

**HIST/GNST 4372**  
**Perspectives on Women in American History**  
**Spring 2019**  
**Tuesday/Thursday 9:25 – 10:40, 122 Ross Hall**

Dr. Marta Cieslak  
UA Little Rock, Department of History  
Stabler Hall 604G  
mxcieslak@ualr.edu  
Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-2:30 and Thursdays 1:00-2:30 or by appointment

**Course Description**

How would dominant narratives of US history change if we wrote them from a perspective of women? What did “discovery of America” mean for Indigenous women? What was “liberty” for enslaved women? What did “pursuit of happiness” imply for working class women? In *Perspectives on Women in American History*, we will examine the conventional themes in US history and investigate their true meaning for women, starting in the colonial period and ending with a discussion on whether the current #MeToo movement suggests that we have finally learned something important from the historical experience of women.

As we explore perspectives on women in US history, we will also pay close attention to the fact that there is no single historical female perspective as women’s experiences have always been shaped by their race, class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, or religion. How women self-defined and how they were defined by others had and continues to have enormous historical significance and in this class, we will keep reminding ourselves that there is no “women’s history.” There are only multiple complex perspectives by women and on women in history.

**Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of selected historical events and processes that shaped various experiences of women in the United States since the colonial period.
- Determine major political, economic, and social forces that shaped selected experiences of women in the United States.
- Discuss how such categories as race, class, ethnicity, nationality, or religion complement and change the meanings of sex and gender in US history.
- Determine connections between US and global historical processes and events.
- Determine how and by whom history is written and how that changes historical narratives.
- Plan, design, and execute a multi-component research project.
- Determine differences between primary and secondary sources.
- Demonstrate foundational knowledge of historical methodology.
- Apply background knowledge and critical thinking skills to analyze primary and secondary sources.
- Demonstrate foundational knowledge of historical methodology.
- Communicate historical knowledge in written and oral forms.
- Use evidence from written and visual sources to draw conclusions and support an argument.
- Understand the principles of academic integrity, including how to cite sources.
- Understand the ethical implications of research and knowledge in addressing both historical and current issues.

## Readings and visual sources

All readings will be available on the Blackboard course website. See the course site and the schedule below for more details.

## Course Requirements

Students will:

- **Read assigned readings and examine other sources** (e.g., images, videos, etc.): All the assigned readings and other sources are posted on Blackboard. Make sure to have the assigned readings with you in class (paper or electronic copy). It is absolutely essential that you prepare for each class in order to be able to participate in discussions.
- **Participate in discussions (40 points)**: Participation is an important component of the final grade. Note that in order to receive the complete 40 points your participation must demonstrate your familiarity with the readings.
- **Submit take-home midterm exam (60 points)**: A take-home midterm exam **will be available on Friday, March 1** and you will submit the exam via Blackboard by **Friday, March 8, 11:59 PM**. The exam will consist of open-ended questions and two short essay questions that will test your familiarity with the assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions. The exam will cover all content from classes prior to March 1.
- **Submit take-home final exam (60 points)**: A take-home final exam analogous to the midterm exam **will be available on Friday, May 3** and you will submit the exam via Blackboard by **Friday, May 10, 11:59 PM**. The exam will consist of open-ended questions and two short essay questions that will test your familiarity with the assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions. The exam will cover all content from classes after March 1 (second half of the semester only).
- **Complete the final project “Perspectives on Women in US History: Exhibit” (240 points collected over the course of the semester)**: The final project is designed to strengthen your research, critical thinking, analytical, critical reading, writing, presentation, organization, and planning skills. It will also help you apply knowledge and skills gained in this course to working with primary and secondary sources.

Our final product will be an exhibit that rewrites US history from the perspective of women. We will decide on the form of the exhibit (virtual vs. traditional) as a group over the course of the semester. Each student will complete their own individual research project that will be a section of the exhibit. You will design, plan, and execute your project step by step over the course of the semester in the following order:

1. **Project proposal**: Choose a weekly theme that we discuss in class (see the outline below; each week has a theme) and think of how you would want to address that particular theme in US history from a perspective of an experience of women. Your topic will be entirely of your choice but it must fit within a framework of rewriting the existing historical narratives using a perspective of women.

