

**HISTORY 375/WGSS 390:
WOMEN IN AMERICA SINCE 1870**

SPRING 2022
BROWN 1154
TTH 1:30-2:45

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Major changes in US history since 1870 have had a profound impact on gender and “womanhood” – i.e., what it means to be female in America. This class will focus on different aspects of the “female experience” in modern America – including expectations and realities regarding the female body, mental health, sexuality, reproduction, race and class, and gender identity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will develop an understanding of the connections between contemporary issues, such as the #metoo movement, and historical precedents.
2. Students will evaluate the meanings and understandings of gender; changing meanings and significance of family, motherhood and personal relationships; expressions and regulations of female sexuality; and women and popular culture.
3. They will understand the importance and power not only of gender but also of race, ethnicity, class, and sex in women’s private and public lives.
4. Students will evaluate the often competing and conflicting nature of historical interpretation and assess various forms of primary source evidence (including memoirs and diaries) to form conclusions about the meaning and significance of the history of women and womanhood in modern America.
5. Through in-depth reading assignments, students will develop an understanding of how expectations about women’s bodies and behaviors have created unique challenges for women.

REQUIRED READINGS:

6 books:

- Gay, Roxanne; *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*
- Brumberg, Joan; *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins; *The Yellow Wallpaper*
- Kaysen, Susanna; *Girl, Interrupted*
- Skloot, Rebecca; *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
- Carl, P.; *Becoming a Man: The Story of a Transition*

This syllabus is subject to change, and will be updated on Brightspace as needed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

<i>REQUIREMENTS</i>	<i>DATE</i>	<i>% of final grade</i>
JOURNAL ENTRIES (pick 3)	1/25, 2/10, 2/15, 3/1, 4/7, 4/28	30
PERSONAL ESSAY	2/22 by 5 p.m.	10
FINAL ESSAY	5/3 by 5 p.m.	30
quizzes	1/25, 2/10, 2/15, 3/1, 4/7, 4/28	30

94-100% = A

91-93 = A-

88-90 = B+

83-87 = B

81-83 = B-

78-80 = C+

73-77 = C

71-73 = C-

68-70 = D+

63-67 = D

60-62 = D-

< 60% = F

Important Notes:

* **Cheating / Plagiarism:** Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information is submitted the greater the opportunity for the university to investigate the concern. More details are available on our course Brightspace table of contents, under University Policies.

* **Email etiquette:** Outside of class or office hours, communicate with your professor by email. State the reason for your email in the subject line (ex: “question about essay”). Include a full salutation (ex: “Dear Professor”), and closing with your full name (ex: “Sincerely, Robert Owen”). Please use full sentences, correct grammar, and punctuation.

* **Electronic Devices in the Classroom:** Please do not use electronic devices during class. No iPhones, iPads, or laptops. Srsly. Otherwise your casual meanderings around the World Wide Web will distract everyone around you. If you want to take notes, use pen/pencil and paper. If we are discussing the reading and you only have access to it on a laptop or iPad, let me know in advance.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Please note: Reading assignment in parentheses should be completed before designated class. Be prepared to answer questions in response to that day's reading assignment.

PART I: BODY PROJECTS

T	Jan 11	Introduction
R	Jan 13	#MeToo (read <i>Hunger</i> ch. 1-20)
T	Jan 18	Nassar and the National Nightmare (read <i>Hunger</i> ch 21-41)
R	Jan 20	Women and Advertising (read <i>Hunger</i> ch 42-62)
T	Jan 25	Discussion (finish <i>Hunger</i>) *in-class quiz *journal entry option 1 due by 9:00 am on Brightspace
R	Jan 27	The New Woman (read <i>Body Project</i> Intro and ch. 1)
T	Feb 1	Women and Education (read <i>Body Project</i> ch. 2)
R	Feb 3	working-class women and the city (read <i>Body Project</i> ch. 3)
T	Feb 8	The curse (read <i>Body Project</i> 4)
R	Feb 10	Discussion (read <i>Body Project</i> 5 and 6) *in-class quiz *journal entry option 2 due by 9:00 a.m. on Brightspace

