

Wives, Witches, and Wenches: Women in American History

HIST 189/GSWS 188

MW 11:50am-1:05pm

Location: Computer Studies Room 209

Instructor: Brianna Theobald

Contact Info: brianna.theobald@rochester.edu

454 Rush Rhees Library

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-3:30pm and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Emmarae Stein

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Course Description: This course surveys American history through the words and work of women. Broad in chronological scope, the course is not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, we will utilize primary and secondary sources to explore how women experienced important moments and events in U.S. history as well as how women's historical experiences have been shaped by social categories such as race, class, sexuality, and religion. Lectures, discussions, and assignments will further encourage students to consider questions about the practice and politics of studying women's history.

In accordance with the College credit hour policy, which awards 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week, students are expected to devote at least one hour each week to identifying the main lines of argument in course readings, working alone or in groups.

Required Reading: Students must complete assigned reading prior to almost every class session, but you don't need to purchase any texts for this course. All required materials will be available on Blackboard or through the library website. I encourage you to print the readings, take careful notes, and/or have your laptop or other device available so you can access the readings during class discussions.

Grade Breakdown:

94-100% = A

87-89% = B+

77-79% = C+

67-69% = D+

90-93% = A-

83-86% = B

73-76% = C

63-66% = D

80-82% = B-

70-72% = C-

60-62% = D-

Assessment:

An overwhelming majority of your grade will be derived from *writing*. We will talk more in class about what constitutes a good paper, but at this point it suffices to note that I expect students to submit polished, well-organized work. I encourage students to visit me during office

hours to brainstorm essays, work through problems, and, if necessary, discuss strategies for improvement. Additional writing assistance is available through the U of R Writing and Speaking Center. Learn more about this resource here:

<http://writing.rochester.edu/tutoring/index.html>.

Students will write two reflection papers (approximately 5 pages in length) that respond to material covered in the first and second halves of the course respectively. Reflection papers should identify historical, historiographical, and/or methodological (we will discuss what each of these words means in class!) themes that strike you as especially important and also consider how lectures, discussions, readings, and/or other course materials relate to your preexisting understanding of American history. See instruction sheet with specific guidelines on Blackboard. Reflection papers should be submitted via Blackboard at the start of class on the dates indicated on the below schedule.

Two additional papers, both 5-6 pages in length, give students an opportunity to practice doing the work of a historian. For the Primary Source Paper, students will read the memoir of a local abolitionist named Lucy Colman. The memoir can be accessed here (the link is also on Blackboard): <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89098876477&view=1up&seq=1>. Each student will write a paper analyzing some aspect of the text, and I encourage you to discuss your ideas for the paper with Emmarae or me ahead of time. For the Oral History Paper, each student will conduct an oral interview with a woman (family member, friend, colleague, neighbor) who was born before 1980 about some aspect of women's lives in the last four decades. You will then use this source material to write an analytical paper on your chosen theme. See instruction sheets with specific guidelines for both papers on Blackboard, and we will also discuss these assignments at greater length in class.

The remainder of a student's grade will be based on participation. To be adequately prepared for class, students need to have completed the assigned reading list on the schedule below. Class sessions will be a mix of lecture and discussion, and students are expected to participate regularly in these discussions. While I will not be taking attendance, attendance is both encouraged and expected; in previous semesters, students have reported that regular attendance improved both their performance in and experience of this course.

Participation: 10%
Reflection Papers (2): 40% (20% each)
Primary Source Paper: 25%
Oral History Paper: 25%

Course Policies and Expectations:

Late Assignments: Assignments are due via Blackboard at the start of class on the date indicated on the below schedule. If you are unable to meet an occasional deadline, there is a two-day grace period before a late penalty is applied. The grace period is yours to take as needed, no questions asked or permission required. Following the grace period, assignments incur a 10-point penalty for every 24-hour period or portion thereof that passes from the deadline until the assignment is submitted. Papers submitted more than a few days after the deadline may not receive the same level of instructor or TA feedback.

