

Department: American Studies

Instructor: Carol Quirke

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Class Period: Tuesday/Thursday 11:20-12:50

Office Hours: Thursdays, 11-12, 3-4. And by appointment. Via phone or zoom.

Spring 2021

Office: 3007

AS 3462 History of Women in the U.S.

This course examines the history of women in the U.S. from the initial contact between Europeans and Native Americans through the late 20th century. We will examine the complexity of women's social, economic, political, and cultural actions and roles in American life. Special attention is paid to how women sought to shape the world around them, particularly women's attempts to advance their social, political, and economic position. Women's history has expanded the study of history to analyze women as historical agents, but it also engages with a range of topics, for example: gender, race and class, sexuality, social movements, social reform, consumerism, citizenship and the state. Women's history is women's histories—as the lives of women from different races, classes, ethnicities, and sexual orientations were subject to markedly different forces that shaped their lives, and that they shaped.

Readings: The required readings will be available in each BlackBoard (BB) “course unit”. However, over the first half of the term we will be reading the following two titles. These books are available in relevant “course units” and also in the “course resources”.

- 1) Harriet Jacobs (or Linda Brent), *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself*
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html> or [Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself by Harriet A. Jacobs - Free Ebook \(gutenberg.org\)](https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/24549)
- 2) Rose Cohen, *Out of the Shadows*, e-copy available through Old Westbury library, and placed in BlackBoard.

Course Objectives: History of U.S. Women meets SUNY General Education Requirements for “American History,” and objectives for the Writing Intensive pilot program. Students will demonstrate:

- knowledge of a basic narrative of American history: political, economic, social, and cultural, including knowledge of unity and diversity in American society;
- knowledge of common institutions in American society and how they have affected different groups;
- understanding of America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world;
- an understanding of gender and how gender and racial formations have operated over time;
- an awareness of the ways women's access to citizenship rights was constricted, and how women fought against such limits;
- knowledge of the intersectionality of women's lives, and particularly how racism, ethnocentrism and class inequalities shape women's lives;
- knowledge of how women's cultural production, political work, and engagement in social movements have shaped their lives and U.S. history.

Course Responsibilities and Grading:

- Class participation is essential. Your participation should be based on a careful reading of the materials listed for the day you come to class. Engagement in small group (breakout rooms, or synchronous small group work) and full class work is expected.
- Participation requires having your “tools,” or your readings. Readings must be accessible when we are in class. It is best to print them, so you can read, or pull up on a tablet or a phone separate from the device you use for our synchronous zoom meetings.
- Our course is scheduled from 11:20-1. We will meet once weekly synchronously, with few exceptions. Tuesday will generally be synchronous, with virtual “in-class zoom” discussions. Thursday will generally be asynchronous, with activities, discussion boards, etc. On Week Five we will meet on both Tuesday and Thursday, February 23 and February 25. Deadlines for BB discussion boards and activities will typically be due on Monday and Wednesday, at 11:59 p.m. There may be small group work for you scheduled on Tuesdays during our class time.
- Attendance is required and recorded. Frequent lateness and/or poor attendance adversely affects your final grade.
- If you miss more than one class, please check in with me via e-mail.
- There is no scheduled extra-credit for this course.
- Expect to share your assignments; one of the best ways to strengthen writing and thinking is by sharing them.
- College papers require citations that demonstrate your awareness that you are part of a community of scholars—you must credit your sources. Unless otherwise directed, all papers should use “Chicago style” footnotes or endnotes. Assume this for every paper you do, unless otherwise directed. (Available though the OW library’s electronic databases (“search databases” via the Chicago Manual of Style)—or this cheat sheet: [Chicago Manual of Style \(uga.edu\)](http://www.uga.edu/cmu). For journals you may use this format: (Jones, 75) to indicate author’s name and page number.
- Make all of your discussion board answers a minimum of 14 font. I review, and return to you via email. Title each of your discussion boards with Your last name, Week and number of class as listed on syllabus, Authors name, or Subject name. (Example: Acevedo, Week 2.1, Ulrich). This allows for easy reference if we have any question about your work and wish to discuss.
- Late journals are welcomed, but will not receive full credit.
- I will work with you to strengthen your grade, but I will not change your grade after final grades have gone in. Be responsible and talk with me if you are concerned about your grade—don’t wait until it is too late.
- I will hold onto your written work through the Fall of 2021.
- There may be changes in the syllabus based on external speakers, class discussion or activities, or collective move to study something slightly different. Think of this as a living document.

Assignments and Evaluation: Students will write regularly over the course of the semester, completing a mix of short, informal assignments (discussion boards, or other activities) and longer, more formal assignments.

