U.S. WOMEN'S HISTORY, 1820-1980

GOALS AND FORMAT:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the history of women's work, family, and political lives in industrializing and modern America. Secondary and primary source readings emphasize the experiences of Native, European, African, Mexican, and Asian American women within the contexts of historical change in the U.S. (the economy, race relations, sexuality, social movements). A major goal of the course is to present women's history both as an integral part of American history and as a unique subject of historical investigation. Students will learn to think critically about historical arguments as well as to understand the difference that gender makes in history and the way that gender interacts with class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality.

The class meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays will combine lectures, discussion, films, and audio-visuals. The one-hour sections on Thursday or Friday will explore particular readings in depth. Students are encouraged to participate in both formats and to come to each class prepared to discuss readings.

BOOKS and other assignments (ordered at Stanford Bookstore and Green Reserves):

Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart, eds., WOMEN’S AMERICA: REFOCUSING THE PAST, 5TH ed. (N.Y., 2000) $38.95
Harriet Wilson, OUR NIG, OR SKETCHES FROM THE LIFE OF A FREE BLACK (N.Y., 2002; orig Boston, 1859) $12
Anzia Yezierska, BREAD GIVERS (N.Y., 1999; orig. N.Y. 1925) $8.95
Vicki Ruiz, FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS: MEXICAN WOMEN IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA (N.Y., 1998) $16.95

In addition, some documents, visuals, and readings will be available through CourseWork. Recommended films are on reserve at Green Media for personal viewing; they will be screened at the Women’s Community Center on Sunday evenings of the week they appear on the syllabus.

REQUIREMENTS:

Prompt attendance and participation at each class session and completion of all reading and writing assignments on time are all critical and contribute to the final grade. Students will write regularly to encourage thought and discussion. There are two kinds of writing assignments, ungraded and graded. For the former, instructors will provide feedback, where needed, to help improve analysis and writing without the pressure of grades. The mid-term essay, in-class identifications, and final essay will receive letter grades; prompt and thoughtful completion of the UNGRADED writing assignments will contribute strongly to the overall letter grade for section. The following grading guidelines are only approximate; for example, improvement in graded papers will be taken into account.

UNGRADED (1-2 page reading responses) Section = 30 % of final grade based on participation and
Novels (due 4/10 and 4/24)
Primary source (due in section 4/17 or 4/18) on-time completion of all
Secondary source (assigned in section) written responses
Two recommended film responses (due dates determined by student film choices)
Oral history assignment (4-5 pages, due 6/3)

GRADED:
Take-home mid-term essay (5 pages, due 5/1) 25% final of grade
In-class identifications (2-3 pages, 6/5) 10% of final grade
Take-home final essay (6-8 pages, due 6/11) 35% of final grade

For mid-term and final essays, topics will be handed out in class at least a week in advance of the due date. Instructions for completing assignments appear at the end of the syllabus or with essay topics.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED ON TIME; late papers will be downgraded a full grade per day and will not be accepted after two days. NO INCOMPLETES will be granted except for medical or family emergencies. If you must miss a section meeting, inform your section leader and submit a report on the week's readings (up 3-5 pages) before the next section meets.

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TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS
INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S HISTORY
4/1

Why do we study women's history; what are the historiographical approaches to the subject; what will this course cover?
Begin reading Wilson, OUR NIG, for section next week.
Recommended Doc: Martha Ballard’s Diary http://www.dohistory.org/diary/index.html

WOMEN'S WORK AND WOMEN'S SPHERES IN EARLY INDUSTRIAL AMERICA, 1820-1880
A. Northern Work and Family Life
4/3

WOMEN’S AMERICA: Boydston, p. 138
Doc: p. 157
Recommended Doc: Godey’s Ladies Book
http://www.history.rochester.edu/godeys/04-50.htm

