**Syllabus**

**AMST/HIST/WGSS 3352, Autumn 2017**

**U.S. Women’s History to 1865**

**The George Washington University**

Monday / Wednesday, 9:35 – 10:50 a.m. / 1957 E Street, Room 211

**Instructor: Bell Julian Clement,** [**Clement@GWU.edu**](mailto:Clement@GWU.edu)

**Office Hours: M / W 11:00 – noon, Phillips 347**

This course introduces students to the experience of American women prior to the Civil War, concentrating on the century beginning with agitation for national independence in the 1760s. We will approach this subject through an exploration of the peculiarities of female citizenship during the period, inquiring into women’s duties, rights, and privileges, and the roles they were expected to play in political and civil society. We will consider the constraints these expectations placed on American women, and also the techniques and channels by which women reshaped and enlarged their citizenship. In this latter regard, we will explore how activists’ efforts on behalf of female emancipation were interwoven with other nineteenth century movements for human liberation. We will consider how understandings of gender allocated power in American society, and may have shaped politics, economic development, or even foreign policy.

We will rely on a selection of journal articles and book excerpts in considering a series of problems in interpretation of antebellum gender norms and women’s experience. Students will use these to explore the factors which accounted for women’s status and to consider how and why this status altered during the period.

## Learning Deliverables

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be familiar with –

• major events and personalities involved in shaping the status of American women in the period;

• major forces shaping women’s roles, how these operated, and how they altered over the course of the period; and

• key issues in scholars’ interpretation of this period of women’s history.

In addition, through energetic engagement with the readings, active participation in class discussions, thorough response to written assignments, and focussed effort to develop their own independent points-of-view on topics addressed, students will be better able to –

• think critically – identify, analyze, and evaluate historical arguments and interpretations;

• read critically – identify, analyze, and evaluate authors’ assertions and the reasoning and evidence offered in support of those assertions; and

• write critically – assert, and articulate effectively in writing, independent positions supported by clear reasoning.

## Assignments and Evaluation

Written work for the course consists in a review essay evaluating a key text in antebellum women’s history; an annotated bibliography exploring a specific topic in women’s history in our period; and an essay using materials developed in that bibliography to address an historical question within the chosen topic area. In addition, I may occasionally assign in-class writing or quizzes. The final exam is in in-class, essay format. I will provide rubrics giving specific instructions and stating evaluation criteria in advance of each written assignment.

• Review essay, 1500 words – Due: Friday, September 29, 2017 – 15 percent of course grade

• Annotated bibliography – Due: Friday, October 20, 2017 – 15 percent of course grade

• Topical essay, 3000 words – Due: Wednesday, November 22, 2017 – 25 percent of course grade

• In-class writing, quizzes, discussion participation – 15 percent of course grade

• Final exam – [ exam week ] – 30 percent of course grade

## Sessions and Readings

Most readings are available, in Gelman electronic databases, via the links provided. Selections marked “PDF” will be posted to Blackboard (Bb) under “Electronic Reserves.” Students may wish to purchase the text we will use to round out our inquiry,

Isenberg, Nancy. *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*. Gender and American Culture. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

### Session 1 – Introduction; Core Concepts

Monday, August 28, 2017

READINGS

Evans, Sara M. “Toward a Usable Past: Feminism as History and Politics.” *Minnesota History* 48, no. 6 (July 1, 1983): 230–35. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/20178825>.

### Session 2 – Historiographical Considerations

Wednesday, August 30, 2017

READINGS

Scott, Joan W. “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis.” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1, 1986): 1053–75. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/1864376>

Brown, Kathleen M. “Brave New Worlds: Women’s and Gender History.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1993): 311–28. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/2947077>

### Session 3 – Pre-Industrial Economy and Female Status

Wednesday, September 06, 2017

READINGS

Boydston, Jeanne. Chapter 1, “An ‘OEconomical Society,’” pp. 1-29 in *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. [PDF]

Shammas, Carole. “The Female Social Structure of Philadelphia in 1775.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 107, no. 1 (1983): 69–83. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/20091740>.

### Session 4 – Slave Economy and Female Status

Monday, September 11, 2017

READINGS

Jones, Jacqueline. Chapter 1, “‘My Mother was Much of a Woman’: Slavery 1830-1860,” pp. 9-41 in *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wrlc-ebooks/detail.action?docID=481165>.

### Session 5 – Legal I: Female Disability under Common Law

Wednesday, September 13, 2017

READINGS

Gundersen, Joan R., and Gwen Victor Gampel. “Married Women’s Legal Status in Eighteenth-Century New York and Virginia.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1982): 114–34. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/1923419>.

Cott, Nancy F. “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934.” *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (December 1, 1998): 1440–61 (excerpt). <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/2649963>.

### Session 6 – Health and Childbearing

Monday, September 18, 2017

READINGS

Klepp, Susan E. “Revolutionary Bodies: Women and the Fertility Transition in the Mid- Atlantic Region, 1760-1820.” *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (1998): 910–45. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/2567216>.

