History 448
Gender and the Family in Modern U.S. History
Tuesdays and Thursday, 12:35-1:50
Faner Hall 1226

Course Description
This course explores gender and the family in the United States over the last century. It is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the diversity of American family life in the first decades of the twentieth century and traces the various socioeconomic forces that loosened familial bonds and altered gender relations between 1900 and 1930, including changes in the structure of wage labor, the expansion of higher education, the rise of the modern welfare state, and the growth of mass culture. In Part II, we turn to the United States at mid-century and look at how emphasizing gender and the family as categories of historical analysis challenges traditional accounts of major events between 1930 and 1973, including the Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Vietnam War. The final part of the course explores the importance of gender, sexuality, and the family in American politics since the 1970s. Here, we explore the revival of modern feminism, debates about “what makes a family,” and the family in post-industrial society.

Course Requirements

- One midterm exam 15%
- One final exam 15%
- Two 5-page essays 50%
- Attendance and class participation 20%

Assignments and Due Dates

- First Essay February 12
- Mid-Term Exam March 5
- Second Essay April 11
- Final Exam May 10

Students may also be asked to write short response papers in order to help facilitate class discussion. These response papers will be graded with a check or check plus, and will be counted as part of the overall participation grade.

Required Texts
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*
Beth Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America*
Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*
Kenji Yoshino, *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights*
Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*

All books are on reserve at Morris Library and are also available for purchase at 710 and the Student Center bookstores. In addition to these books, we will be reading selected articles and essays. These selections will
either be distributed in class or will be on electronic reserve via D2L. All readings that are posted on D2L are indicated with an asterisk (*). Please come to class with printed hard copies of these selections.

Required Films:

*Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice*
*The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*
*The Times of Harvey Milk*

Course Schedule

**Part I: Gender and the Family 1900-1930**

**Week 1: Course Introduction**

1/15   Course Introduction and Discussion of Syllabus

1/17   Lecture: “Gender” and “Family” as Categories of Historical Analysis  

**Week 2: The American Family at the Turn of the Twentieth Century**

1/22   Lecture: Women and the Family Claim  
       Reading: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892)

1/24   Lecture: Loosening the Bonds: Challenges to the Family Claim  
       Reading:  

**Week 3: Gender, Politics, and the Rise of the Modern State 1890-1920**

1/29   Lecture: Women’s Reform, 1900-1920  

1/31   Film Screening: *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice*
Week 4: The New Woman and Modernity

2/5  Lecture: World War I, Feminism, and Modern Love
Reading: Beth Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat*

2/7  Lecture: Consumer Culture and Female Beauty in the 1920s

Part II: Gender, the Family, and Historical Watersheds at Mid-Century

Week 5: The 1930s: Families in Hard Times

2/12 Lecture: The Great Depression and Family Survival
No Reading: First Essay Due

2/14 Lecture: The Revival of Masculinity in Depression-Era America


Week 6: World War II as Watershed? Domesticity, Work, and Family Life in the 1940s

2/19 Lecture: Women Workers and “Rosie the Riveter”

2/21 Film Screening: *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*

Week 7: Gender, Sexual Politics, and Cold War Anxiety at Mid-Century

2/26 Lecture: The Lavender Scare: Gender, Sexuality and the Cold War

2/28 Lecture: Lesbianism in Postwar America

Primary Source: Interview with Barbara Gittings, July 1974.

**Week 8: The Golden 1950s?**

3/5  
**Midterm Exam**

3/7  
Lecture: The Postwar Family Ideal  
Reading: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

**Week 9: Spring Break**

3/12  
No Class

3/14  
No Class

**Week 10: Gender, Race, and Family in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s**

3/19  
Lecture: Gender Politics and the Civil Rights Movement  
Reading:  


3/21  
Lecture: Discovering Jane Crow: Fannie Lou Hammer, Pauli Murray, and Ella Baker  
Reading:  


**Week 11: Bringing the War Home: Masculinity, the Family, and Vietnam**

3/26  
Lecture: Gender and the Social Movements of the 1960s  
Reading: Tim O’Brien, “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong” and “How To Tell A True War Story,” from *The Things They Carried.*

3/28  
Lecture: Gender, the Family, and the POW Publicity Campaign, 1968-1973  
No Reading

**Part III: Gender and the Family in Recent American Political Culture**

**Week 12: The Resurgence of Feminism and Women’s Liberation**

4/2  
Lecture: Resurgence of Feminism, Part One

4/4 Lecture: Resurgence of Feminism, Part Two
Reading: Rebecca Skloot, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

**Week 13: Sexual Revolution**

4/9 Film Screening: *The Times of Harvey Milk*
4/11 Film Screening: *The Times of Harvey Milk*
No Reading: Second Essay Due

**Week 14: The Contemporary Politics of the Family**

4/16 Lecture: The Family, the New Right, and the Culture Wars
No Reading
4/18 Lecture: The Gay Marriage Debate in Historical Context
Reading: Kenji Yoshino, *The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights*

**Week 15: Work, Family, and Identity in the Global Economy**

4/23 Lecture: Women, Post-Industrial Society, and the Feminization of Poverty
Reading: Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By In America*
4/25 The Freedom Trash Can

**Week 16: Final Project: The Freedom Trash Can**

4/30 The Freedom Trash Can
5/2 The Freedom Trash Can, Wrap Up, Course Evaluations
Reading: No Assigned Reading for this week

Final exam will be administered on **Friday, May 10th** from 10:10 am to 12:10 pm.

**Plagiarism warning:** Plagiarism consists of presenting someone else's ideas or words as your own without properly acknowledging that person. You must research and write your papers yourself. Changing a few words is not enough; it is still plagiarism. You may not have a friend write your paper. You may not hire someone to write your paper (this includes Internet sites, which the instructors can easily check through a service known as Plagiarism.org). You may not turn in a paper previously used in a different class. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, consult your instructor, and read the Student Conduct Code. Plagiarism is a very serious matter that carries with it a number of possible penalties, including failure in the class and/or possible expulsion from the university.

**Emergency Procedures:** Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT’s website at [www.bert.siu.edu](http://www.bert.siu.edu), Department of Safety’s website [www.dps.siu.edu](http://www.dps.siu.edu) (disaster drop down), and in Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.