

Comparative Historical Sociologies of Women's Movements in the United States

Instructor

Laura K. Nelson

Email: Lknelson3@berkeley.edu

Office hours: Thursdays 1-3PM, 483 Barrows (or by appointment)

Course Description

Meetings: Mondays 12-2PM, 78 Barrows

Readings:

- Most of the readings are in the course reader, available at Zee Zee Copy (2431 Durant)
- The rest of the readings are available online. I provide the link to these readings in the syllabus, which is also available on bSpace. If you are having problems accessing these readings let me know as soon as possible.

Overview:

Women's movements in the United States have existed for centuries, and have existed in multifarious forms. Collectively, these movements have addressed a wide range of issues, been oriented around diverse political ideologies, encompassed people from diverse religious, ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds, and have incorporated issues around gender identity and sexual orientation. They have won many political and social reforms for women, including the right to vote, the right to serve on juries, protective labor laws, access to no fault divorce, access to cheap birth control, and much more. This course will explore the history of some aspects of these various movements, from a comparative and sociological perspective.

The course is divided into two parts. In the first part we will discuss how sociologists approach the study of social movements in historical perspective, and we will compare various sociological accounts of women's movements in the U.S. The second part of the course will allow you to become the comparative historical sociologist. During this part we will read primary documents from various women's movements, comparing different strands of feminist thought to each other and track their development over time. We will look in particular at various divisions within women's movements, including those based on political ideology, class, race, and general approach to political and social change.

Your Project:

You will use the knowledge gained through the readings to analyze and interpret one aspect of the contemporary women's movement (defined as the 1980s to the present). Early on in the course you should choose a text or collection of texts that you will analyze, comparatively and sociologically, in your final paper. In your final paper you will situate your text(s) within the history of the US women's movement and the development of feminist thought, and analyze/interpret it(them) with a sociological lens. A text can be a formally published work, informally published writing on a website, a public twitter feed or hashtag, a public facebook page, a blog, images such as a tumblr, a pinterest board, or other published images, or audio/video material.

Course Requirements

- 10% Attendance and Participation:
 5% - Active participation in class discussions.
 5% - Discussion leader.
- 15% Eight (8) short blog posts, posted to the bSpace “Forums” by 7PM the Sunday before class. You chose the weeks, but at least two must be during Part I of the course.
- 15% Paper #1 – Literature Review, due by 4PM, Friday 10/18.
- 20% Paper #2 – Project Proposal, due by 4PM, Friday 11/15.
- 40% Final Paper (10-20 pages) – Due by 4PM, Wednesday 12/18.

Course Schedule

Session	Date	Theme	Notes
<i>No Class</i>	September 2		
Session 1	September 9	Introduction to class and overview	
Session 2	September 16	Resource Mobilization	
Session 3	September 23	Political/Discursive Opportunity Structure	
Session 4	September 30	Cultural and Structural Analysis	
Session 5	October 7	Intersectionality/Movement Fields	
Session 6	October 14	Liberal/Middle-Class Feminism I	Paper #1 Due 10/18
Session 7	October 21	Liberal/Middle-Class Feminism II	
Session 8	October 28	Radical Feminism I	
Session 9	November 4	Radical Feminism II	
<i>No Class</i>	November 11		Paper #2 Due 11/15
Session 11	November 18	Socialist/Working-Class Feminism	
Session 12	November 25	Race/Gender Intersectionality I	
Session 13	December 2	Race/Gender Intersectionality II	
Session 14	December 9	Review and Discussion of Papers	Final Paper Due 12/18

Note: Session 8, October 21, may be rescheduled for another day in consultation between the instructor and students.

Course Structure

This is a discussion-based course, led by primarily by you. I may provide some background information at the beginning of class, but the bulk of the class time will be devoted to discussion. It is important that you complete the readings before each class and come prepared to discuss the material. Throughout the course of the semester we will be addressing a variety of issues on which people will have strong and diverse opinions. It is critical that we respect one another's thoughts, give everybody the space to talk, and address our comments at the ideas and not the person.

