Bread Riots to ‘Riot Grrls’: A History of Women in Social and Political Protest

Much historical work portrays politics and social protest as a male domain. This course will challenge the exclusion of women from the realm of the political by examining the ways in which women have organized and protested for greater rights of social, political and economic citizenship. We will examine various political movements and movements of social protest, the reasons for women’s participation, and the gendered forms that protest has taken over time and space. Students will be asked to consider how issues of family, motherhood, sexuality and racial and class oppression have intersected within the formation of social movements. We will not solely be concerned with understanding or locating women’s position within social protest, but with how assumptions about gender, race and class were structured into social movements. This course will focus mainly on North America from the 18th to the 21st century, but it will also incorporate transnational themes.

Required Readings:
Courseware package, available at the bookstore.

Marking Scheme:
Tutorial Participation and Attendance: 15%
Group Document Presentation (including 1 page summary): 10%
Essay Proposal/Annotated Bibliography: 10%
Research Paper: 25%
Mid-term test: 15%
Final Exam: 25%

Tutorial Participation:
This course will be structured as a combination of a lecture and seminar, which means that students are expected to come to class with all readings completed, are ready to engage critically with the material, and participate in discussion and debate. The success of the class depends on your participation, and your commitment to completing the assigned readings.
Group Document presentation:
In a small group of no more than three people, sign up at the beginning of term for the topic that interests you. You will do a brief presentation (approximately 30 minutes) to the class which contextualizes and analyzes your document. (refer to the handout, “Thinking Like a Historian”) Please develop at least two questions for class discussion, which will link the document to what we have learned through the readings. Your group will be expected to submit a brief written report of one page (written together as a group), which will sum up your presentation, and to help facilitate the class discussion on the documents and readings.

Please use your imagination to address the various themes that the document/s have raised. You may use music, art, drama, technology—anything you wish!

Written Assignments (See detailed guidelines handed out separately):

Thesis proposal and annotated bibliography:
Includes an introductory paragraph with thesis statement, and an annotated bibliography of 6 sources, including 1 primary source.

Research Essay (note: please staple your original marked proposal to the final paper):
Research essay (8 p.p.) or creative project plus research essay (5 p.p. plus project)

Choose a topic that interests you from this class, and narrow it down to a manageable form. You may approach this from several different perspectives. You might examine the role of gender norms in a particular protest movement (such as the civil rights movement), or look at the particular methods of female protest (such as food riots). Or, if you wish, you may write a biography of a female social activist. Choose a figure who has emerged from your readings and whose life interests you. In this case, you will be asked to place her life within the context of the larger social movement in which she was active. For example, examine the life of Mary Ann Shadd in the context of abolitionism, Kay Macpherson within the emergence of second wave feminism, Rosa parks and the civil rights movement, Sojourner Truth and abolitionism, or Nellie McClung and first wave feminism. Whichever topic you choose, you will be asked to use at least six scholarly sources, which includes 5 articles/books, and one primary source (pictures, newspaper articles, posters, etc). A variety of such primary source materials are available on-line: please see me for further details. Please consult the recommended readings list included at the end of this syllabus for suggestions on where to begin your research.

For those of you who wish to write a shorter essay combined with a creative project, some suggestions include writing a comic novel or booklet, designing a pamphlet, creating a historical walking tour, creating a teaching unit for the public school system, or filming a Heritage Minute. You are limited only by your imagination! Please let me know in advance if you are considering such a project.
Plagiarism:
All forms of cheating, including plagiarism, will result in a grade of "F." The university maintains a strict policy on academic dishonesty, and this course will abide by this policy. Essays must be original work written only for this course. You may not buy an essay for this course, write one essay and submit it to two different classes, copy someone else’s essay or allow someone else to copy your work. Plagiarism can be either intentional or a result of carelessness. Ultimately, a student should always identify the sources of ideas, words and phrases which are someone else’s. Make it clear to the reader where your material has come from; when in doubt, it is better to over-identify rather than under-identify sources. All phrases or ideas taken directly from the writing of another author must be enclosed in quotation marks and identified. When you reproduce the form and combination of ideas taken from another source (paraphrasing), you must also reference the original source. To avoid plagiarism carefully take notes when doing research for an essay. Clarify which notes are copied, which are paraphrased, and which are your own comments and ideas. Common place information such as dates and names do not need acknowledgement.

