

**Historical Scholarship on U.S. History:
Families, Sexual Difference and the State**
HIGR265C

Prof. Rebecca Plant
Spring 2011

Class Room: HSS 6008
Class time: Tuesdays, 9:30-12:30
Office hours: Thursday, 9:00-11:00

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Course Description

This course seeks to introduce students to a range of readings that focus on the rise of the state in the twentieth-century U.S. and how state authority has permeated and shaped the so-called “private” realm. In particular, we will be exploring how the implementation of laws and policies—on the federal, state and local levels—have served to regulate gender norms, familial life, and sexuality. Part of our concern will be to develop a nuanced understanding of state power, one that does not view “the state” as a monolith, but rather as a complex and multifaceted entity that encompasses varied and competing constituencies. Our other main focus is to investigate changing ideals and practices surrounding sex, gender, family life—especially as concerns marriage and parenthood—through the lens of changing laws, policies, and government programs. Of major concern will be the shifting relationship between individual identity (sexual, gendered, familial, and ethnic/racial) and the construction of citizenship and non-citizenship.

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, in addition to reading a monograph each week, we will also be reading (and sometimes viewing) primary sources. We will spend the last hour or so of most seminars discussing strategies for incorporating arguments/historical material drawn from the monograph into lectures, and analyzing primary sources for their pedagogical value.

Course Requirements

Participation (20%) is a crucial component of the course. Each of you will take responsibility for introducing the main reading for two 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 and/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 around noon on Monday, so that everyone will have had time to read and contemplate them prior to our meeting.

Reviews (30%) For the two 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 the following week, if you prefer to write the review after our discussion.

Review essay (50%) Your major assignment is a paper of 12-15 pages consisting of a review essay of a selection of works on topic of your choosing. You are free to construct the essay to draw upon some of the individual reviews you will have written by that point. Each student should meet individually with me during Weeks 3 or 4 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

Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice Progressive Era Chicago*, Cambridge University Press, 2003

George Chauncey, Jr., *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay World*, Basic Books, 1995

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

Leslie Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and the Law in the United States, 1867-1973*, University of California Press, 1998

Christopher Cappozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, Oxford University Press, 2010

Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, Princeton University Press, 2005

Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, Princeton University Press, 2009

Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*, Oxford University Press, 2008

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

Schedule

Week 1: Introductions

Week 2: Progressive Era Legal Reforms

- Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice Progressive Era Chicago*, Cambridge University Press, 2003
- Jane Addams, *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (1911), chaps. 1-2, and 4; available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15221/15221-h/15221-h.htm>

Week 3: Gender and the Rise of the Origins of the Welfare State

- Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*
- 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, 74-98, 128-132 (handout)

Week 4: Wartime Mobilization and The Expansion of State Power

- Christopher Cappozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, Oxford University Press, 2010
- Primary source TBA

Week 5: Outside the Law: The Emergence of Gay Culture

- George Chauncey, Jr., *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay World*, Basic Books, 1995
- View segment of documentary, *The Celluloid Closet* (1995)

Week 6: Regulating Reproduction: Abortion and the Law

- Leslie Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime*
- Margaret Sanger, *Woman and the New Race*, New York: Brentano's, 1920, chapter 10; available at <http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/2575249?id=2575249&n=2&s=4&res=3>)

Week 7: Sex and Citizenship: The State's Interest in Homosexuality

- Margot Canaday, *The Straight State*

- Excerpt from “The Crittenden Report: Report of the Board Appointed to Prepare and Submit Recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy for the Revision of Policies, Procedures, and Directives Dealing with Homosexuals,” reprinted in Oren M. Levi Walden, ed., *Homosexuality and the Military: A Sourcebook of Official: Uncensored U.S. Government Documents*, Diane Publishing Co., 1993 (handout)

Week 8: Race and Citizenship: Immigration Restriction, 1924-1965

- Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, Oxford University Press, 2010
- Primary source TBA

Week 9: Race, Marriage and the Law

- Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally*
- *Green v. State*, 58 Ala. 190 (Access through Lexis-Nexis, Academic, Federal and State Cases)

Week 10: Gender, Race and the Workplace since the 1950s

- Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*
- Alice Kessler-Harris, “*Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Sears, Roebuck and Company: A Personal Account*,” *Radical History Reviews* 35 (April 1986): 57-70; available on JSTOR