

ASH / WOH 4930 Writing Women's Lives

Spring 2022/ W Period 7-9 (1:55 – 4:55 PM) / Keene-Flint (FLI 0115)

Dr. Sandy F. Chang (she/her/hers)

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Office Hours: Mondays (1-3 PM) in person @ Keene-Flint 20 / via Zoom & by appointment



Course Description

This research seminar explores the possibilities and challenges in researching and writing about women's lives in history. We will consider key themes, theoretical questions, and methodological approaches in the field of women's history, examining topics that range from women's literary traditions in eighteenth-century China to black women's intimate lives in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. In the first half of the semester, students will investigate the lived experiences of women across time and space, and consider how structures of power shaped their lives. Through a close reading of selected texts, we will engage in scholarly debates on the feminist project of recovery, questions of agency, and the evidence of experience. At the same time, rather than treat "women" as a fixed and universal category, this seminar invites students to think critically about how meanings of sexed bodies are produced in relation to one another, and how they change over time. The second half of the course is devoted to training students in the craft of a historian through a series of guided and interactive workshops. Students will learn to conduct archival research; write a literature review; incorporate theoretical and methodological approaches covered in class in their own work; engage in peer review; revise, refine, and reorganize their drafts; and thrive in the "pleasures and perils" of writing history. With these insights and skills, students will produce a piece of original historical scholarship by the end of the semester.

Course Objectives

With the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Historicize the category of “women” and changing conceptions of gender
2. Articulate the key theoretical questions and methodological approaches in the field of women’s history
3. Interpret a range of sources, both primary and secondary, by assessing their arguments, context of production, and intended audiences
4. Conduct research on proposed topic of interest and develop questions for academic inquiry
5. Develop an abstract and literature review
6. Adopt disciplinary conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation
7. Write a piece of original historical scholarship using both primary and secondary sources

Class Format

Our class meets once a week on Wednesdays for three hours. This is primarily a discussion-based seminar. As such, students are required to complete all readings, as well as attend and participate actively in class. The more prepared you are before class, the more you will get out of this seminar. Students are encouraged to bring their notes and texts (hardcopies or electronic version) to class for referencing and close reading. In the first part of the seminar, students will write four (out of five) critical reflections on the weekly readings in order to facilitate our discussion. Each week, I will also give mini-lectures to supplement and contextualize the texts. The latter half of our seminar consists of a series of guided and interactive workshops, which are designed to facilitate the writing of your final research paper.

Covid-19 Statement

I am committed to being as flexible as possible to support all students in our class as we navigate life and learning amid a pandemic. If you are experiencing Covid-19-related challenges, please reach out to me if you feel comfortable doing so and/or contact the [Dean of Students Office](#). Please note that in light of new guidance from the CDC, you are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. During my in-person office hours, masks are *required*. For more on Covid-related policies for our class, refer to: [Course Policies and Resources](#) in the syllabus.

Required Texts and Materials

1. Grace M. Cho, *Tastes Like War: A Memoir* (New York: Feminist Press of CUNY, 2021).
2. Gaiutra Bahadur, *Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
3. Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China’s Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
4. Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020).

This class uses Canvas, a Web-based course management with password-protected access at <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>. Additional readings will be posted under the Modules section. Class announcements will also be posted online. It will be your responsibility to check the website frequently to make sure you are updated on the course work.

Assignments and Grading

Weekly Reflections (40%) – Between Week 2 and 6, you will write four (out of five) reflections on the weekly readings. The reflections should be primarily analytical, succinctly summarizing the key arguments in the texts and offering insightful observations about the author’s theoretical and methodological approaches. Your reflections should also generate questions that the texts raised for you, and draw connections between our class discussions and other course readings. Each reflection should be double-spaced, 12-point font, and 1-2 pages. Reading reflections for the week are due Wednesdays in class; submit hardcopy.

Initial Abstract (5%) – Your initial abstract will provide a short summary of your preliminary research paper. A well-written abstract serves multiple purposes: informs the readers the essence of your topic; offers readers concise information about your argument, sources, and scholarly interventions; and helps readers remember key points from your paper. Each abstract should include a working title of paper, be single-spaced, 12-point font, and 250 words maximum. Submit abstract via Canvas by 6 PM, Friday, 2/25.

