

HISTORY 130: WOMEN IN AMERICAN HISTORY  
Palomar College  
Spring 2021  
Online

Instructor: Dr. Catherine Christensen Gwin

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday 11:00am-1:00pm/ Thursday 5:00-6:00pm (Email to set zoom appointment.)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the history of women in the United States from the Colonial era to the present day. We will explore how women and gender shaped American society and culture during key moments and transformations in U.S. History—from the early nation to the Great Depression to Second Wave Feminism and beyond. As we trace their stories, we will situate women in the broader context of labor, politics, immigration, activism, sexuality, consumer culture, beauty and war. Throughout, we will explore both the similarities and differences of women's experiences and will consider how race, class, ethnicity and historical moment structured the limits and possibilities of their lives.

Beyond our thematic focus, this course aims to cultivate historical thinking and analysis skills, such as:

1. understanding context, multiple perspectives, and complex causation.
2. reading and analyzing primary sources.
3. evaluating diverse historical interpretations and arguments.
4. expressing and supporting ideas in writing.
5. writing an argumentative historical essay that synthesizes and integrates evidence from a variety of primary and secondary sources.

### GRADING

Quizzes	100pts.
Readings Questions & Written Assignments	100pts.
Midterm Exam:	100pts.
Paper:	100pts.
Final Exam:	100pts.

*\*Note: Grading totals for quizzes and written assignments are approximate and can vary each semester.*

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Sara Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America*
- Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War*
- Select Readings on Canvas

These books are available at the Palomar Bookstore (and will also be available on reserve in the library.)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course happens on Canvas. However, I still hope to create a “classroom” with an engaged and lively community of learners. As such, you still need to show up and participate, even if it’s on your own time and schedule. This means you must view lectures and complete assignments within the given time frame, respond to discussion posts when asked, and stay in good contact with me as the course progresses. Communication is vital to succeeding!

*Drop Policy:* If nothing is submitted within three weeks of the course (and I am unable to contact you) will be dropped from the course.

*Modules:* This course is structured with about 25 “modules,” or short units of study which typically include 1-2 lectures, readings, assignments and quizzes. New modules will be available for you to complete within the week. That means you can complete the work when you want, but it has to be done by the “due date” to avoid penalty. If you want to move quicker through the course, please let me know and I can make modules available to you. Also, if “life” or extenuating circumstances are preventing you from completing assignments, etc., contact me for an extension.

*Reading & Written Assignments:* Reading assignments are to be completed before lecture. To make sure you understand the readings (or at least are trying to!) you will submit reading questions/reflections on most readings. These are not hard. You will also complete a few written assignments that include primary analyses, response pieces, film reflections, discussion posts and other small tasks. You can drop or miss two of these reading assignments (unless indicated as “required”). Although you can miss a few assignments, you are still responsible for knowing all course material for exams. If you complete the assignments but feel unclear or uncertain about any of the material, please email me and I’m happy to make sure you are “getting it.”

Note: Many of the reading questions are in a quiz format (especially for your textbook, *Born for Liberty*). Canvas does not allow for multiple choice assignments, so I've entered these reading questions as a "Practice Quizzes." This means you can take them up to 10 times and you do not get an immediate grade. I will give you an averaged grade for these assignments at the end of the course (based on whether you did them...pretty well.) But don't be scared when it says “quiz” at the top of the page.

*Lecture:* All lectures are posted on weekly modules on Canvas. These narrated power points are about an hour in length and the basis of information for both quizzes and exams. If you encounter any difficulties viewing the lectures, please contact me immediately.

*Quizzes:* Upon the completion of the lecture, you will take a short (and pretty easy!) quiz. These quizzes are only worth 3-5 points, but this adds up to 20% of your grade and can significantly improve/hurt your grade. You can retake the quiz three times if you do poorly and can drop or skip three quizzes over the semester.

*Midterm & Final Exams:* The midterm and final exam include two parts: short answer response and two essay questions. The midterm will cover the first eight weeks of class and the final will focus on the second half of class (it is not cumulative). The exams will assess material covered in class, and *no outside material will be allowed.*

*Paper:* You will write one 3-4 page paper for this course. You can submit your paper any time between week 8 and week 14. Specific writing instructions will be provided and preliminary assignments must be completed before your paper is due (e.g. Thesis, Rubric etc.)

*Grading:* Canvas will grade many of your assignments immediately. However I'm not quite as fast and will grade written assignments within a week from submission.

*Late Policy & Plagiarism:* All assignments must be turned in on time, unless you've received an extension. Remember, plagiarism will not be tolerated. Before submitting any written assignments please make sure you understand Palomar College's Academic Honesty Policy. If you are not certain what plagiarism is, or need guidance about academic honesty, please visit the link on Canvas.

*Extra Credit:* You will have the opportunity to extra credit throughout the semester. For more information see Canvas.

*Disability:* If you have specific disabilities and require special accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) will help provide appropriate support for course exams, assignments, etc.

If you have any trouble accessing lectures, quizzes, readings, assignments, films, etc., please notify me immediately.

***Note: Syllabus Subject to Change during the Semester if Required***

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### **Week 1: Womanhood, Gender & Course Themes February 1-February 7**

Module 1: Course Introduction & What is Historical Thinking?

Module 2: What is Women's History? What is gender?

