

University of Massachusetts Boston
Department of Women's Studies
WOST/AMST L394: Women in US Social Movements
Fall 2008
T/Th 8:00-9:15

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Course Description

We will explore the roles, experiences, and accomplishments of activist women in several social movements in the U.S. throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, through reading and discussion of primary documents, biography, and historians' interpretations, and through an original research project. We will analyze some of the motivations and strategies of women activists, against a backdrop of the gender expectations and practices of their particular historical periods. To what extent have women activists conformed to gender expectations, and to what extent have they resisted or/ or worked to change these? How have women activists seen gender issues in relation to other social issues of the day, especially those related to race and social class?

Required Readings

Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenil (eds), *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005). Be sure to get the 2nd Edition!! Please *buy* this textbook, as it is essential reading for the course! (One copy will be available on Reserve at Healey Library.)

Judith Nies, *Nine Women: Portraits from the American Radical Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). (This is an expanded version of a book originally published in 1977 as *Seven Women*. Its author is an activist writer, rather than an academic historian.) (One copy will be available on Reserve at Healey Library)

Ida B. Wells (Alfreda M. Duster (Ed.) *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). We will not read the entire book, so

you may not want to buy this at the bookstore. There will be one copy available on Reserve at Healey Library. (**NOTE** I found dozens of copies of this book online (amazon.com and half.com, ranging in price from \$7.93 to \$20.85).

Assorted readings available through UMB Healey Library's eRESERVE SYSTEM (designated in the schedule as (ER))To access these readings, point your browser to; <http://docutek.lib.umb.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?error=&page=search/> Search for our course under (WOST/AMSTL 394) and input our class-specific password (**fuzzy**). Make sure you have ADOBE ACROBAT READER installed on your computer so you can download PDFs.

Course Learning Goals

1. You will be introduced to the careers and personalities of a selected group of fascinating activist "foremothers"--women who played important roles in social movements of the American past, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries
2. Through readings, films and discussion we will consider some of the reasons women have been drawn to certain kinds of activism, and the impact of gender on their motivations and strategies. We will also consider how differences among women (class, racial and ethnic background, sexuality, etc.) have influenced the choices they make as activists and the movements with which they have been involved.
3. You will have plenty of opportunity to improve your critical reading, speaking, writing, and research skills. The research project has been designed in a step-by-step manner so that later work builds on and incorporates earlier work to help you gradually shape a highly polished original paper of which you can be proud.

Course Policies

Disability Accommodations

Section 504 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. Students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center for Disability Services (Campus Center CC2-2010). If you have a disability and require appropriate accommodation, please notify me by the end of add/drop and seek assistance from the Ross Center.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Below is the University Policy on Academic Standards and Cheating from UMB Undergraduate University Catalog. For further details, refer to the section on plagiarism. I adhere to this policy, so take note. Sadly, EVERY term, I catch at least one student plagiarizing.

"The first obligation of students is to pursue conscientiously the academic objective which they have determined for themselves. Students are expected to conform to all regulations of the University, of the College in which they are enrolled, and of the classes in which they are registered. It is further expected that all examinations, texts, written papers or other assignments completed as a part of academic programs are the product of the student's own work and effort.

This means that students may not solicit or use unauthorized material or assistance for their own benefit and may not offer or give such assistance to another student. Every written report or similar class assignment must indicate fully the sources from which the informant used is obtained, and any verbatim quotations or paraphrases must be clearly indicated as such and properly credited to the source from which they were extracted or adapted."

In my experience, most of what is seen as "plagiarism" in student papers is ACCIDENTAL and unintentional—the result of honest confusion about how to quote, paraphrase, and cite sources. It is vitally important to your academic success that you are clear about all these matters!

The internet makes it very easy to "cut and paste" materials written by someone else into your own work, and all your instructors are aware of this, as well as the fact that term papers are easily available for purchase in many different locations. *Occasionally students who are overstressed are tempted to cheat by turning in work, in whole or in part, that is not their own original writing. Do not do this, in this course or in any other, as in all probability your dishonesty will be detected, and you may fail the course.* Instead, communicate with your instructor about any problems you may be having that are interfering with your ability to do your own work well.

Incompletes

I only give Incompletes very rarely, when a genuine emergency has occurred that prevents the completion of the final project on time. *An Incomplete grade must be negotiated; it is not given automatically.* You must make an appointment to discuss the request, and if granted, we must make a contract for the missing piece of work to come in at a specified date. (Any grade of Incomplete turns into an F automatically after one year, so this can be a dangerous choice unless you are very sure you can complete the work in a short time after the Incomplete has been given.) In my experience, students often regret taking the Incomplete; the unfinished course ends up being a tremendous

burden and it is race to get the work in (when course knowledge is stale) by the deadline. Be warned, dear students!

