

San Francisco State University  
History 468  
Women in the United States: 1890 to the Present  
Professor Sherry Katz

Spring Semester 2007

Day and Time: MWF 2:10-3:00

Room: HSS 151

Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday, 12:00-1:00, and by appointment

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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 modern United States, from the 1890s to the present. 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 also examine the ways in which the expansion of state responsibility for social welfare was both shaped by and had impacts on women and gender ideology. 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 six books are required for the course. One is a collection of both historical documents (primary sources) and scholarly articles, two are memoirs, one is a biography, and two are historical monographs. 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. Please note that some additional readings are available only on electronic reserve (via the SFSU library website, with the password – womansuffrage).

Linda Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart, eds., *Women's America: Refocusing the Past* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
Rose Cohen, *Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Girlhood on the Lower East Side*

Susan Glenn, *Female Spectacle: The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism*  
Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar*  
Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fanny Lou Hamer*  
Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*

Course Requirements:

All students are expected to attend the lectures, come to class prepared to discuss the readings, and participate in class discussions. There will be a take-home midterm exam (6-8 pages) due in class on Monday, March 12; a paper (6-8 pages) due in class on Friday, May 4; and a take-home final exam (8-10 pages) due during the scheduled final exam period on Friday, May 25, 1:30-3:00, in HSS 151. Both exams will be in essay format; exam questions will be distributed in class at least two weeks before the due dates. The paper will be based on an oral history project and guidelines for the paper will be available in class on Friday, Feb. 9.

Grades will be assigned as follows: class attendance and participation, 20%; midterm, 25%; paper, 25%; final, 30%. If you fail to complete any one of the three major written assignments you will receive a failing course grade. Late exams/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 an exam or paper deadline; it is your responsibility to make arrangements for turning in the assignment at a later time.

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  
Jan. 24: Course Overview and Requirements;  
Student Introductions  
Jan. 26: Conceptualizing U.S. Women's and Gender History: A Brief Overview  
of the History of the Field  
  
Readings: Kerber, intro. (pp. 1-23).

Week 2: New Women, New Workers: Working-Class Women, Wage Labor, and Union Activism, 1890-1920

- Jan. 29: Women and Gender to 1890: The Emergence of the New Woman; Patterns of Work Among Wage-Earning Women and Their Families  
Jan. 31: The “New” Working-Class Woman: Labor Militance, Unionization, and Working-Class Women’s Cultures;  
Feb. 2: Documentary Film: “Women of Summer”

Readings: Kerber: Orleck (pp. 310-327); Doc: Newman (pp. 342-344).  
Cohen, introduction and parts 1-3 (pp. ix-xxii and 9-207).

Week 3: New Women, Social Reform, and the Early Welfare State, 1890-1920

- Feb. 5: New Women, Social Reform, and Professional Identity; Maternalism, Feminism, Social Justice, and Social Control in Women’s Reform Activism  
Feb. 7: Cooperation and Conflict in Female Reform Coalitions: Protective Labor Legislation and Mothers’ Pensions  
Feb. 9: Complex Responses to Reform: Perspectives of Social Welfare Clients;  
*\*\* Distribute Guidelines for Oral History Paper \*\**

Readings: Kerber: Sklar (pp. 327-339); Docs: Muller (pp. 340-341), Adkins (pp. 369-370).  
Cohen, part 4 (pp. 211-313).  
Electronic Reserve: Katz, “Socialist Women and Progressive Reform” and Addams, “Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements.”

Week 4: Women of Color: Race, Class, and Gender in the Era of “Jim Crow”

- Feb. 12: Racialized Women and Gender in American Thought and Culture; Experiences of Women of Color in the South and West: Work, Family, Community, and Politics  
Feb. 14: Women of Color in Progressive Reform: Civil Rights, Female “Respectability,” Feminism, and Economic Opportunity  
Feb. 16: Documentary Film: “Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice”

Readings: Kerber: Hunter (235-246); Schechter (268-274); Pascoe (pp. 275-280); Docs: Tape and Zitkala-Sa (281-286); Gilmore (pp. 286-296); Hine (pp. 299-302); Yung (pp. 302-310); Gordon (pp. 345-357).

Week 5: Urban Pleasures and Dangers: Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Modern Mass Culture and Leisure

- Feb. 19: "Putting on Style:" Working Women and Commercial Amusements  
 Feb. 21: New Womanhood in Mass Culture: Representations of Gender in Theater and Film;  
 Feb. 23: Female Performers and Modern Feminism
- Readings: Glenn, introduction and chaps. 1-4 (pp. 1-125).  
 Electronic Reserve: Peiss, "Putting on Style: Working Women and Leisure."