Annotated Bibliography (5%) – The annotated bibliography provides you (and me) with a working guide for your research. It should include both primary and secondary sources you will be using for your research. Each annotation should summarize, assess, or evaluate a source, and reflect on the source’s possible uses for the project at hand. The annotated bibliography should include at least three primary sources and ten peer-reviewed secondary sources. Submit the assignment via Canvas by 6 PM, Friday, 3/4.

Oral Presentation (5%) – Prepare a 10-minute oral presentation that shares your research with the class. The presentation should include your research question, a clear thesis, and evidence to support your conclusions. You may provide several examples from your research to discuss, or explore one in greater detail. Feel free to share what the research and writing process has been like for you, and whether through it, you’ve entertained new questions or avenues for future research. Visual aids are not required, but highly encouraged. Due Wednesdays, 4/13 & 4/20.

Final Research Paper (45%) – This major assignment is an analytical paper based on original research in women’s history, using both primary sources and secondary literature. The final paper should have a compelling question for historical research, a clear thesis, strong supporting evidence, and a persuasive conclusion. It must also include an updated abstract and bibliography. A model final paper should also reflect or integrate the following: theoretical insights and methodological approaches explored in class; a concise literature review; revisions based on constructive feedback from peers; sophisticated prose that conforms to the conventions of the historical discipline, including proper citations and documentations. The final paper should be double-spaced, 12-point font, and a minimum of 15 pages. Submit paper via Canvas and bring a hardcopy to class on Wednesday, 4/20.

List of Assignment Deadlines

Weekly Reading Reflections (40%)	1/12-2/9
Initial abstract (5%)	2/25
Annotated Bibliography (5%)	3/4
5-page draft	3/18

10-page draft
Presentations (5%)
Final paper (45%)

3/30
4/13 & 4/20
4/20

Course Schedule

*Note: This schedule represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the learning objectives. Such changes are not unusual and should be expected.

Week 1 Introduction

1/5 Researching Women, Theorizing Gender: Definitions and Challenges

Required Reading:

1. Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Hearing Women's Voices: A Feminist Reconstruction of History," in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in America* (1985): 11-52.
 2. Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075.
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Week 2 Memoirs, Biographies, and Microhistories

1/12 Writing Women's Lives: An Exploration of Three Genres

Required Reading:

1. Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History* 88, no.1 (2001): 129-144.
 2. Amy Stanley, "Maid-servants' Tales: Narrating Domestic and Global History in Eurasia, 1600-1900," *The American Historical Review* 121, no.2 (2016): 437-460.
 3. Helen M Buss, "Introduction" in *Repossessing the World: Reading Memoirs by Contemporary Women* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2002): 1-26.
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Week 3 Historicizing the Personal

1/19 "Part Memoir, Part Sociological Investigation": Korean Women, Postwar Diaspora, and Trauma

Required Readings:

1. Grace M. Cho, *Tastes Like War: A Memoir* (New York: Feminist Press of CUNY, 2021).
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Week 4 Restoring "Stolen Voices"

1/26 Race, Gender, and Power in Colonial Archives

Required Readings:

1. Gaiutra Bahadur, *Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
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Week 5 Reading Women's Writings, Writing Women's Lives

2/2 Women's Literary Tradition as Social History

Required Reading:

1. Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
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Week 6 Radical Reimaginings

2/9 Methods and Narrative Strategies for Exploring Intimate, Interior Lives

Required Reading:

1. Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020).
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Week 7 Refining Your Research Topic: Themes, Questions, Arguments

2/16 *No Class: Meetings with Professor to Discuss Research Topic

Week 8 Sources and Methods: Finding Women in Historical Record

2/23 Class Presentation on Topics and Sources / Brainstorming Session / Writing Workshop

Required Reading:

1. Sandy F. Chang, "Intimate Itinerancy: Sex, Work, and Chinese Women in Colonial Malaya's Brothel Economy, 1870s-1930s," *Journal of Women's History* 33, no. 4 (2021): 92-117.

