

# HIS 328-01 American Women's History to 1865

TTH 2-3:15 in MHRA 1204

Professor: Dr. Mandy L. Cooper

[mlcoope2@uncg.edu](mailto:mlcoope2@uncg.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:30 in MHRA 2145, Wednesdays, 11-12 via Zoom & by appointment

*UNCG is located on the traditional lands of the Keyanwee and Saura. Let us venture to honor them with our work together.*

## Course Description:

This class examines American women's history from pre-European contact to 1865. Students will examine women's changing experiences and expectations, as well as the significance of the roles that women have held in the American family and in the public sphere. Students will explore historical issues of gender, race, and region, asking how different facets of identity shaped the way that women experienced and interacted with the political, economic, legal, and cultural forces that shaped their lives. This class will examine women's role in key moments and events in early US history, including Native American women prior to colonialism; the exchange of cultures among Europeans, Native Americans and African slaves; work, leisure, sex, and trade; the ideological and social implications of the American Revolution and the broader "age of revolutions"; the changing dynamics of class, work, citizenship, and race in the New Republic and antebellum periods; the rise of slavery; the beginnings of reform movements; the importance of and expansion into the West; and debates over secession and the Civil War. While delving deeper into these key moments and events, students will also become acquainted with the "ordinary" men and women of diverse backgrounds who helped form the nation. This course will both tell history from the vantage point of recognizable figures and move beyond the "great man/woman" perspective to examine women typically left out of the historical narrative.

The course will be divided into four thematic sections, each of which will be structured relatively chronologically. The first section focuses on women in vast early America, covering topics such as Native American cultures, the role of women in colonial societies, and the beginnings of slavery in the United States. The second section turns to business and labor, examining women's work in everything from domestic labor within the household to work in factories, slavery, emotional labor, and more. The third section focuses specifically on politics and activism, examining women's historical role in the political process, the different ways that women have engaged as political actors (even when disenfranchised), and the issues that became defined as women's issues. Finally, the last section focuses on different visions of the "ideal woman," asking students to examine what these visions were, how they came about, and, most importantly, how women actually fit—or didn't fit—into these visions.

The readings, lectures, and assignments have been structured to help students think critically about history and not simply memorize facts, dates, places, and names. The course relies on three kinds of sources: lectures, primary materials, and secondary readings. The lectures are intended to introduce analytical ideas: the big themes, questions, and problems from a particular historical moment. Those ideas will then help you analyze the assigned readings. Primary source materials are sources that were created in the historical time period that we're studying. They allow us, as historians, to enter into that period, to get closer to it, and to get a more direct sense of what was happening at the time. Secondary sources, such as the assigned book chapters and articles, are different: they are written after the fact, are filtered through someone else's observations, and are thus removed from the actual time period in question. The analysis of the two kinds of sources is

also different. With primary sources, we are focusing on materials generated in the past; in learning how to critically analyze those materials, we are also coming to terms with the dynamics of the past. With secondary sources, we would be weighing what other people said about the past and determining which analysis we find most compelling. Students should leave this class with a better and deeper understanding of American history and why the past remains relevant today. While this course is geared toward history majors, students of all fields should find this class helpful in learning how to participate in scholarly discussion and analyze historical arguments.

### **Learning Goals for this Course:**

*Historical Comprehension* (Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods):

- Acquire a basic knowledge of the history of women in the United States from pre-European contact to 1865
- Gain a better understanding of the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality in the lives of early American women
- Analyze the mutual constitution of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, and religion.
- Explain how gender is produced within social institutions and how these institutions affect individual lives.

*Historical Analysis* (Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view):

- Analyze the intersections of race, class, and gender over time and space
- Develop skills in analyzing primary sources and historical topics – and apply those skills to develop strong analytical arguments
- To analyze scholarship and a variety of media to create original arguments in writing.

