

AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN WOMEN

Coordinators: Sydney Babush, Harvey Schmelter-Davis

This study group focuses on relatively unknown women who have made significant contributions to our country. These contributions have been underplayed by the men who typically wrote history because the women went beyond established feminine societal roles. Special emphasis is placed on the women in the context of their times, the influences that shaped them and the obstacles they had to overcome. We aim for a broader definition of American History that incorporates an understanding of women as equal participants in the growth of our nation. Readings provide context for the world in which each of these “Forgotten Women” lived and worked, the history of the woman and her contributions and the writing, where appropriate.

Readings and other materials:

Women and the American Experience (fourth edition) by Nancy Woloch; (McGraw Hill Inc, New York. ISBN 0-07-293284-8)

A coursepack will include listed readings as well as additional source materials, discussion questions, enrichment exercises, suggested bibliography, pictures and cartoon, graphs, timelines, etc.

Harvey Schmelter-Davis was a history major in college. While he professionally has been a college administrator and successful trainer he continues to increase his knowledge of history.

Sydney Babush studied History at the University of Rochester and Boston University. She taught Economics and History at Hewlett High School. She was a Nassau County Teacher of the Month.

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Class participants report on women who are important to them.

Week 1: STUDYING WOMENS' HISTORY: A NEW APPROACH

“A New Approach to Women's Studies “- Gerda Lerner

“Why History Matters “ – Gerda Lerner, 1997 – selected readings

What did Lerner mean by the “Woman’s Sphere”? How does this concept affect the study of Women’s History?

Taking Lerner's views, how might one approach studying your favorite periods and/or events differently?

Week 2: WOMEN AS POLITICAL COMMENTATORS

Mercy Otis Warren. - Wrote definitive Jeffersonian critique of the new constitution.

Lydia Maria Child - Key abolitionist writer and crusader for human rights.

Woloch, Chapter 4 and 159-186.

“Lydia Maria Child” The Poetry Foundation.org

Roberts, Cokie. Founding Mothers: Mercy Otis Warren. [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

Warren, Mercy Otis. “Observations on the New Constitution and on the Federal and State Conventions”.

Child, Lydia Maria. “An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans”.

What contributions did each woman make to her time period? How were these contributions received?

What obstacles did each woman have to overcome in pursuit of her goals?

Week 3: WOMEN IN PUBLISHING

Sarah Hale -First major woman publisher – reinforced the values of the “Woman's Sphere.”

Katherine Graham – major modern day publisher of Washington Post.

Woloch – Chapter 5, “Sarah Hale and the Ladies Magazine

Ladies Magazine, Vol. 1, January No 1 1828”

YouTube Video Interview – Katherine Graham: Personal History, Watergate, Warren Buffet (1997)

NYTimes Book Review, “Personal History” By Katherine Graham, Reviewer, Nora Ephron., February 9, 1997

How did the Woman's Sphere concept affect the lives of men and women in the early 19th century?

What are some of the Woman's Sphere values Hale promoted that are still influencing women today?

Week 4: WOMEN IN EDUCATION

Emma Hart Willard - Educator

Woloch - Chapter 6 - Promoting Women's Sphere - 1800-1860

Emma Willard - A Plan For Improving Female Education

How did Emma Willard help to develop feminism in the 19th century?

What education priorities should there be to educate females in the 21st century?

Week 5: WOMEN IN LITERATURE

Phyllis Wheatley

Sylvia Plath

Woloch – Chapter 3, 526-528.

“Phyllis Wheatley”. poetryfoundation.org.

“Sylvia Plath”. poetryfoundation.org.

“Sylvia Plath Interview”. Youtube.com.

Phyllis Wheatly - selected poem

Sylvia Plath – Excerpts from The Bell Jar

Week 6: WOMEN AS POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

The Grimke Sisters - Abolitionist, political activist

Sarah Winnemucca – Native American activist

Woloch - Chapter 7 “The Grimke Sisters Assail Slavery: The 1830's”

Lerner – Selected sections from her doctoral dissertation about the

Grimke sisters.

Winnemucca, Sarah – Selected readings from her autobiography - Life Among the Piutes.

Grimke sisters selected writings/speeches

Why do you think the Grimke sisters veered away so much from their traditional family 's outlook on the world.

What do we learn from Sarah Winnemucca's activities that we can use today to promote political change?

Week 7: THE ECONOMIC WOMAN

Eliza Pinckney- Colonial and Revolutionary planter and entrepreneur

Mme C.J. Walker – African American entrepreneur and magnate

Woloch, 51-63, 70-71, 386-393.

Gates, Louis Jr. “Mme. C.J. Walker” [.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/100-amazing-facts/madam-walker-the-first-black-american-woman-to-be-a-self-made-millionaire/](http://pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/100-amazing-facts/madam-walker-the-first-black-american-woman-to-be-a-self-made-millionaire/)

Week 8: WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

Jeanette Rankin – first woman elected to House of Representative

Francis Perkins – first woman cabinet member

Margaret Chase Smith – first woman to serve in both houses of Congress.

Woloch, 347- 352 (Votes for women and the Women's Party).

Woloch, 425-438(Contributions of Francis Perkins).

“Rankin, Jeanette.” history.house.gov/People/.

“Margaret Chase Smith.” history.house.gov/People/.

Week 9: WOMEN IN RELIGION

Antoinette Brown Blackwell – First female ordained minister

Mary Baker Eddy - Christian Science Founder

Sally Priesand – First Reform Rabbi
Amy Eilberg – First Conservative Rabbi
Sandy Eisenberg Sasso – First Reconstructionist Rabbi
Sara Hurwitz – First Orthodox Rabbi

Woloch, Chapter 12, “The Rise of the New Woman, 1860-1920”
Lindley, Susan Hill, “You have Stept out of your Place”: A History of Women and Religion in America, Chapter 10, Women's Religious Leadership in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries .
Archive Project of Women Rabbis – video of 4 First Woman Rabbis

How did women overcome barriers to becoming religious leaders?
What kind of personality did these women have in order to work for change in a society that set up barriers to become ordained clergy?

WEEK 10: WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Rear Admiral Grace Hopper
Ellen H. Richards

Richards, Ellen H., “Eugenics: The Science of Controllable Environment: A Plea for Better Living conditions as a First Step Toward Higher Human Efficiency” - selected readings. YouTube –
Grace Hopper – Technology Pioneer

Why were Richards and Hopper so successful in a field dominated by men?

What are current barriers to women succeeding in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects?

Week 11: WOMEN IN SPORTS

Bell, Richard. “A History of Women in Sports Prior to Title IX”. The Sports Journal : March 14, 2008.

Borish, Linda J. “ History of Women in Sports” Chapter 22.

<https://books.google.com/books> .

Cardaele, Kerry. “History of Women in Baseball”. The Gilda Lehrman Institute. Franz, Chris. “ Timeline: Women in Sports”. Infoplease.com . Retrieved October 12, 2015.

Week 12: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Possible field trip to or speaker from Center for Study of Women’s History at the New York Historical Society.