DUE Friday, 2/25: Initial Abstract (Submit via Canvas)

Week 9 The Pleasures and Perils of Writing

3/2 Workshop and Discussion: Loving and Hating the Writing Process

Required Reading:

1. Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994): 60-98.
2. Lynn Hunt, "The Art of History: How Writing Leads to Thinking," *AHA Perspectives on History* (February 1, 2010):
<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/february-2010/how-writing-leads-to-thinking>

DUE Friday, 3/4: Annotated Bibliography (Submit via Canvas)

Week 10 Spring Break

3/9 *No Class (Rest, Stretch, and Read for Pleasure)

Optional Reading:

1. Cheryl Strayed, "Write Like a Motherf#\$*er," *The Rumpus* (August 19, 2010):
<https://therumpus.net/2010/08/dear-sugar-the-rumpus-advice-column-48-write-like-a-motherfucker/>

Week 11 The Dreaded "Lit Review"

3/16 Workshop: Tackling the Literature Review

Required Reading:

1. "Writing a Literature Review":
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/writing_a_literature_review.html
2. Elisa Camiscioli, "Women, Gender, Intimacy, and Empire," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (2013): 138-148.

DUE: Friday, 3/18: 5-Page Draft (Submit via Canvas for Feedback from Professor)

Week 12 Embracing "Shitty First Drafts"

3/23 *No Class (Work on Complete First Draft of Research Essay)

Week 13 Peer Review

3/30 Workshop: Giving, Receiving, and Incorporating Feedback

Required Reading:

1. Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994): 245-273.

DUE: Wednesday, 3/30: 10-Page Draft (Bring hardcopy to class for peer review)

Week 14 Writing Well: Revisions, Revisions, Revisions

4/6 Workshop: Polishing Your Prose

Required Reading:

TBA

Week 15 Presenting Your Research

4/13 Student Presentations, Part I

Week 16 Final Course Reflections

4/20 Student Presentations, Part II, Taking Stock, and Conclusions

DUE: Wednesday, 4/20: Final Research Paper

Course Policies & Resources

Attendance and Participation

The success of our class and fulfillment of your learning objectives depends on your regular attendance, engagement, and contribution. You are permitted one “personal day” or discretionary, unexcused absence without penalty. Additional absences will impact your final grade.

Deadlines

Late assignments will be marked down by a grade fraction for each 24-hour period beyond the due date and time. Assignments that are more than 72 hours late will not be accepted. Exemptions will be allowed for serious illnesses, family emergencies, and university-approved functions, but students must notify me *before* the deadline. In cases of unforeseen emergencies, please get in touch with me as soon as possible after your absence. For more on policies related to make-up exams and assignments, please visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Privacy and Online Learning

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who attend online sessions and participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to

keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Communication

I will send important reminders and announcements via email to your UF account. It is your responsibility to check your account regularly to stay up to date. Students are also very welcome to email me at sandychang@ufl.edu. Please note that I will respond to every student's email within 24 hours during weekdays. I do not check emails regularly on weekends (from Friday, 6 PM to Monday, 8 AM), so please plan accordingly.

I highly encourage students to come to my office hours. It offers an opportunity for me to get to know you better. I am available for discussions about assignments, readings, course content, graduate school applications, or any other relevant topics.

Academic Integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

<https://disability.ufl.edu>

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available from the [Gatorevals website](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via the [evaluation system](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at the [public results website](#).

U Matter, We Care

Your well-being during these uncertain times is of utmost importance to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Covid-19 Guidelines

In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. During in-person office hours, masks are required. Recent studies and guidance from the CDC state that both unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals can transmit the current COVID-19 variant to unvaccinated persons. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.
- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment: <https://coronavirus.uflhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.
- If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email covid@shcc.ufl.edu <<mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu>>) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website <<https://click.info.gator360.ufl.edu/?qs=8f0d5e01a3f7385148f144e2089093522a358a8d85cb9db73c31675d3c5e5c0d27748d40c212f544822551342f1912ea5b4f2b890d5952e8>> for more information.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.
- If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

- Continue to regularly visit coronavirus.UFHealth.org and coronavirus.ufl.edu for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

Additional Academic Resources

Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

E-learning technical support

Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center

Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support

Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

On-Line Students Complaints

[View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#)

Teaching Center

Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.