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His 902: Gender and Class in the US Labor Experience, 1920-50.

Thursdays, 10-12 AM, usually in a history department seminar room

Linda Gordon
4105 Humanities
263-1777, home 251-0826

Office Hours: Sign up: Some Tuesdays 11-12
Wednesdays 2-4
Some Thursdays 2:30-4

Drop in: Tuesdays 12-1

This is a research seminar in which the major requirement is a paper, based on primary sources, on some topic within the scope of the general subject. Students will be responsible, as well, for contributing substantially to the work of other students, through reading and criticizing their work and through sharing suggestions about sources; and for active participation, at times taking leadership, in group discussion.

The following books have been ordered:

James R. Green, *The World of the Worker*, Hill & Wang.
James R. Green, ed., *Workers' Struggles, Past and Present: A Radical America Reader*. Temple Univ. Press.
Ruth Milkman, ed., *Women, Work & Protest*, Routledge Kegan Paul.
Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*. Oxford Univ. Press.

Meredith Tax, *The Rising of the Women*, has been ordered for my His 521 course.

There will be much less general reading than in a 901 seminar, and I don't want to "spend" this small amount on textbooks. So I would like to urge students to familiarize themselves with US labor history in general and with women's labor history in particular. I would suggest:

- (1) Green, The World of the Worker--the best new interpretation of 20th century labor history. Chapters 5 & 6 will be read and discussed together.
- (2) Kessler-Harris, Out to Work--some chapters will be read and discussed jointly.
- (3) Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, chapter 5. (Not in paperback, but on reserve.)

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

(subject to change at nearly any moment!)

PLEASE NOTE: ANY TIME A PROPOSAL OR PAPER IS DUE, IT IS TO BE READ BY EVERYONE BEFORE CLASS. COPIES MUST BE DISTRIBUTED OR PLACED ON THE RESERVE SHELVES OF THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT LIBRARY

BY THE TUESDAY PRIOR TO SEMINAR, BY NOON.

January 23. Introduction, discussion of procedures. Introduction of the big questions.

January 30. Discussion of: Alice Kessler-Harris, chapters 3, 5, 8; Martha May article in Milkman collection. Skim America's Working Women, look at its charts. Topics: the sexual division of labor in society; family and industrial divisions of labor; the family wage; major trends in women's employment.

Throughout the semester, at each meeting one of more students will take responsibility for leading a brief discussion about major pieces of general reading. You may do this alone or with a partner. Your task should be to identify the main themes in each reading segment and to bring them out in discussion, either by raising questions or by summarizing them; AND to offer whatever criticisms or questions you may have about the material. Feel free to include questions about material you simply don't understand.

1. Kessler-harris, chapter 3. -----
2. K-H, chapter 5. -----
3. K-H, chapter 8. -----
4. May -----

February 6. First we meet in the Archives Room of the Historical Society. Then: Discussion of: Dorothy Fennell and John Lippert articles in Radical America collection. Major trends in labor organizing. History of the union form. Review a labor history textbook if you need to. Not too much reading so you can work on developing paper topics.

5. Fennell -----
6. Lippert -----

February 13. Discussion of Meredith Tax, The Rising of the Women. Topics: women's class consciousness; women's worker consciousness; race differences in consciousness; women workers' alliances; obstacles to women's organizing; labor organizing and political ideology.

Although this is a long book, I want the discussion to deal with it as a whole, so I don't want to split up responsibility for leading the discussion. Instead, I'd like to encourage several people to work together on leading this discussion.

7. Tax -----

February 20. First student presentation of paper topics, questions, preliminary bibliography.

February 27. Women's unique work experience. The gendered nature of class consciousness. Reading: Benson and Bularzik in Radical America reader; Cameron in Milkman collection;

Yans-McLaughlin & Cohen in Cantor and Laurie collection (xeroxes on reserve). Anyone who has not read Harry Braverman's Labor and Monopoly Capital should do so if at all possible, especially

- 8. Cameron -----
- 9. Benson -----

March 6. Forms of women's organizing attempts: Lasky, Meyerowitz, in Milkman; Feldberg, Rosenzweig in Radical America. In America's Working Women: pp. 108-125; 167-186, 252-262.

- 10. Lasky -----
- 11. Feldberg -----

March 13. Historiography of the CIO and questions of left party influences. Lynd (selection #9), Lichtenstein and Weir in Radical America anthology; selections from Jeremy Brecher, Strike, a libertarian interpretation, on reserve; Green, The World of the Worker, chapters 5 & 6; Green, two historiographical essays--"Working Class Militancy in the Depression" and "Working-class Militancy in the 1940s", on reserve.

March 20. Student presentation of paper outlines.

Vacation week.

April 3. Women and the CIO. Strom, Meyerowitz and Gabin in Milkman collection; America's Working Women, pp. 320-330. Kessler-Harris, chapter 9.

April 10. No class.

April 17. Discussion of first-draft papers.

April 24. Discussion of first-draft papers.

May 1. To be decided.