

AMH 3561

American Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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Keene-Flint 203

MWF 10:40-11:30      KF 0119

Office Hours MW 2:00-4:00

352-227-3368



Figure 3.7 "A Society of Patriotic Ladies" (1774)  
Library of Congress LC-USZ62-12711  
Chapter 3, *Through Women's Eyes*, Third Edition  
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## *Course Summary*

The nineteenth century was a fascinating time of flux for many American women. Despite commonly acknowledged cultural

rules limiting the public behavior of women, various individuals and groups challenged these dominant gender norms in all sorts of arenas. During this semester we will explore a variety of ways in which women entered the public arena during this period. Lectures and discussion topics will range from activists and reformers, to novelists and orators, to slave owners and the enslaved, to seamstresses.

In addition to text and documents from the main textbook (*Through Women's Eyes*), we will be reading and discussing three novels written by 19<sup>th</sup> Century women.

## *Class Meetings and Preparation*

This course will combine occasional traditional lectures with the intensive discussion of books, articles, and a range of primary sources. Students will also have the opportunity to present the products of modest primary research. Attendance is mandatory. More than two absences will result in automatic deductions from your final average. You are expected to attend all classes with *notes* on the assigned readings. You will have periodic open note quizzes on the assigned readings.

My goal is to create a lively, civil, class community, where students are engaging with each other as much as they are talking to me. Because of these core goals, *no computers or other electronic devices are allowed in class*.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

## *Canvas Web Site*

This class will make limited use of the class web site on Canvas. I will link this syllabus and the three paper/presentation

assignments on Canvas.

I will also create links to additional assigned readings.

And, finally, there will be a page with links to useful primary sources.

We will not use Canvas for class discussions or grades.

## *Readings for Purchase*

The following books should be available in the bookstore and also on line. You should bring the assigned books to class whenever there is an assignment from the book.

- Dubois and Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (2009), volume 1.

This is an excellent textbook in American women's history, which combines a concise narrative with excellent documents and images. For many weeks you will be asked to read one or more chapters as background for class discussions. I will also ask you to prepare specific documents for discussion for many days.

Note that *Through Women's Eyes* (TWE) has gone through several editions. Some are only available in a large edition that spans all of U.S. History. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, which I have assigned, has a "volume 1" that covers the first half of the entire history. Since this course pretty much begins in 1790, we will be skipping the first few chapters of volume 1. Note that there is also a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> edition of this book and it is also possible to buy the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> edition as one volume (and it is really inexpensive). If you find yourself with the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> edition you will generally be okay, just check with a classmate about the pagination of assignments.

- Hannah Foster, *The Coquette* (Oxford UP, Davidson, editor).

This is a very popular novel published in 1797. You do not have to read Davidson's Introduction, but I would like you read the version edited by Davidson (so that the page numbers are the same for everyone).

- Harriett Wilson, *Our Nig* (1859).

This autobiographical novel is generally understood to be the first

novel written by an African American. There are multiple printed versions available. (My own copy is the Vintage copy which is out of print, but is available cheap on line.) But, if you prefer, the entire novel is available on line at the University of Virginia web site: <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/africam/ournighp.html>

(Links to an external site.)

Links to an external site.

(If you read a digital version, please be sure to bring notes to class.)

- Louisa May Alcott, *Work: A Story of Experience* (Penguin Classic, 1873; 1994). ISBN-10: 014039091X.

This novel is Louisa May Alcott's contemplation of working women in society (and various other topics). The book is also available in various on line forms, but I would prefer that you get the inexpensive Penguin paperback to facilitate class discussions.

## *Assignments*

You will write three short (3-5 pp.) essays this semester. The first two will involve connecting a very small piece of research with the larger themes discussed in class. The third will be your response to the three novels. Each assignment will be discussed as the due date approaches.

In writing papers, be certain to give proper credit whenever you use words, phrases, ideas, arguments, and conclusions drawn from someone else's work. Failure to give credit by quoting and/or footnoting is PLAGIARISM and is unacceptable. Please review the University's honesty policy at

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm>

(Links to an external site.)

Links to an external site.

In addition to these regulations on plagiarism, please understand that I will take *any* instance of cheating or intentional dishonesty very seriously. This would include any form of dishonesty on the

most minor quiz or offering an untrue excuse for a missed class or late assignment.

### *Accommodations*

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## Grading

Class Participation, Presentations and Preparation 20%

(This grade will include periodic quizzes)

Short Essays (20%, 20%, 20%) 60%

Final Examination (take home) 20%

Missed classes or persistent lateness will result in substantial grade reductions. For more information on the grading policy see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

### *Participation Grades will Reflect*

- Coming to class prepared to discuss readings.
- Active engagement in discussions (and when your classmates are presenting).
- Success on very simple 10 point (unannounced) reading quizzes, which measure preparation.
- Presentations in class.