Questions for in-class writing and journals will be listed each day—this syllabus lists traditional questions, but I will place the specific ones in the discussion board section of BB. As “low-stakes” writing assignments, journals/discussion boards are graded with a check, check plus, check minus or a zero. You will receive a letter grade based on the quality of your journal responses. If you receive more than one check-minus please make an appointment with me so we can work together to help strengthen your writing and analytic skills.

Over the first half of the term you will read two long memoirs. We will discuss these over several classes. These are excellent books for bedtime reading—begin now if you like. Bring a pen or pencil and take notes about major themes, issues that concern you, questions you have. You will be writing a paper

about one of these works. There will be two additional formal written assignments, along with regular discussion boards and possibly exams (current grade formula does not list exams—if we do exams it would be 10% for each, taken from Discussion Boards).

Your grade in the course will be determined as follows, though lack of participation as a result of lateness or inadequate attendance can bring the total down.

Journals/In-Class Writing/Discussion Boards (informal)	50%
Paper #1 A Who's Who of Women's History	10%
Paper #2 Memoir paper (based on Jacobs or Cohen)	15%
Paper #3 Final paper	25%

ZOOMIQUETTE:

- Please turn on your screens. Courses are social beasts, and if you are absent, our communal beast will feel a bit stunted. If you cannot do this please place an icon for yourself.
- If you don't want to share your home and you have a laptop, park yourself in a corner if you can; you can also use a zoom background.
- I expect that I can ask you questions, or that your peers might ask questions, and that you will still be present, even if something has prevented yourself from being visibly on-screen that day. Being on a walk with your dog, buying fast food, driving somewhere are not conducive to your learning, and wastes the time of others when you are called on.
- Please mute yourself unless you are speaking—background noises and reverberations that we are unaware of can ruin a class.
- It's best to raise your hand in chat, or with the little button to facilitate conversation. I know that's not always possible, but two people can't speak at once on zoom.
- Lots of guidance out there about how to appear in zoom meetings. Don't we have better things to think about? Brush your teeth, or not. (You should probably make sure there's no stray breakfast.) Comb your hair, or not. Do wear some clothes.
- Chats are recorded, so discretion is advised.



Week 1.1 Tuesday, January 26, 2021 Introductions – What is a Woman; What is Women’s History; What is important in Women’s History?

1.2 Thursday, January 28, 2021 What is a Woman?; What is Women’s History?

Mary Beth Norton, “Searchers Again Assembled,” *Gender Distinctions in 17th America*, 69-77.

Discussion Board Question #1: *What do you learn about England and Colonial America from Norton’s exploration of the man/woman Thomas/Thomasina? What do you learn about women’s lives in her essay? What do you learn about “gender?” 300 word minimum answer; #2 Additional questions based upon Tuesday 1/26 conversation.*

Week 2.1 Tuesday, February 2, 2021 Women and their Labors

Sara Evans, “The First American Women,” pp. 28-36; and

Laurel Ulrich, “Three Inventories, Three Households,” pp. 43-52

OR “Wheels, Looms, and the Gender Division of Labor in Eighteenth-Century New England,” *William and Mary Quarterly* (1998) 1-36.

Viewing: *Juggling Gender*

Discussion Board Question: *In what ways were women’s lives constrained in early America—and in what ways did women have power? How did Native American women have more power than European women? How might they have less power than European women? (300 word minimum).*

2.2 Thursday, February 4, 2021 Women and Revolution

Linda Kerber, “Diamonds Really Are a Girl’s Best Friend;”

New York Historical Society, Watch Alice Kessler Harris, “Women Have Always Worked,”

<https://wams.nyhistory.org/settler-colonialism-and-revolution/settler-colonialism/>

“Coverture” <https://wams.nyhistory.org/settler-colonialism-and-revolution/settler-colonialism/coverture/>,

The Edenton Tea Party, <https://wams.nyhistory.org/settler-colonialism-and-revolution/the-american-revolution/edenton-tea-party/> and

“Philip Dawe, A Society of Political Ladies,” <https://wams.nyhistory.org/settler-colonialism-and-revolution/the-american-revolution/political-caricatures/>

in WA

Discussion Board Questions: *How did women use the American Revolution as an opportunity to assert their own independence? Did they succeed? (200 words minimum); Please make three observations about Phillip Dawe’s A Society of Political Ladies (50-100 words); Explain coverture. (100 word minimum)*

Week 3.1 Tuesday, February 9, 2021 Southern Slave Women

Deborah Gray White, “Female Slaves: Sex Roles and Status in the Antebellum Plantation South,” pp. 22-30; and Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Ch. 1, “Childhood”—Ch. 13, “The Church and Slavery.” Also Available at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/JACOBS/hjhome.htm>

