This course focuses on how women different races, classes, and regions laid claim to participation, and developed modes of exercising power in American public life in post-Civil War America. It examines in historical context the conflicts and coalitions of women across lines of race, class, and national origin; the relationship of different groups of women to the state in areas including citizenship, suffrage, sexuality and reproduction, social welfare; and the problems and possibilities of the "maternalization of the state" under the impact of women reformers.

During the first two thirds of the semester, the class meets together to discuss assigned readings, identifying major historiographical trends, exploring various methods and sources, and analyzing important developments. For the final third of the semester, students will pursue research projects. For more information on those projects, see the Final Project Options at the end of this syllabus.

Books to purchase:

Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900*

Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-Of-The-Century New York*

Margaret Finnegan, *Selling Suffrage: Consumer Culture and Votes for Women*

Optional Purchase:

Carol Mattingly, *Well-Tempered Women: Ninteenth-Century Temperance Rhetoric*
Other required readings are available on Electronic Reserve (ERes),

Schedule of Classes

Monday, September 9: Introductions: Time and Place, Concepts and Cultures

Readings:


Monday, September 16: No Class for Jewish Holiday

I will schedule each of you for an appointment with me during this week to talk about what you hope to achieve in the class. We can also begin to discuss your final projects. In addition, please note that the reading assignment for September 23 is quite lengthy; begin it now!

Monday, September 23: Post Civil-War America from the Point of View of One White Woman

Reading: Kathryn Kish Sklar, Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900, entire

Monday, September 30: African American Women and the Transition from Slavery to Freedom
Readings:


Tera Hunter, "Domination and Resistance: The Politics of Wage Household Labor in New South Atlanta," pp. 343-357 in Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King and Linda Reed, eds., *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible*: A Reader in Black Women's History


Website "How Did White Women Aid Former Slaves during and after the Civil War and What Obstacles Did They Face?" http://womhist.Binghamton.edu/aid/abstract.htm please read the abstract, introduction, and at least two documents.

October 7: Sex, Contraception and Women's Power


Your first paper is due at the end of this week, on Friday, October 11. It will be 4-6 pages in length, double spaced, in 12 point type. You will focus on one aspect of the history and historiography of women and power in the nineteenth century as we have explored it to this point. A more specific assignment will be distributed in advance. Click here for details.

**October 14: Working Women at the Turn of the Century**


Nancy Schrom Dye, "Creating a Feminist Alliance: Sisterhood and Class Conflict in the New York Women's Trade Union League, 1903-1914," pp. 225-245 in Milton Cantor and Bruce Laurie, eds., *Class, Sex and the Woman Worker*


**Fall Break!**

*Think about the book you will choose for your monograph analysis*

**October 28: Gender, Class and Consumption**

Jennifer Scanlon, "Introduction," pp. 1-12, in *The Gender and Consumer Culture Reader*

Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements (entire)*


Your choice of monograph is due today. Click here for more information.

**November 4: Making Suffrage "Modern"**
November 11: What did Woman Suffrage Mean?

Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Why Were Most Politically Active Women Opposed to the ERA in the 1920s?" pp. 25-35 in Joan Hoff-Wilson, ed., Rights of Passage: The Past and Future of the ERA;


Your final project topic for your final project is due today. Please submit a "mini-prospectus" that:

1. sketches out a problem for inquiry
2. suggests possible primary sources

Your "mini-prospectus" should be no longer than two pages.

November 18: Presentation of Monograph Analysis

November 25: Class Work Session

December 2: Class Work Session

December 9: Preliminary Presentations

Monograph Analysis:

Your Choice of Monograph is Due October 28

The Monograph Analysis is Due November 18, in both written and oral form.

Each student will read a monograph from a list provided of works that related to questions about women and power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Students will then write a 1000-1500 word (normally 4-6 pages, double spaced in 12 point type) analysis of the work, and extract from it a 10 minute presentation for class. The analysis should

* identify the central point the author is trying to make
* place the author's focus and argument in the context of other works by historians we *have read this semester --that is, place the work in historiographical context and *identify its contribution to the historiography.
* briefly summarize the scope of the work--that is: what does the book cover
* briefly describe the kind of evidence the author uses
* and finally, evaluate whether the monograph is a "good book"--is it important to the *historiography? is it well written? is it worth reading?
Final Project Assignment:

Your final project should launch you into original research in primary documents relevant to women and power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Resources abound: newspapers, government reports, autobiographies, popular magazines, manuscript records for both individuals and organizations. In this latter category, the Oberlin College Library has rich holdings in its microfilm collections, and the Oberlin College Archives includes an array of relevant sources. Your challenges will be:

- framing an historical question or inquiry that draws from the historiography you have encountered in your course reading
- locating primary sources appropriate to the question
- interpreting the sources

You have a choice of two formats in which to frame your project

1. You may write a research paper, 10-12 pages in length, drawing on at least six (6) primary documents, and at least two (2) secondary works not assigned for class.

2. You may do a "document based project" in which you frame a historical question and provide transcription, head note, and annotations for at least four primary documents that address your question. Students may choose to form small "teams" to undertake this project. Topics for this project should focus on materials available in the Oberlin College Archive. A list of suggested sources will be distributed before Fall Break.

In either case, your topics must be submitted for approval by November 11. Final projects are due on **December 17**, the date for which the final exam would have been scheduled.

For some of the primary sources available in the Mudd Library collections, [click here](#)

For the Guide to Women's History Sources in the Oberlin College Archive, [click here](#)

For an example of a women's history website built around documents, see "How Did Oberlin College Women Students Draw on their Experience to Participate in Social Movements?"