

WMNST 341A Women in American History

Fall 2020

Women's Studies

San Diego State University

Instructor Contact Information

Name: Dr. Jess Whatcott

Email: jwhatcott@sdsu.edu (I respond within 24 hours, but during business hours only)

Voicemail: 619-594-2861 (you may leave a message, but email receives a quicker response)

Virtual Office: During office hours, you can email me or meet me in the “Chat” function of Canvas, send your number if you would like a phone call or tell me if you prefer video chat.

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4-6 pm, also available Thursdays during scheduled class time for optional Q&A

General Course Information

Scheduled Class Days/Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45 am

Format: This is a virtual class, with a “hybrid” format of partial “live” and partial “work at your own pace” instruction.

- We will meet together for a “**live session**” through Zoom video conferencing (with an option to call in on your phone) on Tuesdays from 9:30-10:30 each week. At this “live session” there will be opportunity for question and answer, group discussion, and small group activities to take place in “Breakout Rooms.”
- Before our live session, you should watch a pre-recorded lecture with a slideshow, and watch part of a documentary film each week. These can be completed at any time **before** the live session.
- During our scheduled Thursday class sessions, you can join me online for an **optional** Q&A session and further discussion.

GE Category: Partially satisfies the American Institutions requirement.

What is this class about?

How does the history of the United States of America (U.S.) change when we use a women's studies lens? The version of U.S. history we are probably used to hearing has focused on a few wealthy, white men, such as the framers of the Constitution or the Generals in the Civil War. Early women's studies scholars sought to add women to U.S. history by highlighting the stories of notable women such as suffragist Susan B. Anthony, or the abolitionist Grimké sisters. Increasingly, however, feminist thinkers and activists have questioned what counts as important in U.S. history. Rather than emphasize only a few notable “heroes,” feminist historians also tell the stories of

everyday people caught up in historical events. Instead of recreating the standard timeline of important events (usually the big wars), feminist historians ask us to examine how every day structures of domination have been built, maintained, and challenged throughout U.S. history.

Meanwhile, feminists of color have critiqued some forms of women's studies for only telling the stories of elite and middle-class white women. Through a framework of analysis called intersectional feminism, historians have shown how the experiences of women are different based on their geographic locations in the U.S. (northeast versus southwest, mainland versus island), race (white, Black, indigenous, Chicana/latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander), class (elite, middle-class, working-class, poor), and religion/spirituality (Christian versus indigenous worldviews). Rather than assume a shared, universal experience of all women, this class will compare how different experiences give different women unique perspectives of U.S. history. As intersectional feminist historians we will also attend to the lives of gender diverse people who do not fit into the Western categories of "man" or "woman."

The fall semester part of this two-part course focuses on U.S. history from colonization through the nineteenth century post-Civil War period called Reconstruction. First, we will study the history of Europeans settling and colonizing the place we call the U.S., from an indigenous feminist perspective. We will also examine how indigenous women and gender diverse people (some who use the term "Two Spirit" to describe themselves) have resisted and demanded decolonization. Second, we will study the history of kidnapping Black people from Africa through the Transatlantic slave trade, the slave economy in the U.S., and the rise of the prison industrial complex after slavery was abolished from a Black feminist perspective. We will also examine how Black feminists fought for the abolition of slavery and demand reparations.

What will you learn?

By the end of this this course you will be able to identify some of the trends and patterns in U.S. history that feminist historians have argued are significant, and you will have familiarity with some specific events that feminist historians have used to support their arguments. Perhaps more importantly, you will have a set of tools to evaluate narratives about U.S. history:

- **History as interpretive:** Identify the sources of historical evidence, and recognize the differences between primary sources and historical interpretations. Identify the differences between dominant interpretations of U.S. history, and versions of history told from the perspective of feminists of color.
- **Intersectional feminist analysis:** Compare gendered experiences in U.S. history as they intersect with race, class, and geographic location. Evaluate the significance of centering the perspectives of those who are multiply marginalized by gender, race, class, and other forms of social difference.
- **Structural analysis:** Identify the structures of power, privilege, and oppression that have historically distributed rights and resources unequally across gender and race. Describe how economic conditions affect social and political phenomena in U.S. history.
- **Transnational analysis:** Understand that the borders of the U.S. were created and changed over time, and are still contested. Understand the U.S. as a transnational space (for example,

because of immigration and outmigration, and because of the existence of indigenous sovereign nations). Explain how the actions of people based in the U.S. affect people beyond the official borders.

