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HIST 223-01, Interpretive Issues in American Women's History, spring 2000

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History 223
Garceau
T Th, 2:40-4:10pm
X-3290
Buckman 105
2-4pm

Dee

Clough 301,

Ofc Hrs: M,F,
2-4pm

INTERPRETIVE ISSUES IN AMERICAN WOMEN'S HISTORY

Women in American History

Beginning with early contact between Native Americans and Europeans, we explore the effects of colonization on Native American gender systems, the nature of Anglo women's status in coastal colonies, and the meanings of witchcraft in seventeenth-century New England.

Next we investigate the impact of the American Revolution on women, the rise of domestic sentimentalism in Victorian America, the nature of gender and race relations in the slaveholding South, and women's roles in the Civil War.

Moving into the late nineteenth-century, we examine the blurring of 'separate spheres' within the contexts of westward migration, industrial expansion, and urban growth. This brings us to that kaleidoscopic figure whom historians call the 'New Woman.' A mixture of Victorian legacies and modern behaviors, she leads us into the twentieth century.

There we explore the paradoxes of New Womanhood, both Anglo and African-American. Finally, we weigh three pivotal changes in recent American women's history: the impact of World War II, the postwar resurgence of domesticity, and the second wave of American feminism.

The Concept of Gender

Gender is a category of analysis fundamental to historical inquiry. More than a biological distinction, gender is a cultural construct that shapes divisions of labor, civil codes, social identity, family organization, sexual mores, and political rights. Thus gender is not only central to our sense of self as women or men; it also reflects our changing relationship to the larger society.

Historically, the powers to control production and distribution of goods, to participate in political life, and to exercise moral, intellectual, or spiritual leadership have been contested terrain. So, too, the freedoms to choose a partner, raise one's children, or determine one's reproductive life have been contested between races, between classes, and sometimes between women and men. Encoded within gender systems, then, are power relations.

But American women's history is far more complex than a tale of "victim and oppressor." Indeed, gender systems are more than the sum of law, custom, ideology, or

divisions of labor. At times, gender provided a rich array of symbols through which Americans addressed changes in the social fabric. At times, cataclysmic events such as revolution and war spurred changes in women's roles. And at times, women themselves initiated the changes that bounded their lives.

Required Texts:

Mary Beth Norton, *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2nd Edition (1996).

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852).

Elaine Schowalter, *These Modern Women* (1926).

Coursepack (Available at the History Department office).

Course Requirements

1) Consistent attendance and participation. Over three absences will lower your average by a full letter grade.

2) Completion of assigned work, on time. Late papers will be averaged a grade lower than their content.

3) All work, unless otherwise indicated, is assumed to be pledged under the Honor Code.

Class Discussion:

On days marked "Discussion," consider it a standing assignment that you come prepared; that is, having done the reading listed for that day.

When reading, viewing films, or listening to lectures, take notes. You will create a valuable record of ideas, evidence, and questions that you can draw from during discussion.

Good discussion depends upon your preparation.

Class participation will count as fully 20% of your final grade. The four written assignments listed below, each worth 20%, will comprise the rest of your grade.

Written assignments:

1) A 6-7 page take-home exam on gender in the colonial and Revolutionary period. This will be an essay using course materials as evidence. Outside research will not be necessary.

2) A 6-7 page take-home exam on the era of domestic sentimentalism. This essay will use the same format as the first take-home exam, drawing from primary documents and scholarly articles we have covered thus far.

3) An 8-10-page research paper on the 'New Woman.' This will involve analysis and contextualization of primary documents, such as census manuscripts, letters, diaries, government records, oral histories, advertisements, or popular literature.

4) An in-class Final Exam. This will consist of two essays. The first will address gender systems during and immediately after World War II. The second will explore the reemergence of American feminism after 1963, and reactions to it. Study questions will be available ahead of time, to help you prepare.

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COURSE OUTLINE

Th Jan 13 Introduction to the Course

T Jan 18 Lecture/ Discussion
Conceptual Approaches to Women's History

Reading: Lerner, "Placing Women in History," Major Problems in American Women's History (hereafter MPAWH), pp.1-7.

Bock, "Challenging Dichotomies in Women's History," MPAWH, pp.8-13.

Higginbotham, "Afro-American Women in History," MPAWH, pp.14-19.

UNIT I: GENDER IN EARLY AMERICA (1590-1750)

Th Jan 20 Lecture
Gender Systems in Early America: A Seneca Case Study

Reading: Wallace, "The Seneca Nation of Indians," Coursepack, pp.37-50.

UNIT I: GENDER IN EARLY AMERICA (1590-1750)

T Jan 25 Discussion
Gender in Cross-Cultural Transition: Native American Women and European Colonization

Reading: Documents, MPAWH, pp.21-24.

Devens, "Resistance to Christianity by the Native Women of New France," MPAWH, pp.25-33.