*Historical Interpretation* (Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument, orally and in writing):

- Demonstrate the ability to communicate analytical ideas effectively – both in discussion and in writing
- Construct a historical argument
- Evaluate a scholarly argument and critique scholars' interpretations of history
- Participate in an academic discussion

*Historical Research* (Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources):

- Develop an exhibit on some aspect of US women's history prior to 1865 that is grounded in primary sources and supported by scholarly literature

### **Course Readings:**

Readings will consist of book chapters, articles, and primary sources. Book chapters and primary sources will be posted on Canvas or linked on the syllabus, and articles can be found on JSTOR. We will go over how to find and access articles through JSTOR in class.

### **Class Structure:**

Each class will begin with a lecture that draws from your readings. At certain points during class, I will stop and ask you to discuss specific points from the readings and lecture. Your response and discussion should reveal your knowledge of the assigned reading. About ten minutes of each class

will be devoted to discussing the primary source reading for that day, generally one or two short items; this discussion will usually fall at the end of class. Diverse and strong opinions are welcome; however, I expect students to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times.

**Reading Assignments:**

Students should complete the assigned readings for a particular lecture before class. You will need to thoroughly read the book chapters and/or articles (posted on Canvas) and come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. We will discuss strategies for reading analytically (and quickly!) in class. The readings give you an idea of what we will go over in class, but I will be covering other topics and using my own methods to organize lectures. If you miss a lecture, the readings will serve you well, but you should also ask a classmate if he/she would be willing to share a copy of their notes for that day. The primary sources are brief (generally only one to two pages each), and we will go over them in class together. Students are expected to come to class having done the required reading and prepared to thoughtfully engage in the lecture, discussion, and primary source exercises. All primary sources are hyperlinked on the syllabus unless otherwise noted.

**Podcast Analysis:**

Your first assignment for this course is a podcast analysis. Students will be provided with several different podcast episodes to choose from and will write a 3-4 page analysis of one source from the provided list. You will receive more information on this paper in class.

**Response Paper:**

Students will sign up to write a response paper based on the readings for one class session. The response paper should be a review of the day's secondary and primary readings. The paper should be between three and five pages in length and should contain the following elements: summary, criticism, comparison/contrast, and an assessment of the readings' major contributions. These response papers should not merely summarize the major arguments of the readings but should make connections between them. Response papers are due by the beginning of class on the day you sign up for.

**Final Project:**

Your final project for this class will be to design an exhibit on some aspect of US women's history prior to 1865. Your exhibit can focus on people, events, monuments, work, etc., as long as it's related to women's history. You will turn in a list of three possible choices for your exhibit for my approval. You will also turn in a rough draft of your project in early April, and we will hold several workshop sessions in class. The exhibit should have a central narrative, a logical flow, and historical context. It should be written and presented in a style accessible to the general public. You will receive more information on this project in class.

**Exams:**

There will be two exams. Students will be provided with essay topics in advance.

**Grading Scheme:**

Participation: 10%

Podcast Analysis: 15%

Response Paper: 15%

Final Project: 25%

First Exam: 15%

Final Exam: 20%

### **Attendance Policy:**

You are expected to attend class. Please be aware that it will be very difficult for you to succeed in this course if you do not attend class. However, given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, if you encounter extenuating circumstances that mean that you will miss class, you should speak to me personally to make arrangements to ensure that you do not fall behind.

### **Late Work:**

All papers and assignments are due by the start of class on the date listed on the syllabus. You must submit the midterm and final exam on the dates listed on the syllabus.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of others without giving them credit. Any source that you use in your work (i.e. books, documents, articles, webpages) must be properly cited. If you use someone else's exact words they must be enclosed in quotation marks and be followed by a citation. If you put someone else's ideas into your own words, you must also use a citation. Plagiarism includes copying and pasting any text from the internet into a document without using quotation marks and a citation.

Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute students' acceptance of UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy. You can find the full Academic Integrity Policy, here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0rFGGhJvbDHUExSZmFFaWFmb00/view>.