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of American history, the United States Constitution, and California state and local government. Upon successful completion of this course AND WMNST 341B, students will fulfill their **American Institutions GE requirement**. There are other possible combinations for fulfilling this requirement, see your major advisor.

What will you read?

Required Books: The following books have been chosen because they explore U.S. history through the perspectives of women of color. Because of their unique perspectives, the events and trends these authors highlight will be quite different from some more conventional histories of the U.S.

1. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, by **Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz**, 2014, ISBN: 9780807057834
2. *Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir*, by **Deborah A. Miranda**, 2013, ISBN: 9781597142014
3. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written By Herself*, by **Harriet A. Jacobs**, 2009, ISBN: 9780674035836
4. *Women, Race, & Class*, by **Angela Y. Davis**, 1983, ISBN: 0394713516

Other Required Readings

There are **4 other required articles** listed in the syllabus will be available on the course Canvas page as pdf documents.

What does the professor expect of you?

1. **Read the assigned material and watch the slideshow prior to live class.** Each part of this class builds on the others. In order to fully understand the slideshows, you should do the assigned reading first. In order to fully participate in live class, you should have looked at the slideshow. The exams in class will ask you to demonstrate your understanding of the broad themes of the course, and to give some concrete examples from the readings, although in general you will not be asked to memorize dates, places, or names. For you to complete these exams successfully, you must complete the assigned readings.
2. **Check your university e-mail regularly.** Any changes to reading assignments, instructions for completing assignments, and any other announcements will be sent via e-mail.
3. **Regularly attend and participate in class.** This is not the type of class that you can pass by reading the material on your own. Class instruction will be spent comprehending the arguments made in assigned material, analyzing and evaluating the material, and synthesizing and integrating ideas across assigned readings. To pass the course exams, you must regularly attend and participate in class instruction. *If you have an emergency or*

serious extenuating circumstance that requires you to miss several class periods, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss your situation. I am much more understanding if you come and speak with me.

- 4. Participate respectfully during class time.** We join the virtual classroom from a variety of situations and from different life experiences. Because most of class instruction will be completed on your own time, I ask that you make every attempt to join our Tuesday live session each week, and that you minimize as many distractions as can during the live session. You will not be required to have your video camera on for the entire live session, but during breakout sessions it will build a sense of community if you can turn your camera on. During these discussions, you will be asked to abide by some community agreements that we will create together during the first live session.
- 5. Complete all assignments to the best of your ability and on time.** You should expect to put in two hours of homework per classroom hour each week to keep up with assigned readings and complete assignments. You are responsible for keeping track of when assignments are due. Late policy: I accept assignments and exams *up to one week late (and no longer) for partial credit*. If you have an extreme, unavoidable, and documentable reason preventing you from turning in your assignment on time, please come speak with me. No work will be accepted beyond Thursday, December 17.

How will you know you are learning?

Participation: 20 points

During live class and outside of class there will be several short activities including reading quizzes, responses to documentary films, group discussions, and other group activities. Most assignments are worth 1 point, with some worth 2 points. You should aim for completing at least 20 points. Any additional assignments you complete will be considered extra credit.

Exams: 30 points each, 60 points total

In order to demonstrate your ability to apply the frameworks and theories of the class (see “What will you learn?” above), you will complete two take-home exams, one on each unit of the course (settler colonialism and slavery). The prompts for the exam will be distributed two weeks before they are due. Each exam will consist of one essay question, and one creative assignment where you will apply the frameworks of analysis from indigenous feminism and Black feminism.

Digital Humanities Project: 20 points

Using what you learn about the digital humanities in this class, you have two options for creating your own web page at the end of the semester which will part of a class created Google website:

Option A: Refine, expand on, and transform one of your midterm exams into a web page.

