

Gender and U.S. History: Theory and Practice
Fall 2007, Mondays, 7-9:40 PM
269 Upham Hall

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Course Description:

This course will explore the rich field of women's and gender history, with a particular focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century U.S. history. Since feminists inaugurated the field of women's history in the 1960s and 1970s it has gone through many changes – from boldly inserting women's experiences into the historical narrative to, more recently, using gender analyses to deconstruct the standard narrative and redefine discussions of race, class, the body, sexuality, and foreign affairs, to name a few. This class will introduce students to the history of the field, highlighting recent developments, and explore the variety of ways in which historians incorporate gendered analyses into their work. We will begin by tracing the development of the discipline, covering major turning points and debates (especially the shift from women's history to gender history), as well as read a few major works in gender theory. Then, we will study gender history in practice. Each week we will focus on a different paradigm (biography, race, foreign policy, labor, etc.) and explore how gendered analyses shed fresh light on familiar issues and open up new avenues of inquiry. To enrich our discussions, each week 1-2 students will be in charge of leading a portion of discussion and serving as our "class experts" on that particular book, author, and field of study. The final two weeks of class will be devoted to student presentations of their research-in-progress.

Required Texts: (available for purchase at the MU bookstore in the Shriver Center or through a number of on-line vendors, and on reserve at the King Library)

- * Downs, Laura Lee. *Writing Gender History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN: 0340807962. call number: HQ1154 .D686 2004
- *Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 10th Anniversary Edition. New York, 1999. ISBN: 0415924995. HQ1154 .B88 1999
- *Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1, An Introduction*. Translated from the French by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990. ISBN: 0679724699. HQ12 .F6813 1978
- *Allgor, Catherine. *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000. ISBN: 081392118x. HQ1236.5.U6 A45 2000
- *Painter, Nell Irvin. *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996. ISBN: 0393317080. E185.97.T8 P35 1996

- * Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. ISBN: 0226041395. HQ1075.5.U6 B43 1995
- * Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. ISBN: 0465026214. HQ76.2.U52 N53 1994
- * Peiss, Kathy. *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture*. New York: Henry Holt, 1998. ISBN: 0805055517. TT957 .P45 1998 (Science Library)
- * Briggs, Laura. *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. ISBN: 0520232585. HQ766.5.P8 B75 2002
- * Buhle, Mari Jo. *Feminism and Its Discontents: A Century of Struggle with Psychoanalysis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. ISBN: 0674004035. BF175.4.F45 B84 1998
- * May, Elaine Tyler. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War*, revised and updated edition. New York: Basic Books, 1999. ISBN: 0465030556. HQ535 .M387 1988
- * Barry, Kathleen M. *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8223-3946-5. HD6073.A432 U62 2007
- * Meyerowitz, Joanne. *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002. ISBN: 0674013794. HQ77.95.E85 M48 2002

*Articles are available through e-reserves, and most are easily accessible through databases such as JSTOR.

*For students less familiar with U.S. women's history, an excellent textbook is Nancy Wolloch, *Women and the American Experience*, which I have placed on reserve at the King Library. For a history of the 20th century U.S. women's rights movement specifically, see Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How The Modern Women's Movement Changed America*, also on reserve.

Course Materials and Course Website:

I will post announcements and course materials on Blackboard found through <https://mymiami.muohio.edu>. Please check the course site regularly.

Assignments and grading:

10 Weekly response papers (2 pages, double-spaced) = 30%

The weekly papers are intended to help students hone critical reading and writing techniques and incorporate writing into their regular routines. These papers should be précis of the books. In other words, you should write an overview of the book, its main points, and methods. What types of sources does the author use? How is the book organized? What types of questions does the author ask? What are the main points? Is anything missing? You should also include 2-3 questions for class discussion. Ultimately these papers are for your personal use

– so that you will have a resource that will quickly refresh your memory when studying for exams or preparing your own classes. These papers will be graded on the check (B/85), check-plus (A/95), check-minus system (C/75). You do not have to write a précis every single week – choose ten. Also, focus on the main book, not the article.

