

WOMEN, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY IN POSTWAR AMERICA
HIS 350R (39885) / WGS 345 (47880) / AMS 370 (30865)
Fall 2013 Wednesday 3-6 PAR 210

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This course intensively examines U.S. women's history between World War II and the 1970s. In doing so, it also explores understandings of womanhood, manhood and sexuality that became central to the cultural politics and social conflicts of the postwar period. By weaving together these topics – women's history, popular culture, and postwar social movements – we raise fresh questions about well-known episodes of U.S. history. Why, for example, do most Americans remember Rosa Parks only as a demure seamstress who initiated the Montgomery Bus Boycott because she was too tired to give up her seat to a white? If every young woman hoped to be like Donna Reed or June Cleaver in the fifties, then where did the sixties movements come from? We also explore how various groups (e.g., suburban girls, working-class women, civil rights activists, immigrants, and others) differently negotiated ideas of family, work and sexuality. In doing so, we examine roots of issues that continue to have political purchase today, such as reproduction, sexuality, job equity, welfare, race, and ethnicity. This is primarily a discussion seminar, but class will include short lectures, films, writing workshops and other activities.

This course carries both a Writing Flag and an Individual Inquiry Flag. It is designed to help you develop the historical writing, research, and analytical skills you need to pursue your own intellectual voyage of discovery in the history of women, gender and sexuality in mid-twentieth-century American culture. Students will write regularly to encourage critical engagement with the texts and improvement of analytic skills. Graded assignments include weekly reading summaries, a short media research paper based on popular magazines and other forms of mass media of the postwar era; and a "Postwar Women's Memoir Project" based on interviews with women who came of age between World War II and the 1970s. You will have opportunities to submit and revise drafts, and to share your work with other students.

Course Evaluation and Requirements:

- 10% Completion of readings and class participation*
 - 15% Three 350-500 word weekly reading analyses (5% each)
 - 25% Media research essay, 1500 words (about 5 pages)
 - 40% Postwar Women's Memoir Project essay, 2500-3000 words (about 8-10 pages)
 - 10% Postwar Women's Memoir Project group presentation
- EXTRA CREDIT: Earn extra point added to final grade by attending assigned special event.
* Below, see Attendance Policy regarding unexcused absences.

Required Readings:

Required short readings will be posted on Blackboard.

These required books are available at the University Co-op Bookstore and PCL Reserves.

- * Baxandall, Rosalyn and Linda Gordon. *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*
- * Boyd, Nan Alamilla, *Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965*
- * Douglas, Susan J. *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*
- * Meyerowitz, Joanne, ed. *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Noted on syllabus as NJC)
- * Orleck, Annelise. *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*
- * Santiago, Esmeralda. *Almost a Woman*
- * Shakur, Assata. *Assata: An Autobiography*

IMPORTANT NOTES

Attendance Policy: This seminar meets only once a week and is based on student discussion of readings and research. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. If you have more than 2 unexcused absences, five points will be deducted from your final grade for each additional unexcused absence. For excused absences (medical or family emergencies, religious holidays and official U.T. business) you will need a written note. Etiquette for this class includes arriving promptly and remaining until the end of class. If late arrivals or early departures happen frequently, it may affect your final grade if you are on the edge between two grades. Exceptions to these requirements should be discussed with me in advance. You are responsible for finding out about missed announcements.

Grades ending in .5 or above will be rounded up; grades ending in .49 or below will not. Pluses and minuses will be used, as follows:

A = 93-100; A- = 90-92

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

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

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

F = below 60

Late Paper Policy: Grades will be dropped 10 points for each day after the due date, other than for medical or family emergencies with approved written excuses

Blackboard will be used in this course. You will find links for the syllabus, announcements, assignments, and readings, and be able to check your grades. I also use Blackboard to send emails.

Special accommodations will be provided, upon request, for qualified students with learning disabilities. Contact the Dean of Students office at 471-6259 or ssd@uts.cc.utexas.edu if you have need of accommodations for which you are not already certified.