### **Academic Support & Disability Accommodations:**

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro seeks to promote meaningful access to educational opportunities for all students. Should you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS - <https://ods.uncg.edu/>), located in the Elliot University Center, #215. As an instructor, I am committed to making this course accessible to all students in it and will work with OARS to accommodate students' requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to the instructor in order to receive accommodations, but you do need to have documentation from OARS for whatever accommodation you have been approved for.

### **COVID-19 Policies:**

As we return for spring 2023, please uphold UNCG's culture of care to limit the spread of covid-19 and other airborne illnesses. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- Engaging in proper hand-washing hygiene
- Self-monitoring for symptoms of covid-19
- Staying home when ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to isolate if ill
- Completing a [self-report](#) when experiencing covid-19 symptoms or testing positive for covid-19
- Following the CDC's [exposure guidelines](#) when exposed to someone who has tested positive for covid-19
- Staying informed about the University's policies and announcements via the [covid-19](#) website

### **Contra Power Statement:**

As your instructor, I am committed to creating a productive and non-discriminatory learning environment of mutual respect. Title IX and UNCG's school policy prohibit gender-based harassment, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination for all members of the University community. Harassment can come in many forms - both direct and indirect - and can occur in subtle or overt ways. Traditionally, harassment is seen from a formal power-over structure. However, harassment can occur without a formal power structure. Contrapower, when a student harasses an instructor or peer, is a type of behavior that can create an intimidating environment in and outside of the classroom. Either form of harassment can include direct or indirect comments, physical intimidation, emails, anonymous notes, and course evaluations. **Both Contrapower and traditional forms of harassment are prohibited and subject to the same kinds of accountability applied to offenses against protected categories, such as race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, etc.**

If you experience or witness such instances of harassment, please seek out the following resources:

- UNCG Counseling Center (non-reporting agency/confidential): 336.334.5874
- Murphie Chappell, Title IX Coordinator (reporting agent): 336.256.0362 or [mechappe@uncg.edu](mailto:mechappe@uncg.edu)
- University Police (reporting agent): 336.334.4444

For more information on UNCG's policies regarding harassment, visit [UNCG Sexual Harassment Policy](#)

### **Classroom Conduct:**

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to leave class. Please review the [Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy](#) for additional information.

### **Health and Wellness:**

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling [336-334-5874](#), visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to [recovery@uncg.edu](mailto:recovery@uncg.edu)

### **Religious Observance:**

The university allows for a limited number of excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of the student. Students must notify both myself and your TA in advance of the date of the religious observance.

### **Policy on Children in Class:**

It is my belief that if we want women in academia, that we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff, and faculty parents.

- 1) I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
- 3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
- 4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.

**Writing Center:**

The Writing Center provides support for all types of writing assignments. Since you pay for the Writing Center via your student fees, you should take advantage of it to improve your writing. Visit the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/>) to learn more.

**Speaking Center:**

Besides providing help for in-class presentations, the Speaking Center has useful resources and tips for students who are shy about speaking up in class or section. ([speakingcenter.uncg.edu](http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu))

**Office Hours:**

I am always happy to discuss any questions or concerns you have regarding this course. I am always available during office hours, and you are welcome to schedule an appointment outside of those times by emailing me.

**History Department Websites:**

History Department website: <https://his.uncg.edu>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/>

**Syllabus Updates:**

Please note that readings and due dates are subject to change. I will notify you of any changes to the course schedule in class.

