

History 285: Women in American History

Fall 2022

Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-3:15, 227 CCC

“To make trouble was, within the reigning discourse of my childhood, something one should never do precisely because that would get one in trouble... Hence, I concluded that trouble is inevitable and the task, how best to make it, what best way to be in it.” —Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 1990

“Well-behaved women rarely make history.” —Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, 1976

Prof. Rob Harper, he/him/his

462 CCC

rharper@uwsp.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00, Thursdays, 1:00-2:00, or email me to make an appointment.

Course Description and Objectives

History 285 surveys the past experiences of women in the lands that today make up the United States. To do that, we will also explore the history of gender in America, as well as the intersecting categories of race, class, sexuality, nationality, and religion, to name a few. Along the way, you will become familiar with the art of “doing history” (asking questions about the past, using evidence to answer those questions, and evaluating historical scholarship), focusing on the distinctive ethical, political, and methodological questions involved in studying histories of women and gender.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the diverse experiences of women in America and how these experiences have changed over time
- Explain how women responded to past challenges and opportunities
- Identify and describe various kinds of evidence used to study women’s history
- Critically read and analyze historical evidence
- Recognize and explain how interpretations of women’s history have changed

Required Materials

- *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past* (WARP), ninth edition, edited by Linda K. Kerber, Jane Sherron De Hart, Cornelia Hughes Dayton, and Karissa Haugeberg (2020). Text Rental.
- All other readings and links will be posted on Canvas

Contacting Me

Helping you learn is the *most important* and *most rewarding* part of my job. If you would like to talk more about the course, please contact me by email to make an appointment. I receive and reply to email more quickly than phone messages. Please include “History 285” in the subject line and list times when you are free to meet.

How to Succeed

To do well in this class, you must attend and participate regularly, complete all assigned reading, and take effective notes on readings, lectures, and class discussions. Absences from class, either physical or mental, will bring down your grade. As with any three-credit course, you should expect to spend 6-9 hours each week on coursework outside of class. If you are worried about your progress, please contact me ASAP to discuss how to improve.

Grading

Attendance and participation:	10%
Short assignments:	10%
Reading journal:	10%
Jigsaw presentations:	10%
Unit exams:	15% each

Critical reading and notetaking

In a college-level history course, effective reading requires different approaches from those that may have worked for you in the past. For all materials in this course, ask yourself these questions:

- Who wrote this? When? For what audience? Why?
- How is this reading related to other things you've learned?
- What do you find most interesting, surprising, or challenging about this reading?
- What questions do you, as an individual, have about this topic? Is the reading answering them? What new questions does the reading make you think about?

Active reading and notetaking will enable you to remember much more, and for much longer, than rote memorization. For each assignment, take handwritten notes (research suggests that we learn more when taking notes by hand than by typing). It usually works best to read one section, then quickly summarize it in a couple of sentences or a short list of key ideas, then move on to the next section. If possible, review your notes before completing written assignments or taking tests. For every hour of reading (or listening or viewing), spend no more than 5-10 minutes taking notes. Your notes are for your eyes only (you won't hand them in).

Reading journal

Throughout the semester you will regularly write about assigned readings (and videos, podcasts, etc.) To complete each journal entry, you will write thoughtfully about the material for about 30 minutes. Specific guidelines will vary (and will be posted in Canvas), but in general you will:

1. Share your own experience of reading the assigned material (your expectations, things you found interesting or challenging, your emotional response, and/or questions and concerns).
2. Respond to specific questions provided in the assignment prompt.

In many cases you may not know the answers to the questions, and you may not understand everything in the material, and that's okay: writing thoughtfully about the material will earn full credit. I am especially interested in finding out what you think and how you feel about the assigned reading. You may find it helpful to start writing by summarizing what you read, but you will not earn credit unless you also share your thoughts about it and answer the assigned questions.

Jigsaw assignments

Beginning in unit 2, you will work in groups to complete a series of short document analyses. Your group will work together on the Canvas Discussions board to prepare your analysis and then report your findings orally, in class (you will do this once in each of the last three units).