350-500 word papers: You will all write papers for Week 2. For Weeks 3-6, we alternate between Group A and Group B. Each paper addresses the readings assigned for that class date. The goal is NOT simply to summarize, nor is to share free-floating thoughts. I want you to engage specific readings in relation to a theme that surfaced as you did the reading, including your own insights, concerns, and/or questions. Identify *primary sources* (original documents) by stating the author(s), the intended audience, and the context in which the document was written. For *secondary readings* (by historians and other scholars), briefly summarize the main point or key argument before you discuss them. Papers are due by class time.

Media Research Essay: This project will increase your familiarity with the ways in which women, gender and sexuality were represented in postwar popular media. It is designed to help you learn to better analyze such representations in historical writing. Focusing on a particular theme of your choice, you will analyze a series of articles and/or images from one or more magazines or journals published between 1945 and 1960. As you work on the project, we will discuss how to analyze these artifacts in their historical contexts, and how to assess the relation between media representation and “experience,” production and consumption. I also encourage students to explore contradictory images. Papers are due Week 7, Oct. 9, in class. (You will receive a handout further explaining this assignment.)

Postwar Women’s Memoir Project: You will writing a research paper on a historical theme of your choice that will based, in part, on an oral history with a woman who “came of age” between 1945 and 1975. Although you will draw on other secondary research materials (i.e., published scholarly articles and books), the interview will serve as your principal primary (unpublished) source for the final paper and for a group presentation. Many of you will choose to interview an older family member or other woman you already know for this paper. For others, I will work with you to locate potential interviewees. This project

will include several smaller required but ungraded assignments, which are designed to steer you through the process. The penultimate draft is due on the last class day. The final paper is due on the date of the final exam. We will also have group presentations at the time of the final exam. You will have time to plan these presentations during class time. (You will receive a more detailed handout.)

Schedule:

Week 8: Conduct preliminary interview.
Week 9: Submit 1-page statement of topic and description of interviewee.
Meet with me outside of class.
Week 10: Submit 1-page prospectus and bibliography with 5 secondary books or articles.
Week 11: Conduct taped oral history.
Week 12: Submit 3-page transcript of most important portion of interview.
Week 13: Complete secondary research.
Week 14: No class but submit detailed outline.
Week 15: Submit penultimate draft of paper
Week after classes end: Revise and finish writing paper. Finalize group presentation
Friday 12/13, 7-10 p.m. Submit final paper and do group presentation.

Citations: For works included on the class syllabus, clearly identify the author and title in the body of the paper and then include the page numbers in parentheses following a quotation or reference to specific content. For works not included on the syllabus, use footnotes in Chicago Manual of Style format.

http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c10_s2.html

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/12/>

You will also need to submit a bibliography with your final Memoir Papers.

Format for all papers: Typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Submit in hard copy.

Academic Integrity: The University of Texas adheres strictly to guidelines regarding academic integrity, including plagiarism. *These guidelines extend to all material found on the worldwide web*, as well as to print material. Penalties for violations may include loss of credit for the course. Please familiarize yourself with the Dean of Students website on academic integrity, in particular the page on plagiarism:

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plagiarism.php

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1, 8/28 Introduction

What is women's history? Do gender and sexuality have a history? What can we learn through a study of the post-World War II era?

IN-CLASS: Read and discuss "We Wanted the Voice of a Woman to Be Heard': Black Women and the 1963 March on Washington," by Dorothy I. Height

Week 2, 9/4 Women, Gender and History

READ:

* Haulman, Bock, Castaneda, Alexander, "Approaches to American Women's History"

* Elsa Barkley Brown, "What Has Happened Here?: The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics"

* NJC, Introduction

FILM: *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*

DUE: 350-WORD PAPER: GROUPS A & B

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY: Gail Collins, Monday, September 9, 2013 :: 7:00 pm :: Hosted by the Plan II Honors Program at the Etter-Harbin Alumni Center

Week 3, 9/11 Conflicts in History: Women, Popular Culture, and the Cold War

READ:

- * Douglas, Intro and Ch. 2, "Mama Said"
- * Meyerowitz, "Beyond the Feminine Mystique" (NJC)
- * Laila Haidarali, "Polishing Brown Diamonds"

WORKSHOP by Kristen Hogan, Women's and Gender Studies Librarian

After a short break we will reconvene in PCL 1.124 at 4:30 sharp.