This is a reading and writing intensive course and we cover a lot of material every week, so attendance is mandatory and counts toward your participation grade. You are allowed one (1) absence before your grade is affected. If you know you are going to miss a week you should notify me at least four days in advance and I will let you know if the absence will be excused.

Assignments

I will not accept any late papers. The Reading Responses are due by **7PM** the **Sunday** before class. The three papers should be posted to bSpace before **4PM** on the day they are due. I will check B-Space promptly at 4PM, so make sure to post them early.

Discussion Leader: Each student will be responsible for kicking off one of our discussions. To do this you should prepare a document that should include: 1) the central question(s) in that week's readings; 2) the central thesis or theses; 3) a few things you found particularly interesting about the readings, including how they relate to previous readings; and 4) 3 or 4 questions you would like to discuss during the section. Email the document to me by 7PM on the Sunday before your assigned section. You will then kick off discussion by presenting your thoughts and questions. While you will only present once, I encourage everyone to do this exercise for each of the readings. Writing about what you read is the best way to learn and work through the material, and will help you prepare for the papers.

Reading Responses: In addition to the document you prepare for your role as discussion leader you are also required to submit eight (8) short (two-paragraphs to one-page) reading responses, posted to the bSpace "Forums" by 7PM on the Sunday before class. In your reading response you should compare themes within the week's readings to each other and to previous readings in the course, and offer some reflections on the readings. You may also compare the readings to the project you are developing, to help you prepare your final paper. You may want to incorporate some of your responses into your final paper, so put some thought into them. I encourage everyone to read each other's responses before class. These short responses will help you work through and understand the primary documents, they will help you get used to writing in a comparative perspective, and they will help kick off discussion.

Paper #1: Literature Review (800 words)

In this paper you will compare and contrast the different approaches to the sociological analysis of women's movements that we read: resource mobilization theory, political opportunity structures, discursive opportunity structures, cultural analysis, intersectionality, and field analysis. In the paper you should compare and contrast the benefits and drawbacks of each analysis, and then decide which theory (or combination of theories) you find most adequate and explain why. Keep in mind the general topic you would like to pursue in your final paper; the theory you promote should be the theory most

adequate for your particular question or topic. This paper will serve as a draft of the literature review section of your final paper, and the theoretical framework you decide is best will set up your final analysis.

Paper #2: Project Proposal (1200 words)

In order to write this paper you need to identify which contemporary text(s) you will be using for your final paper. Early in the course I will give you a list of texts that will work for this project. You may choose something from the list or choose something different; if you choose something not on the list run it by me before you write this paper.

You should include the following in your project proposal: 1) Identify the contemporary text(s) you will be using for your final paper; 2) Identify a general topic, question, or puzzle related to that contemporary text that you will be exploring; 3) Briefly identify which general set of historical texts and sociological frameworks you will be using to analyze the contemporary text, e.g. do you think this will be a radical feminist text, a socialist feminist text, a combination of different theories, or something entirely new? 4) Identify what general method(s) you think you will use to analyze the text(s).

Final Paper (10-20 pages)

Doing either an in-depth reading of your text(s) or content analysis, carry out the analysis you proposed in Paper #2. In your paper you should both situate your text(s) in the historical development of U.S. women's movements and feminist thought, and bring an appropriate sociological lens to your analysis.

Your final paper should include (but is not limited to):

- 1) A statement of the question or puzzle you are exploring, and the text(s) you are using.
- 2) Literature review: What sociological theories will you be using to frame your analysis? What works and what does not for your particular question? Is there a particular gap in the literature you are trying to fill, or a particular debate you are addressing?
- 3) Sociological analysis of your text: How does the contemporary text you are analyzing build on previous texts written by feminists? How is it similar and different? How does your text fit into the general history of the women's movements and feminist theories we have been studying? What historical/social changes have occurred that might help explain the content of your text? What sociological theories can help us interpret the text?
- 4) Conclusion: Why should we care about your analysis? What further steps would you take to better analyze/understand your question or puzzle? What are the limitations of your analysis?

