



HIST 512:274:02  
**History of Women  
in the United States,  
1877 to Present**  
Spring 2017



**Instructor:** Bren Sutter  
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**Office:** Conklin Hall 326  
**Office Hours:** Tues and Thurs, 1–2pm  
(and by appointment)

**Class Time:** Thursdays,  
2:30pm—5:20pm  
**Class Location:** Hahne & Co.  
Building, Room 322

**Course Description:**

This course is an invitation for those both familiar and unfamiliar with gender history to explore the role of women in American history since 1877. Our aim is not to construct a parallel women's history separate from American history, but to uncover the myriad ways women have contributed to, and often instigated, major social, cultural, political, and legal events. The defining theme of the course is the persistent construction of gender ideologies characterized by divisions. As we will see, the female experience cannot be distilled from race, class, or sexuality. Embracing a multitude of perspectives and experiences, we will ask: How have women worked to enact their social power and attain political influence? How have women's bodies been used as sites of contestation? What are women's rights and obligations as citizens? How have ideals of womanhood changed across time? What are the continuities and discontinuities in American women's lives?

**Learning Outcomes:**

Throughout this course, students will refine their analytical skills in both reading and writing. They will develop a range of interpretive strategies by which to think critically about the arguments, evidence, assumptions, and intent of textual and visual material. Students will learn to distinguish between primary and secondary sources and understand how to marshal such evidence for their own claims and interpretations. Frequent written assignments will provide students with ample opportunity to practice organizing and articulating their thoughts, as well as formulating substantiated arguments. Weekly class discussions will facilitate public speaking and push students to recognize new or alternative perspectives. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to apply all of these skills so as to demonstrate an understanding of the diverse experiences of American women in their appropriate historical context.

## **Required Readings:**

There is only one book you are required to obtain for this course:

- Anzia Yeziarska, *Bread Givers*, 1925 (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Reprint, New York: Persea Books, 2003).

*Bread Givers* is available for purchase at the campus bookstore or on Amazon.com for a slightly discounted price.

All other required readings will be posted in the “Course Documents” section of the Blackboard site at <https://blackboard.rutgers.edu/webapps/login/>.

## **Assignments:**

### *Discussion Questions (Due Every Thursday by 9am):*

Beginning the second week of class, you will be required to submit at least one discussion question based on any of the week’s readings to Blackboard. These questions should reflect a deep engagement with the week’s readings. A question that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no,” is not sufficient. These questions should stimulate discussion and whenever possible, relate back to previous lectures, class discussions, or readings. You should also read your fellow students’ questions before class, as these questions will form the basis of our Thursday discussions. If you find another student’s question particularly worthwhile, I encourage you to give the question a star rating. I will be sure to devote considerable class time to discussion questions that have received multiple ratings.

To submit your question, log into Blackboard between 1pm on Tuesday and 9am on Thursday, click on the “Discussion Board” section, enter the forum for the correct discussion date, and click on “Create Thread.”

### *First Set of ERA Letters to the Editor (Due February 8):*

Write a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* in 1921 advocating the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Write a second letter from someone opposing the Equal Rights Amendment. Your letters should adopt a fictive identity (for example: a member of the NWP, an immigrant factory worker, a black domestic worker, a conservative male politician) and you must illustrate how your identity informs your position on the ERA. Both letters should be at least 250 words each.

### *Bread Givers Paper (Due February 22):*

You will be asked to write a 5 to 6-page paper on Anzia Yeziarska’s 1925 novel *Bread Givers*. Essays should be double spaced, in 12-point Time New Roman font, with one inch margins. We will devote significant class time to the fundamentals of writing a history essay. The exact essay prompt will be provided one week in advance.

You must include **the Rutgers Honor Pledge** at the top of this assignment:  
“On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment,” and provide your consenting signature.

In addition to turning in a hard copy during class, you are also required to upload your paper into the “Assignments” section on Blackboard, where it will be automatically checked for possible plagiarism violations.

*Midterm Exam (March 8):*

The midterm exam will focus on the material covered to date, and will consist of identifications and an essay.

*Second Set of ERA Letters to the Editor (April 19):*

Write a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* in 1982 advocating the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Write a second letter from someone opposing the Equal Rights Amendment. Your letters should adopt a fictive identity (for example: a suburban housewife, a civil rights activist, an army general) and you must illustrate how your identity informs your position on the ERA. Both letters should be at least 250 words each.

*Final Exam (Date TBD):*

The final exam for this course will be administered in class during the scheduled final examination period. The final exam will focus on the material covered since the midterm exam, and will consist of identifications and an essay.

