

HIS 350R/WGS 345, Fall 2012
History of American Feminism, Seaholm
Monday, 3-6, PAR 302

seaholm@mail.utexas.edu

Office hours: MF, 2:30-4:30, GAR 4.124

Course Description: This upper-division seminar uses contemporary documents and the work of historians to investigate the history of feminism in the United States from the early 19th century to the present. Beginning with the question, "What is feminism?," students will trace agitation regarding the status and role of women in American society, the oppressions and abuses that women experienced, the various forms of that agitation or activism, and different ideological arguments—made at different times—for expanding the legal and customary rights of women and for claiming personal liberty. Since the experience of women in the United States has, as with men, been significantly influenced by race, class, and ethnicity, students will learn about the activism and the critique of these women and the inclusion or exclusion of those groups in movements often controlled by middle- and upper-class white women.

As a seminar, students are expected to do much reading and to discuss that reading in class. As a "writing flag," students are also expected to improve their writing in four essays on assigned topics.

The Writing Flag: The Center for the Core Curriculum of the School of Undergraduate Studies has provided this description of the "writing flag."

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

Required Reading: Reading assignments are about 100-150 pages each week.

- **Christine Stansell**, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to the Present* (Random House, 2010).
- **Ruth Rosen**, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (Penguin Press, 2000).
- **Bell Hooks**, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (South End Press, 2000)
- **Course Packet**, available at UT Copy Center, GSB, after 9/15.

Grading:

- 60% of course grade based on weighted average of writing assignments.
- 40% of course grade based on class participation. Class participation is evaluated on basis of participation in class discussion and performance on, occasional, in-class essays.

Class attendance: Regular attendance in class, excepting illness or family emergency, is expected and will be considered in the class participation grade.

Writing Assignments: 60% of course grade based on weighted average of writing assignments. All essays should be sent to me electronically in WORD documents. All essays should be double-spaced and should include endnotes, or in-text notes (APA), and a bibliography of works cited.

1. 1-2 page essay: "What is Feminism?" Due Saturday, 9/15 (10% of writing grade)
2. 3-5 page essay: Reform, Feminism and Suffrage: your review and analysis of reading regarding women's activism and/or feminist activism (or a particular aspect of) during the 19th century through the achievement of the woman suffrage amendment in 1920. Due Thursday, 10/4 (25% of writing grade)
3. 3-5 page essay: Issues of the Second Wave: Your discussion and analysis of three issues that promoted by Second Wave Feminists. Draft due in class on 11/19 for peer review; final essay due to Seaholm on Saturday, 11/24. (25% of writing grade)
4. 8-10 page essay: Based on research outlined at the end of the syllabus, this final essay should address these questions: Is Feminism Dead? Is Feminism Necessary? If there is a need for continued feminist activism, what are the challenges for feminists in the 21st century? Due Thursday, 12/13. (40% of writing grade)

Citations and Attribution:

Students are expected to use proper citation whenever using the words or the thoughts of others. You may use any of the major citation style sheets (MLA, Chicago, or APA), but I think you will find the APA style the easiest to use. The Undergraduate Writing Center provides guidelines for using APA in citations: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts>

Plagiarism: Using the words or thoughts of another without attribution is plagiarism and will not be allowed in this class. Be sure to read "The Standard of Academic Integrity" posted on the Dean of Students website: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php. Also, be sure to read "A Brief Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism," posted online by UT's LBJ School Writing Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/writing/plagiarism.pdf>. With this information, all students in this class are expected to avoid plagiarism in their essays. Students who do plagiarize will receive an "F" in the class and will be referred to Student Judicial Services in the Dean of Students Office.

