

AMST 401  
Gender in American Life and Thought  
Spring 2006, Dr. Terri L. Snyder

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This class investigates the cultural construction of gender in America and examines ideas and experiences of women and men in selected settings from the period of early American settlement through early twentieth-century modernization. We will focus on key cultural institutions that shaped gendered experiences in America, including print and popular culture, intellectual and public life, and race and region. Although this course takes an historical approach, it is not meant to be a survey, but, rather, an in-depth analysis of how different cultural historians with differing interdisciplinary specialties have studied gender. The course will also consider the research methods of early American studies from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.

### **Requirements**

**1. Assessment.** This course is a proseminar with a limited enrollment. As such, most class meetings will be devoted to discussions of the assigned reading and documents, and all class members are expected to actively take part in these discussions. Indeed, the success of the seminar depends in large part on student efforts in regard to preparation for class and participation in class. Assessment in this course will be based upon your active participation in class and your thoughtful contribution to class discussion. If you cannot or choose not to participate verbally, it is your responsibility to meet with me to determine an alternative method of participation. It will also be based on your ability to critically analyze primary sources in oral and written assignments as well as on your comprehension and analysis of secondary texts. Finally, assessment will be based on the quality of your research paper. In particular, your research paper should be conceptualized clearly and completely; it should provide a developed and critical analysis of primary sources; and should address and incorporate secondary research in a synthetic and thoughtful manner.

**2. Participation.** Class meetings will consist of discussions on weekly reading assignments: therefore, attendance and active student participation are required in each class. Students are expected to read all assigned class material and come to every class meeting prepared to raise questions about the reading, to relate the readings to each other, and to relate the readings to historical and contemporary issues in American cultural studies. Over the course of the semester, students will be assigned to lead discussion in conjunction with their **document projects**; similarly, all students will be asked periodically to provide a list of **discussion questions** on the assigned secondary readings. Absences from class will contribute negatively to your grade, and students who miss 3 or more classes will be ineligible for A or B grades; more particularly, each absence during

the last two weeks of the semester will lower your grade one increment. Consistent late arrivals and early departures will contribute negatively to your grade.

**3. Written assignments.** There are no tests in this class. Instead, undergraduates will complete two informal papers (4 pages each) based on **Document Projects** and one **Research Paper** of approximately 15 (undergraduates) or 25 (graduates) pages. **Document Projects** will be assigned during the first week of class and will focus on oral and written analyses of the primary sources listed in the syllabus. Not all students will write on every source listed on the syllabus; however, those when assigned to do so, you are expected to present the results of your analyses to the class. The **Research Paper** represents a semester-long project, and it must address some aspect of gender in American culture. It must be based on original research in primary sources and have a historical focus on gender and American culture. Each student is required meet with me to discuss their topic and plan of research and writing. All research projects must have my approval. Students will make an in-class presentation on their research paper during the last two weeks of class. These assignments are discussed in detail on a separate handout.

**4. Grading policies.** Final grades for the class include plus and minus grades. Final grades will be determined by class participation and written assignments.

<b>Participation</b>	<b>Total=</b>	<b>30 points</b>
Daily discussions		20 points
Discussion Questions as assigned		10 points
<b>Papers</b>	<b>Total=</b>	<b>70 points</b>
Document Projects (10 points each)		20 points
Research Paper (55 points total)		
Topic Selection		5 points
Primary Source Documentation		5 points
Oral Presentation of Topic		5 points
Final Paper		35 points
<b>Total Possible Points for Class=</b>		<b>100 points</b>

Unless they have my prior consent, students who fail to meet the established due dates will forfeit the relevant points and have their grade for the class lowered by one increment. There is no make up work in this class without a written documented excuse.

**5. Graduate students.** The requirements for graduate students differ from those of undergraduates. **Document Projects** should be 6-7 pages in length and **Research Papers** should be approximately 25 pages. In both cases, the scope of analysis should be more extensive than that of undergraduates.

**6. Readings.** Students should plan to purchase the required texts from Little Professor Bookstore. All other texts are available through electronic reserve [ER] at Pollock

Library or through the Library's electronic resource database, JSTOR [J]. Addresses for websites [W] are given in the course bibliography.

**6.a. Required Texts (in alphabetical order):**

Gale Bederman. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996. ISBN 0226041395. Paperback.

Stephanie M. H. Camp. *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Daniel A. Cohen. *The Female Marine and Related Works: Narratives of Cross-Dressing and Urban Vice in America's Early Republic*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997. ISBN 1558491244. Paperback.

Rhys Isaac. *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN 0195189086. Paperback.

Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. ISBN: 069109196X.

Elizabeth Reis. *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997. ISBN 0801486114. Paperback.

Judy Yung. *Unbound Voices: A Documentary History of Chinese Women in San Francisco*. Berkeley, 1999. ISBN: 0520218604. Paperback. (Recommended.)