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

Week One: 4 January
Introduction
What is women’s activism? Thoughts and theory

Week Two: 11 January
Women’s Activism before Women’s Movements: Citizens and Mothers

Articles:

Documents:

Week Three: 18 January
Politics, Faith and Gender in Alternate Communities: Women Creating Utopia
Articles:
- Jennifer Cubic and Heather Rogan, “Were Women in the Oneida Community Liberated or Oppressed by Bible Communism, 1848-1880?” in *Women and Social Movements in the United States*. (see directions, below)

Documents:
The documents this week are located in the journal entitled *Women and Social Movements in the United States* (WASM). WASM is an electronic journal available through SFU library services. Once you reach the WASM site, from the main page, click on Document Project. Scroll down to 1848, under which you will see the authors listed above. Read the short article by Cubic and Rogan, then click on document list at the bottom of the page. Read the following documents:

Recommended Movies:
- *The Village* (2004, 1 hr 48 min)

Week Four: 25 January
Female Abolitionists: Intersections of Race and Gender in the Anti-slavery movement

Articles:

Documents:
- “Frances Gage’s Account of Sojourner Truth’s Address to the Akron Women’s Rights Convention, 1851 (“Ain’t I a Woman?”), in Mary Beth Norton ed., *Major Problems in American Women’s History*, 1st ed., 205-6

Movie Options:
- *Rebel Hearts: The Grimké Sisters* (58 minutes)
Week Five: 1 February
Rethinking Suffrage: The Politics of the History of First Wave feminism

Articles:

Documents:

Emily Murphy, selection from the Black Candle (1922) in Interpreting Canada’s Past, 2005: 191-95.

For those of you who are interested in this controversy, you might want to look at some of the thoughts expressed at “Emily’s Paradox,” at http://cannabislink.ca/papers/murphy/

Recommended Movies:
- Iron Angels
- Suffragettes in the Silent Cinema (Women Make Movies, 2003)

Week 6: 8 February
Midterm test

Week 7: 15 February
Olympic Break

Week 8: 22 February
Olympic Break

Week 9: 1 March
Radicalizing Women: Working Class Women and Militant Protest in the era of Consumer Capitalism

Articles:

**Document:**
• Letter to Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, from the *Wretched of Canada*, p. 199.

**Film Options:**
• *The Notorious Mrs. Armstrong*

**Week 10: 8 March**
**Fighting for Peace, Protesting War**

**Articles:**

**Documents:**

**Film Options:**
• *Voice of Women* (NFB)

**Week 11: 15 March**
**Civil Rights and ‘Bridge Leaders’: Gender, Race and the Civil Rights Movement**

**Articles:**
• Catherine Fosl, “Anne Braden and the ‘Protective custody’ of White Southern Womanhood,” in *Throwing off the Cloak of Privilege*, 101-23

**Documents:**
• Anne Moody, “Involved in the Movement,” in *Women’s America*, 380-385.

**Movie Options:**
• *Standing on My Sister’s Shoulders*
Week 12: 22 March

Women and Liberation

Articles:
- Alice Echols, “‘Nothing Distant About it’: Women’s Liberation and Sixties Radicalism,” in *Shaky Ground: The 60s and Its Aftershocks*: 75-96.
- Debra Michals, “From Consciousness Expansion to Consciousness Raising: Feminism and the Countercultural Politics of the Self,” *Imagine Nation*: 41-64.

Documents:
- “No More Miss America!” (1968), in *A History of Gender in America*, 380-82.

Movie Options:
- *Word is Out*
- *Before Stonewall*
- *When Abortion was Illegal*
- *Jane: An Abortion Service*
- *Vera Drake*
- *I Had an Abortion* (Women Make Movies, 2005)
- *From Danger to Dignity: The Fight for Safe Abortion* (Women Make Movies, 1995)

Week 13: 29 March

Protecting Their Own: Women and the Right Wing in North America

Articles:

OR

Documents:
Visit the following two websites, and get a sense of what their ideological position is on various women’s issues. How do these topics relate to the readings that we did for this class? What is their view on women’s sexuality, the role of motherhood, and marriage? Are these organizations “feminist?” What are some of the differences and similarities between the American and Canadian sites?

