

Syllabus: History 140.80/Women's Studies 140.80/American Studies 140.80
(Spring 2007; 3 credits; CRN 23091; 23117; 23118)

Women in the United States: 1865 to the Present

Professor Cynthia Harrison

Tuesday, Thursday: 2:20 – 3:35 p.m.

Room: Fungler 208

Office hours: Tuesday: 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. (837 22nd St.)
Also by appointment Thursday: 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. (Phillips 303)

Telephone numbers: 202-363-4356 (10-5, M-F); 202-994-6943 (T: 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.).

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Note: This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her discretion, change content and requirements at any time during the semester.

Course description & objectives:

This course will examine the experience of women in their social, economic, and political roles to understand how gender shapes experience. The exploration will include the impact of class, region, race, and ethnicity on women and on gender roles and the effect of the changes in women's roles on men.

Classroom protocol:

Attendance is expected at all classes and will be factored into the grade for class participation. An attendance sheet will circulate at each class session for students to sign. Students who come to class after the attendance sheet has been passed should remember to sign at the end of class. Recording attendance is a student responsibility.

In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, a student must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services, Marvin Center 436, 994-8250. Accommodations will be made based upon the recommendations of the DSS Office. Class sessions may be taped only in cases of documented necessity.

Please consult the university code of academic integrity, which can be found on-line at <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dos/GuidetoStudentRights/>. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: “intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.” All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in conformance with The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.

If you are having problems with the reading assignments, with class participation, or with any other facet of the course, please come and see me. If my office hours are not convenient for you, we will find another time that suits your schedule.

January 24, 2007

Books available for purchase at the GW bookstore:

Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 4th edition. (McGraw-Hill, 2006).

Susan Ware. *Modern American Women: A Documentary History*. 2nd ed.. McGraw-Hill, 2002.

Louise Meriwether. *Daddy Was a Number Runner*. New York: Feminist Press, 1986 [1970].

Nancy A. Walker. *Women's Magazines, 1940-1960: Gender Roles and the Popular Press*.
Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998.

Alix Kates Shulman. *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen*. 2007 [1969]. [This title will arrive in
February.]

Course requirements:

Students will have the following responsibilities:

- * participation in discussion based upon readings and occasional in-class quizzes (15%)
- * a mid-term examination (March 6) (25%)
- * one paper (described below, due April 3) (25%)
- * a final take-home examination (due May 10) (35%).

Class participation: 15%

Every student should come to class having read the assigned material and prepared to participate in the discussion. Bring the relevant reading with you; you may be asked to write briefly about the assignment. These exercises will not be graded so long as they demonstrate familiarity with the reading. Attendance will be factored into the grade for participation. To enhance our discussions, come to class with a passage or section marked that you found unusually insightful or problematic.

Examinations:

Midterm (March 6; 75 minutes): 25%

Final (Take-home examination, due May 10): 35%

PLEASE NOTE: Students who fail both the midterm and the final examinations (i.e., receive less than 60 percent on each exam) will receive a failing grade in the course regardless of grades received for the term paper or class participation.

Writing assignment (2000-2500 words; April 3): 25%

At her discretion, the instructor may impose penalties on papers submitted after the due date.

Choose two books from the following list of memoirs. (Do not choose two from the same grouping.) Explore the meaning of gender for twentieth-century American women in an essay highlighting the *commonalities in life experience of the two women because of their gender and describing the ways in which race, ethnicity, class, region and, if applicable, time period produce differences in their lives*. Look, for example, at experiences such as education; after-school jobs; household chores; relationships with family members; expectations about adult life; understandings about relationships between men and women and about work, marriage, children, and sexuality. *To frame your essay, think about how their lives are different because they are girls rather than boys in their family*. Describe the way in which the expression of gender differs with race, class, and ethnicity. This essay should not focus on “oppression” per se and students ought not to attempt to compare and gauge degrees of oppression between groups. Gender differences produce both opportunities and constraints for both boys and girls. You do want to look at culturally-specific responses to hardship. Include the other people the writers talk about as models and describe how these models help the author learn about the meaning of womanhood. Draw inferences; read between the lines. Don’t rely exclusively on explicit gender analysis by the author. *Note that these books are memoirs (non-fiction), not novels, which are fiction.*

Students are responsible for locating copies of the books they choose, through Gelman library, through the consortium or other local libraries, or through bookstores or the web for purchase. Do not wait for the last minute to locate the books. Try to examine several books to find ones that you will enjoy reading and that cover the same period of life of the women (i.e., some are memoirs only of childhood, others of adult life, others of both).