Course Assessments

Attendance, Punctuality and Participation 20%

Because this course is discussion-intensive, your ON TIME attendance and participation is essential. You will be expected to attend each class and keep up with the weekly reading assignments so you've got something learned to say. *I do reserve that right to fail any student who misses more than 25% of scheduled classes (NOTE: That's 7 classes).* In addition to noting your attendance and punctuality, I will pay careful attention to the quality and frequency of your in-class participation. I am looking for regular, thoughtful, informed contributions which reflect a command of the assigned reading and an ability to make connections BETWEEN readings.

Don't despair if you are shy and reluctant to speak up. I will take into consideration each student's starting point, if you will, and assess you based on the degree of your growth as a class contributor. At the end of the term, I will invite you to self-evaluate (I will provide a form for this purpose) and recommend a grade for your Attendance, Punctuality and Participation. I will take your recommendation under serious consideration, but the final assessment is my own.

**A note about classroom participation: I recognize that a number of factors make it difficult for students to speak up in class. And some of these factors, such as speaking English as a second language, can be daunting. But, I believe that we as a community of learners, can take steps to make the classroom a relatively safe place for EVERYONE to speak up if they want to. We are all familiar with common obstacles to productive classroom dialogue: 1) coming to class unprepared and 2) fear of sounding stupid. But, both obstacles are avoidable: the former if each student keeps up with the reading, the latter if we collectively agree to a few ground rules for democratic discussion.

The rules are as follows:

1. No attacks based on individual or group characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, age or English language skills
2. No esoteric terms or reference to materials unless they are known to all (or the speaker is equipped to define/explain their relevance).
3. No individual or groups of individuals may dominate discussion. If you are talkative and notice that you are taking a lot of "floor time", pause before you speak up and watch to see if someone else might like a chance. It is my job to create balance in classroom discussion, so I will be helping out and encouraging our more quiet classmates to "find their voice."

Reading Responses 30%

Reading responses are informal commentary on ONE of the readings assigned for a particular class period due on the day the reading is planned for discussion (this means you may NOT submit more than one response for any set of class readings).

This is not a formal composed-and-revised paper but reading commentary written while reading the assigned material and after. There are no "right answers," and there are many acceptable kinds of responses.

Please do *not* paraphrase or summarize what you read (except when stating an idea you want to react to). In other words, do not "take notes" on the reading as you would take notes for a classroom lecture. Rather, take notes on YOUR REACTIONS to the reading.

Please type your notes before submitting them. Whenever quoting from the reading, quote accurately (using only the writer's exact words within quotation marks) and follow with an "in-text" citation (author's last name, page number). Even when you just paraphrase or summarize key points, given an in-text citation. A list of suggested questions are included at the end of this syllabus; they are intended to stimulate your thinking as you read. You are NOT expected to answer ALL of them (or even MANY of them).

Length: Responses vary in length but typically fill two double-spaced pages.

Grading: You are required to submit 5 reading responses (there are over 60 assigned readings of assigned readings appropriate for this assignment). In total, the 5 reading responses are worth 30% of your course grade.

Due Date: You must submit your reading response on the date designated for discussion of your selected reading (see the syllabus for these dates). AGAIN: YOU MAY ONLY WRITE A RESPONSE ON ONE OF THE READINGS ASSIGNED FOR A PARTICULAR DAY.

Grading criteria:

- Responses that do not respond to the reading or that mostly paraphrase the chapter or that are hasty, sloppy, or incomplete will receive a grade of $\sqrt{-}$.
- Responses that demonstrate understanding of the ideas in the reading and that respond to them in a thoughtful way and/or are noteworthy for their perceptiveness and interest will receive a grade of $\sqrt{}$.
- Responses that, in addition, demonstrate exceptional insight and original thinking will receive a grade of $\sqrt{+}$.

At the end of the term, I will ask you to resubmit your FULL SET OF READING RESPONSES. (so PLEASE keep them when I turn them back earlier in the term !!!) I will re-read them and assess a letter grade to the entire set.

Research Project 50%

Early in the semester, you will select an interesting woman activist whose career and representation you will explore through independent research.

