



### WOMEN IN AMERICA, 1600-1865

This course seeks to introduce students to women's experiences in the past as a vital component of the making of the United States. In addition, we will explore the history (historiography) of the study of women. Students will read and analyze both primary accounts -- letters, diaries, slave narratives, and novels -- and recent secondary studies that use methods of social history and gender analysis to reconstruct our understanding of American history. During the semester, we will have both lectures, class discussions, class presentations, a mid-term exam, and a final paper.

**Dr. Phyllis Hunter**

**Office: 2119 Moore/HHRA Bldg**

**Office Hours: M 3:30-4:30 Tues 5:00-6:00**

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**TEXTS:**

Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, *Women and Power in American History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J. Prentice Hall, 2009.

Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980

Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* with Introduction by Cathy Davidson. Oxford University Press, 1986. (Originally published in London in 1791 as *Charlotte, A Tale of Truth*. 1<sup>st</sup> American edition published by Matthew Carey in Philadelphia in 1794.)

These texts are available for purchase at the University Bookstore.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Students will learn the changing customs and conditions of life for women in America from 1600 to 1865.
2. Students will explore, through readings, class discussions, and writing assignments, the socially constructed nature of gender and how ideas about gender changed over time.
3. Students will learn about the changing representations of women in the past
4. Students will learn to develop interpretations of primary and secondary sources on the history of women as demonstrated in class discussion, writing assignments, and class presentations.
5. Students will be able to apply historical interpretation and gender analyses to a case study of an individual women who lived during a part of the historical period covered.
6. Students will gain experience in presenting their findings to the class orally and in writing.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### CLASS PARTICIPATION:

The most important requirement for this course is a careful reading of the assignments

and thoughtful participation in class discussion and group exercises. The assigned reading must be done before coming to class. When you read, please take notes, write down questions, “talk” to the text as you read along. Become an active reader, imagine you are looking at the same evidence and having a conversation with the author about it. Then share your ideas and questions in class. You will be graded on class participation.

Attendance is required and more than three absences will adversely affect your grade. Please bring the appropriate texts, reading notes, and any relevant handouts to class with you.

### FINAL PROJECT/PAPER:

In this project students are to use primary sources and the understanding of developments in American women's history gained during the course to research and interpret a woman or community of women that lived during the period under study (1600-1865). The lives of your subjects must be carefully grounded in appropriate historical context. I hope you will choose something that relates closely to your own life -- a paper on your own ancestors, a study of women in your home town if it was settled during the period, research on a teacher if you are planning to become a teacher -- a topic you will enjoy delving into. You might want to research the role of women in your favorite sport or craft, or in a place you have visited with family or friends. Another possibility is to follow up on something in the reading that you find particularly intriguing. You will be doing a 5-10 minute presentation of your final project to the class. You will also turn in a written paper. Both elements will be part of your grade. The length of the paper should be 6-8 pages with at least three additional pages of supplementary materials such as inventories, letters, maps, deeds, and other primary sources. Detailed instructions will be provided later in the course.

### COURSE GRADES:

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Class Participation                    | 30%        |
| Mid-term Exam and shorter written work | 30%        |
| Final Paper/Project                    | <u>40%</u> |
|  | 100%       |

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

Read consistently and participate in class -- we will all have a lot more fun and begin to feel the joy of learning, of grappling with questions, of understanding how other historians have answered those questions, and of beginning to develop our own historical interpretations. Since this course does not have a final exam, what you do from week to

week will be directly related to your success in the course. It won't work to wait until the last minute.

If you have items you have come across in other reading, on TV (if you have time for this!), movies, etc. that relate to the course -- even present day concerns -- bring them to class and share them with us. If you have any concerns or problems related to the course or things you are interested in and want to discuss further, come to office hours -- or just stop in to say hello!

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### DOING WOMEN'S HISTORY

Wed – Jan 20 Introduction  
 Mon – Jan 25 Lecture: The History of Women's History  
**Reading:** Sklar and Dublin, *Women and Power in American History*, “Introduction.”

### NATIVES AND STRANGERS

Wed -- Jan 27 Class discussion and Pocahontas.  
**Reading:** Sklar and Dublin, *Women and Power*, Chap 1: “Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier,”

### COLONIAL AMERICAN WOMEN

Mon – Feb 1 Lecture: Regional Differences  
 Wed – Feb 3 Class Discussion  
**Reading:** *Women and Power*, Chap 3: “Women and Property across Colonial America”  
 Mon – Feb 8 Midwife’s Tale (in-class video)  
 Wed – Feb 10 Library Workshop on Diaries  
 Mon – Feb 15 Class Discussion **Due:** Selection of Diary Woman

Wed – Feb 17 Women under Slavery, including a talk by  
 Nicole Mazgaj of the Race and Slavery Petitions Project.  
**Reading:** Sklar and Dublin, *Women and Power*, Chap 2: “Beginnings of the Afro- American Family in Maryland”  
**and** Chap 7: “Gender and Slave Labor in Antebellum New Orleans.”

### WOMEN IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

**Reading:** Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters*, Chapters 2 and 3  
 Mon – Feb 22 Class Discussion  
 Wed – Feb 24 Mary Silliman’s War

**Reading:** Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters*, Chapters 6 and 7

**and *Women and Power*, Chap 4, “Food Rioters and the American Revolution”**

Mon -- Mar 1                      Class Discussion

**Due:** Answers from Mary Silliman’s War

Wed – Mar 3                      Reports on Diary women in class

Mon – Mar 8                      OFF! Spring Break

Wed -- Mar 10                      OFF! Spring Break

Mon – Mar 15                      Reports on Diary women in class and Review session –

Wed – Mar 17                      **Mid-Term Exam**

**WOMEN READERS AND WRITERS**

**Reading:** Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (including Introduction by Davidson)

Mon -- Mar 22                      Lecture: Women and the Literary Marketplace

Wed -- Mar 24                      Visit to Special Collections (2<sup>nd</sup> floor Jackson Library)

Mon -- Mar 29                      Class Discussion

**Due:** Short (3-5 pages) paper on issues of power and gender in Charlotte Temple

**WOMEN AT WORK**

Wed -- Mar 31                      Introduction of Final Projects and Class Discussion. .

**Reading:** *Women and Power*, Chap 5 “Women, Work, and Protest”

Mon -- Apr 5                      Class Discussion

**Reading:** *Women and Power*, Chap 6: “Domestic Balance of Power” and Blewett, “Sexual Division of Labor” [e-reserves]

Wed -- Apr 7                      Work on final project (in class)

**Due:** Proposal and Bibliography for Final Paper/Project

Mon -- Apr 12                      Somerset Place and Class Discussion

**Reading:** White, “Female Slaves” [on e-reserves]

**REFORMED AND REFORMING WOMEN**

Wed -- Apr 14                      Class Discussion

**Reading:** Smith-Rosenberg, “The Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman” [e-reserves]

Mon -- Apr 19                      *Little Women* the movie

Wed -- Apr 21                      Class Discussion

**Reading: *Women and Power*, Chap 10: Victorian Women and Domestic Life.”**

Mon -- Apr 26                      Class Discussion and the Declarations

Reading: *Women and Power*, Chap 8: “Women’s Rights Emerges **“and** The Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments (handouts)

### **FINAL PROJECTS**

Wed – Apr 28                      Presentation of Final Projects

Mon -- May 3                      Presentation of Final Projects

Fri. – May 7                      **Due: Written Final Project/Paper**  
**Due by 5PM. in the folder outside my office door.**