- Week 6: Votes for Women: The Woman Suffrage Campaign, 1890-1920  
 Feb. 26: Building a Mass Coalition: Diversity, Cooperation, and Conflict in the Suffrage Movement;  
 The Significance of the American West in the Development of the Suffrage Movement;  
 \*\* *Distribute Midterm Exam Questions* \*\*  
 Feb. 28: Modern Arguments, Strategies, and Methods of Influence in the Last Phase of the Suffrage Campaign;  
 Equality and Difference: Complexities in the Conceptualization of Women's Rights and Citizenship  
 Mar. 2: Documentary Film: "One Woman, One Vote"
- Readings: Kerber, Docs: Reconstruction Amendments (247), Minor (251-252), Mackenzie (365-367), Equal Suffrage Amendment (367-368); DuBois (358-364).  
 Glenn, chap. 5 (pp. 126-254).  
 Electronic Reserve: Terborg-Penn, "African American Women and the Woman Suffrage Movement."

- Week 7: Radical Women, Birth Control, and Modern Feminism  
 Mar. 5: \*\* *Discuss Midterm Exam Questions* \*\*  
 Mar. 7: The Challenge of "Sex Rights:" Racial Feminists and the Early Birth Control Movement  
 Mar. 9: Defining Modern Feminism in the 1910s
- Readings: Kerber: Mohr (pp. 183-192); Docs: Comstock Law (pp. 250), Sanger (pp. 370-378).  
 Electronic Reserve: Eastman, "Now We Can Begin" and Cott, "The Birth of Feminism."

- Week 8: Women's Emancipation Deferred: The Fate of New Women in the 1920s
- Mar. 12: The Flapper: Consumer Culture, Sexuality, and Modern Womanhood;  
 "Mrs. Consumer:" Companionate Marriage and the Modern Bungalow;  
**\*\*\* TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM DUE IN CLASS \*\*\***
- Mar. 14: Immigrants and Migrants: Black, Latino and Asian Women in the 1920s;  
 Women of Color and Modern Womanhood
- Mar. 16: Possible Documentary Films: "The Flapper Story" or  
 "Margaret Mead: An Observer Observed"
- Readings: Kerber: Brumberg (pp. 390-398); Cowan (pp. 399-410).  
 Glenn, chaps. 6-7 and conclusion (pp. 155-223).  
 Electronic Reserve: Ruiz, "Star Struck: Acculturation, Adolescence, and  
 Mexican American Women."
- Week 9: Changing Political and Economic Contexts: From the Conservative Times of the  
 1920s to the Hard Times of the 1930s
- Mar. 19: Women's Activism and Gender Ideology in the Context of Political  
 Reaction;  
 After Suffrage: Feminism, Citizenship, and the Diversity of Female  
 Reform
- Mar. 21: Women and Economic Hardship During the Great Depression
- Mar. 23: Grassroots Responses to the Great Depression: Gender and Cultural  
 Diversity in the Militant Union Movement: A Case Study of  
 Chicana Workers in California
- Readings: Cott (pp. 379-389); Hall (pp. 410-422); Reagan (pp. 423-428); and  
 Jones (pp. 429-432); Doc: Dollinger (pp. 433-435).
- Week 10: Women and Gender in the Great Depression and New Deal of the 1930s
- Mar. 26: Women Reformers and Gender Issues in the New Deal and National  
 Welfare State: the Construction of Social Security and Labor Law
- Mar. 28: Possible Documentary Films: "Union Maids," "With Babies and Banners,"  
 or "Eleanor Roosevelt"
- Mar. 30: **\*\* Cesar Chavez Day \*\*** - No Class Meeting
- Readings: Kerber: Kessler-Harris (pp. 435-447); Cook (447-454);  
 Lerner (pp. 454-458).  
 Houston, begin reading if possible.
- Week 11 Women and World War II: Opportunities and Hardships
- Apr. 2: Documentary Film: "The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter"

- Apr. 4: A Watershed for Women? Work and Gender Ideology During WWII; Race, Gender, and the Double V Campaign
- Apr. 6 Japanese-American Women and the Internment Experience
- Readings: Kerber: Matsumoto (pp. 459-465); Milkman (pp. 466-477).  
Houston, read entire book.  
Electronic Reserve: Anderson, "Persistent Discrimination Against Black Women During World War II."

