History 267:
Gender, Ethnicity and Race in Nineteenth-Century America
Fall 2003

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Please note: Additional Information for this course is available at its Blackboard Site

Course Description:
This course explores the historical construction of gender in nineteenth-century America by looking at the variations and changes in the experiences of women from diverse racial, ethnic, religious and cultural groups of women from the late years of the eighteenth century through the early decades of the twentieth century. We investigate at women on and of "the middle ground"--the rapidly changing geographic, social, political and economic terrain of the nineteenth-century United States--and the areas that became part of the United States, seeing both differences and similarities in several ethnic and racial communities. We explore how changing economic, social and political conditions both affected women of different groups and were, in turn, affected by women. We examine women as subjects and as agents, as conservators of culture and as mediators within and between communities and identities. Women, through work and family, kinship and sexual congress, both forced and chosen, inherited and forged racial and ethnic identities; they both adapted to changing work and resisted new forms; they sustained "private" worlds and sought public identities as citizens. We follow all these themes as we explore how varieties of nineteenth-century American women made history although not always under conditions of their own choosing.

A Note on Class Format:
This class meets for two 75 minute periods per week. Although I will give some lectures (and even then only for a portion of the class period), and we will watch some videos, our primary mode of instruction will be through structured discussion and collaborative exploration. To make this interaction productive, students are expected to complete reading assignments before class, and come prepared to use materials from the reading in class. The timely completion of readings and
assignments will be essential to the class. If you have questions about readings or assignments, please contact me to talk.

Course Requirements:

- Class Participation: you are expected to do the assigned reading and come to class prepared to participate based on your understanding of the reading.
- Class Attendance: You cannot participate in class if you are not present. Absence without notification will be noted, and grades will be adjusted accordingly.
- Blackboard Posting: September 11
- Blackboard Posting: September 16
- Short Paper: Followup to Blackboard Posting: September 19
- Short Paper: October 7
- Blackboard Posting: October 14
- Guided Primary Source Paper, including
  - Research Prospectus Due: November 4
  - Paper Due: December 4
- Take Home Final Exam: Scheduled for Examination Period

Students may choose to rewrite any paper (except the take-home final) or posting to improve their grade. You must consult with me to discuss your paper with me before you rewrite it and to set a due date for your rewrite.

Books to purchase:

Thomas Dublin, *Farm to Factory: Women's Letters, 1830-1880, revised edition*
Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West*

September 2
Introduction: Women and “the Long Nineteenth Century:”
The Transformation of Martha Ballard’s World

September 4
Hearing Women’s Voices

September 9
From Martha Ballard to Models of Domesticity: The Strengths and Limits of the New England Model of Women’s History

Required Readings:

- Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860,” American Quarterly, 18 (Summer 1966): 151-174 [Link to this article in JSTOR](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-2152%2C18%3A3%3C151%3ATCWOTP%3E2.0.CO;2-Z)

Questions to consider when you do this reading:
What different formats do the two readings represent? What was the purpose of the piece? When was each written? What difference does the historical context for the production of each piece make in the way you read the piece? What “evidence” did each author use? Can you determine the basic argument of each author? What makes sense to you about the argument? WHY? What puzzles you? What annoys, irritates, or infuriates you? WHY?

**September 11**

Alternative Gender Systems: Native American Women
Readings: Required for ALL:
- Sarah Evans, “The First American Women,” Chapter 1 in Born For Liberty, pp. 7-19
In addition, you will be divided into reading groups, and each group will read one of the following:
- Group 1: Richard Godbeer, "Eroticizing the Middle Ground: Anglo-Indian Relations along the Eighteenth-Century Frontier," (Eres)
- Group 2: Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, "Autonomy and the Economic Roles of Indian Women of the Fox-Wisconsin River Region, 1763-1832," (Eres)
- Group 3: Theda Perdue, "Women, Men and American Indian Policy: The Cherokee Response to 'Civilization,'" ER es
- Group 4: Claudia Sue Kidwell, "Choctaw Women and Cultural Persistence in Mississippi," ER es
- Group 6: Carol Douglas Sparks, “The Land Incarnate: Navajo Women and the Dialogue of Colonialism, 1821-1870” (Eres)

