History of Women in America Spring 2015

Professor Liz Regosin

The Project:
Where are all the women in American history? Although women were key players in American history, the traditional understanding of what history is all about has obscured their presence. This course restores American women to their proper place in history by reexamining events and institutions that both shaped and were shaped by women’s lives from the colonial era to the present. Throughout the semester we will trace the social, political, and legal construction of womanhood and of woman’s status and roles in American society. We will also examine the diversity of women’s experiences according to such factors as race, class, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation.

Your Requirements:
In order to pass the class, you must successfully complete the following assignments:

- **Two reading response papers** - You will write two 5-page papers that address questions about a set of readings. (25% each)
- **Final Thematic Paper** - You will write a paper that traces a particular theme you see play out in our readings throughout the course of the semester, includes preliminary outline. (25%)
- **“Badass Woman of the Week” Presentation** - Teams of two students will make an oral presentation to the class about a notable woman in American history, connecting that woman to themes of the class. (10%)
- **Getting Right with the Reading** - Throughout the semester, we will be grappling with a lot compelling and complex issues related to women's lives. In order to grapple with gusto, you must do the readings thoughtfully and carefully! To help guide you through the readings (and to compel you to do them), I'll offer a variety of reading assignments over the course of the semester, including concept maps, reading questionnaires, guiding questions, and quizzes. Each assignment’s grade will be given equal weight in the calculation of this component of your final grade. (15%)

NOTE that there’s no participation grade. That’s not because I expect you to sit quietly while I chatter away at you. Rather, I expect that you’ll participate actively in each class by being there, having read and thought about the reading in advance, and by thoughtfully engaging in our discussions and activities. Taking ownership of your learning is a core value of your liberal arts education.

**A word about attendance and late assignments:** You are expected to attend class regularly. More than three absences (excused or unexcused) over the course of the semester will result in a 1/4 grade per absence reduction of your final quiz grade. Late assignments will be penalized 1/4 grade per day beginning five minutes after class starts on the day the assignment is due. (Okay, okay, this probably flies in the face of what I said above about taking ownership of your own learning. And yet, it is what it is.)

**Your Reading:**
Linda Kerber, Jane S. DeHart, and Cornelia Dayton, eds., *Women’s America: Refocusing the Past*, 7th edition

Please note that there are three reading assignments in red. Those assignments are not in *Women's America* but can be accessed right here on the syllabus.

**What We'll Be Up to, Week-by-Week:**

**January 14, 16: Indigenous Women**
January 19, 21, 23: Status and Sexuality in Colonial America

January 26, 28, 30: Women and Revolution/ Revolutionary Women

February 2, 4, 6: Slavery and Womanhood

February 9, 11 (no class on Friday): 19th-Century Households and Conceptions of Womanhood

Also, check out “Godey’s Lady’s Book” online.

February 16, 18, 20: Women’s Rights and Suffrage

First Paper Due Monday, February 16 in class. If you miss class this day, your paper will be considered late.

February 23, 25, 27: Civil War and Reconstruction

March 2, 4, 6: Women’s Activism in Industrializing America

March 9, 11, 13: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the early 20th Century

Spring Break

March 23, 25, 27: Realizing the Dream

March 30, April 1, 3: The Depression and WWII
Reading: 1) Reagan, “When Abortion was a Crime” 2) Jones, “Harder Times, the Great Depression” 3) Document: “Struggling to Unionize” 4) Kessler-Harris, “Designing Women and Old Fools” 5) Matsumoto,
Second Paper Due Monday, March 30 in class. If you miss class, your paper will be considered late.

April 6, 8, 10: Transition to Modernity - Challenging Traditional Roles
Reading:
3) Cahn, “‘Mannishness,’ Lesbianism, and Homophobia in U.S. Women’s Sports” 4) Documents: “Making the Personal Political” (select documents to be announced) 5) Antler, "Imagining Jewish Mothers"

April 13, 15, 17: Women of Color at the Intersection of Race and Gender

Outline for final thematic paper due on Monday, April 22

April 20, 22, (no class on Friday): Making the Personal Political
3) Documents: “Dimensions of Citizenship III"

April 27, 29, May 1: Making the Personal Political


Final thematic paper due Wednesday, May 8 by 4:00 p.m. in my mailbox in Piskor 114