Undergraduate Writing Center: I hope you will take advantage of the wonderful resources provided by the Undergraduate Writing Center: www.uwc.utexas.edu The UWC provides:

- individualized, expert help with any writing project on a walk-in basis or by appointment (call 512-471-6222).
- 45 minute sessions with writing consultants to help students clarify and organize ideas; improve grammar, punctuation, and usage; and cite sources properly.
- help with research, first drafts and revisions.
- online handouts that cover a variety of writing issues: <http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/handouts>
- online information about APA, MLA, and Chicago style sheets (how to do footnotes, in-text notes, and bibliographies): <http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/handouts>

Women's Rights Timelines: Two chronologies of women's rights activism are available to you. One is posted under Course Documents on Bb, and one follows the Preface in Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*.

Class Schedule

All classes meet on Mondays from 3-6 pm in Parlin 308

Students are expected to complete reading assignments before class.

9/10

Introduction: What is American Feminism? Were antebellum women reformers feminists?

Reading for class:

1. "A Day Without Feminism" by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards" (posted under Course Documents on Blackboard, hereafter Bb)
2. Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, Introduction, chapters 1-3
3. Deborah Gray White, "Sex Roles and Status in the Antebellum Plantation South" (Bb)
4. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America" (online: PCL, JSTOR: *American Quarterly* 23:4, Oct 1971)

9/15

First Essay Due: 1-2 page essay. One of following topics:

"What is Feminism?" How do *you* define "feminism?"

"Were antebellum women reformers feminists?"

9/17

Nineteenth Century Feminism and Woman Suffrage

Reading assignments:

1. Sarah Grimke, "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes" (Bb)
2. Sojourner Truth, "A'int I a Woman?" (Bb)
3. Stansell, chapter 4
4. "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions from Seneca Falls" (Bb)
5. Ellen DuBois, "The Radicalism of the Suffrage Movement" (Bb)
6. Margaret Fuller, "Woman in the Nineteenth Century," excerpt, provided in class on 9/10.

9/24

Late-19th and Early-20th Century Feminism and Woman Suffrage

Reading assignments:

1. Stansell, chapter 5-6
2. Nancy Cott, "The Birth of Feminism," chapter 1 in *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, Course Packet, hereafter CP.
3. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, excerpt from *Women and Economics* (CP)
4. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, chapter 5, "Mobilizing to Win the Vote: African American Women's Organizations," in *African-American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920* (CP)
5. Ellen DuBois, "Working Women, Class Relations, and Suffrage Militance; Harriot Stanton Blatch and the New York Woman Suffrage Movement, 1894-1909" (CP)

VIDEO: "One Woman, One Vote"

10/4

2nd Essay Due

10/1

Feminism and Sexual Politics

Reading Assignments:

1. Linda Gordon, "The Struggle for Reproductive Freedom: Three Stages in the History of Feminism" (CP)
2. Emma Goldman, "Marriage and Love" (CP)
3. Margaret Sanger, "Woman and the New Race" (CP)
4. Angela Davis, "Racism, Birth Control and Reproductive Rights" (CP)

VIDEO: "Margaret Sanger"

10/8

Post-Suffrage Feminism

Reading Assignments:

1. Stansell, chapter 7
2. Cott, chapter 3, "Voluntarist Politics," in *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*" (CP)
3. Elise Johnson McDougald, "The Struggle of Negro Women for Sex and Race Emancipation," 1925 (CP)
4. Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!" 1949 (CP)

10/15

American Women and Feminism During the Cold War

Reading Assignments:

1. Simone de Beauvoir, "Introduction" from *The Second Sex*," 1949 (Bb)
2. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, chapter 1, "The Problem That Has No Name," (Norton, 1963): online
<http://www.h-net.org/~hst203/documents/friedan1.html>
3. Stephanie Coontz, "'Leave it to Beaver' and 'Ozzie and Harriet': American Families in the 1950s," chapter 2 in *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, by Coontz, 1992. (CP)
4. Amy Swerdlow, "The Congress of American Women: Left-Feminist Peace Politics in the Cold War," in *U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays*, eds. Linda Kerber, et. al., 1993.

