History of American Women and Gender in a Global Context

Spring 2012

Wednesday, 4:10-6:00 340405

Joe Eaton, PhD

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Office hours, 340527 Tuesdays 2-4 pm and by appointment

Course description: The course introduces both the content and methodology of American women's history. We will survey women's historical experiences in the United States from the American Revolution to the present. In particular, we will give emphasis to the development of American notions of gender within a global perspective and explore ways that American concepts of gender had a transformative impact on other societies. The course involves original source readings, scholarly readings, as well as popular film.

Skills and aptitudes: This course should help to develop the following within the context of historical study of American women: 1. analytical skills, 2. critical thinking skills, 3. English writing ability, 4. and English reading comprehension.

Grading by percentage: Mid-term (30%), Final (30%), Essay (30%), Attendance and participation, including pop quizzes (10%)

Essay due in class May 23. Late papers maybe turned-in in class on May 30 (10% grade reduction) or June 6 (20% grade reduction). I will not accept emailed papers. Topic: “Significance of a particular American woman” 4-6 pages, typed, double-spaced. More details announced in class.

Course texts:

Gail Collins, *America’s Women: 400 Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates, and Heroines*. New York, Harper,

2003 (Kindle and Nook editions available online)

Additional articles from internet websites, e-learning website, and JSTOR scholarly database (NCCU library website).

Schedule of topics (listed by week). Please complete reading by the date indicated:

February 22: Introduction to the course

February 29: The Southern Colonies

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapter 1 “The First Colonists: Voluntary and Otherwise”

March 7: Daily Life

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapter 3 “Daily Life in the Colonies: Housekeeping, Children, and Sex”

March 14: The American Revolution and Women

Required readings: Collins, *American Women*, chapter 4 “Toward the Revolutionary War”

Brian Steel, “Thomas Jefferson’s Gender Frontier” *Journal of American History* 95 (2008), 17-42.

March 21: Closing of the Revolutionary Door, Gender and Democracy

Required reading: Rosemarie Zaggari, “Moral, Manners, and the Republican Mother,” *American Quarterly*, 44:2 (June 1992), pp. 192-215

Fanny Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832) excerpts

March 28: Slavery, Abolition, and Women

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapters 7 and 8 “African American Women: Life in Bondage” and “Women and Abolition: White and Black, North and South”

April 4: Tomb Sweeping Day – no class

April 11: The Civil War and Women

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapter 9 “The Civil War: Nurses, Wives, Spies, and Secret Soldiers”

April 18: Mid-term

April 25: Women and the West and Immigrants

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapters 10 and 12 “Women Go West: Pioneers, Homesteaders, and the Fair but Frail” and “Immigrants: Discovering the Woman’s Country”

May 2: The “New Woman”

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapters 13 and 14 “Turn of the Century: The Arrival of the New Woman” and “Reforming the World: Suffrage, Temperance, and Other Causes”

May 9: The New Woman and New China

Required readings: Carol Chin, “Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Century” *Diplomatic History* (2003) and Chin, “Translating the New Woman: Chinese Feminists View the West, 1905-1915” *Gender and History* (2006).

May 16: The 20s and 30s

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapter 15 “The Twenties: All the Liberty You Can Use in the Backseat of a Packard”

May 23: To be announced.

Essay due in class

May 30: World War II and 50s

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapters 17 and 18 “World War II: “She’s Making History, Working for Victory” and “The Fifties: Life at the Far End of the Pendulum”

June 6: The 60s

World War II and 50s

Required reading: Collins, *American Women*, chapter 19 “The Sixties: The Pendulum Swings Back with a Vengeance”

June 13: TBA

June 20: Final