Your task is to compare and contrast the scholarly literature available on your selected activist with the juvenile literature written about her. Thus, you will be expected to perform serious scholarly research on your selected activist AND locate AT LEAST one book written about her that is intended for a young adult audience (e.g., *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom, Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth; Oh Lizzie! The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton; and Rachel Carson: A 20th Century Life*). Our Healey Library has a juvenile literature collection in our Curriculum Resource Center (see <http://www.lib.umb.edu/crc/>). The librarian in charge is MARILYN DAY and she is ready to help you search for the appropriate books. Your local neighborhood libraries are also great sources for this literature.

This assignment is designed to answer several questions:

- How is your activist represented in the juvenile literature? Heroine? Legend? Martyr? Rebel?
- How does the representation of your activist in the juvenile literature differ from her representation in the scholarly literature? What is omitted, diluted and/distorted in the juvenile literature?
- And why, do you think this is the case?

The research project will proceed in FIVE phases.

Phase I: Submit Research Proposal (2-3 pp) **5%**

In this proposal:

1. You will name the activist you chose to study and why you chose her.
2. You will suggest directions for research (what you will look for and where).
3. You provide a timeline for completion of your project.
4. You will discuss any concerns or worries you may have about doing this project and how you plan to address them.

Phase II. Present Results of Internet Research Exercise **5%**

[You will briefly present your findings in class on 10/7]

1. Type your activist's name into the Google search engine (www.google.com) and note how many entries comes up. (Does it make any difference if you type in last

name, first name, or first name, last name?) Check out the first 10 hits. (If you don't get enough hits, type in her last name and a keyword for the movement, such as "Carson environmental" or "Steinem feminism")

2. Do any of them appear to be a scholarly article with a named author (biographer or historian) and a date of publication?
3. What do the others appear to be? Are any of them what could be called "primary sources"? (e.g., interviews? writings by your activist? speeches by your activist? accounts of her public appearances at which people praised her or blamed her?)
4. Go to Wikipedia (the public online encyclopedia edited collectively by thousands of members—www.wikipedia.org) and type in your activist's name. If you get an article, print it out. Is there a bibliography? Try seeing whether you can locate the online sources used by the author(s) and editor(s) of this article—if so, print a few of these out. Which are "secondary" and which are "primary" sources?
5. Of all the sources you were able to locate in this exercise, are any of them going to be items you will put in your Bibliography? Which ones and why? Do you have full references for them?

Phase III: Submit Annotated Bibliography (including no less than 6 scholarly sources and at least 1 juvenile book or extended treatment in a compilation on several activists) **10%**

In proper citation format, list each source you intend to use. Following the source, compose a ONE paragraph summary of the argument advanced by the author/s. I will provide an example of an annotated bibliography in class.

Phase IV: Submit Paper (10-15 double-spaced pages)

25%

Specific guidelines will be distributed and discussed in class at a later date.

Phase V: In-class Presentation

10%

The last two days of the term have been designated for presentations based on student research projects. ***A 5 minute formal oral presentation should be planned, to be accompanied by a one-page handout.***

In this presentation, you will briefly outline the results of your research, highlighting the discoveries you found most interesting/compelling and/or surprising.

Let me know at least a week in advance if you will need computer equipment to enable you to do a visually-enhanced version of your talk.

YOUR PAPER IS DUE ON THE DAY OF YOUR PRESENTATION (we will draw presentation dates out of a hat around mid term).

Summary of Grading System

Attendance, Punctuality and Participation	20%
5 Reading Responses (complete and on time)	30%
Team Research Project (in phases)	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research Proposal (2-3 pp)• Internet Research Exercise• Annotated Bibliography• Paper• Oral Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5%5%10%20%10%
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	100%

Schedule
(subject to change as needed)

***** The reading load varies day to day. Some days it is heavy; some days it is light. Please familiarize yourself with the readings assigned for each class period and plan ahead (e.g. on days that the load is light, read a selection from a day that carries a heavier load). This system works! I promise!)

9/2 Introductory meeting.

Goals and requirements of course; brief introductions
Self Assessments

I. Conceptual Groundwork

9/4 Read: (ER) Faye Ginsburg, "Women Divided: Abortion and What It Means to Be Female,"

9/9 Read (ER) Henderson and Jeydel, "Women and Noninstitutional Politics".
Questions to guide your reading: how are the following concepts defined and operationalized?