Turner, Sasha. “Home-Grown Slaves: Women, Reproduction, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, Jamaica 1788-1807.” *Journal of Women’s History* 23, no. 3 (September 3, 2011): 39–62. <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxygw.wrlc.org/article/449287>.

### Session 7 – Religion and Female Status: Constraints and Opportunities

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

READINGS

Catherine A. Brekus, Chapter 1, "Caught Up in God: Female Evangelism in the Eighteenth Century Revivals," pp. 23-67 in *Strangers & Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America*, 1740-1845. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/lib/gwu/reader.action?docID=3039423&ppg=9>

### Session 8 – Sexual Regulation

Monday, September 25, 2017

READINGS

Godbeer, Richard. Chapter 1, “‘Chambering and Wantonising’ – Popular Sexual Mores in Seventeenth Century New England,” pp. 19-51 *Sexual Revolution in Early America*. Gender Relations in the American Experience. Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wrlc-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3318145>.

Brown, Kathleen. “‘Changed... into the Fashion of Man’: The Politics of Sexual Difference in a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Settlement.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6, no. 2 (1995): 171–93. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3704121>.

### Session 9 – Anglo-American Women, Enlightenment, and Revolution

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

READINGS

Kerber, Linda. “‘Empire of Complacency’: The Inheritance of the Enlightenment,” pp. 13–32, in *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America.* University of North Carolina Press, 1980. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/10.5149/9780807899847_kerber.5>.

Zagarri, Rosemarie. “The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (1998): 203–30. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/2674382>.

### Session 10 – Revolution: Women’s Engagement

Monday, October 02, 2017

READINGS

Kerber, Linda, “‘Women Invited to War’: Sacrifice and Survival,” pp. 33-68 in *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America.*  33–68. University of North Carolina Press, 1980. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/10.5149/9780807899847_kerber.6>.

Jones, Jacqueline. “Race, Sex, and Self-Evident Truths : The Status of Slave Women during the Era of the American Revolution,” in *Women in the Age of the American Revolution*, Peter J. Albert and Ronald Hoffman, eds. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989. [PDF]

### Session 11 – Republican Wife, Republican Mother: Female Status in the New Republic

Wednesday, October 04, 2017

READINGS

Lewis, Jan. “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic.” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (1987): 689–721. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/1939741>.

Bloch, Ruth H. “American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785-1815.” *Feminist Studies* 4, no. 2 (1978): 101–26. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3177453>.

### Session 12 – Industrialization and Female Status

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

READINGS

Kessler-Harris, Alice. Chapter 2, “From Household Manufactures to Wage Work,” pp. 20-44 and Chapter 3, “Industrial Wage Earners and the Domestic Ideology,” pp. 45-72 in *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United Sates*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. [PDF]

### Session 13 – Cultural Constraints: “True Womanhood”

Monday, October 16, 2017

READINGS

Welter, Barbara. “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860.” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1966): 151–74. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/2711179>.

Li, Stephanie. “Motherhood as Resistance in Harriet Jacobs’s Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.” *Legacy* 23, no. 1 (2006): 14–29. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/25684492>.

### Session 14 - Cultural Constraints: “Separate Spheres”

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

READINGS

Faragher, Johnny, and Christine Stansell. “Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail to California and Oregon, 1842-1867.” *Feminist Studies* 2, no. 2/3 (1975): 150–66. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3177779>.

Kerber, Linda K. “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History.” *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (June 1, 1988): 9–39. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/1889653>.

### Session 15 – Domesticity and Nationalism

Monday, October 23, 2017

READINGS

Kaplan, Amy. “Manifest Domesticity.” *American Literature* 70, no. 3 (1998): 581–606. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/2902710>.

Romero, Lora. “Black nationalist housekeeping: Maria W. Stewart,” pp. 52-69 in *Home Fronts: Domesticity and Its Critics in the Antebellum United States*. New Americanists. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. [PDF]

### Session 16 – Female Education

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

READINGS

Mary Kelley, “Equally Their Due: Women’s Education and Public Life in Post-revolutionary and Antebellum America.” In *Writing Women’s History*, 3–27. A Tribute to Anne Firor Scott. University Press of Mississippi, 2011. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/j.ctt2tvd3w.6>.

Scott, Anne Firor. “The Ever Widening Circle: The Diffusion of Feminist Values from the Troy Female Seminary 1822-1872.” *History of Education Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1979): 3–25. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/367807>.

### Session 17 – Female Activism: The Case of Indian Removal

Monday, October 30, 2017

READINGS

Portnoy, Alisse Theodore. “‘Female Petitioners Can Lawfully Be Heard’: Negotiating Female Decorum, United States Politics, and Political Agency, 1829-1831.” *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 4 (2003): 573–610. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3595025>.

### Session 18 – Female Activism: Anti-Slavery

Wednesday, November 01, 2017

READINGS

Schweninger, Loren. “The Fragile Nature of Freedom: Free Women of Color in the U.S. South.” In *Beyond Bondage*, 106–24. Free Women of Color in the Americas. University of Illinois Press, 2004. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt1xcg3s.9>.

