

**HISTORY 285:**  
Women in American History

Spring 2017  
10:00 TRF in 321 CCC

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Office Hours: 1:00 T, 10:00 W, and by appointment

This course explores the racial and ethnic diversities of women living in the United States. It is a history of the variety of women whose lives and experiences were affected by race, class, ethnicity, geographic location, and sexual orientation. Students will look at how all of these women interacted with and perceived each other, and will explore how and why women's gender has made them a minority (culturally and socially, rather than numerically). Other topics include women's work both within and outside of the home, gender roles, marriage and family, politics, and feminism.

As part of the General Education Program's Historical Perspectives category, History 285 is designed to teach students to:

Describe events from past cultures, societies, or civilizations;  
Recognize the varieties of evidence that historians use to offer diverse perspectives on the meaning of the past;  
Identify the role of human agency in shaping events and historical change;  
Explain historical causality; and  
Evaluate competing historical claims that frequently inform the present.

History 285 is also part of the General Education Program's U.S. Diversity category, designed to teach students to:

Describe the various dimensions of diversity and marginalization within the United States; and  
Explain the means by which one or more persistently marginalized groups in the U.S. have negotiated the conditions of their marginalization.

This will all be accomplished through exams and essays based on lectures and assigned readings.

## REQUIRED BOOKS

Text rental:

Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenil, eds., *Through Women's Eyes*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

For purchase:

Jean Fagan Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*

Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers*

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Exams (25% each)

There are three 50-minute exams (combination of 35 multiple choice questions and one essay) that cover lectures, readings, and visual materials. Study guides for the essay portion of the exams will be posted on D2L approximately one week before each exam date. You must take all exams or you will fail the course.

### 2. Book Essays (25% total)

There are two in-class essays based on the Yellin (15%) and Yezierska (10%) books. Details are on D2L.

You must write both of the essays or you will fail the course.

All of these requirements must be completed on the dates listed below on the syllabus. Any request for a make-up must be made prior to the assignment date and may only be granted for the following reasons (supported by documentation): illness, death in the immediate family, military service, activity for another class. Failure to complete an assignment will result in failing the class.

## Grading Criteria

Essays are graded as follows:

**A:** (90-100) demonstrates both a fine command of historical knowledge (ideas, names, places, dates, etc.) and an informed interpretation of that information

**B:** (80-89) demonstrates a command of historical knowledge but contains a weak interpretation

**C:** (70-79) demonstrates competent/average historical knowledge but completely lacks an interpretation

**D:** (60-69) shows deficiency of historical knowledge and lacks an interpretation

**F:** (50-59) shows inaccurate historical knowledge and lacks an interpretation, and/or is incomplete

**0:** non-existent or incomplete work

Graded exams and essays are returned two weeks after the completion date. Make sure to collect and save all of your graded assignments. Grades are not available electronically.

Point equivalents for letter grades for exams and essays are as follows:

93-100: A; 90-92: A-

87-89: B+; 83-86: B; 80-82: B-

77-79: C+; 73-76: C; 70-72: C-

67-69: D+; 63-66: D; 60-62: D-

59 and below: F

0: blank or incomplete work

Check Desire2Learn (D2L) at least once a week for any new information on the class.

### **Extra Credit**

You may, at my discretion, earn up to three extra points on your final grade if you regularly participate in class by asking and answering questions that are pertinent to the material. Make sure to have read the assigned materials in preparation for each class period. Students who violate the classroom policy about electronic devices (see below) will not receive any of these points.

### **OTHER EXPECTATIONS/INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Attendance: It is your responsibility to attend class on a regular basis. I do not post my lectures or PowerPoint presentations nor do I provide notes to students for any reason.

If you do not come to class, you will be poorly prepared for the exams. At the end of each lecture I will review key terms that will show up on the exams. That is the only time and place the terms will be available—they will not be posted on D2L or distributed as handouts. So if you miss a class, you will have to ask another student for that information or do without it.

2. Arrive on time. If for some very compelling reason you have to leave early, you must notify me in advance and sit in an aisle or front row seat so that your departure is not distracting. If you are tardy, take the first most easily accessible seat.

3. Computers (laptops or tablets), phones, audio and visual recording devices, etc. must be turned off and put away during class. Anyone in violation of this rule at any time is not eligible for the extra points described above. However, accommodations will be made for students working through the Disability and Assistive Technology Center (609 LRC).

4. Only one person talks at a time (this is usually me). If you have a question, raise your hand and wait to be called on.

5. E-mails are a form of professional communication and therefore must conform to high standards of politeness and respect. I will answer questions about the class via e-mail, except in instances where the answer is available from the syllabus. If you don't receive a response from me within 24 hours, Monday through Friday, it means you already have that information--you just have to look for it.

I am willing to discuss your progress in the class at any point in the semester. If you receive a D or F on the first essay and/or exam, you should get in touch with me sooner rather than later. The office hours listed at the top of the syllabus indicate the scheduled times I am available for such conversations. I am available at other times as well.

Please review this link for additional information on rights and responsibilities:  
<http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf>

## **LECTURES AND READINGS**

### **Week 1: January 23-27**

Introduction

America, Europe, and Africa

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 1

### **Week 2: January 30-February 3**

Life in the Southern Colonies

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, begin Ch. 2

### **Week 3: February 6-10**

Life in the Northern Colonies

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, finish Ch. 2

### **Week 4: February 13-17**

The American Revolution

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 3

### **Week 5: February 20-24**

Work in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Domesticity and Wage Labor

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, pp. 154-171; 188-192; 201-211  
Begin Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*

### **Week 6: February 27-March 3**

The Institution of Slavery

**Thursday, March 2:** Exam #1 on Weeks 1-5

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, pp. 172-187; 193-200; 212-215

### **Week 7: March 6-10**

Expansion, Reform, and the Civil War

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 5

### **Week 8: March 13-17**

Life in the Reconstructed United States

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 6

### **Spring Break: March 20-24**

**Week 9: March 27-31**

Migration, Immigration, and Reform in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 7

Begin Yeziarska, *Bread Givers*

**Week 10: April 3-7**

The Progressive Era

**Thursday, April 6:** in-class essay on Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 8

**Week 11: April 10-14**

From the Roaring 20s to the Great Depression

**Thursday, April 13:** Exam #2 on Weeks 6-10

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, pp. 470-493; 505-525

**Week 12: April 17-21**

Wartime America

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, pp. 493-504; 526-531

**Week 13: April 24-28**

Beyond the Feminine Mystique

**Thursday, April 27:** In-class essay on Yeziarska, *Bread Givers*

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 10

**Week 14: May 1-5**

Civil Rights: Race and Gender

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 11

**Week 15: May 8-12**

The Global Age

**Reading:** DuBois and Dumenil, Ch. 12

**Tuesday, May 16** at 10:15-11:05 a.m.: Exam #3 on Weeks 11-15

**NOTE:** Lecture topics are subject to change without notice.