

American Studies 320  
Women in American Society  
Spring 2009  
M/W 1-2:15 MH-468

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### Required Readings

\*All required texts are available @ Little Professor Bookstore\*  
Reprint packet is available at Copyco in Fullerton

Reprint Packet	AMST 320 Book of Readings
Chopin, Kate	<u>The Awakening</u>
Friedan, Betty	<u>The Feminine Mystique</u>
Hendricks, Judith	<u>Bread Alone</u>
Yeziarska, Anzia	<u>Breadgivers</u>

### Course Requirements

This course will *introduce* you to the history of women in American society, variant conceptualizations of feminism, women's autobiographical fiction and the struggle for/between public and private identities (late 19th/early 20th centuries), and continued questions of women's identity and social roles in the late 20th century. The readings, consequently, are heavy. Recognize this and plan accordingly: timely completion of the reading assignments is crucial to this course as class time will be devoted to open discussion of the readings.

### Learning Goals

The first unit of this course introduces students to methods of social scientific reasoning and feminist inquiry in an interdisciplinary framework. For the remainder of the course, students will interpret primary source materials in relation to their appropriate historical contexts and in relation to the student's own immediate context as a participant in American culture. Studying the lives of individual women through highly autobiographical if fictionalized narratives allows students to explore the physical, psychological and sociocultural factors that each woman sought to integrate, to recognize the challenges she faced at key developmental moments between adolescence and old age, and to examine the decision-making strategies each women employed in confronting complex personal/social problems. Course materials represent not only different historical periods in American life but diversity of cultural participation in terms of class, age, and ethnicity. The writing requirements for CSUF GE courses will be met via written feedback regarding your performance on the 2nd and 3rd assignments which have similar writing requirements/expectations in terms of analysis & argumentation, with the 2nd evaluated as if a draft & the 3rd as a polished paper.

*The University requires students with disabilities to register with the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), located in UH-101 and at (714) 278 – 3112, in order to receive prescribed accommodations appropriate to their disability. Students requesting accommodations should inform the instructor during the first week of classes about any disability or special needs that may require specific arrangements/accommodations related to attending class sessions, completing course*

*assignments, writing papers or quizzes/tests/examinations.*

### Assessment

Your mastery of course materials will be assessed using a range of evaluation methods:

100 points	In-class, short answer exam.
100 points	Response essay (in class).
<u>100 points</u>	Formal response paper
300 points	Total possible *No final examination in this seminar*

Grading is based on a 10% scale -- a "grading curve" will not apply. In the case of a borderline final grade score (i.e., 1 point from the grade cut-off), my decision to either raise or lower the score will reflect your thoughtful class participation--or the lack thereof. 2 absences across the semester are allowed: further absences will earn -10 pt. penalty per absence from your earned course point total. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of the earned score. "Incomplete" course grades must be arranged in advance and will forfeit the possibility of an A for the course. Email documents are not acceptable for the formal response paper.

### Course Outline

#### Unit One

1/26 Introduction to the course: outline & expectations. Purchase course readings.

1/28 Thinking about gender: lecture and discussion. No reading.

2/2 & 2/4 "Women's Studies: An Introduction." Read Sapiro pp. 3-33 in 320 Readings.

2/9 & 2/11 Gender & social constructions of reality. Read Sapiro pp. 34-57, 320 Readings.

**Mon. 2/16 President's Holiday**

**Weds. 2/18** Defining feminism. Read Sapiro, pp. 491-521, 320 Readings. **\*Prep for exam**

**Mon. 2/20 In-class short-answer exam.**

#### Unit Two

2/25 Lecture: "True Womanhood" in late 19th c. Fiction as a cultural document.  
Reading: Preface and Chapter 1, The Awakening

3/2 Lecture: The concept of autonomy. Read: The Awakening, Chpts. 2-6.

3/4 & 3/9 Women's fiction as cultural informant: reflection, critique, sense of possibility.  
Reading: Reading: The Awakening, Chpts. 7-32.

3/11 Evaluating autonomy: Finish reading The Awakening for final discussion.

### Unit Two (continued)

3/16 & 3/18 New women in a new world: Changing definitions of family and femininity among immigrant women.  
Read: Breadgivers, Intro. & Chpts. **1-9** for 3/16 and **10-16** for 3/18

**\*Mon. 3/23** In pursuit of autonomy: Finish Breadgivers, Chpts. 17-21 for final discussion  
**\*2nd Midterm (essay exam) question given in class \***

**\*Weds . 3/25** In -class comparative response essay\*

3/30 & 4/1 **Spring Break**

### Unit Three

4/6 Happy Housewife as Heroine: 1950's suburban "dream life" & doubts.  
Read Fem. Mystique, Preface & Chpts. 1 & 2

4/8 The Postwar Mystique: Feminine, Masculine, or American?  
**Film: Men's Lives.**

4/13 Mistaken choices. Read Feminine Mystique, Chpts. 3 & 8.

4/15-4/27 Tradition & Liberation: women's pursuit of autonomy at end of 20th c.  
Read Bread Alone as follows: Chapters 1-6 for 4/15; 7-10 for 4/20;  
11-16 for 4/22 and 17-20 for 4/27.

**\*Weds 4/29** Breadgivers to Bread Alone: review of change and continuity in women's lives.

5/4 Contemporary narratives of autonomy in recent commercial film.  
**Film: Real Women Have Curves**

5/6 Real Women Have Curves: discussion & comparative analysis.  
**\* Formal response paper assigned \***

5/11 & 5/13 Workshop your response papers-in-progress  
**\*No reading: work on writing your response papers\***

**Monday 5/18 Final Response Paper Due not later than 4 pm**

**Turn in to my office, UH-418 1-2:15 pm**  
**OR**  
**deliver to my mailbox in the AMST Dept Office, UH-313**