

HISTORY 37500
WOMEN IN AMERICA SINCE 1870
SPRING 2017
TU/TH 9:00-10:15 in UNIV 219

Professor Nancy Gabin
University Hall 121
494-4141 or 494-4132
ngabin@purdue.edu

Office Hours:
Tuesdays 11:00-12:30
other days and times by appointment

This course surveys the history of women in the United States from 1870 to the present. By examining the social, political, and economic forces that have shaped that history, the course assesses the sources of change and continuity in women's lives. We will consider topics such as the changing meanings and understandings of gender; the changing meanings and significance of family, motherhood and personal relationships; changes in women's education and shifts in female employment; women's involvement in political and social movements; women's relationship to the state; expressions and regulations of female sexuality; and women and popular culture. Stressing diversity as well as unity, the course emphasizes the importance not only of gender but also of race, ethnicity and class in women's lives. The course satisfies the gender requirement in the CLA core curriculum and the humanities requirement in the university core curriculum. It is open to all undergraduates.

A Blackboard Learn website for History 37500 has all the course handouts, lecture outlines, some reading assignments, the writing assignments, and grades. <https://mycourses.purdue.edu>

The following paperback book is required reading for this class.

- Linda Kerber, Jane Sherron De Hart, Cornelia Hughes Dayton, and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Women's America: Refocusing the Past, Volume Two 8/e* (2016)

Other required readings—primary sources available via the internet or as pdfs posted on Blackboard—are indicated on the course outline below, included in lecture outlines, and/or will be announced in class.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Women in America in 1870

January 10-12

Read: *Women's America*, Introduction (pdf on Blackboard)

New Woman and Working Girl, 1870-1920

January 17-26

Read: *Women's America*, pp. 300-349
[Bradwell v. Illinois \(1873\)](#)

Politics and Power, 1900-1920

January 31-February 14

Read: *Women's America*, pp. 350-417, 457-464
[Muller v. Oregon](#) (1908)
Remembering the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>

The New Woman in the Prosperity Decade

February 16-23

Read: *Women's America*, pp. 420-451, 480-492, 503-512
Photo essay: Adorning the Body, *Women's America*, pp. 465-472

MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS ON TUESDAY FEBRUARY 28

From the Flapper to Rosie the Riveter, 1930-1950

March 2-9

Read: *Women's America*, 451-456, 492-502, 513-547.

Dorothea Lange, photographs <https://www.moma.org/artists/3373>

Spring Break No Class March 14-16

Beyond the Feminine Mystique: Changing Lives in Postwar America

March 21-30

Read: *Women’s America*, pp. 550-614, 648-655

Women in the Black Freedom Movement <http://www.crmvet.org/info/women.htm>

The Gender Revolution

April 4-18

Read: *Women’s America*, 615-647, 656-689, 699-756

Women in the Modern Era, 1980-present

April 20-27

Read: *Women’s America*, 674-677, 689-698, 756-794

[Betty H. Carter Women Veterans Historical Project](#)

FINAL EXAM DURING FINALS WEEK—dates and times to be announced

GRADING

Exams:

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. The midterm on Tuesday February 28 will cover the course material from the first half of the course; the final—dates and times to be announced—will cover the material from the second half of the course. Each exam will consist of several short-answer questions and one essay question. To help you prepare for the exams, you will receive one-week in advance a list of short-answer questions and essay questions from which the exam will be drawn word-for-word. Each one-hour, in-class exam is worth 0-60 points. Please bring a blue or green exam booklet to each exam. Blue/green booklets will be collected and redistributed at the start of each exam.

Informal Essays:

Over the course of the semester, you will write two essays responding to questions based primarily on the reading material. Each essay is worth 0-30 points. You decide which two of six dates you will submit essays. Essays must be submitted on Blackboard. Instructions begin after the grading summary below.

In-class Responses:

There will be at least six opportunities during the semester to respond spontaneously and very informally to class material (lectures, films, discussion, etc.). These unscheduled, unannounced and generally ungraded in-class written response pieces will be worth a total of 20 points. No make-ups for the in-class responses. But I will drop the lowest score; in other words, you are allowed one missed in-class response.

Extra Credit:

There will be several out-of-class events this semester that you may attend and report on to earn extra credit during the semester. Information about the extra-credit opportunities will be distributed by email and posted on Blackboard.

TO SUMMARIZE THE GRADING:

Informal essays (2 @ 30)	60 points= 30 %	193-200 pts = A+	153-158 pts = C+
In-class responses	20 points= 10 %	185-192 pts = A	145-152 pts = C
Midterm	60 points= 30 %	179-184 pts = A-	139-144 pts = C-
Final	60 points= 30 %	173-178 pts = B+	133-138 pts = D+
Total	200 points=100 %	165-172 pts = B	125-132 pts = D
		159-164 pts = B-	119-124 pts = D-
			0 - 118 pts = F

READ-AND-RESPOND QUESTIONS and ESSAYS

Over the course of the semester, you will write two short essays. Each essay should be 2-3 double-spaced typed pages or 550-700 words. Each one is worth 0-30 points. You decide which two of six dates you will submit essays. No extensions will be granted and no backtracking is allowed. The essays should be submitted on Blackboard by 11:59 pm on the assigned date.

The purpose of these essays is not so much to improve your writing skills as it is to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems suggested by your study of American women's history since 1870. The goal is for you to discover, develop, and clarify your own ideas and I will be looking for evidence that you are thinking seriously about history. You should do the appropriate reading and reflecting; then write in response to the question for 45-60 minutes. Do not do any research beyond the material assigned for and presented in class. **Your essays should show that you have done your reading** and that you are wrestling with ideas and concepts introduced in the reading, in lectures and films shown in class, and in discussions. For the most part, you will be rewarded for the process of thinking rather than the act of composing.

