

American Women, American Womanhood:

Colonial Era through the Civil War

(HIUS 156)

[Prof. Rebecca Jo Plant](#)

Fall 2010

T/TR 3:30-4:50 p.m. in Center Hall 109

Course description

This course examines the history of American women from colonial times through Reconstruction. We will explore women's changing status and experiences from a range of perspectives — political, economic, legal, social and cultural. Major areas of inquiry will include: the strategies that women pursued in attempting to attain political power; their roles as producers and consumers in an evolving economy; cultural attitudes toward female sexuality and motherhood; and the relationship between gender ideologies and divisions based on race and class.

Requirements

Course requirements are: a two-page document analysis (15%), a short essay (25%), a midterm (25%), and a final examination (35%).

The midterm will consist of a series of short answer questions. The final will have identifications, short answer questions, and two essay questions. Answers to the identifications should be roughly two sentences and should identify the person, event, or term and briefly explain its significance. Short answer questions require a paragraph-long response. Essay responses should be roughly five-paragraphs.

Policy regarding late papers: I will accept late papers without penalty only if an extension is requested by email at least seven days in advance of the due date. Otherwise, a letter grade will be deducted for each day beyond the due date.

Grading scale:

97-100 A+

94-96 A

90-93 A-

87-89 B+

84-86 B

80-83 B-

77-79 C+

74-76 C
70-73 C-
Etc.

Grading for this class will not be on a scale.

Academic integrity:

I take the issue of academic integrity very seriously, and I will report suspected cases of cheating or plagiarism. Indeed, as a UCSD professor, if I suspect evidence of cheating or plagiarism in my class, I am *required* by the Office of the Academic Integrity Coordinator to file a report. (See the “Instructors’ Responsibility” and “Students’ Responsibility” sections of the [University’s Academic Integrity Statement](#).) Please do not make me take this step.

The problem of plagiarism has become more pervasive since the rise of the internet. Obviously, purchasing a paper or taking a paper (or any part of paper) off of a website violates the principles of academic integrity. But plagiarism is not limited to these flagrant examples. Any time you take a sentence, or even a phrase, from another person's work without using quotation marks and providing proper attribution, you are plagiarizing. When you write a paper, the best way to avoid plagiarism is to do all the necessary reading, including on-line reading, in advance. Once you begin to write, you should not go on-line again until the paper is done.

If you have any questions as to what is or is not plagiarism, please review the attached [MLA statement](#). If you still have questions, please contact me.

Contacting Prof. Plant

email: rplant@ucsd.edu

Office hours: Thursdays, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., HSS 6016

Books

[Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750*, New York: Random House, 1991 \(orig. 1980\)](#)

[James E. Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* \(1824\), ed. June Namias, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995 \(orig. 1992\)](#)

[Hannah W. Foster, *The Coquette* \(1797\), ed. Cathy N. Davidson, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986](#)

[Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* \(1861\), ed. L. Maria Child, New York: Dover Publications, 2001](#)

[Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges within the Anti-Slavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Short History with Documents*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2000](#)

[Drew Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*, New York: Vintage, 1997 \(orig. 1996\)](#)

Course Packet

[List of readings in course packet](#)

Weekly Schedule

9/23 [Introduction](#)

Week 1: Colonial Times

9/28 [The Gendered Order of Colonial New England](#)

9/30 [Indentured Servitude and Slavery in the Chesapeake Region](#)

- Ulrich, *Goodwives*, 3-10, 35-50, 68-86, 106-25, 146-63

Week 2: Bodies, Minds and Spirits

10/5 [Female Piety and Wickedness](#)

10/7 [Witchcraft](#)

- Reis, "The Devil, the Body, and the Feminine Soul in Puritan New England"
- Ulrich, *Goodwives*, 89-105, 167-83, 215-35

Week 3: Cultural Encounters & Hostilities

WRITING ASSSIGNMENT #1 DUE

10/12 [Native American Gender Roles & Colonists' Perceptions](#)

10/14 [Captivity Narratives](#)

- Ulrich, *Goodwives*, 202-14
- Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*, 53-160

Week 4: A Revolution for Women?

10/19 [Revolutionary Experiences and Republican Ideology](#)

10/21 [The Rise of the Novel](#)

- Foster, *The Coquette*

Week 5: The West as a Site of Gender Conflict

10/26 **MIDTERM**

10/28 Race and Gender in the West

- Hurtado, “Settler Women and Frontier Women”
- Farragher and Stansell, “Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail”
- Hurtado, “When Strangers Met”

Week 6: Middle-Class Domestic Ideology

11/2 True Women and Moral Mothers

11/4 Separate Spheres and Female Benevolence

- Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood”
- Excerpt from Beecher, *Domestic Economy*
- Lewis, “Mother’s Love”
- Excerpt from Sigourney, *Letters to Mothers*

Week 7: Women’s Work in an Industrializing Economy

11/9 Women and Wage Labor in the North

- Stansell, “Women and the Labor Movement”
- Dublin, “Women, Work and Protest in the Early Lowell Mills”
- Larcom, excerpt from *New England Girlhood*

11/11 **VETERANS' DAY**

Week 8: Women, Slavery and Abolitionism

11/16 Plantation Slavery as Gender System

11/18 Women and the Anti-Slavery Cause

- Shaw, “Mothering under Slavery”
- Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (pages TBA)

Week 9: Women's Rights and Suffrage

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

11/23 Emergence of a Women's Rights Movement

- Sklar, 1-76, docs. 3-5, 7, 14, 16, 31, 34, 39-43, 49-54

11/25 THANKSGIVING

Week 10: The Civil War and Its Aftermath

11/30 Wartime Sacrifices

12/2 Postwar Disappointments

- Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 3-79, 234-254

12/6 FINAL (3-6 p.m.)