- women's social activism
- "gendered" activism
- Feminism

In Class: Circulate list of activists. Students may select activists on a first come, first served basis. You are welcome to choose an activist not listed on the pages I will distribute (but please see me first before you set to work on your research proposal)

II. The social and political context for women's antislavery politics in the early 1800s.

9/11 Read: DuBois and Dumenil (D&D), Ch. 3, pp. 136-168

9/16 Read: DuBois and Dumenil (D &D) 175-201.

Questions to guide your reading:

- What were dominant understandings of womanhood in 19th century America, and what were social and economic realities for 19th century foremothers?
- What was the True Womanhood ideology?
- How important was Christianity to 19th-century women?
- What were some of the impacts of race and slavery on women's lives? How different were white and black women's lives?

- How and why were the experiences of white women in the North and South different from each other?
- What connections do you see between the situations of these foremothers and ourselves?
- Which of the documents and visual sources help bring home the class and race differences among nineteenth century women most effectively?

DEADLINE FOR SELECTING ACTIVISTS FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS!!!!

III. Women's rights activism as an offshoot of the antislavery movement (1830s and 1840s).

9/18 Read:
D&D, ch. 4, pp. 213-228;
(ER) Yee, "Sowing the Seeds of Black Feminism," from *Black Women Abolitionists*;
(provided in class) excerpts from Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges*, pp. 84-88, 98-103; 165-8;
more excerpts from Sklar (ER) 172-80; 183-5; 196-9;

9/23 Video: "One Woman One Vote," Part I.

Research Proposal DUE

IV. Impact of Civil War and postwar politics: The split between feminists and abolitionists: a complex and painful story.

9/25 Read: D&D, 228-235, 251-276; Sklar (ER) 200-204;

9/30 Research Proposal RETURNED

In Class: Check in re: proposals. Be prepared to say a few words about your proposed project and why you chose it. Share any worries or concerns you have about conducting your research.

10/2 Read "Elizabeth Cady Stanton," in Nies, pp. 63-93.

V. Woman Suffrage Organizing in the Post-Reconstruction Era: Increasing Problems of Race and Class Bias.

10/7 In- Class Report on Internet Research Exercise

- 10/9 Read: (ER) Newman, "Women's Rights, Race and Imperialism; D&D, 277-283; (ER) "Cullen Du Pont, Susan B. Anthony," 165-179;
- 10/14 Video: "A Passion for Justice"
- 10/16 Read: D & D, 297-305; Selections from Ida B. Wells, *Crusade for Justice*: 7-52, 69-82; and 239-256;
- 10/21 Wells, 309-333 and (ER) Bederman, "The White Man's Civilization on Trial"

In class: brief mid-semester course evaluation.

VI. Working women's labor activism in the contexts of industrial capitalism and immigration.

- 10/23 **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**
In Class: How is the research progressing? What do you need help with?
- 10/28 Read: D&D 283-297; 311-316; 352-368; 386-392; 406-424; and Nies, "Mother Jones," in *Nine Women*, 97-123.
- Question to guide your reading: To what extent does early women's labor activism seem "gendered"? (Refer to our introductory chapter by Henderson & Jeydel?)
- 10/30 Video: "Heaven will Protect the Working Girl"

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY RETURNED

VII. Final Push for Women's Suffrage: War politics, Parades, Compromises, and Cartoons.

- 11/4 Read: D&D: 317-326; 393-399, 424-453.
- Video: One Woman, One Vote," Part II.

VIII. Radicals of the early Twentieth Century: Socialists, "Feminists" and Birth Controllers.

- 11/6 Video: "The Pill"
- Read: D&D, 454-465; (ER) Nancy Woloch, "Margaret Sanger's Direct Action Crusade;" (ER)

11/11 NO CLASS. Holiday

11/13 Read: Zona Gale, "Why Not Get Rid of the Private Kitchen?"; (ER) Blanche Wiesen Cook, "Crystal Eastman" and (ER) Crystal Eastman, "Marriage Under Two Roofs."

IX. Women of the Civil Rights Movement(s): Leaders and Grassroots Community Activists.

11/18 Read: D&D, 574-586, 613-620; (ER) Catherine Clinton, "Ella Baker"

11/20 Read: Nies, "Fannie Lou Hamer," in *Nine Women*.

X. The "Second Wave" Women's Movement of the 60s and 70s: Liberal and Radical Wings.

11/25 Read: D&D, 587-612; 628-654; 677-684; (ER) Evans, "Black Power: Catalyst for Feminism" (ER) Rosen, "Hidden Injuries of Sex"; and Nies, *Nine Women*, "Bella Abzug."