Option B: Archival/Primary Document Research. For this option, you will engage in the work of an historian. The special collections archivist has compiled a set of primary documents for you to examine. You will then search special collections or another online archive for one additional related document. You will compose a web page in which you detail your findings. If you choose this option, to mitigate the additional labor of this option, you will not be required to complete the creative portions of the take-home exams.

Overall grades will be based on the following points earned:

A = (94-100); A- = (90-93)

B+ = (87-89); B = (83-86); B- = (80-82)

C+ = (77-79); C = (73-76); C- = (70-72)

D+ = (67-69); D = (60-66)

F= (\leq 59)

Note: At any point in the course, you can estimate your grade by adding up the points you have earned and compare that to the remaining points available.

Other important things to know

Students are responsible for being familiar with the university wide policies found at:

https://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/catalog/GC1617/143_UniPolicies.pdf.

Content warning

A course on the history of the United States, especially one centering women of color, necessarily requires us to encounter texts discussing sexual violence, child abuse, sexual harassment, violence against women, and LGBTQ people. Please reach out for support from me or the following resources if you are experiencing distress due to this content.

- Campus-based Counseling and Psychological Services, M-F 8 am – 4 pm: 619-594-5220
- San Diego Access & Crisis Phone Line available 24/7: 1-888- 724-7240
- San Diego Access & Crisis Chat Line available M-F 4-10 pm:
<https://svcrplv.uhc.com/sdchat/>

Disability and Access Information

I invite all students to communicate their other access needs with me. If you have a campus accommodation letter, it would be helpful to get a copy as soon as possible.

If you think that you could benefit from an accommodation, even if you do not yet have a learning disability or psychiatric diagnosis, or if you are experiencing a new or temporary disability caused by injury, please contact the Student Ability Success Center and they will go through the process with you. Visit: http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/sds/services-overview.aspx. Voice: (619) 594-6473.

Academic honesty

I encourage students to study together and to talk about their ideas for the exams together. However, any work that you turn in **must be in your own words**. In order to be give credit to the ideas of others, any phrase, sentence or paragraph that is an exact copy of what somebody else wrote (or said) should be attributed to the author (or speaker) by name and include a page number. In addition, any idea from an author or theorist that you use in your work, even if it is not a direct quote, should also be attributed to that author by name. To present someone else's words as your own is considered plagiarism, whether you intended to steal their work or not.

Students who are found to be plagiarizing, whether intentionally or not, will be subject to penalty.

This can include: receiving a zero on the assignment or exam, receiving a failing grade in the course overall, or being referred to student conduct.

Sexualized Violence and Reporting Requirements

All employees are required to report incidences of sexual assault and sexual harassment to the campus Dean of Students office. That means that professors and other employees who become aware of sexual assault or harassment must contact the Title IX office. HOWEVER, it would be YOUR choice to pursue any action beyond the initial report. You do not have to talk to the university at any point, even if a report is made about you. Anyone who would prefer to talk to someone confidentially about sexual assault or harassment can contact:

- Counseling & Psychological Services (see above)
- Campus-based Sexual Violence Advocate & Educator, [Calpulli Center](#), 2nd Floor, [\(619\) 594-0210](#)
- Center for Community Solutions (CCS), 24-Hour Hotline: [\(888\) 385-4657](#) (Bilingual)

Course Schedule

Subject to change with fair notice – through announcement posted on Canvas.

| Week/ Date of live session | To do before live session | Live session | Assignments due by Thursday class time each week (unless otherwise specified) |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1 Aug 25 | | <p><i>Welcome, Introductions and Overview</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDSU land recognition • In class activity: What do you already know about the history of the U.S.? • Class overview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class activity = 1 point • Obtain books for the class • Sign in to class Canvas page and locate weekly modules |
| 2 Sept 1 | <p>Watch: <i>Beyond Recognition</i> (24 minutes)</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “California is a Story - Introduction” by Deborah Miranda • “Follow the Corn - Ch. 1” by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> <p>Write down questions for professor</p> | <p><i>Introduction to indigenous feminist perspectives of U.S history and present</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of <i>Beyond Recognition</i> and local indigenous struggles • Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to <i>Beyond Recognition</i> = 1 point • Choose one place you have lived and identify the indigenous people of that place (using link provided in Canvas) = 1 point |