### *Attendance and other Deductions*

- After two absences, the final grade number will be for each additional unexcused absence.
- If a student is habitually late, this will result in a reduction off the

final grade.

- Please do not text or use electronic devices during class! This will result in grade reductions.

### *Course Evaluation*

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at

<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

(Links to an external site.)

Links to an external site.

## *CLASS MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS*

### **PRESCRIPTIONS FOR WOMEN**

1 M August 21

Introductions

2 W August 23

Rules and Prescriptions

3 F August 25

*DISCUSS: Barbara Welter*

Read: Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,"

*American Quarterly* 18 (Summer, 1966): 151-174. See link on

Canvas

4 M August 28

Fiction and Prescription

5 W August 30

Discuss: *The Coquette*

Read: Hannah Foster, *The Coquette*. You do not have to read Davidson's Introduction, but I would like you read the version edited by Davidson (so that the page numbers are the same for everyone).

6 F September 1

Discuss: *The Coquette*, continued

## WHAT IS A REPUBLICAN MOTHER?

- M September 4                      Holiday  
7 W September 6                      *Politics and Gender*  
Read: TWE, 122-138; 162-167, 174-176.  
8 F September 8                      *Remember the Ladies?*  
Read: [Letters from Abigail and John Adams](#)    Linked to Canvas.

## THE NEW NATION

- 9 M September 11                      *Race and the War's Legacies*  
Read: TWE, 137-143, 169-173.  
10 W September 13                      *Domesticity*  
Read: TWE, 186-195.  
11 F September 15                      *Lowell Girls*  
Read: TWE, 195-203.

## DECODING PRESCRIPTION

- 12 M September 18                      Presentations  
13 W September 20                      Presentations  
14 F September 22                      Presentations  
*Essay #1 Due in Class*

## BATTLES OVER SLAVERY

- 15 M September 25                      *The Institution of Slavery*  
Read: TWE, 204-219.  
16 W September 27                      *Resisting Slavery: Two Accounts*  
Read: TWE, 225-231  
17 F September 29                      *Abolitionism and Gender*  
Read: TWE, 266-274.

## REFORMING WOMEN

- 18 M October 2                      *Varieties of Reform*  
Read: TWE, 262-279 (note that this includes the section on abolitionism again).  
19 W October 4 *Seneca Falls*  
Read: TWE, Appendix A-18.

F October 6

Homecoming

### HARRIET WILSON, NOVELIST

20 M October 9 An African American Novel

21 W October 11 *Discuss: Our Nig - I*

Read: Wilson, *Our Nig*  
(Links to an external site.)

Links to an external site.

22 F October 13 *Discuss: Our Nig - II*

### WOMEN IN PUBLIC

23 M October 16 *Women in the street*

Read: Christine Stansell, "Women, Children, and the Uses of the Streets: Class and Gender Conflict in New York City, 1850-1860," *Feminist Studies* Vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer, 1982), pp. 309-335. Linked to Canvas

24 W October 18 *Women and Wartime - I*

Read: TWE, 279-286.

25 F October 29 *Women and Wartime - II*

TBA

### PRESENTATIONS: IN SEARCH OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC

26 M October 23 Presentations

27 W October 25 Presentations

28 F October 27 Presentations

*Essay #2 Due in Class*

### IN SEARCH OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

29 M October 30 *Suffrage and Reform*

Read: TWE, 324-330; 353-357; A14, A24-26.

30 W November 1 *Race and Reconstruction*

Read: TWE, 330-337.

31 F November 3 *Ida B. Wells*

Read: TWE, 358-362

32 M November 6 *Working Women*  
Read: TWE, 337-343, 363-368.  
33 W November 8 TBA  
F November 10 Holiday

### LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

34 M November 13 *Louisa May Alcott's Work*  
Read: LMA, *Work*.  
35 W November 15 *Louisa May Alcott's Work*  
36 F November 17 *Louisa May Alcott's Work*

37 M November 20 *Discussion: Novelists and Gender History*

### *Essay #3 Due in Class*

W November 22 Holiday  
F November 24 Holiday

### THE END OF THE CENTURY

38 M November 27 *Immigration, Displacement and Cultural Difference*  
Read: TWE, 388-413, 421-424.  
39 W November 29 *Jane Addams and the Settlement House Movement*  
Read: TWE, 413-416, 426-433.  
40 F December 1 TBA

41 M December 4 *Conclusions*  
42 W December 6 *Prepare for Takehome*

December 14

Take Home due at 12:30 (exam period)