Recommended film: A MIDWIFE’S TALE

Section registration through CourseWork begins after class today

B. Religion, Education, and Sexuality
4/8

WOMEN’S AMERICA: Sklar, p. 159; Smith-Rosenberg, p. 168; Mohr, p. 183
C. Southern Work and Family Life 4/10

WOMEN’S AMERICA: Faust, p. 214
Doc: p. 125-127
Wilson, OUR NIG (complete for section)

First section meetings this week; bring 1-2 page reading response to OUR NIG

D. Women and Western Encounters 4/15

WOMEN’S AMERICA: Rohrbough, p. 149
http://irw.rutgers.edu/research/ugresearch/birthplaces/lettertozachtaylor.html

E. Reform, Women's Rights, and the Legacies of War 4/17

WOMEN’S AMERICA: Lerner, p. 200; Painter, p. 211; Hunter, p. 229
Docs: pp. 193, 207, 210, 228, 241-245; 259
Recommended Docs: Seneca Falls

A 1-2 page analysis of a primary source is due in section this week

THE TRANSFORMATION OF WOMEN'S SPHERES, 1880-1920

A. Race, Class, and Ethnicity among Working-Class Women 4/22

Ruiz, FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS, chap. 1
WOMEN’S AMERICA: Gilmore, p. 283; Pascoe, p. 278; Orleck, p. 294
Docs: pp. 130, 310
Yezierska, BREAD GIVERS (begin)
RECOMMENDED FILM: "Hester Street"

“Folk Music of Women’s History,” Women’s Community Center, 4/23, 12-1 p.m.
A participatory workshop - learn while singing!

B. Middle-Class Women, Higher Education and the Professions 4/24

Yezierska, BREAD GIVERS (complete for section)
RECOMMENDED FILM: "Sentimental Women Need Not Apply"
Reading response to BREAD GIVERS due in section

TOPICS FOR THE FIRST GRADED PAPER WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS on 4/24; PAPERS ARE DUE BY MAY 1.

C. Viewing Nineteenth Century Women's History 4/29

REQUIRED FILM: “Hearts and Hands,” shown in class, with discussion
NEW WOMEN AND NEW CHALLENGES, 1900-1950

A. Sexuality, Health, and Social Reform

Ruiz, FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS, chaps. 2-3
WOMEN’S AMERICA: Sklar, p. 312; Gordon, p. 343; Bromberg, p. 363
Docs: pp. 267, 325, 355

Recommended Docs: Emma Goldman and Margaret Sanger; Women and Social Movements
Emma Goldman and Margaret Sanger on Birth Control:
http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/goldman/Exhibition/birthcontrol.html
Emma Goldman on marriage, 1897:
http://www.jwa.org/exhibits/goldman/
Women and Social Movements:
http://womhist.binghamton.edu/date2.htm

RECOMMENDED FILMS: “She Even Chewed Tobacco”; “Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice"

B. Feminism: Before and After Suffrage

WOMEN’S AMERICA: Cott, p. 377; Cook, p. 401
Docs: pp. 338-342
RECOMMENDED FILM: “One Woman, One Vote”
Oral history subject and interview date due by today

C. Economic Crises, Women's Roles, and Family Survival

Ruiz, FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS, chap. 4
WOMEN’S AMERICA: Jones, p. 410; Yung, p. 414; Kessler Harris, p. 418
REQUIRED FILM: "The Women of Summer" (in class)

D. Mobilization and De-Mobilization

WOMEN’S AMERICA: Bailey and Farber, p. 423; Matsumoto, p. 46; Evans, p. 442

E. Viewing Twentieth Century Women’s History

REQUIRED FILM: "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter" (in class)

MOVEMENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE, 1950-1980s
A. Family and Sexuality during the Cold War 5/22

WOMEN’S AMERICA: McEnaney, p. 448; Freedman, p. 455; Cahn, p. 462
Recommended Doc: Rates of premarital sex in the twentieth century
http://www.pbs.org/fmc/timeline/dsex.htm