**6.b. Articles and Book Chapters accessed via JSTOR or Electronic Reserve.**

Sharon Block, "Rape Without Women: Print Culture and the Politicization of Rape, 1765-1815," *Journal of American History* 89 (December 2002), 849-68. (J)

George Chauncey, Jr., "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: The Changing Medical Conception of Female 'Deviance,'" in Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, eds., *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*. Philadelphia, 1989. (ER)

Angela Davis. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday*. New York, 1999. (ER)

Kate Haulman, "Fashion and the Culture Wars of Revolutionary Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. LXII (2005): 625-62. (J)

Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother." In Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sharron DeHart, eds., *Women's America, Refocusing the Past*, 6th edition. New York, 2004. (ER)

Vicki Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America*. New York, 1999. (ER)

Barbara Sicherman, "Reading *Little Women*: The Many Lives of a Text." In Alice Kessler Harris, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Linda K. Kerber, eds., *U.S. History As Women's History: New Feminist Essays*. Chapel Hill, 1995. (ER)

### 6.c. Websites.

*Ad Access*. W.H. Harlman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing.  
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess/browse.html>

*Godey's Lady's Book*, University of Rochester  
<http://www.history.rochester.edu/godeys/>

*Political Women During the American Revolution*, Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000*.  
<http://womhist.binghamton.edu/projectmap.htm>

*Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*, University of Virginia  
<http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/home.html>

Slave Narratives [Jacobs and Douglass], *Documenting the American South*, University of North Carolina.  
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/>

**AMST 401**  
**GENDER IN AMERICAN LIFE AND THOUGHT**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**

WEEK            SEMINAR TOPIC AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

**I. Gender and Early American Cultures**

- 1/31            Introduction to Class: Studying Gender in American Thought and Life
- 2/1            Gender and Early American Puritans: A Case Study of Witchcraft  
Reading:        Reis, *Damned Women*, xi-xix; 1-11  
Document:     Preliminary Reports on browsing the *Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*, University of Virginia  
<http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/home.html> (W)
- 2/7            Evil, Sin, and the Devil in the Puritan World View  
Reading:        Reis, *Damned Women*, Chp. 1 and 2 excerpts, 13-14, 37-50; 55-62
- 2/9            Library Session, 12:00-12:45, PLN-103
- 2/14-16        Bodies, Souls, and Confessing to Witchcraft in Puritan New England  
Reading:        Reis, *Damned Women*, 93-163  
Document:     Discussion of findings on Race, Gender, and Witchcraft based on the *Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*, University of Virginia  
<http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/home.html> (W)
- 2/21-23        Gender, Slavery, and Mastery in the Early American South  
Reading:        Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom*, I -xxiv, 1-54, 105-120  
Documents:    Preliminary Reports on browsing excerpts Wright, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd*, excerpts (ER)
- 2/28-3/2       Patriarchy, Slavery, and Conflict in Southern Households  
Reading:        Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom*, 163-232, 265-336  
Document:     Discussion of the Contours of Masculinity in 18th Century Virginia based on Wright, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd*, excerpts (ER)

## II. Gender in 19th Century America Print Culture

- 3/7-9 Gender, the American Revolution, and Political Subjectivity  
Reading: Block, "Rape Without Women" **J**  
Kerber, "The Republican Mother" **(ER)**  
Haulman, "Fashion and the Culture Wars" **(J)**  
Documents: Browse and orally report on *Political Women During the American Revolution*, <http://womhist.binghamton.edu/projectmap.htm>  
Begin Document Project 1 based on Cohen, *The Female Marine*
- 3/14-16 Switching Gender in the Early Republic  
Reading: Cohen, *The Female Marine*  
**Document Project 1 Due**
- 3/21-23 Gender, Slavery, and Geography  
Reading: Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 1-92  
Document: Douglass, *Narrative*, Chps. IX-X; Jacobs, *Incidents*, Chps. V-X
- 3/28-3/30 No Class, Spring Break
- 4/4-6 Abolitionism, Print Culture, and the Civil War  
Reading: Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 93-141.  
**Documentary Projects 2 and 3 Due**
- 4/11-13 Victorian Popular Culture  
Reading: Sicherman, "The Many Lives of a Text" **(ER)**  
Document: *Godey's Lady's Book* **W or**  
Alcott, *Little Women*  
**Document Projects 4 and 5 Due**

## III. Gender and Modern America

- 4/18-20 Gender, Violence, and Modernity  
Reading: Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery*, 1-110  
Document: From Yung, *Unbound Voices*, read Introduction and one document from either:  
Part Two, Bound Feet  
Part Three, Unbound Feet  
Part Four, First Steps

- 4/25-27      Gender, Race, and Modernity  
Reading:      Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery*, 111-226  
                     Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 1-44, 217-39  
                     And either      Ida B. Wells, 45-76  
                                     G. Stanley Hall, 77-120  
                                     C.P. Gilman, 121-169  
                                     Teddy Roosevelt, 170-216
- 5/2-4          Gender, Race and Beauty in Modernizing America  
Reading:      Chauncey, *From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality*, (ER)  
                     Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows* (ER)  
                     Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (ER)  
Document:      Reports on Gender, Advertising, and Modernity based on  
                     reports from *Ad Access*. W.H. Harlman Center for Sales, Advertising, and  
                     Marketing. <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess/browse.html>
- 5/9-11        Class Presentations
- 5/16-18      Class Presentations
- 5/25          Research Paper Due