10/22

The Second Wave of American Feminism: Early Years

Reading Assignments:

1. Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*, Introduction; chapters 1-3
2. Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women," 1960 (CP)
3. Casey Hayden & Mary King, "A Kind of Memo..." (CP)
4. NOW Statement of Purpose (CP)
5. Redstockings Manifesto (CP)

10/29

"Liberal Feminism" and Radical Critiques

Reading Assignments:

1. Rosen, chapter 4
2. Stansell, chapter 8 (optional)
3. Shulamith Firestone, excerpt from *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*" (CP)
4. "Liberal Feminism" by A. Phillips (CP)
5. "Socialist/Marxist feminism" (CP)
6. Sheila Rowbotham, "Woman's Consciousness, Man's World" (CP)

VIDEO

11/5

NOT for Whites Only: Women of Color and Second Wave Feminism

Reading Assignments:

1. Bell Hooks, Prefaces through chapter 5, *Feminist Theory*
2. Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" online

<http://circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html>

3. Chicana Feminism, online:

http://www.umich.edu/~ac213/student_projects05/cf/

4. Mitsuye Yamada, "Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism," 1981 (CP)

11/12

Sexuality, Women's Health, and Feminism

Reading Assignments:

1. Ruth Rosen, chapters 5-6
2. Radicalesbians, "The Woman Identified Woman" (CP)
3. Catherine MacKinnon, "Sexuality" (CP)
4. Jezra Kaye, "Abortion: A Question of Control" and Judith Barrington, "Aborting Women's Choice," (CP)

VIDEO

11/19

**Draft of 3rd Essay Due. Bring to class for peer review.
LIBRARY SESSION (location TBA)**

11/24

Revised 3rd Essay Due.

11/26

Backlash? The End of Feminism?

Reading Assignments:

1. Rosen, chapters 7-Epilogue.
2. Wendy Kaminer, "Feminism's Identity Crisis," *The Atlantic*, October 1993 (Bb)

12/3

The Third Wave

Reading Assignments:

1. Lady Gaga (Bb)
2. Jennifer Robinson, "Feminism and the Third Wave," 2007, online:
<http://womensstudies.homestead.com/thirdwave.html>
3. "Third Wave Feminism," in *Uncyclopedia*, online:
http://uncyclopedia.wikia.com/wiki/Third-wave_feminism
4. Susan Douglas, "Introduction: Fantasies of Power," in *The Rise of Enlightened Sexism: How Pop Culture Took Us from Grrl Power to Girls Gone Wild*, 2010. (Bb)

Thursday, 12/13: Final Essay Due (See instructions for final essay on next page)

Final Essay: 8-10 page research paper that addresses these questions:

Is feminism dead? Is feminism necessary? If there is a need for continued feminist activism, what are the challenges for 21st century feminists?

Instructions:

- Find 2 articles (other than Kaminer's 1993 article) published between 1975 and the 2000 about the "death of feminism" or the "end of feminism."
- Find 2 articles published between 1980 and the present about the future of feminism, what the feminist agenda should be, or why feminism is still relevant.
- Read, consider, and evaluate these articles using what you have learned during this semester and according to what you think about what you have learned.
- Write an essay that reports and analyzes the late-20th and early 21st century commentary on the demise or the endurance of feminism in the United States.

Research materials: You may consult popular or scholarly periodicals. A partial list includes the following:

www.world-newspapers.com

The Atlantic

Harper's

Time

Newsweek

New Republic

National Review

The Nation

Ms. Magazine

Off our backs

Ebony

Oprah

Psychology Today

New York Times

New York Review of Books

Signs

Feminist Studies

International Journal of Women's Studies

Women's magazines, eg. *Ladies Home Journal*,

Vogue, *Elle*, *Mademoiselle*, *Woman's Day*,

Cosmopolitan, *Glamour*, *Harper's Bazaar*.....

Essence

Latina Style

US News and World Report

Mother Jones

The New Yorker

The Progressive

American Spectator

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