## **Course Schedule**

Tuesday, January 10

Introduction

Major Themes, Questions, Problems, Concerns

In-Class Activity: Levenstein and Dayton, “The Big Tent of US Women’s & Gender History”

**Theme 1: Women in Vast Early America**

Thursday, January 12 Native American Women in the East

Reading: Camilla Townsend, “Amonute’s People,” in *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*

Primary Sources:

-Iroquois Women in Government, Pierre de Charlevoix (1721)

***Friday, January 13 – Last day to add/drop course for tuition & fees refund***

Tuesday, January 17

Native American Women in the West

Primary Sources:

-Father Gerónimo Boscana Describes San Juan Capistrano Indian Women’s Lives, 1832

Thursday, January 19

Cultures in Contact

Reading: Jennifer L. Morgan, “Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder”: Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1700,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1, (Jan. 1997)

Primary Sources:

-[“Indian Woman and Young Girl.” Watercolor drawing by John White, 1585-1586](#)

-[“Indian Woman.” Watercolor drawing by John White, 1585-1586.](#)

Tuesday, January 24

Women in the Colonial North

Reading: Karin Wulf, “Introduction,” in *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia*

Primary Sources:

-[Transcript of the Trial of Anne Hutchinson \(1637\)](#)

-[Accusations of witchcraft, 1692 and 1706](#)

Thursday, January 26

Women in the Colonial South

Reading: Kathleen Brown, “‘Good Wives’ and ‘Nasty Wenches’: Gender and Social Order in a Colonial Settlement,” in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*

Primary Sources:

-[Song about Life in Virginia](#)

-[1619 Laws of Virginia, \(Act XII and Act XIII\)](#)

-[Eliza Lucas Letters, 1740-1741](#)

Tuesday, January 31

Native American Women & Colonialism

Reading: Juliana Barr, “Diplomatic Ritual in the ‘Land of the Tejas,’” in *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands*

Primary Sources:

-Mary Musgrove Seeks Aid from Georgia in Return for Past Service and Losses, 1747

**Theme 2: Business/Labor**

Thursday, February 1	Indentured Servitude Primary Sources: - <a href="#">“We Unfortunate English People Suffer Here”: An English Servant Writes Home</a> (1756) <b>**Podcast Analysis Due</b>
Tuesday, February 7	Slavery, Part 1 Reading: Alexandra J. Finley, “Fancy” in <i>An Intimate Economy: Enslaved Women, Work, and America's Domestic Slave Trade</i> Primary Sources: -Newspaper Advertisements for Runaway Enslaved Women, North Carolina -Elizabeth Recalls Life as a Slave and the Comfort of Christianity
Thursday, February 9	Slavery, Part 2 Primary Sources: - <a href="#">Harriet Jacobs on rape and slavery, 1860</a> - <a href="#">Vilet Lester to Miss Patsey Patterson, Aug. 29, 1857</a> - <a href="#">Painting of Enslaved Persons for Sale, 1861</a> <b>**Topic Choices for Final Projects Due</b>
Tuesday, February 14	Housework Reading: Jeanne Boydston, “All the In-doors Work,” in <i>Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic</i>
Thursday, February 16	Midwifery Reading: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, “December 1793: Birth 50. Birth 51.” in <i>A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1912</i>
Tuesday, February 21	Working Women in Vast Early America Primary Sources: - <a href="#">Boston trader Sarah Knight on her travels in Connecticut, 1704</a> -Eulalia Pérez Recalls Her Work in a Mission in Spanish California in the Early Nineteenth Century, 1877 -Chart of Huron Indians’ Seasonal and Gendered Labor Cycle
Thursday, February 23	Emotional, Sexual, and Reproductive Labor Reading: Alexandra J. Firley, “Housekeeper,” in <i>An Intimate Economy: Enslaved Women, Work, and America's Domestic Slave Trade</i> Podcast Episode: Sarah Handley-Cousins and Elizabeth Garner Masarik, <a href="#">“Celia, A Slave: The True Crime Case that Rocked the American Slave Power”</a> <i>Dig: A History Podcast</i>
Tuesday, February 28	Women & Work during the Civil War Primary Sources: - <a href="#">Civil War Nurses Illustration, 1864</a> - <a href="#">Susie King Taylor Assists the First South Carolina Volunteers, 1862-</a>