Seminar project (15-20 pages, double-spaced) = 40%

For this paper, students should select a research project that best suits their own work and goals. For example, students can elect to write a traditional, article-length research paper, an annotated bibliography of works in a field of interest (e.g. black women’s history, women’s labor history, history of sexuality, etc.), a syllabus for a gender-related class you might like to teach, or an interpretive guide to a public history site that deals with gender. Students should determine their seminar paper topic in consultation with me.

Daily class participation = 20%

Since this course is discussion-oriented, regular attendance and participation is essential to its success. Participants are expected to attend each class, complete the assigned reading and writing assignments, and come to class prepared to discuss the readings thoughtfully at both the micro (book-level) and macro (how does it relate to our other readings/things you have read in other classes/the world around us?) levels.

One-time leading of class discussion = 10%

To further enhance our class discussions as well as students’ own mastery of the course material, each student will have the opportunity to lead a portion of one class. For this day, class discussion leaders should prepare to share with the class some combination of the following: information on the author, contextual information about the book (how does it fit historiographically with other books in the field, is it in conversation with a particular work or works? Does it respond to a particular incident or question?), an overview of the book’s reception, and questions for class discussion.

Format of Papers:

All papers must be typewritten. Double space between lines, use 12-point font, and use 1-inch margins all the way around the text. Papers should conform to MLA or Chicago Manual of Style (sometimes referred to as “Turabian” in honor of Kate Turabian who has written a standard manual for this format) standards for format and citation of sources. Failure to adhere to citation guidelines will result in major course penalty, possibly an “F” for the course. An official report of the incident may also be submitted to the university.

Course and Reading Schedule:

M 8/20 -- Course introduction

M 8/27 – An Overview of the field of Women's and Gender History

Readings for 8/27:

*Scott, Joan Wallach. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review*, 91/5 (December 1986), reprinted in Scott, *Feminism and History*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

*Laura Lee Downs, *Writing Gender History*

M 9/3 – Labor Day Holiday – no class
(start reading for 9/10)

M 9/10 – An Introduction to Gender Theory

Readings for 9/10:

* Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

* Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*.

(choose one book to write a précis on, you do NOT have to write two)

M 9/17-- Political history/ "Separate Spheres"

Readings for 9/17:

*Kerber, Linda. "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History." *Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (June 1988): 9-39.

* Allgor, Catherine. *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government*.

M 9/24 – African American Women's History/Biography

Readings for 9/24:

* Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham. "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race." *Signs* 17/2 (Winter 1992): 251-274, reprinted in Scott, *Feminism and History*, 183-208.

* Painter, Nell Irvin. *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*.

****** Please come see me during office hours (or make an appointment) before October 15th to discuss your seminar paper.**

M 10/1 -- The Construction of Gender and Race

Readings for 10/1:

* Hoganson, Kristin, "The Problem of Male Degeneracy and the Allure of the Philippines," in *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998: 133-155.

* Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*.

M 10/8 – Does Sexuality Have a History?

Readings for 10/8:

* Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940.*

M 10/15 – Consumption and Beauty Culture

Readings for 10/15:

*Peiss, Kathy. *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture.*

M 10/22 -- Colonialism and Globalization

Reading for 10/22:

* Briggs, Laura. *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico.*

M 10/29 – Intellectual History

Reading for 10/29:

*Buhle, Mari Jo. *Feminism and Its Discontents: A Century of Struggle with Psychoanalysis.*

M 11/5 – The Family

Reading for 11/5:

*May, Elaine Tyler. *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era, revised and updated edition*

M 11/12 – Labor History

Reading for 11/12:

* Barry, Kathleen M. *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants.*

M 11/19 – Beyond Binaries

Readings for 11/19:

* Laqueur, Thomas. "Orgasm, Generation and the Politics of Reproductive Biology." *Representations* 14. Special Issue: The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the 19th Century (Spring 1986): 1-41.

* Meyerowitz, Joanne. *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States.*

M 11/26 – Paper presentations

M 12/3 -- Paper presentations (last day of class)

M 12/10 -- Papers due in my mailbox in 120 MacMillan by 5 pm