

Women, Gender and Sexuality in the 20th Century U.S. (BC 2567)
Mon/Wed 10:10 – 11:25
Fall 2017

Prof. Premilla Nadasen
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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course chronicles the lives of women, the shifting meaning of gender, as well as women's organizing and activism in the 20th century U.S. We will examine how gender has intersected with and been shaped by class, race, sexuality, and culture and how women in different social locations have lived gender and practiced competing notions of feminism. The course will cover issues of domestic labor, imperial expansion, the suffrage movement, immigration, women's work, poverty, sex and sexuality, reproductive rights, and transnational feminism.

Learning Objectives

- * Read and discuss historiography and scholarly debates within the field of women's history
- * Explore the category of gender, the complexity of women's experiences as influenced by race, class, sexuality and culture, and how these have shaped power, opportunity, and social structure.
- * Examine competing views and perspectives of feminism and individual and collective women's activism
- * Analyze and critique empirical evidence, such as oral histories, photographs, and journalistic accounts.
- * Write an analytical paper in which students are expected to develop a thesis, draw on evidence from research to support an argument, and properly cite the sources.

Required Texts

All required texts are available for purchase at Book Culture, 536 W. 112th Street and are on reserve in the Barnard Library. Articles with an asterisk (*) are also required reading and will be available on the course website. Primary source documents will be available on the course website or will be handed out in class.

Talitha LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015)

Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and A Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1995)

Assata: An Autobiography by Assata Shakur, (Lawrence Hill Books, 2014)

Vanessa Tait, *Poor Workers Unions: Rebuilding the Labor Movement From Below* (Haymarket Books, 2016)

BARNARD HONOR CODE:

"We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake."

You are expected to observe all aspects of the Barnard Honor Code. All work submitted for this course must be your own. Although you may discuss the assignments with your classmates, your short essays, papers, and exam must reflect your own ideas and arguments. If you include information from books, articles and internet websites, such sources must be clearly identified in your footnotes/end notes and bibliography. Please let me know if you have any questions about the honor code as it relates to this course.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students with disabilities who will be taking this course and may need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. Students who need test or classroom accommodations must be registered in advance with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in 008 Milbank.

Office Hours/Appointments

My scheduled office hours are on Monday from 12-2. Occasionally I am unable to hold regular office hours. The best way to see when I am available and make an appointment is to click on the link below.

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UUFjOTBNX1hDQXNvfGRIZmF1bHR8NTNhNGM4ZjU1YjFIZjRIOTEwZjVmNmNkNzQ2OTQ1YWU>

Assignments:

Final exam 30%

Three writing assignments. Unless accompanied by a note from a doctor or the dean, late papers will be deducted half a letter grade per day.

- First Short Essay on Intersectionality: DUE: September 27, 20%

- Second Essay: Op-Ed on protective labor legislation for women, DUE October 23, 20%
- Write an essay about feminism using primary source documents, DUE: November 29, 30%

Sept. 6: Introduction

Sept. 11: Theorizing Women's and Gender History

*Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" *American Historical Review* (1986)

*Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color" *Stanford Law Review*, 1991.

Sept 13: The Domestic Realm and Women's Activism

*Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820 – 1860" *American Quarterly* (1966)

Sept. 18: Gender, Race, and the New South

Talitha LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence*

Sept. 20: Women, Education, and Social Reform

Sept. 25: Gender and Imperialism

*Margaret D. Jacobs, "Working on the Domestic Frontier: American Indian Domestic Servants in White Women's Households in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1920-1940" *Frontiers* (2007), pp. 165-199

*Lewis Meriam, *Problem of Indian Administration*, 1928, excerpt p. 627-628

*Zitkala-Sa, "School Days of an Indian Girl"

Sept. 27: Immigration

First Essay Due

*Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*, Chapter 1

*Sophonisba Breckinridge and Edith Abbot, *The Delinquent Child and the Home*, Chapter 3

Oct 2: Women, Work and the State

Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and a Little Fire*, Chapt. 1-2

Oct. 4: Women's Labor Organizing

Annelise Orleck, *Common Sense and a Little Fire*, Chapter 3-5

Oct. 9: Suffrage Movement

*Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls*, prologue

Oct. 11: Consumerism and the “New Woman”

*Kathy Peiss “Making Faces: The Cosmetics Industry and the Cultural Construction of Gender, 1890-1930” in *Unequal Sisters*

Oct. 16: The Great Depression

Orleck, *Common Sense*, Chapter 6

*Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke, “Slave Market”

*Document: “Shall Married Women Work?”

Oct. 18: The New Deal

Oct. 23: Film: The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter

Second Essay Due

Oct. 25: Women and WWII

*Leisa D. Meyer, “Creating G.I. Jane: The Regulation of Sexuality and Sexual Behavior in the Women’s Army Corps During World War II” *Feminist Studies* (1992): 581-601

October 30: Motherhood and the Postwar Gender Order

*Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Chapt 1

*Daniel Horowitz, “Rethinking Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique*: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America” in *American Quarterly* (1996).

Nov. 1: The Women’s Movement

*Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street*, Chapt. 3

Nov. 6: Academic Holiday: No Class

Nov. 8: Abortion and Reproductive Rights

*Ricki Solinger “Dependency and Choice: The Two Faces of Eve” in *Social Justice* (1998)

*Alison Piepmeier, “The Inadequacy of Choice: Disability and What’s Wrong with Feminist Framings of Reproduction” *Feminist Studies* (2013)

*““Abortions under community control”: Feminism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Reproduction Among New York City's Young Lords” in Jennifer Nelson's *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*

Nov. 13: Women and Struggles for Economic Justice

*Premilla Nadasen, "Expanding the Boundaries of the Women's Movement: Economic Justice and the Struggle for Welfare Rights" *Feminist Studies* (2002)

*Document: Johnnie Tillmon, "Welfare is a Women's Issue"
Wages for Housework Document TBD

Nov. 15: Sexual Liberation

*Document: Gloria Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate"

*Kathy Rudy, "Radical Feminism, Lesbian Separatism, and Queer Theory" *Feminist Studies* (2001)

Nov. 20: Film: Out in the Night

Begin reading *Assata*

Nov. 22: Thanksgiving Holiday: No Class

Nov. 27: Women and Radical Politics

Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

Nov. 29: Women and Gender in the 80s: Pornography, Prostitution and the Anti-Violence Movement

Second essay on feminism due

*Mireille Miller-Young, *A Taste for Brown Sugar*, Introduction

Dec. 4: New Feminist Discourses: The Third Wave, Queer Theory and Transnational Feminism

*Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* (1997)

*Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" *Feminist Review* (1988)

Dec. 6: Women in Power: Leaning In

Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*, Introduction and Chapter 1 (available on-line through CLIO)

Dec. 11: Women: The New Laboring Class

Vanessa Tait, *Poor Workers Unions*