

TOPICS IN THE HISTORY OF CANADIAN WOMEN

MAY 03 1998

COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor: Joanne Stiles  
Office: C216  
Office Phone: 539-2828  
Office Hours: 11:00 – Noon Tues./Thurs. or Before or After Class

Introduction:

Within the traditional study of History, women, comprising half the population, are largely ignored. This is due, not to any overtly anti-female bias, but to the nature of the preoccupations of the historical profession. During most of the Canadian past, women have lived outside of the political, economic, military, and intellectual elites. They have been, therefore, largely invisible to both academic and amateur historians. This course will seek to examine the lives of Canadian women in their own contexts – the kitchen more than the Houses of Parliament, the factory floor instead of the boardroom.

The format of the course will be a combination of lectures and discussions based on assigned readings.

Textbooks:

Alison Prentice, et al. *Canadian Women: A History*. Rev. ed. (Toronto, 1996)

Wendy Mitchinson, et al. *Canadian Women: A Reader* (Toronto, 1996)

Assignments and Grading:

Short Assignments (4)	40%
Book Review	20%
Images of Women in Popular Culture Assignment	25%
Class Participation	15%

Short Assignments

Seven of these will be assigned throughout the early part of the course. Of these, each student is asked to complete four. If anyone chooses to do more than four, the best four grades will be used in calculating the final grade.

Each of these assignments is based on an article in the readings book. In addition, a related issue question is presented for discussion. Your paper should include a brief analysis of the article. It should also take a position on the question offered for discussion. Lectures and the textbook will serve as resources for this part of the assignment. It is expected that these papers will be four to five double-spaced, typed pages (or equivalent).

### Book Reviews

An historical book review essay is more than simply a summary of the book it reviews. Students are asked to analyze the book and its historical significance. A guide for writing historical book reviews will be provided. In addition, reviews of the book in the scholarly journals should be consulted. Each essay should be four or five pages in length and offer substantial evidence of the student's own reactions and understanding.

### List of Suggested Books for Review

- Randi Warne. *Literature as Pulpit: The Christian Social Activism of Nellie McClung*. (Waterloo, 1993)
- Janice Mackinnon-Potter. *While the Women Only Wept: Loyalist Refugee Women in Eastern Ontario*. (Montreal/Kingston: 1993)
- Bettina Bradbury. *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*. (Toronto: 1993)
- Frances Swyripa. *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991*. (Toronto: 1993)
- Ruth Compton-Brouwer. *New women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914*. (Toronto: 1990)
- Wendy Mitchinson. *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada*. (Toronto: 1991)
- Carol Bacchi. *Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918*. (Toronto, 1983)
- Joy Parr. *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, men and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950*. (Toronto, 1990)
- Veronica Strong-Boag. *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939*. Rev. ed. (Toronto, 1993)

Ruth Roach Pierson. *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood.* (Toronto, 1986)

Sylvia van Kirk. *"Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870.* (Winnipeg, 1980)

N.E.S. Griffiths. *The Splendid Vision: Centennial History of the National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1993.* (Ottawa, 1993)

### Images of Women in Popular Culture Assignment

Students are asked to examine the way that Canadian women have been portrayed in popular culture. This assignment may rely entirely on printed sources or it may take in video or audio materials. You will need to limit your topic in some fashion: by medium, by historical period, by characteristics of women concerned, or by any combination of these factors. Your final product may be a traditional paper, an audiovisual presentation, or a lecture to the class. Projects may be individual or group work. If they are the latter, it is expected that they will be more substantial.

An example of one such study will be distributed during the second week of class. At the same time, we will discuss the assignment in greater depth.

### **Class Schedule**

The course will be organized more topically than chronologically. It is, therefore, necessary that students have a basic understanding of Canadian History. Anyone who has not taken previous courses in this area, should read a basic textbook in conjunction with assigned readings. The Origins and Destinies series by Francis, Jones, and Smith provide a brief but adequate foundation.

Week One: Course Introduction: Why Women's History?

Week Two: Women in Native Canada

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE – "Women Traders in the Maritime Fur Trade" by Loraine Littlefield, pp. 6-19. How have Euro-Canadian values conditioned our view of the status of native women?

Week Three: Women in Agricultural Society

Week Four: Women in Industrial Society

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE – "Sweated labour: Female Needleworkers in Industrializing Canada" by Robert McIntosh, pp. 142-172. What effect did women's industrial work have on gender relations in Canada?

Week Five: Economic Lives of Women in Post WW2 Canada

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE – "Women and Income Security in the Postwar Period: The Case of Unemployment Insurance, 1945-1962" by Ann Porter. Government programs in modern Canada are presented as non-discriminatory. Have they, in fact, treated women fairly?

Week Six: Child Rearing and Domestic Labour

Week Seven: Childbearing and Fertility

ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE – "The Politics of Obstetric Care: The Inuit Experience" by O'Neil and Kaufert, pp. 416-429. Why have child birth issues assumed such a large role in Canadian gender relations?

Week Eight: Religious Life and Education

ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE – "a Woman's Awakening": Evangelical Belief and Female Spirituality in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada" by Marguerite Van Die, pp. 49-68. What, in addition to spiritual factors, has attracted women to organized religion?

Week Nine: Images of Women in Canadian Mass Culture

BOOK REVIEW DUE

Week Ten: Charitable Work – Women as Givers and Receivers. Early Feminism.

ASSIGNMENT #6 DUE – "Femmes Fortes" and the Montreal Poor in the Early Nineteenth Century" by Jan Noel, pp. 68-85. How did women's charitable work influence the class structure of early Canada?

Week Eleven: The Suffrage Movement and the Person's Case. Political Feminism in Post 1945 Canada

ASSIGNMENT #7 DUE – "Populism and Gender: The UFA and Social Credit Experiences" by Alvin Finkel, pp 299-319. What have been the major roles filled by women in Canadian political parties?

Week Twelve: Women and the Canadian Legal System. Women and Poverty Panel.

POPULAR CULTURE ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week Thirteen: Contemporary Women's Issues. Course Summary