History 385B: Women and Gender in Modern America

Professor Michael Flamm
Elliott Hall: (740) 368-3634
Office Hours: T 1-3 pm / F 2-4 pm (or by appointment)
Ohio Wesleyan University
mwflamm@owu.edu
Spring 2007

Overview:

From the fight for suffrage to the struggle for equality, the history of women in modern America has featured change and continuity, conflict and consensus. Great expectations and individual courage have led to substantial progress – but also to bitter disappointment and unintended consequences. This seminar will examine how, for more than a century, American women have sought personal fulfillment and professional advancement despite political, economic, racial, social, cultural, and individual obstacles.

Texts:

• Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements*
• Nancy Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism*
• Elaine May, Homeward Bound*
• Sarah Evans, Personal Politics*
• Kristin Luker, Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*
• Danielle Crittenden, What Our Mothers Didn’t Tell Us*
• Wendy Wasserstein, The Heidi Chronicles*
• Katie Roiphe, The Morning After*

All texts are available at the bookstore. The * indicates that the text is also on reserve in the library. All ERes readings are available through the OWU Library homepage.

Requirements:

• Deliver two oral introductions (5 minutes) to the readings I assign (with your input). Offer opinions and identify issues. Use reviews to develop ideas. Prepare a list of questions for discussion and bring copies for the class.
• Prepare three reading essays (around 750 words) on the texts (not articles) of your choice. The essays are due in class and should analyze – not summarize – an issue, theme, or idea that is central to the work and that you find interesting or controversial. Offer a thesis with which a reasonable person could disagree. Support personal opinions with specific references. You may not submit an essay on a reading you have to introduce. The first essay is due on or before week six. I will drop the lowest of the three grades that you receive. I will not accept late essays.
• Submit a final paper of around 2000-2500 words (eight to ten typed, double-spaced pages with standard one-inch margins). Analyze one of the recurring themes or issues of the course that you find interesting or controversial. Make explicit reference to at least three of the
texts. Include page numbers and a title page. Use footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations (e.g. Cott, p. 439) for specific facts and direct quotations. Please get advance approval for your topic by November 5. The paper (required) is due on November 12. The rewrite (optional) is due on December 10. It may enable you to raise your original grade by one letter (from a B- to an A- for example) or to a B-, whichever is higher. See me if you need assistance or wish to do a rewrite. Failure to submit the final paper will result in an “F” for the course.

- Deliver a six to eight minute oral presentation on your final paper. You may use note cards but do not read to the class.

Late papers will receive substantial penalties (one full letter grade per day). Any act of plagiarism (see the OWU Catalog and The History Handbook) will lead to an “F” for the assignment and a report to the dean of academic affairs, with additional penalties possible.

Grading:

- Class participation 50 percent
- Reading essays 25 percent
- Final paper 25 percent

Regular attendance is required. More than two excused absences will lead to a reduction of one letter in the course grade as will any unexcused absences. The oral introductions and oral presentation will count as part of class participation. Significant progress will receive appropriate recognition.

Topics and Assignments (due that day unless otherwise announced):

**Week One (January 15-19): Course Introduction**

M: Course Overview
W: *The Progressive Era: Work and Reform*

**Week Two (January 22-26): Gender and Leisure**

M: Due: Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*
W: “One Woman, One Vote” (video)

**Week Three (January 29-February 2): The Birth of Feminism**

M: Due: Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, introduction, chapters 1-4
W: *The “New Woman”*

**Week Four (February 5-9): The Fight for Feminism**

M: Due: Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, chapters 5-8, epilogue
W: “The Greatest Generation”
   Due: “Women in the Breadlines” (packet)

Week Five (February 12-16): The Great Depression and the Home Front

M: Due: May, Homeward Bound, chapters 2-3; “Harder Times” and “War Jobs” (ERes)
W: “The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter” (video)

Week Six (February 19-23): The Culture of Conformity

M: Due: May, Homeward Bound, intro, chapters 1 and 4-9; “Beyond the Feminine Mystique” (ERes)
W: The Feminist Movement and the Politics of Gender
   Due: “NOW Statement” and “No More Miss America” (packet)

Week Seven (February 26-March 2): Authenticity and Activism

M: Due: Evans, Personal Politics
W: The Anti-Feminist Movement and the Politics of Motherhood

Week Eight (March 5-9): Abortion Wars

M: Due: Luker, Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood; “30 Years after Abortion Ruling” (packet)
W: Courtship and Dating in Modern America (Part I)
   Due: “New Christian Take” (packet)

Week Nine (March 12-16): University Holiday

Week Ten (March 19-23): Contemporary Perspectives (I)

M: Due: “Introduction (Faludi)” (ERes); “Black Women” and “Sisterhood” (ERes); “Why Women Are Angry” (packet)
W: Courtship and Dating in Modern America (Part II)
   Due: “Manolo Moochers” (packet)

Week Eleven (March 26-30): Contemporary Perspectives (II)

M: “Mary Tyler Moore” and “Sex in the City” (video)
   Due: “What Carrie Could Learn from Mary” (packet)
W: Due: Crittenden, What Our Mothers Didn’t Tell Us

Week Twelve (April 2-6): Contemporary Perspectives (III)
M: Due: “The Opt-Out Revolution” (packet); “New Feminist Mystique” and “Enough About Feminism” (packet); topic brainstorm
W: Due: Wasserstein, *The Heidi Chronicles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Thirteen (April 9-13):</th>
<th><strong>Cinematic Perspectives</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
M: “Uncommon Women” (video)  
W: Due: **Final papers** (no class)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Fourteen (April 16-20):</th>
<th><strong>Individual Conferences</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Fifteen (April 23-27):</th>
<th><strong>Contemporary Perspectives (IV)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
M: Due: Roiphe, *The Morning After*; OWU Policies (packet)  
W: *Historical Perspectives*  
   Due: “Now a Majority” (packet)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Sixteen (April 30-May 4):</th>
<th><strong>Personal Perspectives</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
M: Due: Oral presentations; **optional rewrites**  
W: Due: Oral presentations; “Of Divas and Ditzes” and “Baby Bust” (packet); course evaluation

*For changes and updates, please consult the ERes course page.*