution of Plantation Society in Virginia," Labor History 26 (Winter 1985) (Reserve)

Jean R. Soderlund, "Black Women in Colonial Pennsylvania" in Friedman, Shade and Capozzoli, eds. Our American Sisters, 4th ed. (Reserve)

Feb. 28: Invasion, Resistance and Accomodation

Reading: Robert Steven Grumet, "Sunksquaws, Shamans, and Tradeswomen: Middle Atlantic Coastal Women During the 17th and 18th Centuries" in Etienne and Leacock, eds., Women and Colonization (Reserve)

March 2: Women's Work in a Commercial Society

Reading: Elaine Forman Crane, "When More Means Less: Women and Work in Colonial American Seaports," Paper Delivered at the Berkshire Conference on Women's History, June 1984 (Reserve)

\*\*2-3 Page Comparison of Crane and Soderlund Due

### Political Revolution and the Ideology of Gender

March 7: The "Enlightenment"

Reading: Linda Kerber, Women of the Republic, Ch. 1

March 9: Fighting the Revolution

Reading: Linda Kerber, Women of the Republic, Ch. 2-6

March 14: The Problem of "The People"

Reading: Linda Kerber, Women of the Republic, Ch. 7-9

### IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAMINATION: MARCH 16

### The Emergence of the Domestic Female Ideal

March 28: Domesticity and the New Middle Class

Reading: Nancy Cott, "Domesticity" from The Bonds of Womanhood (Reserve)

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual," Signs 1 (Fall 1975) (Reserve)

March 30: Domesticity and its Discontents

Reading: Mary Kelley, "At War with Herself: Harriet Beecher Stowe as Woman in Conflict within the Home" in Kelley, ed., Woman's Being, Woman's Place (Reserve)

### Gender and Slavery in the Antebellum South

April 4: Work and Community

Reading: Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman?

April 6: Resistance among Female Slaves

Reading: Angela Y. Davis, "The Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," Black Scholar 3/4 (December 1971) (Reserve)

### Free Women of the Antebellum Working Classes

April 11: The Case of Lowell

Reading: Begin Christine Stansell, City of Women

April 13: Gender in the Commercial City

Reading: Finish Christine Stansell, City of Women

April 18: Free Black Women in the Antebellum North

Reading: Sharon Harley, "Northern Black Female Workers: Jacksonian Era" in Harley and Terborg-Penn, eds., The Afro-American Woman

James Oliver Horton, "Freedom's Yoke: Gender Conventions among Antebellum Free Blacks," Feminist Studies 12/1 (Spring 1986) (Reserve)

\*\*5-7 Page Research Paper Due

#### Gender and Culture on the Western Frontier

April 20: White Women on the Western Frontier

Reading: Johnny Faragher and Christine Stansell, "Women and their Families on the Overland Trail," Feminist Studies 2/3 (1975) (Reserve)

Joanna L. Stratton, "The Clashing of Cultures: Indians" from Pioneer Women (Reserve)

April 25: "Progress" Comes to the Native Americans

Reading: Excerpt from Diane Rothenberg, "Mothers of the Nation: Seneca Resistance to Quaker Intervention" in Etienne and Leacock, eds., Women and Colonization (Reserve)

Mary E. Young, "Women, Civilization and the Indian Question," in Deutrich and Purdy, eds., Clio Was a Woman (Reserve)

#### Antebellum Reform

April 27: Class, Religion and Reform

Reading: Nancy Hewitt, Women's Activism and Social Change, Intro. and Ch. 1-3

Patricia Grimshaw, "Christian Women, Pious Wife, Faithful Mother, Devoted Missionary": Conflicts in Roles of American Missionary Women in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii," Feminist Studies 9/3 (Fall 1983) (Reserve)

May 2: Abolitionism and Temperance

Reading: Nancy Hewitt, Women's Activism and Social Change, Ch. 4-5  
Ron Walters, "The Erotic South: Civilization and Sexuality in American Abolitionism" American Quarterly, 25 (1973) (Reserve)

May 4: The Birth of the Women's Rights Movement

Reading: Finish Nancy Hewitt, Women's Activism and Social Change  
Angela Y. Davis, "Class and Race in the Early Women's Rights Campaign" from Women, Race and Class (Reserve)

#### Gender, Race, and Power in the Postbellum South

May 9: Free Women, Black and White, in the Postbellum South

IN-CLASS EXMINATION ON SECOND HALF OF COURSE: MAY 11