Example: The theme of “Emancipation” → Project ideas: The experience of black rural women workers under the Jim Crow system; How violence affected black women in the

South after 1865?; Methods used to control black women in the South after 1865; Black women’s resistance to the methods applied to control them after 1865; Black women as community leaders fighting for access to education after 1865; Relationships between black and white rural women after emancipation; Economic opportunities for black women after 1865; How did the end of slavery change the role of black women in the family?, etc.

You can start by choosing a theme and then determine a topic of your project. Or, if you already have a topic of interest, think of which theme it may fit into. If you don’t know what topic you might want to investigate, a list of proposed topics will be provided by the instructor.

1. **Bibliography proposal:** You will choose three academic peer-reviewed sources (books, book chapters, and/or academic articles) and three written primary sources (not images!) that you will use as the foundation of your project. You can use one primary source and one secondary source from our reading list.
2. **Analysis of secondary sources:** You will analyze the secondary sources that you have chosen for your project following instructions provided by the instructor.
3. **Analysis of primary sources:** You will analyze the primary sources that you have chosen for your project following instructions provided by the instructor.
4. **Annotated timeline:** You will create an annotated timeline of relevant events that took place in the historical period that you will cover in your project.
5. **Paper outline:** You will write and submit a paper outline following instructions provided by the instructor.
6. **Final paper:** You will write and submit a paper of 1000-1500 words based on all the work done prior to this point of the semester.
7. **Exhibit section:** Based on your paper, you will create a section of the “Perspectives on Women in US History: Exhibit” following a template and instructions provided by the instructor.

Due dates for all the assignments:

| Assignment                     | Due date                     | Points     |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Project proposal               | Friday, February 1, 5:00 PM  | 10         |
| Bibliography proposal          | Friday, February 8, 5:00 PM  | 20         |
| Analysis of secondary sources  | Friday, February 22, 5:00 PM | 30         |
| Analysis of primary sources    | Friday, March 1, 5:00 PM     | 30         |
| Take-home midterm exam         | Friday, March 8, 11:59 PM    | 60         |
| Annotated timeline             | Friday, March 15, 5:00 PM    | 30         |
| Paper outline                  | Friday, April 5, 5:00 PM     | 30         |
| Final paper (1000-1500 words)  | Friday, April 19, 5:00 PM    | 60         |
| Exhibit section                | Friday, May 3, 5:00 PM       | 30         |
| Take-home final exam           | Friday, May 10, 11:59 PM     | 60         |
| Participation                  | Ongoing                      | 40         |
| <b>Total number of points:</b> |                              | <b>400</b> |

### **Grading scale**

Grades are determined on the following point scale:

A: 90-100% (358-400 points)

B: 80-89% (318-357 points)

C: 70-79% (278-317 points)

D: 60-69% (238-277)

F: 59% or less (237 points or below)

### **Late and Make-up Work**

Students must keep on schedule. All assignments will receive late penalties of 10 points for each 24-hour period beyond the due date.

### **Class Conduct and Attendance**

Attendance in this course is required and will be taken on a daily basis, at the beginning of each class. Missing 15 classes (roughly half of all scheduled classes) or more will result in automatic F for this course. We can discuss exceptions in case of a documented emergency but please communicate with me if you're going through any challenges that make attending classes difficult or impossible. Don't wait until the end of the semester to explain your absences.

You can use electronic devices in class in order to take notes and/or access the assigned materials. Using your devices in class for non-class related purposes (texting, chatting, using social media, web browsing, etc.) is disrespectful, distracting to all around you, and simply a waste of your time. Since you are in class, pay attention, take notes, and participate. It will benefit you, contribute to your overall performance, and help you grow as a student, future professional, and human being.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s), and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501.569.3143 (V/TTY) or 501.683.7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website, <http://ualr.edu/disability>.

### **Academic Honesty**

All of your work for this class should be original, or you will not receive credit for the assignment. Plagiarism is copying work without giving credit to the source, or copying extensive passages from other work, or the use of words or ideas produced by another person without acknowledging its source. University regulations regarding academic dishonesty, as set forth in the UALR student handbook and other university documents and publications will be strictly enforced in this class. Any student who submits work that he/she did not produce for the given assignment will be assigned a grade of zero points (F) for the assignment in question and may possibly fail the class. In accordance with Section VI: Statement of Student Behavior, under the code of student rights, responsibilities, and behavior, the university defines academic dishonesty under the classifications of cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and duplicity. Cheating and blatant plagiarism in this class can result in disciplinary sanction.