- REAL Women of Canada website: www.realwomenca.com or www.realwomen.bc.ca
- Concerned Women for America website: www.cwfa.org

**Movie Options:**
*Revelations: Exposing the Radical Right* (Feminist Majority Foundation)

**Week 14: 5 April**
Easter Break

**Week 15: 12 April**
**Girls Gone Mild?: Third Wave Feminism, Riot Grrls, and Feminist Protest**

**Articles:**

**Documents:**

**Movie Options:**
- *The ‘F’ word*
- *I Was a Teenage Feminist* (Women Make Movies, 2005)
Recommended Readings by topic:

**Perspectives on Activism:**

**Early Women’s Activism**
• Smith, Barbara C. “Food Rioters and the American Revolution.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 1994 51(1): 3-38. (available on-line, through Library Services, on electronic database

**Alternate Communities**

• Richard P Sutton, *Les Icariens: The Utopian Dream in Europe and America*
• Etienne Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie* (1840)
• Christopher Clark, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 1843-47.
• Christopher Clark, *The Communitarian Movement: The Radical Challenge of the Northampton Association* (Cornell UP, 1995)
• http://www.newlanark.org, a Scottish historical site that attempts to preserve and interpret Robert Owen’s New Lanark utopian community.
• Louis J. Kern, *An Ordered Love*.

**Abolitionist Movement**

• Peggy Bristow, “The Hour a Day Study Club,” in *Still We Rise*, 145-72.


Yee, Shirley J. “Gender Ideology and Black Women as Community-builders in Ontario, 1850-70.” Canadian Historical Review 75, 1 (1994), 53-73.

Debra G. Hansen, Strained Sisterhood

J.R. Jeffrey, The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism

Ann D Gordon, ed, The Selected Papers of E Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony, v 1: In the School of Anti-Slavery, 1840-1866

Suffrage Movement

Warne, Randi. “Nellie McClung’s Social Gospel.” In Changing Roles Within the Christian Church, 33-54.


Gail Landsman, “The ‘Other’ as Political Symbol: Images of Indians in the Woman Suffrage Movement, Ethnohistory 1992 39, 3, 247-284.(through Library Services, on electronic database)

Working Class Women and Militant Protest


• Orleck, Annelise. "We are that Mythical Thing called the Public: Militant Housewives During the Great Depression," *Feminist Studies* 1 (Spring 1993), 147-72.


**Fighting for Peace, Protestng War**


**Civil Rights**


• Sara Parsons, *From Southern Wrongs to Civil Rights: The Memoir of a White Civil Rights Activist*
• Joan Curry, *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement*
• Constance Curry, *Silver Rights* (Chapel Hill, 1995)
• Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom’s Sake* (Urbana, 1999)

**Women and Liberation**

• Luxton, Meg. “Feminism as a Class Act: Working-Class Feminism and the Women’s Movement in Canada.” *L/LT* 48 (Fall 2001), 63-88.
• Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad*
• “Discussion at Sandy Springs Conference, August 1968,” in Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, 369-77.
• *Documents from the Women’s Liberation Movement: An On-line Archival Collection* [www.scriptorium.lib.duke.edu.wlm](http://www.scriptorium.lib.duke.edu.wlm)

**Women and the Right Wing**

• June Melby Denowtiz, *Days of Discontent: Women and Right Wing Politics*, 1933-45
• Kathy Dobie, “Skin girl Mothers: From Thelma and Louise to Ozzie and Harriet,” in *Activist Motherhood*, 257-67.
• Catherine Rymph, Republican Women: Feminism and conservatism from Suffrage Through the Rise of the New Right (Chapel Hill, 2006).
• Margaret P Bacchetta, eds. *Right Wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists Around the World*

**Third Wave Feminism**

• Leslie Heywook and Jennifer Drake, eds, *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism* (University of Minnesota Press)
• Irene Karras, “The Third Wave’s Final Girl: Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” *thirddspace* 1,2 (March 2002) www.thirddspace.ca/articles/karras.htm

**Fighting Against the State in the Late 20th century**


### Women’s Studies 317 at a glance

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