DEPOSIT YOUR PAPERS ON BLACKBOARD BY THE DUE DATE, IN THE DROP BOX LOCATED UNDER THE “PROJECTS” TAB.

NOTE: This assignment will be graded on both content and clarity of organization and expression. That is, writing well *counts*. Consult the “writing advisory” at the end of the syllabus for advice concerning the most common writing problems in student papers. For additional assistance in matters of style, grammar, usage, punctuation, and other technical aspects of writing, I recommend *A Pocket Style Manual* by Diana Hacker, published by Bedford Books. You can purchase this compact guide at the GW bookstore.

Students who would like further assistance with written assignments should consult the Writing Center, Rome 550, 994-3765 or gwriter@gwu.edu.

Group I African-American women

Maya Angelou. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. 1974.
Rosemary Bray. *Unafraid of the Dark : A Memoir*. 1999.
bell hooks. *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood*. 1996.
Gloria Wade-Gayle. *Pushed Back to Strength: A Black Woman's Journey Home*. 1993.
Zora Neale Hurston. *Dust Tracks on a Road*. [1942.] 1999.
Itabari Njeri. *Every Good-bye Ain't Gone*. 1990.

Group II Asian-American women

Arlene Voski Avakian. *Lion Woman's Legacy: An Armenian-American Memoir*. 1992.
Maryam Qudrat Aseel. *Torn Between Two Cultures: An Afghan-American Woman Speaks Out*. 2003.
Firoozeh Dumas. *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America*. 2003.
Maxine Hong Kingston. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. 1989.
Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston. *Farewell to Manzanar*. 1973.
Mary Paik Lee. *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America*. 1990.
Monica Sone. *Nisei Daughter*. 1953.
Jade Snow Wong. *Fifth Chinese Daughter*. 1950.

Group III European-American women

Margaret Bolsterli. *Born in the Delta: Reflections on the Making of a Southern White Sensibility*. 1991.
Judy Blunt. *Breaking Clean*. 2002.
Louise Desalvo. *Vertigo: A Memoir*. 2002.
Susan Klein. *Through a Ruby Window: A Martha's Vineyard Childhood*. 1995.
Toni A.H. McNaron. *I Dwell in Possibility: A Memoir*. 1992. (Lesbian)
Kate Simon. *Bronx Primitive: Portraits in a Childhood*. 1982.
Stella Suberman. *The Jew Store*. 2001.
Sue Toth. *Blooming: A Small-Town Girlhood*. 1981.

Group IV Latina women

Judith Ortiz Cofer. *Silent Dancing*. 1990
Fabiola Cabeza de Baca Gilbert. *We Fed Them Cactus*. 1954.
Mary Helen Ponce. *Hoyt Street: Memories of a Chicana Childhood*. 1993.
Esmeralda Santiago. *When I Was Puerto Rican*. 1994.

Group V Native American women

Mary Crow Dog. *Lakota Woman*. 1990.
Wilma Mankiller. *Mankiller, A Chief and Her People*. 1993.
Mountain Wolf Woman. *Mountain Wolf Woman, Sister of Crashing Thunder: The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian*. 1961.

Class meetings

*These readings are posted on Blackboard.