**Grades:**

Attendance/Minute Papers (10%)  
Discussion Questions and Participation (15%)  
*Bread Givers* Paper (20%)  
Midterm Exam (20%)  
ERA Letters to the Editor (10%)  
Final Exam (25%)

**Grading Scale:**

A = 90—100	C+ = 78—79	F = 59 and below
B+ = 88—89	C = 70—77	
B = 80—87	D = 60—70	

**Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory for this course. Attendance will be captured through the submission of a “minute paper” at the end of each class period. The last few minutes of every class will be reserved for you to compose a minute paper—a brief summary of the important points or themes of that day’s lecture and/or any lingering questions you may have. Their purpose is to help you synthesize and retain material while providing me

with an ongoing assessment of your learning comprehension. All submitted minute papers will receive credit. Please remember to bring paper and a pen with you to each class in order to complete this assignment.

The only grounds for an excused absence from class are illness, religious holidays, dangerous traveling conditions, personal emergencies, and extracurricular activities approved by the University. In order to have an absence excused, students must email me within 24 hours of the missed class.

After two unexcused absences, your overall course grade will be lowered by a partial grade (from B+ to B, for example) for every further unexcused absence. With four absences, the stakes change: Any student who misses four or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will have missed more than a quarter of the class time and will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid an F.

If you arrive late, once we have already begun lecture or discussion, I will give you half credit for being in class. This means that two late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence. I realize that delays are sometimes inevitable—I, too, have tried to find parking in Newark!—and I would rather that you come to class late than not at all. To accommodate that, I will give you three two late passes—after the second late arrival, the late policy as stated above will kick in, with no exceptions. Leaving early without prior permission will count as an unexcused absence.

### **Electronics:**

Laptop use is a privilege. The instructor reserves the right to ban all laptops if students abuse this privilege during class time. The use of all other electronic devices is prohibited. Phones should be on silent mode and stowed away.

### **Late Work:**

Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Late assignments will lose five points for each additional day beyond the original due date. Late assignments will be accepted without penalty only if an extension has been arranged with me *in advance*.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:**

All students should be familiar with the University's policies on student conduct and academic integrity. As a standard minimum penalty, students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Pending investigation, further penalties can include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University.

Read the Rutgers Policy on Academic Integrity here:  
<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

### **Accommodation of Student Disabilities:**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible.

To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information, please contact the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or contact [odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@rutgers.edu).

### **Writing Assistance:**

We will devote a sizable portion of class time to developing our writing skills. Students who wish to further improve upon their writing are encouraged to visit the Writing Center in Conklin Hall, room 126. They offer free tutoring and workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers-Newark campus. Learn more at: <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>.

### **Lecture and Assignment Schedule:**

Each week's readings are expected to be completed before class meets on Thursday.

#### **THURSDAY JANUARY 18: WHAT IS WOMEN'S HISTORY ANYWAY?**

- In Class: Personal Information Page
- Kate Haulman, "Defining 'American Women's History'" (2007)
- Antonia I. Castañeda, "Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History" (1992)
- Leslie M. Alexander, "Rethinking the Position of Black Women in American Women's History" (2004)

#### **THURSDAY JANUARY 25: BLOOD, SWEAT, & TEARS**

- Jacqueline Jones Royster, ed., *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* (1997), p.1-26
- Mary Church Terrell Describes Lynching from a Negro's Point of View (1904)

- Danielle Phillips, “Cleaning Race: Irish Immigrant and Southern Black Domestic Workers in the Northeast United States, 1865-1930” (2017)
- Rose Cohen Describes Her First Job in New York City (1892)

#### **THURSDAY FEBRUARY 1: WOMEN & PROGRESSIVE ERA REFORM**

- Kathryn Kish Sklar, “Differences in Political Cultures of Men and Women Reformers During the Progressive Era” (1995)
- Jane Addams Applauds the “Beginnings of a New Conscience” Regarding the “Ancient Evil” of Prostitution (1912)
- Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, “Diplomats to the White Community: African American Women in Progressive-Era North Carolina” (1996)
- Kathleen M. Blee, “Women in the 1920s’ Ku Klux Klan Movement” (1991)

#### **THURSDAY FEBRUARY 8: FEMINISM, SUFFRAGE, & EQUALITY**

- ❖ Due: First Set of ERA Letters to the Editor
- Nancy F. Cott, “Equal Rights and Economic Roles: The Conflict over the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1920s” (1990)
- Elsie Hill Explains Why Women Should Have Full Legal Equality (1922)
- Florence Kelly Explains Her Opposition to Full Legal Equality (1922)
- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “In Politics to Stay: Black Women Leaders and Party Politics in the 1920s” (1990)