Before Class, post on Blackboard answers to some of the following questions. At the beginning of class, each group will meet briefly, for about 15 minutes, to determine the most important points to be presented to the class. Your group will have 10 minutes to present on the article to the class. Some questions to consider are:
- What time period does the article discuss?
- What tribe or group is the focus?
- How would you characterize gender relations within the tribe before significant EuroAmerican contact?
- What kind of contact did the tribe develop with EuroAmericans?
- How were gender systems within the tribe affected? What happened specifically to women’s roles?
- Does the author seem to have a particular point of view?
- What is the major conclusion of the article?
- What does this article contribute to our study of gender, ethnicity and race in nineteenth-century America?

**September 16**

Alternative Gender Systems: the Southwest
Readings:
- Group 1: Yolanda Chavez Leyva, “‘A Poor Widow Burdened With Children,’” (Eres)
- Group 2: James Brooks, “‘This Evil Extends Especially to the Feminine Sex,’: Captivity and
Identity in New Mexico, 1700-1846,” (Eres)

- Group 4: Albert Hurtado, “Sexuality in California’s Franciscan Missions: Cultural Perceptions and Historical Realities,” (Eres)
- Group 5: Albert Hurtado, “Customs of the Country: Mixed Marriage in Mexican California,” (Eres)
- Group 6: Deena Gonzales, “Women in the Courts” (Eres)

Before Class, post on Blackboard answers to some of the following questions. At the beginning of class, each group will meet briefly to determine the most important points to be presented to the class. Your group will have 10 minutes to present on the article to the class. Some questions to consider are:

- What time period does the article discuss?
- What part of the Southwest or far West does the article discuss?
- On what population does it focus?
- What concerns does it raise about women’s lives and women’s status?
- What kinds of evidence does it use?
- Does the author seem to have a particular point of view?
- What is the major conclusion of the article?

What does this article contribute to our study of gender, ethnicity and race in nineteenth-century America?

Assignment: After class, write a 2-5 page paper about the article your group presented. You may want to focus on questions of fact: what the article explored, the kinds of evidence it used, and the importance of the article in the study of gender, ethnicity and race in nineteenth-century America; or you may want to write a more analytic essay, in which you frame a thesis or question about the article. Your short paper is due Monday, September 19 at 9 am, and may be submitted electronically.

September 18

Women and Enslavement: White Women in the Plantation Economy

Optional Readings


September 23

Women and Enslavement: African American Women

Required Reading for All:


Choose one of the following two:


or


September 25
Sex, Love, Contraception and Demography

September 30
Industrialization, Education and Immigration: The New England Mills

Required Reading:
- Thomas Dublin, ed., Farm to Factory, Women's Letters, 1830-1860, 2nd edition. All students must read pp. 1-38 and choose at least three of the five sets of letters.

Assignment: Write a short paper, 3-5 pages in length using documents from Farm to Factory in conjunction with class notes and documents used earlier in the semester to compare and contrast the lives of the women whose letters are collected in Farm to Factory with the life of Martha Ballard. Think about change and continuity to determine whether you would argue that the lives described in these two moments in time would be better discussed in terms of change or continuity in New England womanhood. Explain why, and be specific. You need not discuss all aspects of the women’s lives; instead you will probably want to choose a particular aspect. You may want to think about changes in the economic context in terms of their influence on both individuals and on the region, and other historical transformations.

Your paper is due Tuesday, October 7 at 9 am. You may submit your paper electronically.