11/27 NO CLASS. HOLIDAY

XI. Some Contemporary Women's Activisms-1: Third Wave Feminism; Women of Color Feminists.

12/2 Read: D&D, 658-667, 672-676, and 685-692; (ER) Astrid Henry, "Solitary Sisterhood: Individualism Meets Collectivity in Feminism's Third Wave"; (ER) Barbara Duncan, "Searching for a Home Place: Online in the Third Wave."

XI. Contemporary Women's Activisms-2: Environmental Justice; Contemporary Immigrant Worker Activism; Global Feminism.

12/4 Read: Nies, *Nine Women*, "Women in the Environmental Movement" (pp. 271-297); (ER) Winona LaDuke, "Mothers of Our Nations," and "Acceptance Speech for the Green Party's Nomination for Vice President of the United States of America," pp. 211-217 and 267-272; and (ER) Miriam Ching Yoon Louie and Nguyen Louie, "The Conversation Begins."

12/9 Presentations (GROUP 1 PAPERS due)

12/11 **Presentations (GROUP 2 PAPERS due)**
Course Evaluations

A Helpful Guide for Preparing your Reading Responses and Research Papers

A. Some questions to ask when reading SECONDARY SOURCES:

1. According to this writer, what were some of the key social and economic reasons for women's situations during this time period in U.S. history?
2. What were some of the most significant ways in which women's opportunities and lives differed, according to their social class (degree of education, money, property, etc.), marital status, race & ethnicity?
3. According to the writer, how did movements for social reform or radical changes emerge out of the social, economic, and political situation of the United States in this time period?
4. What made particular groups of women or individual women see the need for change or reform of American institutions? What were their individual motivations for activism?
5. What was the impact of gender (social definitions of womanhood and manhood) on the goals and strategies of women activists? For example, to what extent did the activists see themselves as having special qualities as women that gave them special responsibilities or talents?
6. What were some of the specific issues women activists were most concerned about? How were their choices influenced by their other identities (race, class, marital status, etc.)?
7. How and why did U.S. women activists often fail to act as "sisters"(with harmony and solidarity) in social movements? How were racial, ethnic, class, age, marital status, or regional or other differences setting them against one another? (Examples?)
8. When women got involved in these social movements as activists, did the gender ideals of their day make it more difficult to play leadership roles in activist organizations? Did men and other women object to their work?
9. When women activists did run into resistance to their work, from family, society, or even their own movements, what resources did they draw upon to continue their work?
10. To what extent did activists seem to identify as what we now call "feminists"—women and men working for significant changes in the social rules and power distribution between women and men? What were some reasons why they did or did not?

11. What were the activists' most important achievements, in your view, or in the interpretation of this writer?
12. What questions or problems do you have in trying to understand this movement, or the particular women we are reading about who were involved in this movement?
13. Is there anything puzzling or unclear or seemingly contradictory in this reading?

B. To do a “Critical” Reading of Secondary Sources, ask yourself about how the historian uses evidence to present this interpretation of events:

1. How does the writer of this biography or historical narrative view the historical significance of this particular activist within her time and place? Is this writer disagreeing with other historical interpretations that have been published in the past? What makes you think so? (Evidence? page references, please.)
2. As you read the biography or analysis, try to be aware of the evidence on which the writer's generalizations and interpretations are based. Does she supply lots of examples that help clarify and support her overall argument? Do you find any of the interpretations she makes less than convincing? If so, what evidence would be needed to make the argument more convincing?

C. The challenge of understanding Primary Source Documents

When you are reading a “primary source” document, written *during the period of time we are studying, by someone with first-hand experience of events*, you will find that it is not easy to see immediately how it relates to the big picture questions you may be interested in. You may not even be sure of its specific meaning at first. Often you will often have to *read it more than once*, trying to familiarize yourself with the language and mind-set of that past time.

Try using some of the following questions to help you understand the writer's meaning in the context of her time period.

1. What do you know (or can you guess from internal clues) about *the audience* that the document was originally aimed at? Under what circumstances was it produced? How might these factors have affected what arguments are being made?

2. What do you know (or can you guess from internal clues) about the *beliefs, background, and motivation of the author* of the document? How might her social class, ethnicity, education, and work experience have affected her ideas and the way she is expressing them?

3. In light of what you know about the writer and the situation in which the document was produced, how trustworthy is its information likely to be? *What biases or perspectives is it likely to display?*

4. What does this document suggest to you about how some women activists of this time period thought and felt about social change and their roles as activists?