DUE: 350-WORD PAPER: GROUP A

Week 4, 9/18 Conforming and Transgressing

READ:

- * Douglas, Ch. 1
- * Kunzel, "White Neurosis, Black Pathology" (NJC)
- * Breines, "The 'Other' Fifties: Beats and Bad Girls" (NJC)
- * Solinger, "Extreme Danger" (NJC)

DUE: 350-WORD PAPER: GROUP B

Week 5, 9/25 Queer Sexuality in Postwar America

READ:

- * Boyd, Ch. 2-5 (including Reba Hudson oral history)

FILM CLIPS: *The Word is Out* (1977)

DUE: 350-WORD PAPER: GROUP A

Week 6, 10/2 Rethinking Women's Activism in the Fifties

READ:

- * Rosa Parks, "'Tired of Giving In': The Launching of the Montgomery Bus Boycott"
- * Feldstein, "'I Wanted the Whole World to See'" (NJC)
- * Garrison, "'Our Skirts Gave Them Courage'" (NJC)
- * Rose, "The Community Service Organization" (NJC)

DUE: 350-WORD PAPER: GROUP B

Week 7, 10/9 (Im)migrant Identities and American Culture

READ:

- * Bao, "When Women Arrived" (NJC)
- * Santiago, 1-89

DUE: MEDIA ESSAY (We will discuss essays in last hour of class.)

Week 8, 10/16 Coming of Age in the Mass Media

READ:

- * Santiago, *Almost a Woman*, 90-169
- * Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, ch. 3-6

Week 9, 10/23 On the 50th Anniversary of the Equal Pay Act

READ:

- * Cobble, "Recapturing Working-Class Feminism" (NJC)
- * Cobble, "Labor Feminism at High Tide," in *The Other Women's Movement*
- * Equal Pay Act of 1963, before amendments: <http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/thelaw/epa.html>
- * Baxandall & Gordon, ch. 11

DUE: 1-page statement of topic and description of interviewee

Week 10, 10/30 Women's Equality, Women's Liberation

READ:

* Astrid Henry, "Waves," in Orr et al, *Rethinking Women's and Gender Studies*, 102-18

* Baxandall & Gordon, "Origins"

* Excerpt from Martha P. Cotera, *The Chicana Feminist* (1977)

(As you read these documents, flag those that strike you as particularly interesting and important.)

WORKSHOP: Planning your Paper and Conducting Oral Histories

DUE: 1-page prospectus and bibliography

Week 11, 11/6 The War to End Poverty

READ:

* Orleck, Ch. 2-8 (ch. 1, 9, epilogue are optional)

Week 12, 11/13 Women's Bodies and the Body Politic

READ:

* Baxandall & Gordon, Part II, "Bodies"

* Carrie Baker, "Race, Class, and Sexual Harassment in the 1970s," *Feminist Studies* (Spr 2004): 7-27

DUE: 2-page section of transcript and 3-sentence comment on why you think it is important

Week 13, 11/20 Is "Woman Revolutionary" an Oxymoron? Gender, Race and National Identity

READ:

Shakur, *Assata*

WORKSHOP: Developing your argument and writing your draft

Week 14, 11/27 Work on Memoir Project

No Class. Use your extra time to work on your Memoir Project.

I will hold extra office hours Monday, 11/25, 9:30-12. I will not have office hours Tuesday or Wednesday.

DUE: Detailed Outline (by email)

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Week 15, 12/4 Cultural Politics

READ:

* Nickerson, "Moral Mothers and Goldwater Girls"

* Douglas, Ch. 9-10

FILM: *Killing Us Softly*

WORKING GROUPS MEET FOR PART OF CLASS

DUE FRIDAY, 12/6, High Noon, History Office: MEMOIR PROJECT PENULTIMATE DRAFT

FRIDAY, 12/13, 7-10 P.M. FINAL PAPER AND GROUP PRESENTATION DUE.

This will also be a potluck dinner and celebration. Location to be announced.