Discussion Board Questions: *How, according to the author, Deborah Gray White, did slave women’s lives differ from the lives of white women? (300 word minimum) Provide three examples from Jacobs’s memoir when possible. (about 100 words)*

3.2 Thursday, February 11, 2021 Associating Women

Susan Zaeske, “Signatures of Citizenship: Debating Women’s Anti-Slavery Petitions, pp. 224-232;

Catherine Beecher, *Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*, Ch. 1;

Additional background: The Grimkes: “Connection Between Religious Faith, Abolition, & Women’s Rights.” pp. 233-237

Sarah Grimke and Angelina Grimke Weld, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,

<https://iep.utm.edu/grimke/>;

National Humanities Center, “The Religious Roots of Slavery,” <https://americanclass.org/the-religious-roots-of-abolition/>;

Discussion Board Questions: *What bound women to the domestic sphere, how were women to obtain power there, and how did women break out of this sphere in the early 19th century? (300 words using Zaeske and Beecher)*

Quirke, *AS3462*, S21, page. 4

Week 4.1 Tuesday, February 16, 2021 Antebellum Working Girls

Thomas Dublin, "Women Work and Protest in the Early Lowell Mills: The Oppressing Hand of Avarice Would Enslave Us," pp. 43-61; and Stansell, *City of Women*, "Women on the Town: Sexual Exchange and Prostitution," pp. 171-192. (handouts)

Discussion Board Question: How did the lives of working women differ from other American women's lives? Were working women "freer" than middle-class women? (300 words)

Week 4.2 Thursday, February 18, 2021 Women, Slavery, and the Nation

Nell Irvin Painter, "Soul Murder and Slavery: Toward a Fully Loaded Cost Accounting," pp. 125-146; Jacobs, *Incidents*, Ch. 14, "Another Link to Life,"—Ch. 24, "The Candidate for Congress."

Discussion Board: What, for Painter, are the "costs" of slavery and to whom? Does Jacobs's memoir bear out Painter's arguments? Provide examples.

Week 5.1 Tuesday, February 23, The First Women's Righters

Gerda Lerner, "The Meaning of Seneca Falls, 1848-1998," 257-263;

Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, "The Beginnings of Reform" and "Seneca Falls Convention," 62-77;

Sojourner Truth, *Speech to the Akron Convention*; Kerry Washington: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry_i8w2rdQY;

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments," and

Married Women Property Acts, 264-268

Discussion Board: What are women's demands—for themselves? What are roots and of the Seneca Falls convention?

FIRST Papers Due, presentations in class.

5.2 Thursday, February 25, 2021 Paper Presentations Continue—in Class

Week 6.1 Tuesday, March 2, 2021 The Meanings of Freedom for Slave Women

Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life*, Ch. 25. "Competition in Cunning"—Ch. 41 "Free at Last."

Discussion Board Question: Was Harriet Jacobs free? What constraints persisted in her life because of race? Because of gender?

Week 6.2 Thursday, March 4, 2021 Black Women at the Century's Turn

Elsa Barkley Brown, "Womanist Consciousness: Maggie Lena Walker and the Independent Order of St. Luke;

Tera Hunter, *To Joy These Freedoms*, "Washing Amazons and Organized Protests," 74-97

Discussion Board Question: How does black women's activism parallel the work of white women activists? How is it different and why? How do women work collectively to strengthen their economic lives?

Week 7.1 Tuesday, March 9, 2021 Expanding Spheres—Midterm Week

Katherine Kish Sklar, "Florence Kelley and Women's Activism in the Progressive Era," 402-413

Begin: Rose Cohen, *Out of the Shadow*, Part One, Chapter XIV, 57-65 and Part Two, pp. 69-145.

Discussion Board Question: What did women's activism accomplish—for the women themselves, and for other women or the society at large?

Thursday, March 11, 2021 Immigrant New York City Women

Cohen, *Out of the Shadow*, Part Three and Four, pp. 149-270.

Discussion Board Question: How does Cohen's life exemplify some of the points made by Orleck and Yung? How does gender shape the immigration experience?

Week 8 Tuesday, March 16, 2021 Polyglot Women in Industrial America

Aneliese Orleck, "From the Russian Pale to Labor Organizing in New York City," pp. 386-400;

Judy Yung, "Unbound Feet: From China to San Francisco's Chinatown"

Discussion Board Question: *What are the commonalities and divergences in Jewish and Chinese immigrant women's experiences?*

Thursday, March 18, 2021 Film Time

Cohen Out of the Shadow, Part Five. 271-313.

Viewing: "Ida B. Wells, A Passion for Justice"

Week 9 Tuesday, March 23, 2021 Consumer Culture and Sexuality: Womb Furie & Wandering Wombs

Rachel Maines, *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*, Chs. 1-3, 1-42, 48-61; 72-81, 93-110.