Email and Office Hours

Feel free to email me with technical questions, but I will not answer substantive questions over email. If you have a question about the readings either bring it to class or come to my office hours. If you are unable to make my office hours email me and we can arrange an alternative time to meet.

Student Learning Center (SLC)

The Student Learning Center (SLC) Writing Program works under the assumption that all writers, regardless of their experience and abilities, benefit from informed, individualized, and personal feedback on their writing. The program is staffed by professional staff and trained peer tutors who work

with writers engaged in any stage of the writing process – from brainstorming paper topics, to formulating and organizing arguments, to developing editing skills. While tutors will not “proofread” students’ papers, they will help students learn to address issues of style, syntax, grammar and usage in their writing. Tutors are trained to work with non-native speakers of English and with writers from a variety of disciplines. For more information call 510-642-7332 or visit <http://slc.berkeley.edu/writing>.

Writing Guide

I highly recommend referencing *Writing for Sociology*, published by the UC Berkeley Sociology Department. It has tips on how to read, how to prepare to write, and how to write sociological papers. Found here:

<http://sociology.berkeley.edu/undergraduate-writing-resources>

Obligatory Note on Plagiarism

I encourage you to work together to help each other review the readings and reflect on discussion. However, *all written work must be your own*. I take academic honesty seriously, and you should too. For more information on your rights and responsibilities as a student see: <http://campuslife.berkeley.edu/conduct>.

Readings and Schedule

09/02: Academic holiday, no class.

Week 1: Introduction and Overview

09/09: Overview of the course and course requirements.

Part I: The Sociology of US Women's Movements

In this section of the course you will be introduced to the way sociologists have written about various women's movements in the United States. We will discuss what sociologists focus on when describing and explaining women's movements, and what tensions exist in the sociological literature around women's movements.

Week 2: Temporal Overview and Resource Mobilization Theory

9/16: How has the mainstream US women's movement changed over time? What societal conditions influenced these changes?

Reading:

Ryan, Barbara. 1992. *Feminism and the Women's Movement*. Routledge: Introduction, Chapters 1-3 and Chapters 6 (pp. 1-64, 79-98). (Resource Mobilization)

Week 3: Early Successes: National and Local

9/23: Why do some movements succeed and others fail? The readings this week analyze some early successes in various movements.

Readings:

Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*. Chapter 6: Expanding the Separate Sphere (321-372). (Political Opportunity Structure)

McCammon, Holly, Courtney Sanders Muse, Harmony D. Newman, and Teresa M. Terrell. 2007. "Movement Framing and Discursive Opportunity Structures: The Political Successes of the U.S. Women's Jury Movement." *American Sociological Review* 72: 725-749. (Discursive Opportunity Structure)

Found here: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25472489>

Week 4: Industry Structure, Culture, and Women's Labor Activism

9/30: Some sociologists have criticized the literature for only focusing on white, middle and upper class activism. Working class women have historically played a major role in women's movements and the labor movement. This week's readings examine the sociological causes and consequences of some of this activism.

Readings:

Cameron, Ardis. 1985. "Bread and Roses Revisited: Women's Culture and Working-Class Activism in the Lawrence Strike of 1912." Pp. 42-61 in *Women, Work, and Protest: A Century of US Women's Labor History*, edited by Ruth Milkman. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Culture)

Waldinger, Roger. 1985. "Another Look at the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union: Women, Industry Structure and Collective Action." Pp. 87-109 in *Women, Work, and Protest: A Century of US Women's Labor History*, edited by Ruth Milkman. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul. (Structure)

Week 5: Racial Diversity in the Second Wave

10/7: In addition to ignoring class, much of the sociology of women's movements also ignores race. Sociologist Benita Roth explores how women of different racial backgrounds approached feminism in the 1960s and 1970s.