## 1864

Thursday, March 2

**\*\*First Exam Due – No Class**

**Friday, March 3 – Last day to withdraw without a WF grade**

### **Theme 3: Politics/Activism**

Tuesday, March 14

Women & the Revolution

Primary Sources:

- [Abigail and John Adams Converse on Women's Rights, 1776](#)
- [Women in South Carolina experience occupation, 1780](#)
- Petition of Belinda, an African Slave, to the Massachusetts Legislature for Reparations for Slavery, 1787

Thursday, March 16

Removal, Resistance, and Political Tensions

Readings: Tiya Miles, "Circular Reasoning": Recentering Cherokee Women in the Antiremoval Campaigns." *American Quarterly* 61, No. 2, June 2009.

Primary Sources:

- Cherokee Women Resist Removal, Petitions of the Women's Councils (1817, 1818)
- [Wyandotte woman describes tensions over slavery, 1849](#)

Tuesday, March 21

Abolition & Reform Movements

Primary Sources:

- [Angeline Grimké Weld, Speech in Pennsylvania Hall, May 17, 1838](#)
- [Angelina Grimké, Appeal to Christian Women of the South, 1836](#)
- [Dorothea Dix defends the mentally ill, 1843](#)
- [Charlotte Forten complains of racism in the North, 1855](#)

Thursday, March 23

The Women's Movement in Antebellum America

Reading: Martha Jones, "Right Is of No Sex: Reframing the Debate through the Rights of Women" in *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900*, 59-86.

Primary Sources:

- Catharine Beecher on the "Duty of American Females" (1837)
- Angelina Grimké on Women's Rights (1837)
- [Declaration of Sentiments of the Seneca Falls Convention \(1848\)](#)
- [Sarah Grimké Calls for Women's Rights, 1838](#)

Tuesday, March 28

Labor Movement

Primary Sources:

- [Harriet H. Robinson remembers a mill workers' strike, 1836](#)

\*\*In-Class Workshop of Final Projects

Thursday, March 30

The Civil War

Primary Sources:

- [Margaretta Mason and Lydia Maria Child Discuss John Brown,](#)

### 1860

- The Louisianian Sarah Morgan Proudly Proclaims Herself a Rebel, 1863
- A Female Raid, Carolina Watchman, 1863
- Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas Describes Conditions in the Confederacy and Criticizes Northern Women, 1865

### **Theme 4: The “Ideal” Woman? or “Well-behaved women seldom make history”**

Tuesday, April 4

Goodwives – Marriage, Sexuality, and Family in Colonial America  
Reading:

Primary Sources:

- Child Custody Petition by Antonia Lusgardia Hernández, Mulatto Woman, New Spain, 1735

### **\*\*Rough Draft of Final Project Due**

Thursday, April 6

The Republican Mother

Primary Sources:

- [Mary Smith Cranch comments on politics, 1786-87](#)

Tuesday, April 11

True Womanhood

Primary Sources:

- [Susannah Rowson, Charlotte Temple, 1794](#)

-Keep Within the Compass: Illustrated Guide to Women’s Virtue

\*\*In-Class Workshop of Final Projects

Thursday, April 13

The Southern Belle

Secondary Reading: Laura F. Edwards, “Privilege and Its Price,” in *Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era*  
Primary Sources:

- [Sermon on the Duties of a Christian Woman, 1851](#)
- [Mary Polk Branch remembers plantation life, 1912](#)

Tuesday, April 18

Marriage

Podcast Episode: Elizabeth Garner Masarik and Marissa Rhodes, [“Marriage in America: A Brief History” Dig: A History Podcast.](#)

Primary Sources:

- [Abigail Bailey Escapes an Abusive Relationship, 1815](#)
- Lucy Stone’s Marriage Protest (1855)

Thursday, April 20

In-Class Workshop: Final Projects

Tuesday, April 25

Review/Course Wrap-Up

**Final Exam due Thursday, May 4 by 6:30 PM**