PART II: WOMEN AND MENTAL HEALTH

T	Feb 15	Yellow Wallpaper Discussion (read <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i>) *in-class quiz *journal entry option 3 due by 9:00 am on Brightspace
R	Feb 17	Women and the Asylum (read <i>Girl, Interrupted</i> , pp 1-47)
T	Feb 22	Neuresthenia (read <i>Girl, Interrupted</i> , pp 48-91) *Personal essay due (see description p.6) on Brightspace
R	Feb 24	Gaslight (read <i>Girl, Interrupted</i> , pp. 92-136)

- T Mar 1 Discussion: *Girl, Interrupted* (finish *Girl, Interrupted*)
 *in-class quiz
 *journal entry option 4 due by 9:00 am on Brightspace

PART III: SEX, RACE, AND SCIENCE

- R Mar 3 Race and Health (read *Immortal Life* prologue- ch.4)
- T Mar 8 Immigration (read *I.L.* ch. 5-8)
- R Mar 10 eugenics (read *I.L.* ch. 9-11)
- T Mar 22 gynecology, midwifery and childbirth (read *I.L.* ch 12-15)
- R Mar 24 history of cancer research (read *I.L.* 16-20)
- T Mar 29 Tuskegee (read *I.L.* ch. 21-26)
- R Mar 31 Cervical Cancer (read *I.L.* ch. 27-31)
- T April 5 HPV (read *I.L.* ch. 32-35)
- R April 7 Discussion: Henrietta Lacks (finish book)
 *in-class quiz
 *journal entry option 5 due by 9:00 am on Brightspace

PART IV: GENDER IDENTITY

- T April 12 1950s culture (read *Becoming a Man* ch. 1-2)
- R April 14 gay rights (read *Becoming a Man* ch 3-4)
- T April 19 women and social movements (read *Becoming a Man* ch 5-6)
- R April 21 NO CLASS (read *Becoming a Man* ch 7-8)
- T April 26 women's health movement (read *Becoming a Man* ch 9-10)
- R April 28 Discussion: *Becoming a Man* (finish book)
 *in-class quiz
 *journal entry option 6 due by 9:00 am on Brightspace

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

- **EXPLANATION OF INTELLECTUAL JOURNAL**

Each person in the course is required to write **three** journal entries on Brightspace. The purpose of this journal is to encourage students to reflect on the readings and material covered in the course and thereby, to help students prepare for in-class discussions. On a larger scale, the journal will help you and me track the development of your intellectual understanding and questioning throughout the course.

They are due by 9 a.m. on those dates via Brightspace on the following dates: 1/25, 2/10, 2/15, 3/1, 4/7, 4/28. (remember, you only need to do three of the six, but you need to submit the three on time in order to receive ANY credit.)

-Please write a total of **400-500 words per entry**. That's about two typed double-spaced pages. Write in full sentences and in clearly organized paragraphs. Demonstrate that you've engaged in some way with the reading material. Feel free to link the reading with discussions we've had in class or with previous readings, but be sure to focus primarily on the actual assigned chapters. How is this author approaching his or her subject matter? What kinds of issues are raised by this particular subject? What sources is the author using, and what argument is he or she making? (i.e. why does the subject matter? Why should we care about it?)

-**OPPORTUNITY TO OPT OUT OF FINAL ESSAY:** *if you would prefer to frontload your work and skip the final essay requirement, you can choose to turn in ALL SIX journal entries. But you have to do ALL SIX and turn them in ON TIME in order to opt out of the final. NO EXTRA CREDIT will be given for turning in more than 3 entries.

- **Personal essay:** In 500 words, introduce yourself to me! Tell me why you decided to take this course, what interests you in particular when it comes to gender and history, and share any reflections on how this pandemic has made you think, work, live, and see the world differently.
 - DUE DATE: 2/22 by 5 p.m. on Brightspace.
- **FINAL ESSAY:**
 - DUE DATE: May 3 by 5 p.m. on Brightspace.
 - FORMAT: You will get a specific essay question at least one week in advance. Essay should be approximately five pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font. It will draw on readings and lectures from class.