Reading:

Roth, Benita. 2004. *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Introduction, Chapter 1, 5, and Conclusion (Pp. 1-46, 178-226; 94 pages). (Intersectionality, intermovement political fields)

Part II: Ideology, Politics, and Visions: Original Writings from the Women's Movements

In this section we will read primary documents from various participants and organizations involved in US women's movements. While reading these documents keep in mind what we learned about how sociologists analyze movements. How would a sociologist read these documents? What can we, as sociologists, learn from them? Think in particular about comparisons between different strands of feminist thought, and comparisons over time.

Weeks 6-7: Liberal/Middle-class Feminism

10/14 – Liberal/Middle-class Feminism Part I

Readings:

Seneca Falls Convention. 1848. *Declaration of Sentiments*.

Found here: <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html>

Coolidge, Mary Roberts. 1912. *Why Women are So*. Hypothesis, Section 2: The Effect Upon Women (89-190).

First half: Discussion of readings.

Second half: How to do text-based research projects.

Handout: Methodological resources on text-based analysis.

First Paper Due by 4PM Friday, 10/18

10/21 – Liberal/Middle-class Feminism Part 2

Readings:

National Organization for Women. 1966. *Statement of Purpose*.

Found here: <http://www.now.org/history/purpos66.html>

Friedan, Betty. 2001[1963]. *The Feminine Mystique*. Chapters 1-3 (15-79).

Weeks 8-9: Radical Feminism

10/28 – Radical Feminism Part I

Reading:

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. 1898. *Women and Economics*. Sections I-V (1-98).

11/4 – Radical Feminism Part I

Reading:

Firestone, Shulamith. 1970. *The Dialectics of Sex*. Selections. Chapters 1-2 (1-40); Chapters 9-10 (170-202).

Week 10, 11/11: Academic holiday, no class.

Paper #2: Due by 4PM Friday, 11/15

Week 11: Socialist/Working-Class Feminism

11/18 – Socialist/Working-Class Feminism in Comparative Perspective

Readings:

Goldman, Emma. 1911. “Woman Suffrage”.

Found here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2162/2162-h/2162-h.htm#suffrage>

Conger-Kaneko. “Woman's Slavery: Her Road to Freedom.” Begin with “Woman and the Ballot” p. 18-31.

Found here: http://debs.indstate.edu/c7485w6_1911.pdf

Chicago Women's Liberation Union. 1972. *Socialist Feminism: A Strategy for the Women's Movement*.

Found here: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/wlm/socialist/>

Optional: Hartmann, Heidi. 1979. “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union”. *Capital and Class* 3(2): 1-33.

Found here: <http://cnc.sagepub.com/content/3/2/1.full.pdf+html>

Week 12-13: Intersections between Race and Gender

11/25 – Intersectionality Part I

Readings:

Cooper, Anna Julia. 1893. “Women's Cause is One and Universal”.

Found here: <http://www.blackpast.org/?q=1893-anna-julia-cooper-womens-cause-one-and-universal>

Jones, Claudia. 1949. *An End to the Neglect of Problems of the Negro Woman!*

Found here: <http://library.ucf.edu/Systems/DigitalCollections/Item.php?r=DP0000333&page=1>

12/2 – Intersectionality Part 2

Readings:

Beal, Frances M. 1969. “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female”

Found here: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/wlm/blkmanif/#double>

The Combahee River Collective. 1974. “Black Feminist Statement”

Found here: <http://circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html>

La Rue, Linda. 1970. “The Black Movement and Women's Liberation”. *The Black Scholar* 1: 42.

Found here: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/wlm/blkmanif/#the>

Optional: Moraga, Cherrie and Gloria Anzaldua (eds). 2002[1983]. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Berkeley: Third Woman Press.

*Available in the Comparative Ethnic Studies Library.

Week 14: Optional Review and Discussion of Papers

12/9: This will be an optional review session as it is during RRR week. Bring questions you have about any of the readings and/or the paper. You may also bring ideas you have for your paper to discuss with others.

Final Paper Due Wednesday, December 18 by 4PM