Week 12: \*\* Spring Break \*\*  
Apr. 9, 11, and 13: No Class Meetings

- Week 13: Women and Gender in the Culture of the Cold War, 1946-1960
- Apr. 16: The Cold War and Gender Ideology: Gender Roles, the Family, Sexuality, and the "Containment" of Communism
- Apr. 18: Cultural Contradictions: The "Feminine Mystique," Consumerism, and Women's Work in the Cold War Era
- Apr. 20: Gender and Progressive Politics in the Cold War Era: Feminism, Civil Rights, Labor, and Peace
- Readings: Rosen, preface and part 1 (pp. xi-xvi and 3-59).  
Kerber: Horowitz (pp. 481-495); Lerner (pp. 496-500); Freedman (pp. 500-507); Cahn (pp. 508-517); Swerdlow (pp. 517-532).  
Electronic Reserve: Meyerowitz, "Competing Images of Women in Postwar Mass Culture."

- Week 14: Women in the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1950s and 1960s
- Apr. 23: Women's Participation and Gender Ideology in the Modern Civil Rights Movement
- Apr. 25: Civil Rights, Gender, and the War on Poverty
- Apr. 27: Possible Documentary Films: "Fund: the Story of Ella Baker" or "America's War on Poverty: Given a Chance"
- Readings: Kerber: Payne (pp. 532-536); Kornbluh (pp. 552-560).  
Lee, read entire book.

- Week 15: The Resurgence of Feminism in the 1960s and 1970s
- Apr. 30: Women's Rights and Women's Liberation: Central Strands of

Feminism in the 1960s

May 2: The Personal Becomes Political: Naming the “Hidden Injuries of Sex”

May 4: Conceptual Breakthroughs: the Social Construction of Gender;

\*\*\* **ORAL HISTORY PAPER DUE IN CLASS** \*\*\*

Readings: Rosen, parts 2 and 3 (pp. 63-226).

Kerber: Docs: Murray (pp. 537-546), Hoyt and Taylor (pp. 546-550), Civil Rights Act (pp. 550-552); Bailey (pp. 560-568); Douglas (pp. 569-572); Docs: Friedan (pp. 573-576), Hanisch (pp. 576-578), Redstockings (pp. 578-580), Weiss (pp. 591-593); De Hart (pp. 598-612).

Recommended Reading: Rosen, chap. 7 (pp. 227-260).

Week 16: The Resurgence of Feminism II: Proliferation and Backlash, 1970s and 1980s

May 7: Toward a More Inclusive Sisterhood: the Proliferation of Feminisms;  
\*\* *Distribute Final Exam Questions* \*\*

May 9: The Institutionalization of Feminism in Law and Society;  
Feminism and Popular Culture

May 11: Opposition to Feminism: the Sexual Politics of the New Right

Readings: Rosen, part 4 (pp. 263-340).

Kerber: Docs: Radicalesbians (pp. 580-582), Chavez (pp. 583-584), Asian women (pp. 584-586), Combahee (pp. 586-590), Schlafly (pp. 593-597); De Hart (pp. 612-615); Docs: ERA (pp. 624), Education (pp. 625-627), Frontiero (pp. 628-629), Roe and Casey (pp. 630-636), Vietnam (pp. 637-641), Rostker (pp. 641-643), Vinson (pp. 643-645), VAWA (pp. 646-647), Changing workplace (pp. 657-660).

Week 17: Where do we go from here? Contemporary Controversies Regarding Gender and Global Feminism

May 14: Current Issues: the Unfinished Agenda of American Feminism

May 16: The United Nations, NGOs, and the Construction of Global Feminism;  
Women’s Rights as Human Rights: Rethinking Rights, Equality, and  
Citizenship;

Course Wrap Up and Final Review

Readings: Rosen, epilogue (pp. 340-344).

Kerber: De Hart (pp. 615-620); Francke (pp. 647-656); Bordo (pp. 660-663); Docs: Rethinking marriage (pp. 664-669); Lakoff (pp. 670-676); Adair (pp. 677-681); Whalen (pp. 682-691); De Hart and Lewis (pp. 691-696); Evans (pp. 697-704).

**\*\*\* TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAMINATION \*\*\***

Due During the Scheduled Final Examination Period: Friday, May 25,  
1:30-3:00, in HSS 151.