Attendance and in-class work

Success in this class requires active face-to-face participation. Attendance and in-class assignments factor into your final grade. However, I understand that sometimes you must miss class due to circumstances beyond your control, and that sometimes you would rather not share the details with me. And I'm good with that: your reasons for missing class are your own business. With all that in mind, here are the rules:

- You may miss up to four class meetings, and four in-class assignments, without penalty, *regardless of the reason*.
- You may miss one in-class Jigsaw report, without penalty, *regardless of the reason* (this does NOT exempt you from working with your group on Canvas to prepare).
- You may not make up in-class work that you miss, *regardless of the reason*.
- If you must miss more than four class periods, for any reason, you must contact me ASAP to discuss how you can complete the course successfully.

In general, I recommend that you avoid missing class if at all possible. Keep those four free misses in reserve for real emergencies. If you get seriously ill in week 10, and have already missed four classes, this policy will not help you.

Students with Disabilities

I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the needs of students of all abilities. Students requesting accommodation must first meet with the staff of UWSP's Disabilities Services and Assistive Technology Center (DATC). I will allow no accommodation until I receive and agree to a formal plan approved by DATC.

Academic Integrity

I will report cases of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, following the policies laid out in UWSP's Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures. To learn more about academic integrity, please ask me and consult this document:

https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/2015_Aug_AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf. Students found to have committed academic misconduct will receive an F for the course.

Use of Student Work

Students often benefit from seeing examples of strong work completed by other students. For that reason, I may distribute exemplary student work, after removing all identifying information. If you object to my using your work in this way, please notify me and I will respect your wishes.

Words

Many historical sources use unfamiliar vocabulary, including racial and ethnic terms that we do not, and should not, use today. Please do not use outdated or offensive language in class or in written assignments, except in quotations. Here is a quick guide.

	Present-day terms	Some outdated and/or offensive terms
Species	Human being(s), humanity, people, person	Man, Mankind (as gender neutral)
Political and ethnic	American, American Indian, Native American, First Nations, Spanish, Angolan, Ojibwe, Cherokee, Inuit, Iowan, Latina/o,, other specific national, state, and tribal terms (more specific terms are almost always better).	Using racial terms (white, black, Indian, Asian) in place of more specific terms. Using "Hispanic" as an ethnic term
Racial (imaginary groups by which we categorize ourselves and one another)	White, Black, African American, Asian American, biracial, multiracial, métis	Tribesman, redskin, brave, chief (unless an official position), negro, squaw, wench, oriental, mulatto, mixed blood, half-breed, Caucasian, "the White Man"

Schedule of Assignments

This schedule will change. All updated reading and writing assignments will be posted on Canvas.

Week 1

Wednesday, Sept. 7: Introductions

Unit 1: Gender Trouble

Week 2: Constructing sex and gender

Monday, Sept. 12:

- Watch "The Origin of Gender" (2018), <https://youtu.be/5e12ZojkYrU>
- Watch "Judith Butler: Your Behavior Creates Your Gender" (2011), <https://youtu.be/Bo7o2LYATDc>
- Brown, "Anglo-Indian Gender Frontier," WARP 2-11
- Morgan, "Male Travelers, Female Bodies," WARP 11-20

Wednesday, Sept. 14:

- Read (and look over the very detailed graphic in) Montañez, "Beyond XX and XY: The Extraordinary Complexity of Sex Determination" (2017), <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/beyond-xx-and-xy-the-extraordinary-complexity-of-sex-determination/>
- Watch "The Mysteries of X and Y" (2022), <https://youtu.be/pgjcmZlh6tE>
- Watch "Medicine's Fixation on the Sex Binary" (2022), <https://youtu.be/GFlugrTaSmM>
- Norton, "Both Man and Woeman," WARP 37-46

Week 2: Negotiating gender and sexuality

Monday, Sept. 19:

- Manion, "Passing as a Man" (2016)
- Cleves, "A Prehistory of Same Sex Marriage" (2015)