Accommodation Policies: I'm happy to make accommodations as recommended by UR Disability Services. Should you need accommodations, I encourage you to make these arrangements sooner rather than later.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is at the core of the historical discipline, and you'll find that it is something that Emmarae and I care deeply about. All work submitted must be your own, prepared especially for this course. The use of AI tools is not outright prohibited, but the writing and analysis you submit must fundamentally be your own, and you are responsible for the quality and integrity of the work you submit. I will report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the University's Board on Academic Honesty. That said, I am happy to discuss any questions you may have about what does and does not constitute plagiarism, provided this conversation occurs *before* you submit the assignment. For helpful discussions of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association's "Defining Plagiarism," <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism>.

Schedule:

Week 1:

- M Aug 26: Why Women's History?: Introductions, Definitions, and Intentions
- W Aug 28: Beginning at the Beginning: Native America
Watch: Crouse, "Seneca Creation Story"
 Smithsonian, *Pocahontas: Beyond the Myth*

Week 2:

- M Sept 2: NO CLASS: Labor Day.
- W Sept 4: Centering Women in the Chesapeake
Reading: Shefveld, "Cockacoeske and Sarah Harris Stegge Grendon"

Week 3:

- M Sept 9: The Social Order in New England
Reading: Norton, *Founding Fathers and Mothers*, prologue
- W Sept 11: Women and Religious Dissent

Reading: Hutchinson trial transcript

Week 4:

M Sept 16: Gender, Witchcraft, and Witch Trials

Reading: TBA

W Sept 18: Salem: A Case Study

Reading: TBA

Week 5:

M Sept 23: The Meaning(s) of Independence

Reading: Kerber, “The Republican Mother”

W Sept 25: Education for Women

Reading: Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak*, ch. 3

Week 6:

M Sept 30: Gender and Indigenous Dispossession

Reading: Excerpts from *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*; Perdue, “Cherokee Women and the Trail of Tears”

W Oct 2: Life on the Plantation

Reading: Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (excerpts)

Week 7:

M Oct 7: Abolition and Women’s Rights

Reading: Grimké, “Letters on the Equality of the Sexes”; Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions”

W Oct 9: Women’s Rights in the Reconstruction Era

Reading: Tetrault, “Woman’s Day in the Negro’s Hour”

****Reflection Paper 1 Due**

Week 8:

M Oct 14: NO CLASS: Fall Break

W Oct 16: Library Day—Meet in Special Collections (2nd floor of Rush Rhees Library)

Week 9:

M Oct 21: The Nineteenth Amendment and Beyond

Reading: Cahill, “Our Democracy and the American Indian”

W Oct 23: NO CLASS—Reading/Writing Day

Week 10:

M Oct 28: Race Women
Reading: Wells, “Southern Horrors”; Williams, “The Club Movement”
****Primary Source Paper due via Blackboard at the start of class**

W Oct 30: Women and Work
Reading: Woloch, “A Class by Herself”

Week 11:

M Nov 4: Gender in Prosperity and Depression
Reading: Simon, *Lost Girls*, ch. 2

W Nov 6: Women and War, Again
Reading: Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits*, ch. 3

Week 12:

M Nov 11: Rosa Parks, Pauli Murray, and the Movement for Civil Rights
Reading: McGuire, “It Was Like All of Us Had Been Raped”

W Nov 13: Cold War and the Home Front
Reading: Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name,” in *The Feminine*

Mystique

Week 13:

M Nov 18: A “Second Wave”?
Reading: TBA

W Nov 20: Feminisms of Color
Reading: Moraga, “La Güera”; Combahee River Collective Statement;
 Yamada, “Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism”

Week 14:

M Nov 25: Indigenous Feminisms
Listen: “All My Relations,” episode 1

W Nov 27: NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break

Week 15:

M Dec 2: Suburban Warriors and the Reagan Revolution
Reading: Schlafly, *The Power of the Positive Woman* (excerpts)

W Dec 4: Women in Public Life
Watch: *Anita: Speaking Truth to Power*

Week 16:

M Dec 9: 2024 in Historical Perspective
No Reading.
***Oral History Paper due via Blackboard at the start of class.**

Reflection Paper 2 due via Blackboard on Monday, Dec. 16 at 9am.