Zaeske, Susan. “‘A Nest of Rattlesnakes Let Loose among Them’: Congressional Debates over Women’s Antislavery Petitions, 1835-1845.” In *In the Shadow of Freedom*, 97–124. Ohio University Press, 2011. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/j.ctt1j7x7gz.9>.

### Session 19 – Legal II: Campaign for Female Emancipation – Married Women’s Property Laws

Monday, November 06, 2017

READINGS

Basch, Norma. “Invisible Women: The Legal Fiction of Marital Unity in Nineteenth-Century America.” *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 2 (1979): 346–66. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3177600>.

Pula, James S. “‘Not as a Gift of Charity’: Ernestine Potowska Rose and the Married Woman’s Property Laws.” *Polish American Studies* 58, no. 2 (2001): 33–61 (excerpt). <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/20148613>.

### Session 20 – Female Friendships; Female Networks

Wednesday, November 08, 2017

READINGS

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth Century America," Signs, 1 (Autumn 1975), 1-29. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3172964>.

Ryan, Mary P. “The Power of Women’s Networks: A Case Study of Female Moral Reform in Antebellum America.” *Feminist Studies* 5, no. 1 (April 1, 1979): 66–85. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3177551>.

### Session 21 – The Female Crowd

Monday, November 13, 2017

READINGS

Bynum, Victoria. “‘War within a War’: Women’s Participation in the Revolt of the North Carolina Piedmont, 1863-1865.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 9, no. 3 (1987): 43–49. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3346260>.

Chesson, Michael B. “Harlots or Heroines? A New Look at the Richmond Bread Riot.” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 92, no. 2 (1984): 131–75. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/4248710>.

### Session 22 – Female Radicals

Wednesday, November 15, 2017

READINGS

Isenberg, Nancy. Chapter 1, “Firstborn Feminism,” pp. 1-14 and Chapter 2, “Citizenship Understood (and Misunderstood),” pp. 15-40 in *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

### Session 23 – Female Costume

Monday, November 20, 2017

READINGS

Fischer, Gayle V. “‘Pantalets’ and ‘Turkish Trowsers’: Designing Freedom in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century United States.” *Feminist Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997): 111–40. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3178301>.

Roberts, Helene E. “The Exquisite Slave: The Role of Clothes in the Making of the Victorian Woman.” *Signs* 2, no. 3 (1977): 554–69. <http://www.jstor.org.proxygw.wrlc.org/stable/3173265>.

### Session 24 – Emergence of a Feminist Movement; Seneca Falls

Monday, November 27, 2017

READINGS

Isenberg, Nancy. Chapter 3, “Visual Politics,” pp. 41-74 in *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*. Gender and American Culture. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

### Session 25 – Feminist Organizing 1848-1868

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

READINGS

Isenberg, Nancy. Chapter 4, “Conscience, Custom, and Church Politics,” pp. 75-102 in *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*. Gender and American Culture. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

### Session 26 – Civil War: Women’s Engagement

Monday, December 04, 2017

READINGS

Isenberg, Nancy. Chapter 5, “The Political Fall of Woman,” pp. 103-154 in *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*. Gender and American Culture. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

### Session 27 – The Fourteenth Amendment Fight

Wednesday, December 06, 2017

READINGS

Isenberg, Nancy. Chapter 6, “The Bonds of Matrimony,” pp. 155-190, and Chapter 7, “The Sovereign Body of the Citizen,” pp. 191-204 in *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*. Gender and American Culture. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

### Session 28 – WRAP

Monday, December 11, 2017

READINGS

Isenberg, Nancy. Chapter 7, “The Sovereign Body of the Citizen,” pp. 191-204 in *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*. Gender and American Culture. Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

NOTE: Over 15 weeks, students will spend 2.5 hours (150 minutes) per week attending class for a total of about 37.5 hours of direct instruction and discussion. Reading course materials and other out-of- class work is estimated at around 7 hours (420 minutes) per week, sometimes more and sometimes less, for a total of about 105 hours over the course of the semester.

NOTE: In accordance with university policy, the final exam will be given during the final exam period and not the last week of the semester. For details and complete policy, see: [provost.gwu.edu/administration-final-examinations-during-examination-period](https://provost.gwu.edu/administration-final-examinations-during-examination-period).

**University Policies**

**University policy on observance of religious holidays** In accordance with University policy, students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. For details and policy, see: [students.gwu.edu/accommodations-religious-holidays.](https://students.gwu.edu/accommodations-religious-holidays)

**Academic integrity code** Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For details and complete code, see: [studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity](http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity)

**Safety and security** In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

**Support for students outside the classroom**

**Disability Support Services (DSS)** Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information see: [disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/](https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/)

**Mental Health Services 202-994-5300** The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. For additional information see: [counselingcenter.gwu.edu/](http://counselingcenter.gwu.edu/)