| Week/ Date of live session | To do before live session | Live session | Assignments due by Thursday class time each week (unless otherwise specified) |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 3 Sept 8 | <p>Listen: “All My Relations” podcast Episode 1 (51 minutes)</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 2-6 by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> <p>Write down questions for professor</p> | <p><i>How history is made</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Amanda Lanthorne, SDSU University Archivist • Activity: Analyzing primary documents • Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening/reading quiz = 2 points • In-class activity = 1 point |
| 4 Sept 15 | <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The End of the World: Missionization, 1770-1836” by Deborah Miranda (part 1 of book) (content warning - discussion of sexual violence) <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Resilient Histories for Resilient Futures: CA Indian History & Community Empowerment” a talk by Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy ~1 hour <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | <p><i>California history from an indigenous perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous people terminology and how to decipher the indigenous internet • Activity: Analyzing Miranda’s poems • Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to “Resilient Histories” = 1 points • In-class activity = 1 point • Preparation for exam: Locate an official website for the indigenous people you identified earlier (see guidance on Canvas); if the people do not have a web site, use internet searching to determine why = 1 points |
| 5 Sept 22 | <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm exam instructions and start brainstorming ideas • “Bridges: Post-Secularization, 1836-1900” by Deborah Miranda (part 2 of book) | <p><i>Gender, Patriarchy, and Settler Colonialism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: TBD • Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you want to do option B for your digital humanities project, you must upload a proposal to Canvas by Friday at 5 pm = 1 point |

| Week/ Date of live session | To do before live session | Live session | Assignments due by Thursday class time each week (unless otherwise specified) |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapters 7-8 of Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class activity = 1 point Option A students: Read the history section on the website of the indigenous people you are learning about; if they do not have a web site, use one of the links provided to locate another source of information = 1 point |
| 6 Sept 29 | <p>Interact: Visit Project 562 web site, view the photo gallery and watch two videos</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qwo-Li Driskill “Stolen From Our Bodies” (pdf on Canvas) “Conclusion: The Future of the United States” by Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | <p><i>What is Two-Spirit?; Indigenous People Today</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity: Analyzing Qwo-Li Driskill’s poems Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor (last one before the exam is due) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class activity = 1 point Option A students: Are the indigenous people you identified on week 2 represented in Project 562? If not, use one of the other links to locate information about current issues important to the people = 1 point |
| 7 Oct 6 | No assigned material | <p>No live session or optional Q&A</p> <p>Watch on your own time: “Introduction to Digital Humanities” by Dr. Pam Lach</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm exam DUE uploaded to Canvas by Tuesday, 9:30 am Option B students: Attach to your |

| Week/ Date of live session | To do before live session | Live session | Assignments due by Thursday class time each week (unless otherwise specified) |
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| | | | <p>exam your list of primary resources = 1 point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to “Digital Humanities” video = 2 points |
| 8 Oct 13 | <p>Read: From “The 1619 Project” online: “We are committing educational malpractice”: Why slavery is mistaught — and worse — in American schools” by Nikita Stewart</p> <p>“Four hundred years after enslaved Africans were first brought to Virginia, most Americans still don’t know the full story of slavery” by Mary Elliott and Jazmine Hughes</p> <p>Listen: Episodes 1 of “1619” podcast (41 mins)</p> <p>Scroll through National Geographic Slideshow</p> <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | <p><i>The History of American Slavery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: Constitutional Scavenger Hunt • Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to “1619” = 2 points • In-class activity = 1 point |
| 9 Oct 20 | <p>Watch: <i>Race the Power of Illusion: The Story We Tell</i>, episode 2 (57 mins)</p> <p>Read:</p> | <p><i>Constructing race, constructing gender</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: TBD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option B students: submit one page of your notes on your sources (see Triple Entry) |