#### **THURSDAY FEBRUARY 15: MAKING A ‘MODERN’ WOMAN**

- In Class: How to Write a History Paper
- Vicki Ruiz, “The Flapper and the Chaperone: Mexican American Teenagers in the Southwest” (1998)
- Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers* (1925), pages TBD

#### **THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22: HARD TIMES & A NEW DEAL**

- ❖ Due: *Bread Givers* Paper
- In Class: Excerpt from *Our Dancing Daughters* (1925)
- Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers* (1925), pages TBD

#### **THURSDAY MARCH 1: WOMEN’S CITIZENSHIP & LABOR IN WAR**

- Valerie Matsumoto, “Japanese American Women During World War II” (1984)
- Megan Taylor Shockley, “African American Women, Citizenship, and Workplace Democracy During World War II” (2003)
- Mary McLeod Bethune Urges President Roosevelt to Turn to Qualified Negro Women for Help in the War Effort (1940)
- Leisa D. Meyer, “The Regulation of Sexuality and Sexual Behavior in the Women’s Army Corps During World War II” (1992)

#### **THURSDAY MARCH 8: MIDTERM EXAM**

- No readings or discussion question due

## **MARCH 13 & 15: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)**

### **THURSDAY MARCH 22: BEYOND THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE**

- Betty Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name” in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)
- Daniel Horowitz, “Rethinking Betty Friedan and the Feminist Mystique: Labor Union Radicalism and Feminism in Cold War America” (1996)
- Joanne Meyerowitz, “Competing Images of Women in Postwar Mass Culture” (1993)
- Pauli Murray, “Why Negro Girls Stay Single” (1947)

### **THURSDAY MARCH 29: WOMEN IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

- Charles Payne, “A Woman’s War: African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement” (1995)
- Danielle L. McGuire, “It was Like We Were All Raped: Sexualized Violence, Community Mobilization and the African American Freedom Struggle” (2004)
- Oral history excerpts of Diane Nash (1990), Mary Dora Jones (1983), and Earline Boyd (1991).

### **THURSDAY APRIL 5: TAKING IT TO THE STREETS**

- Pauli Murray, “I had entered law school preoccupied with the racial struggle...but I graduated an unabashed feminist as well” (1987)
- Linda Gordon, “The Women’s Liberation Moment” (2015)
- Johanna Schoen, “Living Through Some Giant Change: The Establishment of Abortion Services” (2015)
- Anne Koedt, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm” (1970)
- Watch: “Southern Bell,” <http://www.pbs.org/video/2331436057/>

### **THURSDAY APRIL 12: JUST WHOSE FEMINISM ANYWAY?**

- Alma M. Garcia, “The Development of a Chicana Feminist Discourse, 1970-1980” (1980)
- Mirta Vidal Reports About the Rising Consciousness of the Chicana About Her Special Oppression (1971)
- Rhonda Y. Williams, “Black Women, Urban Politics, and Engendering Black Power” (2006)
- Frances Beale, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female (1970)
- Combahee River Collective, *The Combahee River Collective Statement* (1977)
- Radical Lesbians, “The Woman Identified Woman” (1970)
- Watch: “Makers Profile: Rita Mae Brown,” <https://www.makers.com/rita-mae-brown>

#### **THURSDAY APRIL 19: WELFARE & THE RISING RIGHT**

- ❖ Due: Second Set of ERA Letters to the Editor
- Premilla Nadasen, “Expanding the Boundaries of the Women’s Movement: Black Feminism and the Struggle for Welfare Rights” (2002)
- Jamala McFadden Tells Her Story of Welfare Assistance in the 1990s (2002)
- Matthew D. Lassiter, “Inventing Family Values” (2008)
- Watch: “Stop ERA,” <http://www.pbs.org/video/2333333961/>

#### **THURSDAY APRIL 26: WOMEN’S PAST, WOMEN’S FUTURE**

- Robin Tolmach Lakoff, “Sexual Harassment on Trial: The Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas Narrative(s)” (2000)
- Watch: “Flashback: Anita Hill's explosive opening statement,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWD1Cce2AUo>
- Watch: “Sen. Alan Simpson Questions Anita Hill,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wc7KSINLF5U>
- Watch: “Flashback: Clarence Thomas responds to Anita Hill,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZURHD5BU1o8>
- Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Hillary Clinton’s Candidacy Reveals Generational Schism Among Women,” *The New York Times*, February 16, 2016: [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/17/us/hillary-clintons-candidacy-reveals-generational-schism-among-women.html?src=twr&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/17/us/hillary-clintons-candidacy-reveals-generational-schism-among-women.html?src=twr&_r=0)