Journal Grading Rubric: Each entry is worth 10 points

Excellent (10 points): The journal entry offers a unique, insightful and well-crafted response to the reading. The response draws on specific examples from the reading to support their insights and further their understanding of the text. It is organized in a way

that establishes a logical flow between paragraphs and adds clarity to the entry as a whole.

Good (8-9 points): The journal entry offers a polished answer to the reading but falls short in organization and clarity. It demonstrates a command of course material and an understanding of historical context, but lacks consistency in the writing or the depth of their reflections.

Average (6-7 points): The journal entry has significant problems in articulating and presenting the author's ideas and reflections or lacks emphasis on the reading. This journal entry offers a basic reflection of the reading material without going beyond the immediate and the obvious. It may also contain factual errors.

Poor (1-5 points): The journal entry does not reflect on the reading and only summarizes the basic material from the text. It has significant issues concerning factual errors, unclear writing, poor organization and grammatical problems. As a result, it fails to address the expectations of the assignment

HOW WRITTEN WORK WILL BE EVALUATED:

I am less interested in a regurgitation of facts than a thoughtful analysis of the question, based on evidence from readings, lectures, discussions, and films.

Planning and organization- Before you jump into answering the question, make sure that you have prepared an outline of your essay. Each paragraph that you then write should correspond to a specific point that you have in your outline.

Introduction and thesis- Each question requires that you come up with an argument—or thesis—that directly answers the question. This thesis statement should be in your introductory paragraph. The rest of the introduction should state the meaning and significance of the issue as it will be discussed in the body of the essay (you don't need to spend time repeating or paraphrasing the question, or describing the specific scheme of organization that your essay will take).

Body- The body of your paper should provide examples and evidence to support your thesis. You may express an opinion, but your opinion should be based on the materials and evidence.

Conclusion- Use your final paragraph not only to summarize your main points, but to demonstrate the significance of your findings.

Proofreading- reread your essay in order to confirm that you have conveyed what you intended.

IMPORTANT NOTES AND PROCEDURES:

Attendance Policy:

Regular attendance is expected. Quizzes will take place at the beginning of the class and are 30% of your grade. You will not be allowed to make up the quiz unless you have a written excuse for your absence. If there is an occasion where you must leave early, notify me before class starts and sit near an exit. We will also be having regular class discussions and your input is valued!

University policy:

“The University expects that students will attend classes for which they are registered. At times, however, either anticipated or unanticipated absences can occur. The student bears the responsibility of informing the instructor in a timely fashion, when possible. The instructor bears the responsibility of trying to accommodate the student either by excusing the student or allowing the student to make up work, when possible. The University expects both students and their instructors to approach problems with class attendance in a manner that is reasonable.”

Protect Purdue Plan

The [Protect Purdue Plan](#), which includes the [Protect Purdue Pledge](#), is campus policy and as such all members of the Purdue community must comply with the required health and safety guidelines. Any student who has substantial reason to believe that another person is threatening the safety of others by not complying with Protect Purdue protocols is encouraged to report the behavior to and discuss the next steps with their instructor. Students also have the option of reporting the behavior to the [Office of the Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). See also [Purdue University Bill of Student Rights](#) and the Violent Behavior Policy under University Resources in Brightspace.

***REGULATIONS REGARDING PERSONAL INFORMATION**

If students wish to allow the instructor to disclose information such as grades in letters of recommendation, they must provide written consent according to FERPA. Also because of FERPA, faculty cannot email grades to students.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. More details are available on our course Brightspace table of contents, under University Policies.

Accessibility:

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247. More details are available on our course Brightspace under Accessibility Information.

Mental Health Statement:

If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends

and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

Emergency Preparation:

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 beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructor via email. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis.