

San Francisco State University
History 467
Women in the United States to 1890
Professor Sherry Katz

Fall Semester 2006

Day and Time: TTh 2:10-3:25

Room: HSS 151

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00-1:00 and by appointment

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This course is one of the electives in the Segment III Cluster: "Women – Half the World."

Course Description:

American women differ by race, class, ethnicity, age, culture, sexual orientation, family situation, and region. Yet gender remains a significant category for historical study. This lecture/discussion course examines the history of diverse groups of women in the United States, from pre-Columbian times to the 1890s. The course also explores changes in gender ideology over time, and through this process, enables students to think about the social construction of gendered norms and expectations. We will analyze the many factors that reshaped both gender ideology and women's lived experiences, including economic, political, and cultural shifts. We will discuss the ways in which women were instrumental in shaping their own destinies, as individuals and through organized movements. We will explore the definitions of feminism constructed by diverse women and analyze the influences of feminist movements on American society. We will not only analyze relations between the sexes, but we will also examine relations among women who represent diverse cultures, divergent goals, and unequal power. Finally, the course will introduce students to the methodologies of women's history and to the often hidden ways that gender has shaped many aspects of the American past.

Fundamental to the course are five key concepts: that gender has been socially constructed; that the group woman is not a homogenous one; that various interconnected systems of power have shaped women's lives; that women have been historical actors active in constructing their own lives and gender ideologies; that gender (like race and class) is an important category of historical analysis essential to understanding relations of power in society.

Required Texts:

The following four books are required for the course. One is a textbook complete with both visual and written primary sources (historical documents), another is a collection of both scholarly articles and primary sources, one is an autobiography, and one is a novella. These books can be purchased at the SFSU Bookstore. All readings are also on reserve at the SFSU Reserve Book Room in the J. Paul Leonard Library.

Ellen DuBois and Lynn Duménil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents*

Linda Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart, eds., *Women's America: Refocusing the Past* (6th ed.)

Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written By Herself* (enlarged edition,

edited and with an introduction by Jean Fagan Yellin)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wall-Paper*

Course Requirements:

All students are expected to attend the lectures, come to class prepared to discuss the readings, and participate in class discussions. Students will write two analytical essays, based on course readings and lectures: the first (6-8 pages) will be due in class on Tuesday, October 10 and the second (8-10 pages) will be due during the scheduled final exam period on Thursday, December 21, 1:30-3:30, in HSS 151. Students will also complete a book review (6-8 pages) of an historical monograph related to course material (and approved by the instructor), due in class on Tuesday, November 28. Essay questions will be distributed in class at least two weeks before the due dates. Book review guidelines will be available in class on Thursday, September 14 and monographs must be chosen (with instructor assistance) by Tuesday, October 24.

Grades will be assigned as follows: class attendance and participation, 20%; first essay, 25%; book review, 25%; second essay, 30%. If you fail to complete any one of the three major written assignments you will receive a failing course grade. Late papers will be accepted only in emergencies (with a reasonable, documented excuse). Please consult the instructor as soon as possible if it should be necessary for you to miss a paper deadline; it is your responsibility to make arrangements for turning in the assignment at a later time.

Graduate students will be required to complete one other assignment – to read an additional historical monograph related to course themes and to report on its arguments in a 15-minute oral presentation.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

Any incident of plagiarism or cheating is grounds for failure on that assignment. In addition, it is my policy to report incidents of plagiarism and cheating to the proper campus-wide agency. For more on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, including the range of penalties, refer to the University Bulletin (Policies and Regulations). Plagiarism includes direct copying of another's work; but can also include copying parts of another's work or summarizing without proper citation. If in doubt, cite. *If you have any questions about proper citation or paraphrasing, ask.* Cheating is a violation of the rules of the course that usually involves passing off someone else's work as your own. You may certainly study with others in the class, but the take-home examinations and papers must be the products of your own, individual work.

Topics and Reading Assignments:

Week 1: Introduction to the Course and to the Field of Women's History
Aug. 29 Course Overview and Requirements;
Student Introductions
Aug. 31 Conceptualizing U.S. Women's and Gender History: A Brief Overview
of the History of the Field

Readings: Kerber, introduction (pp. 1-23).

DuBois, introduction for students (pp. xxv-xxxiii).

- Week 2: Native-American Women from Pre-Columbian Times Through the Colonial Period
- Sept. 5 Gender Roles and Daily Lives: Native-American Women's Diversity in Pre-Columbian Times
- Sept. 7 Patterns of Contact, Conquest, Acculturation and Resistance: the Impact of Euro-American Contact on Native American Women; Racialized Assumptions Regarding Native American Women in Colonial Thought
- Readings: DuBois (pp. 2-14, 38-49).
Kerber: "Traditional America" (pp. 25-28); Plane, "Creating a Blended Household" (pp. 29-37); Brooks, "Negotiating Captivity" (pp. 38-45).
- Week 3: Euro-American Women in the Colonial Period: Cultural and Regional Diversity
- Sept. 12 Gender Ideology and Women's Lives in the Colonial Northeast
- Sept. 14 Gender Ideology and Women's Lives in the Colonial Chesapeake
*** Distribute Guidelines for Book Review of Historical Monograph ***
- Readings: DuBois (pp. 14-22, 24-28, 30-37, 50-56, 57-63).
Kerber: Docs: Law of Domestic Relations (pp. 55-58); Norton, "Gender Distinctions" (pp. 69-78); Dayton, "Abortion and Gender Relations" (pp. 97-113).
- Week 4: African-American Women in the Colonial Period
- Sept. 19: The Experiences of African-American Women: From Indenture to Slavery;
Racialized African-American Women in Colonial Thought and Culture
- Sept. 21: Colonial Women's Household Labor: Diversity in the Patterns of Everyday Life
- Readings: DuBois (pp. 22-24, 56-57, 63-64).
Kerber: Berkin, "African-American Women" (pp. 59-66); Docs: Laws of Slavery (pp. 67-68); Ulrich, "Ways of Her Household" (pp. 45-54).
- Week 5: From Goodwives to Disorderly Women
- Sept. 26: Documentary Film: "A Midwife's Tale;"
*** Distribute First Analytical Essay Questions ***

Sept. 28: Disorderly Women: Perceived Dangers of Women's Piety and Power

Readings: DuBois, (pp. 28-33).
Kerber: Doc: Trial of Anne Hutchinson (pp. 79-82); Karlsen, "Devil in the Shape of a Woman" (pp. 83-96).

Week 6: Women and Gender in the American Revolution

Oct. 3: Women in the Revolution;
** *Discuss First Analytical Essay Questions* **

Oct. 5: Revolutionary Legacies: Continuities and Changes in Gender Ideology
and

Women's Roles in Public Life: Revolutionary Claims, Evangelical Religion, and Republican Motherhood

Readings: DuBois (pp. 70-130).
Kerber: Docs: Supporting the Revolution (pp. 114-118); Kerber, "Republican Mother and the Woman Citizen" (pp. 119-127).

Week 7: Reframing Gender in the Antebellum Period: Early Industrial Capitalism, the New Middle-Class, and Women's Roles

Oct. 10: Separate Spheres Ideology: True Womanhood, Christian Motherhood, and New Middle-Class Values;

*** **FIRST ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE IN CLASS** ***

Oct. 12: Middle-Class Domesticity in a Market Age

Readings: DuBois (pp. 136-145, 182-189).
Kerber: Industrializing America (pp. 129-131); Boydston, "Pastoralization of Housework" (pp. 153-164); Rosenberg, "Female World of Love and Ritual" (pp. 168-183).

Week 8: Women and Wage Labor in Industrializing America

Oct. 17: The Lowell Mill Girls: Wage Work Among Young Women of the New Middle-Class

Oct. 19: Urban Working-Class Women, Poverty, and Wage Earning; Working-Class Immigrant Cultures, Gender Ideology, and Women's Roles

Readings: DuBois (pp. 146-154, 169-174, 190-193, 197).
Kerber: Doc: Working Conditions (pp. 165-167).
Begin Jacobs (pp. vii-94).

Week 9: Race, Class, and Gender in the Antebellum South

Oct. 24: White Women in the Slave South: Plantation Mistresses and Yeoman Farm Women;

*** Monograph Selections for Book Review Due in Class ***

Oct. 26: African-American Women in Antebellum Slave and Free Black Communities;
Racialized Gender Ideologies in the Antebellum South

Readings: DuBois (pp. 154-168, 175-181, 194-197).
Kerber: Docs: Testimony of Slave Women (pp. 132-134); Block, "Sexual Coercion" (pp. 135-145); McCurry, "Yeoman Households" (pp. 145-152).
Jacobs (pp. 95-242).

Week 10: Antebellum Women in Public Life: Reform, Antislavery, and Women's Rights

Oct. 31: Widening Spheres: Women in Antebellum Social Reform and Abolitionism

Nov. 2: Women's Wrongs and Women's Rights;
Women's Sexuality in Transition: Reproductive Control, Abortion,
And Questions of Social Morality and Women's Power

Readings: DuBois (pp. 202-203, 213-228, 245-250).
Kerber: Docs: Mohr, "Abortion in America" (pp. 183-192); Claiming Rights I (pp. 193-200); Wellman, "Seneca Falls" (pp. 200-213);
Docs: Claiming Rights II (pp. 214-218); Painter, "Sojourner Truth" (pp. 218-219).
Finish Jacobs (pp. 243-274).

Week 11 Western Expansion and Civil War

Nov. 7: Euro-American, Native-American, and Mexican-American Women in the Transformation of the Trans-Mississippi West

Nov. 9: The Civil War's Impact on Women and Gender

Readings: DuBois (pp. 203-213, 228-235, 236-244, 251-263).
Kerber: Faust, "Confederate Women" (pp. 220-232); Docs: Counterfeit Freedom (pp. 233-235).

Week 12: Reconstruction, Redemption, and the Meanings of Freedom

Nov. 14: Black and White Women in the New South;
The Gendered Dimensions of Black Migration to the Urban North

Nov. 16: Documentary Film: “Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice”
Readings: DuBois (pp. 270-272, 277-283, 306-310).
Kerber: Hunter, “Reconstruction” (pp. 235-246); Schechter, “Ida B. Wells” (pp. 268-274); Hine, “Inner Lives of Black Women” (pp. 299-302).

Week 13: ** Thanksgiving Recess**

Nov. 21: No Class Meeting

Nov. 23: No Class Meeting

Week 14: Women’s Rights and the Struggle for Woman Suffrage, 1865-1900

Nov. 28 Documentary Film: “One Woman, One Vote;”

***** BOOK REVIEW DUE IN CLASS *****

Nov. 30: Women’s Citizenship and the Struggle for the Vote

Readings: DuBois (pp. 272-276, 361-365).

Kerber: Docs: Reconsidering the Law (pp. 247-252); Docs: Women’s Centennial Agenda (pp. 265-268).

Week 15: The Triumph of Industrial Capitalism and Its Consequences:

Class, Culture, and Gender in Urban America, 1870s-1890s

Dec. 5: Immigrant, Working-Class Women, Wage Work, and the Family Economy;

Class Conflict, Labor Organization, and Women;

**** Distribute Second Analytical Essay Questions ****

Dec. 7: Leisure-Class Women: Education, Professional Employment, and the “Social Claim;”

Organized Womanhood and Social Reform: Women’s Clubs, the WCTU, and the Emergence of New Womanhood

Readings: DuBois (pp. 283-305, 311-333, 352-361, 386-399).

Kerber: Sichertman (pp. 252-264).

Gilman, read entire novella (pp. 7-62).

Week 16: The Consolidation of the West and the Crisis of the 1890s

Dec. 12: Intercultural Relations and Women’s Lives in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1865-1900;

Women Reformers and Federal Indian Policy

Dec. 14: Women and the Economic and Political Crisis of the 1890s: The Pullman

Strike, the Populist Revolt, and the Emerging Vision of the
Welfare State;

*** Course Wrap-Up and Discussion of Second Analytical Essay
Questions ***

Readings: DuBois (pp. 340-352, 361-385).
Kerber: Docs: Claiming an Education (pp. 281-286).

***** SECOND ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE IN CLASS*****

During the Scheduled Final Examination Period: Thursday, December 21,
1:30-3:30, in HSS 151.