In Class: Describe some of the ideas of female bodies and female sexuality that circulate in Western thought. How have women's bodies and sexuality been pathologized? How does mass consumer culture help redefine women's sexuality?

Thursday, March 25, 2021 Feminisms: Second Wave

Viewing: You're Beautiful When You're Angry

Second Paper Due

SPRING/BREAK/WELLNESS WEEK

10 Tuesday, April 6, 2021 "Woman Can Never Call Herself Free Until She is Mistress of Her Own Body"

Ellen Chesler, *Woman of Valor: Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement in America*, pp. 56-73; 97-104; 128-132; 138-143; and 150-172; and (handout)

Margaret Sanger, "To Mothers—Our Duty," (1911); and "Morality and Birth Control" (1918).

Discussion Board Question: *Why did Sanger believe in women's control of their reproduction, and what did her opponents argue?*

10 Thursday, April 8, 2021 Painted Ladies Made Good

Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture*, "Beauty Culture and Women's Commerce," pp. 61-96, and "Promoting the Made-Up Woman," pp. 134-166, (handout)

Discussion Board Question: *What opportunities did "beauty culture" give women? How were cosmetics marketed?*

11 Tuesday, April 13, 2021 Women and the Great Depression

Jacqueline Jones, "Harder Times: The Great Depression," 512-514; Quirke on Dorothea Lange

Meridel Le Sueur, *Ripening*, "Women on the Breadlines," pp. 137-143 and "I Was Marching," pp. 158-174;

and Mary Heaton Vorse, *Rebel Pen*, "Women Stand By Their Men," pp. 175-178; and "The Emergency Brigade at Flint," pp. 181-185.

Discussion Board Question: *How did the economic crisis of the Great Depression limit women's options?*

Thursday, April 15, 2021 Rosies—The War Hero Created Then Destroyed

Viewing: *Rosie the Riveter*

12 Tuesday, April 20, 2021 Women during War

Valerie Matsumoto, "Japanese American Women During WWII," 537-542; Beth Bailey and David Farber, "Prostitutes on Strike: The Women of Hotel Street During WWII," 544-552;

Quirke, *AS3462*, S21, page. 6

Discussion Board Questions: How did World War II shake up traditional conceptions of womanhood?

Thursday, April 22, 2021 The Post-War Shake-Up

Daniel Horowitz, Betty Friedan and the Origins of Feminism in Cold War America,” 577-586, and; Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Ch. 1, “The Problem That Has No Name.”

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2018/01/15/577675950/meet-the-fearless-cook-who-secretly-fed-and-funded-the-civil-rights-movement>

Discussion Question: What was the “feminine mystique?” Did women fall for it, (which women) and if so, why?

13 Tuesday, April 27, 2021 Consciousness Raised

Sara Evans, “Tomorrow’s Consciousness and the Future of Women,” 390-415; (handout)

Laura Kaplan, *The Story of Jane*, 195-217; (handout)

National Organization of Women, “Statement of Purpose;” Barbara Mehrhof and Pamela Kearon, “Rape an Act of Terror,” and “Rape Crisis Center Collective;” and Susan Lydon, “The Politics of Orgasm.” (handout); Carol Hanish “Miss America Pageant:” and Redstockings, “Manifesto,” and Pat Mainardi, “The Politics of Housework,” 694-703; **All WA**

Discussion Question: What angered women in the 1970s about their status? How did women build a movement?

Thursday, April 29, 2021 Consciousness Piqued: Growing Pains

Alice Echols, “Taming of the Id: 1968-1983,” pp. 50-66; (handout)

National Black Feminist Organization, “Statement of Purpose,” (handout) and Radicalesbians, “What is a Lesbian,” 698-701; Jennie Chavez, “The Double Oppression of Mexican American Women,” 704-705; “Women in the Asian Movement,” 705; “The Combahee River Collective Statement,” 707-711.

Discussion Question: How does feminism splinter or ramify in the 1970s?

14 Tuesday, May 4, 2021 Thursday, May 6, 2021 Women Against Women: Feminism Under Attack

Susan Douglass *Where the Girls Are: Growing up Female With the Mass Media*, Ch 8 “I am Woman Hear Me Roar,” 163-191 Ch 11, “Narcissism as Liberation and Ch. 12, “I’m Not a Feminist, But” 245-294; (handouts)

and Phyllis Schlafly, “The Thoughts of One Who Loves Life as a Woman,” 714-718. **WA**

Discussion Question: How did the media undermine feminism, according to Douglass? What challenges did feminism face in the 1970s? What were its successes?

Thursday, May 6, 2021 Last Class Contemporary Feminisms

Readings and Questions: TBA

Tuesday May 11, 2021 Make Up Class

Tuesday May 18, 2021 Final