Thursday, October 2
Women, Ethnicity and Race in the Antebellum City:

Tuesday, October 7
The Politicization of “Woman’s Sphere” — Women and the World of Reform — Temperance, Prostitution, Poverty and Native Americans

October 9
Antislavery, Gender, and the Emergence of the Woman’s Rights Movement

Required Readings:
- Angelina Grimke, “Appeal to the Christian Women of the South,” on Blackboard Course Documents
- Antislavery Convention of American Women, May 1838, on Blackboard Course Documents
- Seneca Falls Declaration, on Blackboard Course Documents

October 14
Oberlin Women’s History as American History

Required Reading:
- “How Did Oberlin Women Students Draw on Their College Experience to Participate In
Antebellum Social Movements, 1831-1861?"
http://womhist.binghamton.edu/oberlin/intro.htm

**Very Short Assignment:** Before class, please post on Blackboard the name of one of the documents you have read in this section that you believe we should examine more closely in class and explain why. Your posting need not be more than 100 words, and, if at all possible, should be placed on Blackboard at least one hour before class, that is by 2pm.

**October 16**
Women, Citizenship and the Civil War
And
Introduction to the Document Project
For Further Information: see Blackboard

**Fall Break!**

**October 28**
Reconstructing African American Women’s Lives

**Required Reading for All:**

In addition, read either:
- 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*(Eres)

**October 30**
Women’s Organizations Resurgent: the Rise of the WCTU

**Required Reading:**
- Frances Willard, 1891 Address at [prohibition.history.ohio-state.edu/Willard/willard.pdf](http://prohibition.history.ohio-state.edu/Willard/willard.pdf)

**November 4**
Exporting Domesticity to the West: New Cultures, New Confrontations

**Required Reading:**

**November 6**
Library Session

**Assignment Due before class:** Documents Project Prospectus.
Please See Blackboard for the Prospectus
November 11
A New World of Women; A New World for Women
Female Immigration in the Late Nineteenth and Early twentieth Century

November 13
The Progressive Response to Immigrant women: the Maternalization of the state Jane Addams
Required Readings:
- “Jane Addams, Progressivism and Woman Suffrage,” pp. 179- in Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, ed., One Woman, One Vote (Eres)

November 18
Video: Hester Street

November 20
African American women in the Progressive Era: The Nadir of Black History?
Required Reading:
- Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, “Discontented Black Feminists: Prelude and Postscript to the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment,” (Eres under “Penn” for author)

November 25
Video: Ida B. Wells

November 27: Thanksgiving, No Class

December 2
Working-Class Women: Consumerism and Suffrage
Required Reading:

December 4
Primary Documents Paper Due; Student Presentations

December 9
The Meaning of Woman Suffrage
Required Reading:
- Louise Newman, White Women’s Rights (entire)

December 11
The Future of the Past: Gender and Women in Nineteenth-Century America

A Note on the Final Examination:
I will distribute questions for the take-home final exam at the last class. You may read the questions in advance and think about your answers. When you sit down to write, you may NOT use any notes, books, articles, etc. You will take your take-home exam during any two consecutive hours up the two hour block in which the final exam is scheduled. You will write your starting time at the beginning of your exam, and your ending time at the finish. You will write and sign the honor pledge at the end of your exam.

Exams may be word processed, in which case you will write the honor pledge followed by your name if you submit your exam electronically.

If you do not hand in your exam before the beginning of the scheduled examination time, you MUST take the exam in the room scheduled for the exam during the examination time.

A Note on Grading

Grading is an art, not a science. I have assigned the following percentages for the assignments for the course, but in addition, improvement over the course of the semester will be rewarded.

- Blackboard Posting, September 11: 5%
- Blackboard Posting, September 16: 5%
- Short Paper, September 19: 5%
- Short Paper, October 7: 15%
- Blackboard Posting, October 14: 5%
- Research Prospectus, Due November 4 10%
- Document Paper, Due December 4: 20%
- Take Home Final Exam: 25%
- Class Participation 10%