INSTRUCTIONS: CHOOSE ANY TWO OF THE FOLLOWING SIX ESSAY OPTIONS. THEN SELECT ONE OF THE NUMBERED QUESTIONS UNDER THE ESSAY OPTIONS TO ANSWER. SUBMIT YOUR ESSAYS FROM ASSIGNMENTS ON BLACKBOARD.

Essay Option 1. Answer *one* of the following three questions. Due by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday January 26

1. You are the judge in the settlement of the estate of Fred Paquet. Do you award the estate to his widow, Ophelia Paquet, or to his brother, John Paquet? Why?
2. How new was the New South for African American women in the decades after the Civil War? How does knowing about Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Ida Wells, and Mary McLeod Bethune help answer this question?
3. Did more divide or unite American women across racial, ethnic, and class lines in the late nineteenth century?

Essay Option 2. Answer *one* of the following five questions. Due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday February 14

1. Were late 19th-early 20th century middle-class women reformers such as Florence Kelley, Jane Addams, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Margaret Sanger motivated by altruism or by self-interest?
2. How does *Triangle Fire* help you to understand working-class women's experience in the late 19th-early 20th century? What does it add to the discussion in *Women's America*, the material on the Remembering the 1911 Triangle Fire website, and the other reading for this period?
3. Did city life liberate women in the late 19th-early 20th centuries or did it reinforce male power and control? Draw on the articles in *Women's America* and the films in answering this question.
4. How does *Iron Jawed Angels* help you to understand the woman suffrage movement? What does it add to the coverage of the movement in *Women's America*? What does it omit?
5. You are a newly arrived and somewhat lonely immigrant woman in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century and have relatives back in Europe/Asia/South America who are thinking about joining you in the Land of Opportunity. You miss them and would like to have their good company, but you also have come to know well how different life is in the United States. Write a letter to your loved ones describing life as you have come to know it in the new country. You may assume that your letter will greatly influence their decision to stay in the old country or make the journey to the new one.

Essay Option 3. Answer *one* of the following five questions. Due by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday February 23

1. Which side of the debate over the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1920s would you have been on?
2. To what extent were the 1920s an era of sexual liberation? How do the essays by Cheryl Hicks, Joan Brumberg, and Vicki Ruiz help answer this question?
3. "The emergent and burgeoning consumer culture of the early 20th century liberated more than it repressed women." What is the extent of your agreement (if any) with this statement about the period 1900 to 1930?
4. In the period 1870-1930, how new was the New World for immigrant women?
5. Were Trixie Perry and Texas Bill flappers?

Essay Option 4. Answer one of the following five questions. Due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday April 4

1. How new was the New Deal for American women?
2. To what extent did World War II disrupt and alter the role of women in the United States?
3. How did ideas about gender and postwar gender codes shape the way the women entered and participated in the civil rights movement? How does the assigned reading—the essays in *Women's America* and the related primary sources—help answer this question?
4. Was conservative women's activism more different from or similar to that of liberal women such as peace and civil rights activists and feminists in the 1950s and 1960s?
5. Did the Cold War and the fear of communism limit or increase women's public activism in the period from 1945 to 1965?

Essay Option 5. Answer one of the following three questions. Due by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday April 13

1. Revolutions imply a change in the center of power within a society. What then was "revolutionary" about the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s? How did it challenge 1) gender, 2) sexuality, 3) kinship? Were these challenges revolutionary?
2. Did conflicts among women with different backgrounds and views hurt or advance the cause of the women's liberation movement in the 1960s and 1970s?
3. What were government and popular conceptions of lesbian and gay lives in the 1940s-1960s? How did these conceptions affect gay and lesbian experiences?

Essay Option 6. Answer one of the following four questions. Due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday April 25

1. Looking at the late 20th-early 21st century, what roles do women play in politics? What are the ways that gender affects and is affected by political participation? How does gender affect thinking about politics?
2. Do you see same-sex marriage and lesbian families as challenges to or affirmations of the traditional family? Why and how?
3. From the perspective of women's history, what is novel about the most recent wave of immigration? Do you see parallels between the experiences of immigrant women of the late 19th-early 20th century and those of the late 20th-early 21st century?
4. In evaluating popular culture, some people stress its repressive aspects (its tendency to stereotype and discriminate, for example, or its propensity toward social and political conservatism) while others emphasize its liberating features (or at least its subversive possibilities). Looking at the late 20th-early 21st century, does popular culture reinforce or challenge conventional ideas about gender roles and relations? How does the course material—the assigned reading and the media in class presentations—help answer this question?

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Purdue University and this professor prohibit "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." (University Regulations, Part 5, Section III, B, 2, a). In this class, it will lead to a failing grade (0) on the assignment. Depending on the severity of the incident it may lead to further consequences. And you should know that faculty members are required to report all cases of plagiarism to the Office of the Dean of Students. Please do your own work. See: <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>

DISABILITIES AND ADAPTIVE PROGRAMS STATEMENT

Students with disabilities must register with Adaptive Programs in the Office of the Dean of Students before classroom accommodations can be provided. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please meet with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs.

UNIVERSITY EMERGENCY POLICY

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Any changes will be posted, once the course resumes, on the course website. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course: my email address ngabin@purdue.edu, my office phone 765-494-4141, and the History Department main office phone: 494-4132. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis.

Please review the Emergency Preparedness website:http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/index.html