**Course Outline (Schedule subject to change in class)**

Asterisk (\*) by the reading means that we read primary sources. You are required to have all the assigned readings with you in class, either in traditional paper form or easily accessible on your electronic device (laptop, tablet, etc.).

**Week 1: Introduction**

| Date       | Topic   | Assignment   |
|------------|---|--|
| January 22 | Introduction and class requirements                       | Read the syllabus<br><br>In class activity: Audre Lorde, "Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." In <i>Essays and Speeches</i> (The Crossing Press, 1984): 40-44                     |
| January 24 | How do we investigate the historical experience of women? | Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." <i>Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</i> 1, no. 1 (1975): 1-29 |

**Week 2: Discovery**

| Date       | Topic                             | Assignment  |
|------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| January 29 | Indigenous gender relations       | Gretchen Green, "Gender and the Longhouse: Iroquois Women in a Changing Culture." In Larry Eldridge (ed.), <i>Women and Freedom in Early America</i> (New York University Press, 1997): 7-25<br><br>*European images of Indigenous women (in class) |
| January 31 | Indigenous women and colonization | Clara Sue Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators." <i>Ethnohistory</i> 39, no. 2 (1992): 97-107   |

**Week 3: Freedom of Expression**

| Date       | Topic              | Assignment  |
|------------|--------------------|---|
| February 5 | Religious freedoms | *"The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson at the Court at Newton" (1637)  |
| February 7 | Gender expression  | Mary Beth Norton, "Searchers Againe Assembled." In <i>Founding Mothers &amp; Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society</i> (Vintage, 1996): 183-202 |

**Week 4: Liberty**

| Date        | Topic          | Assignment  |
|-------------|----------------|---|
| February 12 | Middle Passage | Sowande' Mustakeem, "Battered Bodies, Enfeebled Minds." In <i>Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage</i> (University of Illinois Press, 2016): 106-130<br><br>*Historical representations of the Middle Passage (in class) |

|             |                    |  |
|-------------|--------------------|--|
| February 14 | Slavery and gender | *Selection of first person accounts of slavery from Patrick Mingos (ed.), <i>Far More Terrible for Women: Personal Accounts of Women in Slavery</i> (John Blair Publisher, 2006) |
|-------------|--------------------|--|

### Week 5: Pursuit of Happiness

| Date        | Topic                                    | Assignment  |
|-------------|--|---|
| February 19 | Knowledge and expertise in Early America | Judith Carney, "This Was 'Woman's Wuck.'" In <i>Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas</i> (Harvard University Press, 2001): 107-141                     |
| February 21 | Sexual violence in Early America         | Sharon Block, "The Means of Sexual Coercion: Identity, Power, and Social Consent." In <i>Rape and Sexual Power in Early America</i> (University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 53-87 |

### Week 6: Law and Justice

| Date        | Topic  | Assignment  |
|-------------|--|---|
| February 26 | British colonial laws and gender                               | *Selection of laws from British colonies in North America   |
| February 28 | "Accident or disease which is very frequent in its occurrence" | Cornelia Hughes Dayton, "Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village." <i>The William and Mary Quarterly</i> 48, no. 1 (1991): 19-49<br><br>*John Burns, Observations on Abortion, 1808 (in class) |

### Week 7: Independence and Republic ("a more perfect Union")

| Date    | Topic                 | Assignment   |
|---------|-----------------------|--|
| March 5 | Founding documents    | Linda Kerber, "Why Diamonds Really Are a Girl's Best Friend." <i>Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society</i> 153, no. 1 (2009): 56-66<br><br>*Excerpts from the US Constitution (in class)<br>*Gendered images of the North American Revolution (in class) |
| March 7 | Territorial expansion | Carolyn Ross Johnston, "The Trial of Tears." In <i>Cherokee Women in Crisis: Trail of Tears, Civil War, and Allotment, 1838-1907</i> (University of Alabama Press, 2003): 56-78<br><br>*Petitions by Cherokee women (1817, 1818, 1821)                               |