Wednesday, Sept. 21:

- Stryker, "Trans Liberation" (2008)
- Meyerowitz, "Christine Jorgensen and the Story of How Sex Changed," WARP 489-502

Week 4: Women by law

Monday, Sept. 26:

- Karlsen, "Inheriting Women and Witchcraft Accusations," WARP 65-74
- Pascoe, "Ophelia Paquet," WARP 283-88

Wednesday, Sept. 28:

- Kerber, "Republican Mothers and Women Citizens," WARP 96-103
- Lerner, "The Meanings of Seneca Falls," WARP 178-84
- Hunter, "Reconstruction and the Meaning of Freedom," WARP 245-55

Week 5: Women pursuing equality and justice

Monday, Oct. 3:

- Gilmore, "Forging Interracial Links," WARP 264-73
- Additional readings TBA

Wednesday, Oct. 5: Unit 1 exam

Unit 2: Women at Work

Week 6: Entrepreneurship

Monday, Oct. 10:

- Carney, "Toiling in the Carolina Rice Fields," WARP 46-56
- Hartigan-O'Connor, "Abigail Stoneman," WARP 83-86
- Lucy Murphy, "'Their Women Quite Industrious Miners'" (2008)

Wednesday, Oct. 12: Jigsaw #1

Week 7: Gender and class

Monday, Oct. 17:

- Yung, "Unbound Feet," WARP 288-295
- Orleck, "Labor Organizing in New York City," WARP 311-326
- Evens, "Plainclothes Policewomen" (2021)

Wednesday, Oct. 19: Jigsaw #2

Week 8: Behind the mystique

Monday, Oct. 24:

- Nickerson, "Politically Desperate Housewives," WARP 460-71
- Stur, "WACs and Nurses in Vietnam," WARP 534-46

Wednesday, Oct. 26: Unit 2 Exam

Unit 3: Gender and Violence

Week 9: Sexual violence in early America

Monday, Oct. 31

- Warren, "'The Cause of her Grief'"
- Block, "Sexual Coercion in the Early Republic," WARP 123-33

Wednesday, Nov. 2: Jigsaw #3

Week 10: Race and gender and violence

Monday, Nov. 7:

- Glymph, "Women in Slavery," WARP 144-54
- Stremlau, "Sarah Winnemucca," WARP 184-94

Wednesday, Nov. 9: Jigsaw #4

Week 11: Gendered violence and the Civil Rights Movement

Monday, Nov. 14:

- McGuire, "Sexual Violence and the Long Civil Rights Movement," 503-17
- Watch *Ida B. Wells: A Chicago Stories Special Documentary* (2021),
<https://youtu.be/ML8XiKVStWQ>

Wednesday, Nov. 16:

- Watch *Watch Anita: Speaking Truth to Power* (2014)
- Watch key moments from the Ford/Kavanaugh hearings (2018),
<https://youtu.be/VCcELOpPZdE>
- Optional: listen to "Because of Anita," a four-part podcast including the first conversation between Anita Hill and Christine Blasey Ford (2021),
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/because-of-anita/id1585653889>

Week 12:

Monday, Nov. 21: Unit 3 Exam

Wednesday, Nov. 23: no class. Give thanks.

Unit 4: Reproductive Justice

Week 13: Pregnant Early Americans

Monday, Nov. 28:

- Plane, "Childbirth Practices among North American Indigenous Women," WARP 21-26
- Lara Freidenfelds, "Planning the Baby" (2019)

Wednesday, Nov. 30: Jigsaw #5

Week 14: The Era of Reproductive Tyranny

Monday, Dec. 5:

- Reagan, "When Abortion was a Crime," WARP 392-97
- Watch "The Janes" (2022),

<https://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/uwsp299375/watch/09A9E7F2217CD443?referrer=direct>

Wednesday, Dec. 7: Jigsaw #6

Week 15: TBA

Monday, Dec. 12:

Wednesday, Dec. 14:

Unit 4 exam: Friday, Dec. 16, 10:15-12:15