Ronda, "The Attractions of Christianity for Native Women of Martha's Vineyard," MPAWH, pp.34-39.

Plane, "The Adultery Trial of Sarah Ahaton," MPAWH, pp.40-45.

Th Jan 27 Lecture
Gender Systems in Early America: A Puritan Community

Reading: Mintz & Kellogg, "The Godly Family of Colonial Massachusetts," Coursepack, pp.43-54.

On Reserve: Koehler, "The Case of the American Jezebels: Anne Hutchinson and the AntiNomian Controversy."

T Feb 1 Lecture
Gender, Social Tensions, and Symbolic Worlds: Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century Salem

Film: "The Crucible" (optional)

Th Feb 3 Discussion
The Conundrum of Witchcraft

Reading: Demos, "The Poor and the Powerless Witch," MPAWH, pp.54-66.

Karlsen, "The Potentially Powerful Witch," MPAWH, pp.66-75.

Erikson, "The Witches of Salem Village," Coursepack, pp.24-36.

"Documents," MPAWH, pp.49-53.

UNIT II: GENDER IN THE ERA OF REVOLUTION (1740-1812)

T Feb 8 Women and the American Revolution

Reading: Hoff Wilson, "The Negative Impact of the

American Revolution," MPAWH, pp.83-94.

Norton, "The Positive Impact of the American Revolution," MPAWH, pp.94-103.

Jones, "The Mixed Legacy of the American Revolution for Black Women," MPAWH, 103-07.

"Documents," MPAWH, pp.77-82.

Th Feb 10 Discussion
The Limits of Liberty

Film: "Mary Silliman's War." [Meet in Burrow Viewing Room]

FIRST ESSAY EXAM HANDED OUT

T Feb 15 Discussion
The Politics of Reproduction Before and After the Revolution

Reading: Dayton, "Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations," Coursepack, pp.68-84.

Ulrich, "Nov. 1792; Matrimonial Writes," Coursepack, pp.134-61.

UNIT III: THE PARADOXES OF TRUE WOMANHOOD (1820-1860)

Th Feb 17 Lecture
Industrialization and Victorian Domesticity
* FIRST ESSAY EXAM DUE*

T Feb 22 Discussion
The Cult of True Womanhood

Reading: Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," MPAWH, pp.115-22.

Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual," MPAWH, pp.122-32.

Perdue, "Southern Indians and the Cult of True Womanhood," MPAWH, pp.132-37.

Documents, MPAWH, pp.109-14.

UNIT III: THE PARADOXES OF TRUE WOMANHOOD (1820-1860)

Th Feb 24 Discussion
Gender and Race in the Slaveholding South

Reading: Jacobs, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl,"
Coursepack, pp.44-66, 82-9.

Documents, MPAWH, pp.139-45; 229-30.

Farnham, "The Position of Women in the Slave
Family," MPAWH, pp.145-55.

Jennings, "The Sexual Exploitation of African
American Slave Women," MPAWH, pp.155-60.

Scott, "The Myth of the Southern Lady,"
Coursepack, pp.344-51.

On Reserve: Film, "She Ranks Me," [Women in the Civil War].

T Feb 29 Discussion
The Politics of True Womanhood

Reading: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852).
Be prepared to discuss the entire novel.

Th March 2 Discussion
From Deference to Rights: Seneca Falls

Reading: Documents, MPAWH, pp.162-69.

"Keziah Kendall to Simon Greenleaf" (1839)
Coursepack, pp.201-03.

Dublin, "Women Workers in the Lowell Mills,"
MPAWH, pp.169-77.

Alexander, "The Martha Washingtonians," MPAWH,
pp.177-83.

Beuchler, "The Origins of the Women's Rights Movement, MPAWH, pp.183-88.

****2ND ESSAY EXAM HANDED OUT****

March 4-12 **SPRING BREAK**

UNIT III: THE PARADOXES OF TRUE WOMANHOOD (1820-1860)

T March 14 Discussion
 Victorian Sexuality

Reading: Documents, MPAWH, pp.217-29.

Groneman, "Nymphomania: Physicians and Female Sexuality in Victorian America," MPAWH, pp.230-39.

Stansell, "Working Women and Prostitution in 19th Century New York," MPAWH, pp.239-46.

Hode, "A Brief Dialogue on Illicit Sex Between White Women and Black Men in the Slave South," MPAWH, pp.246-52.

Th March 16 Lecture
 Social Housekeeping After the Civil War (1865-1890)

Reading: Documents, MPAWH, pp.257-60.

Bordin, "The Temperance Crusade as a Feminist Movement," Coursepack, pp.215-23.

Freedman, "The Benefits of Separate Female Organizations," Coursepack, pp.266-71.

SECOND ESSAY EXAM DUE

UNIT IV: NEW WOMANHOOD (1890-1929)

T March 21 Lecture/Discussion
 Emergence of the 'New Woman' (1890-1929)

Reading: Documents, MPAWH, pp.285-97.