| Week/ Date of live session | To do before live session | Live session | Assignments due by Thursday class time each week (unless otherwise specified) |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Coverture” by Gretchen Ritter (pdf on Canvas) • “Constructing Race, Creating White Privilege” by Pem Davidson Buck (pdf on Canvas) • Chapter 2 by Angela Davis <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <p>Journal sample) = 1 point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to: <i>Race the Power of Illusion</i> = 1 point • In-class activity = 1 point |
| 10 Oct 27 | <p>Listen: Episode 2 of “1619” podcast (31 mins)</p> <p>Watch: <i>Traces of the Trade</i>, first half (~45 mins)</p> <p>Read: Chapters I-XVIII (through “Months of Peril”) by Harriet Jacobs (first half of book) (content warning - discussion of sexual harassment and physical abuse)</p> <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | <p><i>The Economy of Slavery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: TBD • Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to: 1619 podcast Episode 2 = 1 point • In-class activity = 1 point |
| 11 Nov 3 | <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 by Angela Davis • Chapters XIX (“Children Sold”) – XLI (“Free at Last”) by Harriet Jacobs (second half of book) | <p><i>Black women’s experiences of slavery</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: Group reading quiz for Angela Davis chapter 1 and Harriet Jacobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option B students: All research and notes should be complete by this date • Response to <i>Traces of the Trade</i> = 2 points |

| Week/ Date of live session | To do before live session | Live session | Assignments due by Thursday class time each week (unless otherwise specified) |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | <p>Watch: <i>Traces of the Trade</i>, second half (~42 mins)</p> <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-class activity = 2 point |
| 12 Nov 10 | <p>Watch: Either <i>13th</i> (Netflix) or <i>Slavery By Another Name</i> (YouTube), first half (~40 mins) (content warning: about 33 mins in, <i>13th</i> shows a brief Hollywood depiction of rape)</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructions for final exam, start brainstorming ideas “Slavery, Civil Rights, and Abolitionist Perspectives Toward Prison” by Angela Davis (pdf in Canvas, not in the book) <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | <p><i>The prison industrial complex</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity: TBD Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option B students: turn in outline for essay = 1 point Initial thoughts about your personal responsibility for reparations = 2 points In-class activity = 1 point |
| 13 Nov 17 | <p>Read: “Rape, Racism and the Myth of the Black Racist” Chapter 11 by Angela Davis</p> <p>Watch:</p> | <p><i>Racial terror and sexual assault</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity: TBD Thursday: optional Q&A with the professor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to <i>13th</i> or <i>Slavery by Another Name</i> = 2 points Response to “Survived and Punished” = 1 point |

| Week/ Date of live session | To do before live session | Live session | Assignments due by Thursday class time each week (unless otherwise specified) |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | <p>Either <i>13th</i> (Netflix) or <i>Slavery By Another Name</i> (YouTube), second half (~40 mins)</p> <p>Interact: Visit the ‘Survived and Punished’ website, read “About,” “Analysis,” and watch 2 short educational videos</p> <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> <p>Write down questions for the professor</p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class activity = 1 point |
| 14 Nov 24 | No assigned readings | <p><i>Google Sites Tutorial for your Digital Humanities Final Project</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Dr. Pam Lach, SDSU Digital Humanities Initiative Co-Director • Learn how to build your page on our class Google Site | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final exam DUE uploaded to Canvas by Tuesday, 9:30 am • Option B students: Attach to your exam a rough draft of your essay • In-class activity = 2 points |
| 15 Dec 1 | <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ar’n’t I a Woman” by Sojourner Truth (pdf on Canvas) • Chapters 3, 4, and 7 by Angela Davis <p>Watch slideshow lecture</p> | <p><i>The Future of Feminism</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final discussion • Thursday: Optional “technical assistance” session for help with building your Digital Humanities Project | In-class activity = 1 point |
| 16 Dec 8 | Web page posted to class Google Site by class time (take a screenshot) | <i>Showcase of Digital Humanities Projects</i> | Web page posted to class Google Site by class time |

| Week/ Date of live session | To do before live session | Live session | Assignments due by Thursday class time each week (unless otherwise specified) |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | | | In-class participation = 2 points |
| Finals Week | N/A | No live session | Final edits to web page due by Tuesday, December 15, 11:59 pm |