B. Race, Sex, and Social Justice 5/27

Ruiz, FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS, chap. 5
WOMEN’S AMERICA: Swerdlow, p. 471; Horowitz, p. 486
RECOMMENDED FILM: “Fundi”

C. Reform and Feminism, 1960-1980 5/29

Ruiz, FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS, chap. 6
WOMEN’S AMERICA: Docs: p. 508-523, 532-547, 580
RECOMMENDED FILM: "Some American Feminists"

D. The Challenge of Social Change 6/3

WOMEN’S AMERICA: Rymph, p. 501; Ginsburg, p. 553; Conclusion, p. 587
Docs: pp. 564-585
Oral history interviews are due in class today
Questions for the take home paper will be distributed today (due 6/11 by 3 p.m.)

COURSE REVIEW AND SUMMARY 6/5

In-class identification section of final exam - attendance required

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GUIDELINES FOR FILM RESPONSES

Please submit film responses for two recommended films (of your choosing) to your section leader during the week the film is assigned. Feel free to respond with your own thoughts and opinions. Here are some questions to keep in mind when viewing all of the films; do not be limited by them:

What did you learn from this film about the topics we are studying?
For documentaries: How effective was the use of documentary evidence?
Was there an argument and was it persuasive?
What interpretations were either overlooked or differed from those you have read about?
What if anything does the film add to your understanding of history?

GUIDELINES FOR SECONDARY SOURCE RESPONSE (article from WOMEN’S AMERICA)

What questions does the author ask?
What sources does the author use to answer them?
What is the central argument? How does it relate to other interpretations we have read?
How effective is the author’s use of sources, argument, writing style?
What else would you want to know about the subject?

GUIDELINES FOR PRIMARY SOURCE AND NOVEL RESPONSES
(documents from WOMEN’S AMERICA or a recommended doc on CourseWork)

Identify and provide historical context for the author.
What is the purpose of the document or intent of the author? To whom is it addressed/who is the intended audience?
How does the author/document make its points? (Through what kinds of arguments or rhetoric? How effectively?)
What does the text reveal about the author, women’s history, and the period in which it was written?
What questions does it raise for you?
For novels, how does fiction enhance or complicate the history you are studying? Which scenes best illustrate issues we are studying? What would you like to discuss in section about this novel?

GUIDELINES FOR THE ORAL HISTORY ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to relate the history we have studied in class to the life of an individual woman who has experienced a part of this history. Early in the quarter you should identify an older woman, preferably someone born before 1930, who will agree to meet with you. You can interview a grandmother or another older female relative, a resident of a local retirement community or home, a retired worker at Stanford, or anyone you know who has lived through the events of the past fifty to seventy years. In advance, set up an appointment of around two hours. Please submit the name of your subject and the date of your interview to your section leader by MAY 8. If you have difficulty locating a subject, please let me know by APRIL 22 and I will try to give you leads to older women in the Bay Area. A set of oral history interview questions to use as a guideline will be available on CourseWork.

To prepare for the interview, review relevant course readings. You can also read an oral history interview, for example in one of Sherna Gluck’s books, FROM PARLOR TO PRISON: FIVE AMERICAN SUFFRAGISTS TALK ABOUT THEIR LIVES or ROSIE THE RIVETER REVISITED: WOMEN, THE WAR, AND SOCIAL CHANGE. Prepare a set of questions by selecting a particular focus that is appropriate for your subject’s life (e.g., work history; political activity; motherhood; sexuality; depression and war; the impact of feminism). When you meet with your subject, take good notes and if possible tape record the interview. Begin with a brief family background, then focus on specific (though open-ended) questions that you have prepared on your chosen topic.

The paper you submit on what you learned about women’s history from this experience should not be a chronological report on the subject’s entire life! It should highlight the most important themes in the interview, relating them to the class; note especially the impact of historical events on personal life. The paper, which is due in class on June 3, will not be graded, but like other papers, it cannot be handed in late. Offer to submit a copy of your paper to the woman you interviewed, as well as a copy of the tape if you are able to make one.