Reading & Assignment: Excerpts from "Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender"

### **Week 2: Early American Women February 8-February 14**

Module 3: Native American Women

Reading & Assignments: *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 1; Excerpts from Camilla Townsend, *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*

Activity: Iroquois Creations Myth On-Line Tutorial

Module 4: Colonial Women

Reading & Assignments: *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 2

"Blackstone's Laws on Marriage"; "Commentaries on Marriage" in Colonial America

Film: *A Midwife's Tale*

### **Week 3: Colonial Women & the Revolution February 15-February 21**

Module 5: Disorderly Women in the Colonies

Reading & Assignment: Carol Karlsen, "The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: The Economic Basis of Witchcraft"

Module 6: Revolutionary Women

Reading & Assignments: *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 3 to page 58

Primary Source Cartoon Analysis Assignment (Required)

### **Week 4: Women in an Expanding Nation February 22-February 28**

Module 7: The Separation of Spheres

Reading & Assignments: "The Pastoralization of Housework"; "How Much Should We Pay Moms?"; "Taking Unpaid Housework for Granted Is Wrong"

(Optional) *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 4

Module 8: Women in the West

Reading & Assignments: Theda Perdue, "Cherokee Women and the Trail of Tears" Summary

**Week 5: Women, Slavery, and Reform**

**March 1-March 7**

Module 9: Women in Slavery

Reading & Assignments: *Aren't I a Woman* by Deborah Gray White; *Women, Race & Class* by Angela Davis

Module 10: Reform and Women's Rights

Reading & Assignments: *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 5 Beginning to "Southern Women" "Declaration of Sentiments"; Letters on the Equality of the Sexes

**Week 6: Civil War & Reconstruction**

**March 8-March 14**

Module 11: Women in the Civil War

Reading & Assignments: *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 5 "The Civil War"; Evans, Chapter 6 Beginning to "From the WCTU"

Module 12: Reconstruction & Feminism

Reading & Assignments: Elsa Barkley Brown, "To Catch the Vision of Freedom: Reconstructing Southern Black Women's Political History, 1865-1880"

**Week 7: Sex and the City: Immigrant Women, Urban Life and Wage Work**

**March 15-March 21**

Module 13: Industrial life, Progressivism & Clubwomen

Reading & Assignment: *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 7 to "A Reunited Suffrage Movement"

Module 14 : Progressivism & Prostitution

Reading & Assignment: Kathy Peiss, "Charity Girls"; "The White Slave Trade of Today," Emma Goldman, "The Traffic in Women"

**March 22-March 29 Spring Break**

**Week 8: Midterm Exam**

**March 29-April 3**

**Week 9: Suffrage**  
**April 5-April 11**

Module 15: The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment

Reading & Assignment: *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 7 (152-a “Reunited Suffrage Movement to end”); Chapter 8; Suffrage Poster

Film: *Iron-Jawed Angels*

**Week 10: New Women, Bohemians & Flappers**  
**April 12-April 18**

Module 16: Flappers & Bohemians

Reading & Assignment: Excerpts from Joan Brumberg, *The Body Project* & Questions

Film: *Killing Us Softly*

Module 17: Women, Migrations & the Blues

Reading & Assignment: *Homeward Bound* Introduction & Chapter 1; Discussion on Blues songs

**Week 11: Hard Times: The Great Depression & World War II**  
**April 19-April 25**

Module 18: Gender & the Great Depression

Reading & Assignment: *Homeward Bound* Chapter 2 & 3

Module 19: Women & The “Good War”

Reading & Assignment: *Homeward Bound* Chapter 4

**Week 12: Postwar Women**  
**April 26-May 2**

Module 20: Happy Housewives in Suburban America

Reading & Assignment: *Homeward Bound* Chapters 5; Excerpts, “The Modern Woman” & Good Wife’s Guide

Module 21: Sexual Subcultures, the History of LGBT & Abortion in America

Reading & Assignment: *Homeward Bound* Chapter 6 & 7

**Week 13: Women & the Civil Rights Movement**  
**May 3-May 9**

Module 22: Women in the Movement

Reading & Assignment: Finish *Homeward Bound* (Chapter 8 & 9)

Module 23: Black is Beautiful

Reading & Assignment: Black Women & Black Power

**Week 14: The Second Wave Feminist Movement**  
**May 10-May 16**

Module 24: The Rise & Fall of Second Wave Feminism

Canvas: Freidan, "The Problem that Had No Name"; Redstockings Manifesto

Reading & Assignment: (Optional) *Born for Liberty*, Chapter 12

Frances M. Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" & Questions

Film Clips: *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*

**Week 15: Feminist Backlash & "Postfeminism"**  
**May 17-May 23**

Module 25: The Seventies, the Backlash & the ERA

Reading & Assignment: Excerpts from Susan J. Douglas & Meredith W. Michaels "Mouthing Off to Dr. Spock" from *The Mommy Myth*; & Phyllis Schlafly, "The Positive Woman, 1977"

Film: *Makers III* & Questions

Module 26: Post Feminism?

Reading & Assignment: Excerpts from *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* by Susan Faludi; "Introduction"; from Susan Douglas *The Rise of Enlightened Sexism: How Pop Culture Took Us from Girl Power to Girls Gone Wild*

**Week 16: Final Exam**  
**May 22-May 27**

May 27: *Final Due*