99. Tentler, "Work Culture in Factories", Coursepack, pp.292-

Benson, "The Work Culture of Salesclerks,"
MPAWH, pp.303-11.

Hall, "Disorderly Women and Labor Militancy in
the Appalachian South, 1920s," MPAWH, pp.312-19.

Th March 23 Discussion

Race and Gender in Transition (1880-1930s)

Reading: Documents, MPAWH, pp.254-57, 291-93, & 322-25.
[Readings continue, next page]

UNIT IV: NEW WOMANHOOD (1890-1929)

Th March 23 Discussion

Race and Gender in Transition (1880-1930s) continued:

Reading: Clark-Lewis, "Community Life and Work Culture
Among African-American Domestic Workers in
Washington D.C.," MPAWH, pp.297-303.

Terborg-Penn, "Discontented Black Feminists,"
MPAWH, pp.348-56.

Film: "Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of
Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony,"
Part 3.

* This film is on Reserve at Burrow Library.
Please view it on your own, before class.

T March 28 Discussion

New Womanhood: The Politics of Work, Sexuality, and Marriage

Reading: Schowalter, These Modern Women (1927).

SHORT RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT:

Pick a small set of documents, such as a packet of letters, a diary or journal, an autobiography, a play script, ten census manuscript pages, an advertising campaign which appeared in popular magazines, or a female journalist's published articles from the 1910's and '20s. Your job will be to interpret this body of evidence, and to place it in historical context. Please clear your topic with me before proceeding. Due April 11.

Th March 30 Film: "With Babies and Banners."

* Class meets in Burrow Library Viewing Room for film about female labor activism during the Great Depression.

Reading: Kessler-Harris, "Gender Ideology and Family Survival During the Depression," MPAWH, pp.370-77.

UNIT V: WORLD WAR II AND AFTER

T April 4 Lecture
Gender and Wartime: Women as Reserve Labor (1941-1945)

Reading: "Documents," MPAWH, pp.360-70.

Anderson, "Persistent Discrimination Against Black Women," MPAWH, pp.377-85.

UNIT V: WORLD WAR II AND AFTER

Th April 6 Film: "Rosie the Riveter."

* Class meets in Burrow Viewing Room for this film about women's roles during World War II.

T April 11 Lecture
The Resurgence of Domesticity (1945-1963)

Readings: Cowan, "The Industrial Revolution in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change,"

Coursepack, pp.383-93.

Tyler-May, "The Reproductive Consensus in the Postwar Era," MPAWH, pp.415-20.

Penn, "The Meanings of Lesbianism in Postwar America," MPAWH, pp.430-37.

SHORT RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Th April 13 Discussion
Modern Woman: "The Lost Sex"

Reading: Colton, "Why I Quit Working," Good
Housekeeping [1951], Coursepack, pp.299-302.

"I Denied My Sex," True Romance [1954], Coursepack,
pp.302-08.

Meyerowitz, "Competing Images of Women in Postwar
Mass Culture," MPAWH, pp.420-29.

T April 18 Lecture
The Second Wave of American Feminism (1963-1982)

Reading: "Documents," MPAWH, pp.439-55.

Morgan, "Barbarous Rituals," Coursepack, pp.108-12.

Standley, "The Role of Black Women in the Civil Rights
Movement," MPAWH, pp.456-63.

Rose, "Gender Awareness Among Chicanas and
Mexicanas in the United Farm Workers of America,"
MPAWH, pp.472-81.

UNIT V: WORLD WAR II AND AFTER

April 20-23 EASTER BREAK

T April 25 Discussion
Multicultural Feminism and Reaction (1976-Present)

Reading: For these, we will divide into small groups. Each group
will choose four of the following to present in class:

"Remembering Vietnam," Coursepack, pp.519-23.

Schlafly, "The Thoughts of One Who Loves Life
As a Woman," Coursepack, pp.533-7.

Cahn, "Mannishness, Lesbianism, and Homophobia in U.S. Women's Sports," Coursepack, pp.468-77.

Faludi, "Blame it on Feminism," Coursepack, ix-xxiii.

Faludi, "Man Shortages and Barren Wombs: The Myths of Backlash," Coursepack, pp.3-45.

Hochschild, "The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home," Coursepack, pp.263-68.

Cunningham, "Barbie Doll Culture and the American Waistland," Coursepack, pp.122-25.

Mosle, "How the Maids Fought Back," Coursepack, pp.148-56.

Petchesky, "Antiabortion and Antifeminism," MPAWH, pp.502-14.

Brill, "Feminists and the Debate on Pornography," MPAWH, pp.515-21.

Taylor, "Reflections on the Clarence Thomas Hearing," MPAWH, pp.522-29.

Th April 27 Synthesis and Reflection

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR FINAL EXAM HANDED OUT

Monday May 1 FINAL EXAM, 8:30-11am.