

HTS 3019 -- THE FAMILY, SEXUALITY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN AMERICA

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Fall Semester 2009
M, W, F, 12:00 noon

The nineteenth century in America was a period of crisis and transition in marriage, family life, and sex roles--a period strikingly similar to our own in many respects. Nineteenth-century Americans experienced a series of disruptive changes that came as the United States moved from a pre-industrial to an industrial economy, increased dramatically in size and population, and developed new intellectual and social patterns. These changes placed special strains on traditional forms of family and community life. Many individuals came to feel that the family as they had known it was threatened and must undergo major changes if it were not to be destroyed.

After briefly presenting some larger perspectives on family history and on colonial American family life, this course will focus primarily on three different responses to the perceived crisis in family life and sex roles in Victorian America. We shall look first at utopian alternatives to marriage, especially as reflected in the unorthodox Oneida "free love" community and similar groups. Next we shall investigate mainstream ideals of family life and sex roles, as seen in Victorian novels, medical literature, advice manuals and similar sources. Then we shall look at political activist critiques of American society, as reflected in women's rights activity and the purity crusades. Finally, we shall turn to the present to explore some of the complex contemporary issues about the family since World War II.

Evaluation in the course will be based on three mid-term exams (indicated below in the "outline") on class participation, on a book review or similar project, and on a final comprehensive exam. The exams will be based both on the readings and on the lecture/discussions. The required readings are found in:

Articles available through on-line Library reserve
Lawrence Foster, ed., Free Love in Utopia: John Humphrey Noyes and
the Origin of the Oneida Community
Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge
and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America
Alice S. Rossi, ed., The Feminist Papers
Stephanie Coontz, The Way We Never Were: American Families and the
Nostalgia Trap

The class sessions will combine both lecture and discussion. Since the required readings provide only a taste of the extensive literature on these issues, each student will be expected to do a book review or special project, as well. The basic project would be to choose a book on some aspect of the American family, clear that book with the instructor, and write a 6 to 10 page analytical book review of it. As an alternative to the book review, some students may wish to develop more

complex special papers or research projects. The book review or special project will provide knowledge and perspectives that students may share informally with the rest of the class in our discussions.

The final exam will involve answering broad general questions that synthesize the student's understanding of how the American family has changed and what challenges it has faced.

PLEASE TAKE CAREFUL NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Students are expected to ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY, come ON TIME at the scheduled beginning of each class (NO LATER THAN 12:05 p.m.), and be ready to PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS on the assigned readings.

More than 6 unexcused absences (2 weeks of the course) may be grounds for reduction in the student's overall course grad by as much as one full level (10 points).

Throughout the course, it is expected that all students will adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code.

OUTLINE OF CLASS SESSIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS:

I. Introduction to the Study of the Family, Sexuality, and Social Change
August 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28

Readings: Interview with Philippe Aries
Stephanie Coontz, "Where are the Good Old Days?"
Edward Shorter, "Illegitimacy, Sexual Revolution, and Social Change in the Modern World"
Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex"
Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860"

II. Communitarian Critiques of Victorianism: The Oneida Community and Others
September 2, 4, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23

Readings: Lawrence Foster, "A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Millennial Impulse and the Creation of Alternative Family Systems"
Lawrence Foster, ed., Free Love in Utopia: John Humphrey Noyes and the Origin of the Oneida Community (selections)
Lawrence Foster, "Celibacy and Feminism: The Shakers and Equality for Women"

Lawrence Foster, "Between Two Worlds: Plural Marriage and the Experiences of Mormon Women in Illinois During the Early 1840s"

NO CLASS: Monday, September 7--Labor Day Holiday

EXAM #1 on Topics I and II--Friday, September 25

III. The Victorian Mainstream: Ideal and Reality

September 28, 30; October 2, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16

Readings: John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America, ch. 3

Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Rereading Sex (selections)

Carl N. Degler, "What Ought to be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century"

Christine Stansell, "Women, Children, and the Use of the Streets"

NO CLASS: Monday, October 5--Georgia Tech Recess Period

EXAM #2 on Topic III--Monday, October 19

IV. Militant Victorians: Woman's Rights and the Purity Crusades

October 21, 23, 26, 28, 30; November 2, 4, 6

Readings: Alice S. Rossi, ed., The Feminist Papers (selections)

Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Rereading Sex (selections)

NO CLASS: Friday, November 27--Happy Thanksgiving!

