

510:549:01
Research Seminar in Women's and Gender History
Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00–4:00
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This two-semester seminar gives graduate students the opportunity to design their own independent research projects in a structured and supportive environment. Students can develop topics in any area of women's and gender history—any time period, region or methodological approach within the field of WGH is welcome. By the end of the second semester, students will produce an article-length paper based on their own primary source research.

In class, we will think carefully and critically about the process of research and writing. Our goal will be to understand the challenges all historians face as they try to produce original scholarship and to figure out strategies for coping with them. In the first semester, we will concentrate on the issues involved in starting and developing a research project, including framing a historical problem, posing research questions, setting yourself within the existing historiography, finding sources and figuring out ways to analyze them. We will then begin to think about how to organize our ideas and start writing. In the second semester, we will focus on the process of writing, revising, peer review and publication.

Assignments: The major assignment for this course is the final paper, which must be based on your own primary research. This final paper will be due on May 2. Barring exceptional circumstances, I do not intend to allow any students to take a grade of Incomplete in this course. Instead, we will work hard throughout the year to make sure that everyone is able to complete their paper by the due date. To this end, I have included many short assignments to help you keep on track with your research. There will be no extensions on these assignments. I will collect and comment on them and we will also discuss them in class that day. If the assignment for the day directs you to “post” something, this should be posted to the “Discussion and Private Messages” section of the course Sakai site by no later than 1 pm on Wednesday of that week (24 hours before class begins) so that we can all have the opportunity to read it before class.

Oral participation: One focus of this course will be learning to talk about our own work with others and learning to talk about others' work in a critical but constructive manner. Students should be prepared to spend some portion of each class talking about their progress and posing questions that can assist each other in approaching or rethinking their topic.

During this first semester, in many weeks we will have one common article-length reading by a Rutgers faculty member or student. These articles are all available in the “Resources” folder of the course Sakai site. Often, we read historiography for content. But we will read these common readings differently, to think about how the author made her argument, how she marshalled evidence, how she structured the essay, how she situated herself in the historiography and so forth. The idea is not that you should see these authors as models to emulate, but use their work to think about the process and the practice of writing history.

Spotlighting Rutgers historians will not only expose you to a wide array of approaches to the writing of women's and gender history, but will also give you a better sense of the resources available to you here at Rutgers. You will be required to take advantage of these resources by choosing a faculty member in your field to advise you on your research. You should also arrange to discuss your project with at least one additional faculty member with a common regional, temporal, or thematic set of interests to your own.

Class Schedule

- September 3 Introduction: The Research Seminar
Reading: Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender and the Practices of Scientific History: The Seminar and Archival Research in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (1995): 1150-1176
- September 10 Setting the Bar: What Makes a Great Article?
Reading: Danielle McGuire, "It Was Like We Were All Raped: Sexualized Violence, Community Mobilization and the African American Freedom Struggle," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 3, (2004): 906-931
- Assignment: Choose an article in your field that you find exemplary and post it. Write a one-sentence description of its topic and a one paragraph summary of its argument.
- September 17 Defining Topics and Asking Research Questions
Reading: Kate Imy, "Queering the Martial Races: Masculinity, Sex and Circumcision in the Twentieth-Century British Indian Army," *Gender & History* 27, no.2 (2015): 374-396
Guest speaker: Kate Imy
- Assignment: Post a one sentence description of your own topic and 3-5 research questions.
- September 24 Something Old and Something New: Setting Yourself in the Historiography
Reading: Dorothy Sue Cobble, "A Higher "Standard of Life" for the World: U.S. Labor Women's Reform Internationalism and the Legacies of 1919," *Journal of American History* 100, no. 4 (2014): 1052-1085.
- Assignment: Write a 4-5 page evaluation of the major secondary works on your topic. Where might you fit in?
- October 1 Using and Abusing Sources
Reading: Jochen Hellbeck, "The Diaries of Fritzes and the Letters of Gretchens: Personal Writings from the German-Soviet War and Their Readers," *Kritika* 8, no. 3 (2009): 571-606.
- Assignment: Post one article that you think uses sources well and one that uses sources badly. Be prepared to discuss the difference.

- October 8 Finding and Analyzing Sources
 Reading: Marisa Fuentes, "Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen's Troubled Archive," *Gender & History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 564–584
- Assignment: Make a list of 10 possible primary sources for your topic, including their location. Bring one primary source with you to class and be prepared to discuss what you think it reveals and why.
- October 15 Methodology and Theory: What Does It All Mean?
 Reading: Judith Surkis, TBD
 Guest speaker: Judith Surkis
- Assignment: Bring an article or book that has helped you think about how to frame a question or analyze a source.
- October 22 Author, Argument and Audience
 Reading: Temma Kaplan, "Reversing the Shame and Gendering the Memory," *Signs* 28, no.1 (2002): 179–199
- Assignment: Write one paragraph that summarizes your argument as it now stands. Write another paragraph that explains how this argument represents your own point of view. Finally, write a paragraph that explains who you see as your audience.
- October 29 Opening Gambits: Introductions and Titles
 Reading: Seth Koven, "The 'Sticky Sediment' of Daily Life: Radical Domesticity, Revolutionary Christianity, and the Problem of Wealth in early 20th Century Britain," *Representations* 120, no.1 (2012): 39–82
- Assignment: Post an example of an opening to an article or book you think is particularly effective.
- November 5 Organizing Your Ideas: From Paragraph to Section
 Barbara M. Cooper, "Women's Worth and Wedding Gift Exchange in Maradi, Niger, 1907-89," *Journal of African History* 36, no.1 (1995): 121–140
- Assignment: Devise a possible outline for your paper
- November 12 Moving from Research to Writing
 Reading: Jennifer Mittelstadt, *The Rise of the Military Welfare State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), selections TBD
 Guest speaker: Jennifer Mittelstadt
- Assignment: Be prepared to give a longer oral progress report on your research. How have your research questions changed? What are your sources telling you?

November 19	Research week
November 26	Thanksgiving
December 3	<p><u>Beginning to Write</u></p> <p>Reading: Eviatar Zerubavel, <i>The Clockwork Muse: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses, Dissertations and Books</i> (Harvard University Press, 1999), 14–35</p> <p>Assignment: Post a 3–4 page introduction to your paper, including a concise statement of your argument. We will critique each draft in class.</p>
December 10	<p><u>Moving Forward</u></p> <p>In class: Present a detailed timeline for how you will complete your research and writing over the next 5 months. Dates to keep in mind: Complete drafts due March 15. Final papers due May 2.</p> <p>Assignment: a polished 10–15 page draft of one section of your paper (not including the introduction).</p>