

**Historical Scholarship on U.S. History:  
Gendered Perspectives on the Twentieth Century**  
HIGR265C

Prof. Rebecca Plant  
Spring 2009

Class Room: HSS 6008  
Class time: Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. -1:50 p.m.  
Office hours: Wednesdays, 2-4

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### **Course Description**

Taking as its starting point Joan Scott's influential 1986 article, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," this course seeks to explore to what extent attention gender has reshaped our understanding of twentieth-century U.S. history. Specifically, we will be exploring how historians' use of a gendered analysis has shed new light on central themes and issues in U.S. history, such as constructions of citizenship, the rise of the welfare state, the evolution of racial ideologies and systems of racial dominance, and U.S. imperialism. In addition, we will be reading several works that offer new perspectives on the twentieth-century suffrage and feminist movements.

While introducing you to important readings in the field of U.S. gender history, this course is also designed to encourage you to begin thinking about presenting historical arguments and primary documents to undergraduates. To that end, we will spend the last hour or so of most seminars discussing a primary source and its pedagogical value.

### **Course Requirements**

**Participation** (20%) is a crucial component of the course. Each of you will take responsibility for introducing the main reading (not including primary sources) for three weeks during the quarter. This entails presenting the reading in manner that situates it historiographically, identifies the theoretical and methodological approach employed, and reviews the major arguments and conclusions. You should also be prepared to offer an evaluative critique of the book: Is the evidence sound and are the arguments convincing? Is the work well crafted? What does the author do particularly well or poorly? As part of your presentation, you are also required to come up with three questions designed to stimulate a substantive discussion. These questions should be circulated to the class and instructor via email attachment by 11 a.m. on Tuesday, so that everyone will have had time to read and contemplate them prior to our meeting.

**Reviews** (30%) For the three weeks in which you are presenting, you are also required to write a 2-3 page book review. You can either turn these in on the day of your presentation or, if you prefer to write the review after our discussion, the following week.

**Review essay (50%)** Your major assignment is a 12-15 page paper consisting of a review essay of a selection of works (about 4-5) on topic of your choosing. You are free to construct the essay to incorporate some of the individual reviews you will have written by that point. Each student should meet individually with me during the first three weeks of the quarter to determine their topic and to finalize a list of works. Like all good review essays, the paper should identify a question or set of questions that a number of scholars have grappled with and then proceed to describe and analyze the individual works. The essay should end by delineating some broad conclusions as to what readers can glean from the body of works discussed, and what type of research agenda is needed for the future. Your review essay should be modeled along the lines of those appearing in *Reviews in American History*.

**Books** (available at the UCSD bookstore)

Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies*, Hill and Wang, 1999

Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*, Harvard University (Belknap) Press, 1995

Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*, University of North Carolina Press, 1996

Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization, A Cultural History of Race and Gender in the United States, 1880-1917*, University of Chicago Press, 1996

Allison Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008

Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*, University of California Press, 2008

Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism*, University of Massachusetts Press, 2000

Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace*, Harvard University Press, 2006

## **Schedule**

April 1: Introductions

April 8: Conceptualizing Gender History

- Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91: 5 (1986): 1053-1075

- Joanne Meyerowitz, "A History of 'Gender,'" *American Historical Review* 113: 5 (2008): 1346-56
- Joan Scott, "Unanswered Questions," *American Historical Review* 113: 5 (2008): 1422-29
- Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17: 4 (1991): 773-797
- Regina Kunzel, "Pulp Fiction and Problem Girls: Reading and Rewriting Single Pregnancy in the Postwar United States," *American Historical Review* 100: 5 (1995): 1465-1487

#### April 15: Women's Rights, Gendered Citizenship and the State

- Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies*
- Primary source: Excerpts from Julia Smith, *Abby Smith and Her Cows*, 1877  
<http://sniggle.net/Experiment/index.php?entry=01Nov07>

#### April 22: Gender and the Rise of the Welfare State

- Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*
- Primary source: Excerpts from Molly Ladd-Taylor, ed., *Raising a Baby by the Book: Mothers' Letters to the Children's Bureau, 1915-1932*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, pp. 74-98, 128-132

#### April 29: Women, Reproduction and Imperialism

- Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*
- In class: View "La Operación," dir. Ana Maria Garcia, 1982 (40 min.)

#### May 6: Gender, Race and Politics in the Progressive Era

- Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*
- Primary source: Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Leopard's Spots*, 1901  
<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/proslav/dixonhp.html>
- In class: View part of D.W. Griffith, *Birth of a Nation*

### May 13: Race, Manhood and Masculinity

- Toby Ditz, “The New Men’s History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power: Some Remedies from Early American Gender History,” *Gender & History* 16:1 (April 2004): 1-35
- Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*
- Primary source TBA

### May 20: Reconceptualizing the Suffrage Movement

- Allison L. Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age*
- Primary source TBA

### May 27: The Origins of Second Wave Feminism

- Daniel Horowitz, *Betty Friedan and the Making of “The Feminine Mystique”*
- Primary source: “The Problem that Has No Name,” chapter 1 of Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963)  
<http://www.h-net.org/%7ehst203/documents/friedan1.html>

### June 3: Gender, Race and the Workplace

- Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*
- Ruth Milkman, “Women’s History and the Sears Case,” *Feminist Studies* 12:2 (Summer 1986): 375-400
- Alice Kessler-Harris, “Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Sears, Roebuck and Company: A Personal Account,” *Radical History Reviews* 35 (April 1986): 57-70