

History 3119 Undergraduate Pro-seminar

History of Sex in the United States: Sexual Reproduction and Social Equality

Spring 2009, Louisiana State University

Tuesdays, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Instructor: Prof. Alecia P. Long

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Classroom: TBA

Course Description and Rationale: Students in this course will be introduced to the burgeoning scholarship on the history of sexuality in the United States. Although there are many subfields within this history, we will focus on books that explore the connections between sexual reproduction and social equality (or its lack) in different periods of U.S. History. Students will be required to read five books, take two exams, and write one book review with an oral presentation component. In order to help students make the link between historical and contemporary issues surrounding sexual reproduction and social equality we will engage in a service-learning activity that will help us explore how the relative availability of insurance coverage for contraceptives impacts women. In order to do this, students will collect, reflect on, transcribe, and submit three oral history interviews related to the course topic.

Service-Learning: At LSU, Service-Learning is defined as a credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Our Service-Learning partner for this course is **Planned Parenthood of Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta**. After students complete and transcribe their oral history interviews, content from the interviews will be shared both Planned Parenthood (our Service-Learning Partner) and the interviews will be deposited with the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, here at LSU. Planned Parenthood may use information gleaned from the oral histories to further their knowledge about the impact of contraceptive equity or its lack in the lives of those who are interviewed.

Jennifer Abraham, LSU's Oral History Center's Director, will help us learn how to do oral history in two MANDATORY workshops. Beyond learning how to engage in the methodology of oral history and having the opportunity to share those histories with our Service-Learning Partner, students will be critically involved in creating an archive of oral history interviews that focus on and enhance understanding about the course topic and theme.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: To understand and be able to explain sexuality as a historical phenomenon in the U.S.

Objectives:

- Read and write an exam on *Intimate Matters*, which demonstrates that the student understands the authors' argument and can provide evidence from the text to demonstrate the evolution and variability of sexuality over the course of American history.
- Write a final exam that compares and contrasts previous course readings with the history of birth control presented in *Woman's Body, Woman's Right*.

Goal 2: To explore the historical connections between sexual reproduction and social equality in U.S. History

Objectives:

- Write a review of Ulrich, Schwartz, or Larson (choose one) that explores the issues of sexual reproduction and social equality in the historical time period under consideration.
- Help develop the master list of questions that will be asked in the oral history interviews each of you will do.
- Do four reflection activities that link course readings with contemporary news accounts, assigned reading, and the oral histories students are collecting.

Goal 3: To understand how the methodology of oral history can help bridge the gap between historical knowledge and contemporary social issues.

Objectives:

- Develop, collect, transcribe, and submit three oral histories
- Provide our service-learning partner with information gleaned from real-life histories which they, in turn, may be able to use in their ongoing effort to lobby for contraceptive equity legislation in Louisiana.
- Begin to develop an archive of oral histories that speak to intimate life in Louisiana and are accessible to historians and the broader community through the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History

Required Texts and Readings:

John D'emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, Second Edition

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*

Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South*

Edward Larson, *Sex, Race, and Science: Eugenics in the Deep South*

Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics In America*

Other readings as Assigned (Specifically for oral history workshops)

Assignments and Grading: Grades for this course will be awarded both quantitatively and qualitatively. The QUANTITATIVE grading scale for the course is as follows:

A	90 – 100%
B	80 – 89%
C	70 – 79%
D	60 – 69%
F	59% and below

QUALITATIVELY, grading will follow University policy. An A(90-100) will be given for distinguished mastery of the course material and assignments, a B (80-89) for good mastery, a C (70-79) for acceptable mastery, a D (60-69) for minimally acceptable achievement for credit, and an F (0-59) for failure.

Each assignment is worth a percentage of the total course grade as specified below:

Exam on <i>Intimate Matters</i>	20%
Review of Ulrich, Schwartz, or Larson	20%
Reflection Activities (4)	10%
Collection, Transcription, and Final Submission of Three Oral History Interviews	30%
Final Exam	20%

Specific Requirements Grading Rubrics for the review and exams will be distributed in advance of due date.

For the oral histories we will work as a group to develop a standard set of interview questions. Content and formatting requirements for how to submit your three oral histories will be explained during the TWO MANDATORY ATTENDANCE WORKSHOPS ON ORAL HISTORY on how to do an interview and transcribe your findings.

Student Conduct: It is the responsibility of all students to familiarize themselves with the entire *Code of Student Conduct*. For the purposes of this course, students should pay particular attention to Section 5.1 regarding Academic Misconduct, which reads, in part:

“Academic Misconduct” includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructors, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act.

Suspected violations of the *Code of Student Conduct* will be dealt with in accordance with University procedure.

Important Note: The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and the instructor reserves the right to make them at her discretion. Examinations will be given on the dates specified but, should the lecture schedule change, exams will include only material covered up to that time.

Course Schedule:

- Jan. 13 Course Introduction, Expectations, and Introductory Lecture
- Jan. 20 Discuss, *Intimate Matters*, Part I
- Meet with Julie Mickelberry and learn about the services provided by and needs of our Service-Learning Partner, Planned Parenthood of Louisiana and the Mississippi Delta
- Jan. 27 Discuss, *Intimate Matters*, Part II
- Oral History Workshop, Session 1 (MANDATORY)
- Feb. 3 Discuss, *Intimate Matters*, Part III
- Oral History Workshop, Session 2 (MANDATORY)
- Feb. 10 Discuss, *Intimate Matters*, Part IV and Review for Exam
- Due: Reflection 1
- Feb. 17 Exam on Intimate Matters
- Feb. 25 No Class; Happy Mardi Gras!
- March 3 Discuss *A Midwife's Tale* (all)
- Due: Reviews for those who selected this book
- March 10 Discuss *Birthing a Slave*, Chapters 1-5
- Due: Reviews for those who selected this book
- March 17 Discuss *Birthing a Slave*, Chapters 6-9 and overview
- Due: Reflection 2; will include submitting notes from first oral history interview and answering related reflection question.
- March 24 View and Discuss "Storyville: New Orleans' Forgotten Red Light Era"
- Due: Reflection 3; will include submitting notes from second oral history interview and answering related reflection question.
- Mach 31 Discuss *Sex, Race, and Science*
- Due: Reviews for those who selected this book

- April 7 No Class; Happy Spring Break!
- April 14 Discuss, *The Moral Property of Women*, Parts 1 & 2
- Due: Reflection 4: will include submitting notes from third and final oral history interview and answering related reflection question.
- April 21 Discuss, *The Moral Property of Women*, Parts 3 & 4
- Discuss any outstanding issues with oral histories and review proper formatting for submission to community partner and the Oral History Center
- April 28 Class Members present oral histories in final form to Julie Mickelberry of Planned Parenthood and Jennifer Abraham from the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History
- Final discussion about course content, oral history work, and service-learning
- TBA Final Examination as Scheduled