**Week 8: Progress**

| Date     | Topic  | Assignment  |
|----------|--|---|
| March 12 | Progress in sciences:<br>Roots of modern<br>gynecology | *Chapter XIV of James Marion Sims, <i>The Story of My Life</i> (D. Appleton, 1888): 222-246 |
| March 14 | Industrial progress                                    | *Selection of primary sources on women and early industrialization                          |

\***Week 9: Spring Break: March 17– March 23**

**Week 10: Emancipation**

| Date     | Topic                                   | Assignment  |
|----------|---|---|
| March 26 | Women slaveholders during the Civil War | Drew Gilpin Faust, “Enemies in Our Households: Confederate Women and Slavery.” In <i>Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War</i> (University of North Carolina Press): 53-79                                |
| March 28 | New nation and civil rights             | Faye Dudden, “The Fight over the Fifteenth Amendment.” In <i>Fighting Chance: The Struggle Over Woman Suffrage and Black Suffrage in Reconstruction America</i> (Oxford University Press, 2011): 161-188<br><br>*”Declaration of Sentiments” (1848) |

**Week 11: Equality**

| Date    | Topic                                    | Assignment   |
|---------|--|--|
| April 2 | Black and white women after emancipation | Jacqueline Jones, “Encounters, Likely and Unlikely, Between Black and Poor White Women in the Rural South, 1865-1940.” <i>The Georgia Historical Quarterly</i> 76, no. 2 (1992): 333-353<br><br>*Roda Ann Childs, “I Was More Dead Than Alive” |
| April 4 | Immigrant women                          | Kathy Peiss, “Dance Madness.” In <i>Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York</i> (Temple University Press, 1986): 88-114<br><br>*Images of immigrant women by Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine (in class)          |

**Week 12: Reform**

| Date    | Topic                       | Assignment   |
|---------|-----------------------------|--|
| April 9 | Progressive reform movement | *Excerpts from <i>The Autobiography of Florence Kelley</i> , 1926-27 (Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1986): 61-89 |

|          |                               |   |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|
| April 11 | Reform movement and terrorism | *Ida B. Wells, excerpts from <i>Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases</i> (1892)<br>*“America for Americans,” Little Rock, undated, ca. 1920 (Michigan State University Collection) |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|

### Week 13: Freedom of Choice

| Date     | Topic               | Assignment  |
|----------|---------------------|---|
| April 16 | Radicalism          | *Lucy Parsons, “A Word to Tramps” (1884), Interview with Lucy Parsons (1886)<br>*Emma Goldman, “A New Declaration of Independence” (1909), “Woman Suffrage” (1911)  |
| April 18 | Reproductive rights | *Crystal Eastman, “Birth Control in the Feminist Program” (1918)<br>*Excerpts from Margaret Sanger, <i>My Fight for Birth Control</i> (1931)<br>*Mike Wallace’ interview with Margaret Sanger (1957, Harry Ransom Center) |

### Week 14: Inalienable Rights

| Date     | Topic                                     | Assignment   |
|----------|---|--|
| April 23 | Second wave vs. the Civil Rights Movement | Danielle McGuire, “There’s Open Season on Negroes Now.” In <i>At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance - A New History of the Civil Rights Movement From Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power</i> (Alfred A. Knopf, 2010): 111-130<br><br>*Excerpt from Betty Friedan, <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> (1963)<br>*Excerpt from Phyllis Schlafly, <i>The Power of the Positive Woman</i> (1977) |
| April 25 | Labor rights                              | Vicki L. Ruiz, “Claiming Public Space.” In <i>From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America</i> (Oxford University Press, 2008): 127-146<br><br>*Mitra Vidal, “New Voice of La Raza: Chicanas Speak Out” (1971)  |

### Week 15: “The General Welfare”

| Date     | Topic                              | Assignment   |
|----------|------------------------------------|--|
| April 30 | Image and body                     | Joan Jacob Brumberg, “Fasting Girls: The Emerging Ideal of Slenderness in American Culture” and “Photo Essay: Adorning the Body.” In <i>Women’s America</i> (8 <sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford University Press, 2016): 420-428, 465-479 |
| May 2    | What have we learned from history? | *Testimonies of Anita Hill (1991) and Christine Blasey Ford (2018)   |