EXAM #3 on Topic IV--Monday, November 9

V. Contemporary Issues in the American Family

November 11, 13, 16, 18, 20, 23, 25, 30; December 2, 4

Reading: Stephanie Coontz, The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap (entire)

BOOK REVIEWS due--Monday, November 23

FINAL EXAM--Monday, December 7, 11:30 a.m.

HTS 3019 -- American Family
Lawrence Foster -- Fall Semester 2009
READING ASSIGNMENTS:

August 17--begin reading Aries interview
August 19--begin reading Coontz, "Where are the Good Old Days?"
August 21--begin reading Shorter, "Illegitimacy, Sexual Revolution, and Social Change in the Modern World"
August 24--begin reading Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex"
August 26--begin reading Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood"
August 28--begin reading Foster, "A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Millennial Impulse and the Creation of Alternative Family Systems"
August 31--begin reading Foster, ed., Free Love in Utopia, pp. ix-xxxv, "Introduction: The Roots of an Extraordinary Community"
September 2/4--begin reading Free Love in Utopia, pp. 295-335

NO CLASS: September 7--Labor Day Holiday

September 9--begin reading Free Love in Utopia, pp. 207-224
September 11--begin reading Free Love in Utopia, pp. 225-260
September 14--begin reading Free Love in Utopia, pp. 85-129
September 16--begin reading Foster, "Celibacy and Feminism: The Shakers and Equality for Women"
September 18-- begin reading Foster, "Between Two Worlds: Plural Marriage and the Experiences of Mormon Women in Illinois During the Early 1840s"
September 21--begin reading Foster, "Polygamy and the Frontier: Mormon Women in Early Utah"
September 23--review for EXAM #1

EXAM #1--Friday, September 25

September 25-- review Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood"
September 28/30--begin reading Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America, chapter 3 (pp. 89-137)
October 2--begin reading Lefkowitz, Rereading Sex, introduction and chapter 2 (pp. 3-44)

NO CLASS: Monday, October 5--Georgia Tech Recess

October 7--begin reading Rereading Sex, chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 45-85)
October 9--begin reading Rereading Sex, chapter 5 (pp. 86-122)
October 12--begin reading Degler, "What Ought to be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the 19th Century"
October 14- begin reading Stansell, "Women, Children, and the Use of the Streets"
October 16--review for EXAM #2

EXAM #2--Monday, October 19

October 19/21--begin reading Feminist Papers, pp. 241-281
 October 23--begin reading Feminist Papers, pp. 282-322
 October 26--begin reading Rereading Sex, chapter 15 (pp. 342-357)
 October 28--begin reading Rereading Sex, chapter 16 (pp. 358-385)
 October 30--begin reading Rereading Sex, chapter 17 (pp. 386-403)
 November 2--begin reading Feminist Papers, pp. 378-406
 November 4-- begin reading Feminist Papers, pp. 407-430
 November 6--review for EXAM #3

EXAM #3 --Monday, November 9

November 9--begin reading The Way We Never Were, introductions
 November 11--begin reading The Way We Never Were, pp. 1-41
 November 13--begin reading The Way We Never Were, pp. 42-92
 November 16-- begin reading The Way We Never Were, pp. 93-121
 November 18/20--work on Book Reviews

BOOK REVIEWS due Monday, November 23

November 23--begin reading The Way We Never Were, pp. 122-179
 November 25--begin reading The Way We Never Were, pp. 180-231

NO CLASS: Friday, November 27--Happy Thanksgiving!

November 30--begin reading The Way We Never Were, pp. 232-288
 December 2/4--review for FINAL EXAM

FINAL EXAM --Monday, December 7, 11:30 a.m.