- Jan. 16: Introduction
Discussion of assignments
Themes of the course
- Jan. 18: Women in America before 1865
DISCUSSION: DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS, SENECA FALLS
<http://www.closeup.org/sentimnt.htm> (and at numerous other sites)
WOLOCH: CHAPTER 8
- Jan. 23: 1865-1890: Post-Civil War America and women's issues
DISCUSSION:
Bradwell v. Illinois, 1872
<http://historyofprivacy.net/bradwell.html>
Minor v. Happersett, 1874
<http://www.mit.edu/afs/athena/course/17/17.245/www/MinorHappersett.htm>
WOLOCH: pp. 218-226, 326-337.
- Jan. 25: 1865-1890: The prospect of change
*DISCUSSION: "Miss D. and Miss E.," "A Temperance Tale"
WOLOCH: pp. 275-283, 286-292
- Jan. 30: Immigration, urbanization, industrialization
DISCUSSION: WARE, CHAPTER 1
WOLOCH, pp. 226-247.
- Feb. 1: The Progressive Era: Women as reformers (settlements)
DISCUSSION: WARE, CHAPTER 2 & pp. 84-89.
WOLOCH: CHAPTER 11 & pp. 283-286, 292-299
- Feb. 6: Women at Work
*DISCUSSION: "The Office Clerk,"
WARE, pp. 40-43 & CHAPTER 3
WOLOCH, CHAPTER 9
- Feb. 8: The Progressive Era: Women as reformers (protective labor laws)
Muller v. Oregon, 1908
<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=us&vol=208&invol=412>
- Feb. 13: The Progressive Era: Women as reformers (prohibition and suffrage)
*DISCUSSION: "An 'Anti' Speaks Out"
WARE, CHAPTER 5 & pp. 78-81.
WOLOCH: pp. 337-357.
- Feb. 15: Video: *One Woman, One Vote*.

- Feb. 20: 1920s: What happens to the women's movement?
DISCUSSION: WARE, CHAPTER 6
WOLOCH, CHAPTER 16
- Feb. 22.: 1930s: Women in the Great Depression
WOLOCH, pp. 440 – 461.
- Feb. 27: 1930s DISCUSSION: WARE, CHAPTER 7
- Mar. 1: 1930s DISCUSSION: MERIWETHER, *DADDY WAS A NUMBER RUNNER*

Mar. 6: **Mid-Term Examination**

- Mar. 8: 1940s: World War II
DISCUSSION: WALKER, Documents 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, 18
WOLOCH, pp. 461 – 470.

[SPRING BREAK: March 12-16]

- Mar. 20: World War II (cont'd)
DISCUSSION: WARE, CHAPTER 8
- Mar. 22: Video: *Rosie the Riveter*
- Mar. 27: Reconversion and the politics of the post-war era
DISCUSSION: WALKER, Documents 9, 12, 13, 19 – 22, 30, 33
WOLOCH, pp. 470 – 474.
- Mar. 29: 1950s: The way we really were
DISCUSSION, WARE, CHAPTER 9
DISCUSSION: WALKER, Documents 14, 15, 23
WOLOCH, pp. 497 – 517.

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 1963 – chapters available on the web:

Chapter 1: "The Problem that Has No Name"

<http://www.h-net.org/~hst203/documents/friedan1.html>

Chapter 2: "The Happy Housewife Heroine"

<http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst203/documents/friedan2.html>

- Apr. 3 1960s: A new frontier for women
PAPERS DUE: DEPOSIT IN BLACKBOARD DROP BOX UNDER “PROJECTS” TAB

- Apr. 5: Rebirth of Feminism
DISCUSSION: WARE, CHAPTER 10
WOLOCH, pp. 517 – 532.
- Apr. 10: Women, work, and welfare
DISCUSSION: WARE, CHAPTER 11

- Apr. 12 Sexuality, abortion and the politics of motherhood
DISCUSSION: WARE, CHAPTER 12
- Apr. 17: Video: *The Spirit of Women* (Houston, 1977)
- Apr. 19: Feminist Fiction
DISCUSSION: Alix Kates Shulman. *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen*. 2007 [1969].
- Apr. 24: 1980s: Ambivalence and Backlash
DISCUSSION: WARE, pp. 327 – 334; 338-344.
WOLOCH: pp. 557 – 581.
- Apr. 26: 1990s & 2000s: Contemporary issues
DISCUSSION: WARE, pp. 334-338; 344-358.
WOLOCH: CHAPTER 21 & pp. 581 – 586, 594 – 600.
The Domestic Policy Agenda of the National Council of Women’s Organizations:
<http://www.womensorganizations.org/pages.cfm?ID=33>

Optional: *U.S. v. Virginia*, 1996 (entire opinion)
<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=000&invol=u20026>

FINAL EXAM (DUE May 10):
DEPOSIT ON BLACKBOARD DROP BOX UNDER “PROJECTS” TAB

Writing advisory:

1. Use active verbs – have the subject of the sentence perform the action. Use "to be" in all its forms sparingly.

Passive voice: "Class time was devoted principally to discussion of the readings. All students were expected to read thoughtfully and to share their insights and observations with the class."

Active voice: "This class devoted meeting time principally to discussion of the readings. The professor expected all students to read thoughtfully and to share insights and observations with the class."

