The discipline and courage of women create and sustain the details of everyday life that are the basis of any civilization. Over the past 400 years immigrant women have joined with native women in the peopling of this continent. In W.S. 201 we will explore the lives of the women who by adapting their heritage to this continent collectively built the Canadian life we know today. Our time-span stretches from the days of the earliest European settlement to the dawn of the urban-industrial 20th century; our sources as much as possible will be the words of the women themselves.

Women's lives were and are working lives, so our focus will be on housework, wage work, and volunteer work, in settings as diverse as the convents of early Quebec and the telephone exchanges of early Vancouver. Mostly we will investigate the heroism of ordinary life, but some already familiar heroines will find their places too: we'll get to know Susanna Moodie and her sister Catharine Traill, learn the truth about Laura Secord, meet Dr. James Barry, Canada's first female physician, and share the struggles and triumphs of reform leaders like Nellie McClung.

Readings will be mainly in original sources - letters, diaries, novels, legal documents, recipes, newspapers, autobiographies, etc., - with some additional articles that show how historians have used these sources to interpret women's past. Students will write two papers (each about 1000 - 2000 words) and a take-home exam, and will participate in tutorial discussions.

No Prerequisite.

Required texts:  C.P. Traill, The Backwoods of Canada
                N. McClung, Clearing in the West
                L. Hénon, Maria Chapdelaine
                Women at Work, Ontario 1850 - 1930
                R. Cook and W. Mitchinson, The Proper Sphere
                Xeroxed packet to be purchased from instructor.