Note that "passive voice" and "past tense" are different.

"He threw the ball" uses an active verb in the past tense.

"The ball is thrown" uses a passive verb in the present tense.

In the first sentence you know who is performing the action; you don't know who is throwing the ball in the second sentence.

2. Avoid using "this" as pronoun; follow it with a noun to eliminate confusion about what you mean.

Vague: "Despite data to the contrary, the American public believes that women receiving welfare have a higher birth rate than non-recipients. This is because the media focus on women who do not represent the average welfare recipient accurately."

Clearer: "Despite data to the contrary, the American public believes that women receiving welfare have a higher birth rate than non-recipients. This misperception comes from a media focus on women who do not represent the average welfare recipient accurately."

NEVER use the phrase "This is because . . ." It is both vague and syntactically irregular. ("This is so because . . ." fixes the syntactical problem but the locution remains vague.)

3. Avoid labels, jargon, slang, colloquialisms. Use the word "incredible" only when you mean the person genuinely can't be believed. The expression "in regard to" should never appear as "in regards to." Regards are only for sending.

4. Quotations: Whenever you use someone else's words, you must indicate that you are doing so. Enclose short quotations in double quotation marks. If the selection is longer than five lines, indent *instead of* using quotation marks. (Don't use italics to indicate a quote. Italics denote foreign phrases, court cases, and titles; they are also used for emphasis.) You must also include a citation to the source, including a page number. **You should use direct quotations from sources rarely – only when the precise wording is essential to your point. Otherwise, synthesize and paraphrase. However, when you do quote from either a secondary or a primary source, you must introduce the quoted material in the text by explaining who the speaker is; don't just drop it in without warning.**

Examples of introductions:

As historian Alice Kessler-Harris noted: ". . ." [or]

In the words of political scientist Cynthia Burack, ". . . "

In addition, quotations must fit syntactically in the sentence. Add words in brackets or delete words and use ellipses, if necessary. A quotation within a quotation requires single quotation marks; quoted material within the body of an indented quotation requires double quotation marks.

5. Ellipses: Omit ellipses at the beginning and end of quotations. Use three periods, each separated by a space [. . .], for omissions within sentences and four periods [. . .] for omissions that include the end of a sentence. (Do not include the brackets.)

6. Don't repeat yourself, either in words or in substance. Write concisely. Vary your choice of words. (See examples of introductions to quotations, above.)

7. Spell out numbers of one or two words; use numerals for others, except at the beginning of a sentence. If you must use a number as the first word in a sentence, spell it out. Use numerals with "percent" and spell "percent" rather than using the percent sign.

8. Use apostrophes to denote possession EXCEPT for "its." "It's" means ONLY "It is." The possessive form of "its" has no apostrophe. Plurals do not use apostrophes. E.g. "The Harrisons came to dinner." But: "This is Professor Harrison's class."

9. Avoid the word "things," as in "Things changed rapidly." Use a specific phrase: "The political context changed rapidly."

10. Avoid the first person in formal writing ("I think the evidence fails to support the thesis"). The statement "The evidence fails to support the thesis" suffices. If you must include your own response, use the third person: "This reader finds that the evidence fails to support the thesis."

11. Avoid contractions in formal writing.

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSIGNMENT (for graduate credit)

In addition to the readings for the course and the two examinations, graduate students will read five additional books on a theme we have agreed upon and write an essay exploring their relationship. The essay may also refer to additional material, such as book reviews and works of historiography. Students should consult with me before making a final selection of books to read.

Graduate students do NOT have to complete the undergraduate writing assignment.

This assignment is due at the final class. It will count for 25 percent of the final grade. Students are responsible for locating copies of the books they choose.

Essays should be between 3500 and 4000 words, no longer. Deposit the paper on Blackboard in the drop box located at the "Projects" tab.

NOTE: This assignment will be graded on both content and clarity of organization and expression. That is, writing well *counts*. Consult the "writing advisory" at the end of the syllabus for advice concerning the most common writing problems in student papers. For additional assistance in matters of style, grammar, usage, punctuation, and other technical aspects of writing, I recommend *A Pocket Style Manual* by Diana Hacker, published by Bedford Books. You can purchase this compact guide at the GW bookstore.

Students who would like further assistance with written assignments should consult the Writing Center, Rome 550, 994-3765.