**Course Title:** Topics in American History: A Modern History of Women and Work  
**Term/Semester/Year:** Spring/2010  
**Course Catalog Number:** HIST6720  
**Instructor:** Dr. Erica Ryan

### Course Description:
This course provides graduate students with an overview of the field of women and work in modern United States history, with a comparative view of women’s work globally. We will conceive of women and work broadly, examining a range of settings and time periods to trace the ways the implications and meanings of women’s work have changed over time. We will analyze women and work in relation to gender norms, family life, politics, the labor movement, society and culture, and the nation.

### Prerequisites (If any):

### Goals and Objectives:
These texts will offer a diverse range of topics relevant to women and work in the fields of women’s history, gender history, labor history, cultural history and political science. In class discussion and in written work this course will enable students to engage in these fields with some depth, hone their analytic skills, and broaden their grasp of historiography.

### Course Topics:
Readings cover the work of ex-slaves, sexuality and women’s work, the politics of working women’s leisure, the issues surrounding women’s paid employment, labor unions, mother work, domestic work, and the work of the women’s political and personal activism.

### Text:

**Schedule of readings and class sessions:**

**January 28**  
Introducing the course and each other

**February 4**  
Exploring Women and Work  
(*All essays on WebCampus. Choose one of these essays to write your reflection paper on.)

“Gender and the New Women’s History,” p3-23, from *Women’s America*; “The Meaning of Work in Women’s Lives,” p2-19, from *Women Have Always Worked*; “The Pastoralization of Housework,” p138-149, from *Women’s America*

**February 11**
Black Women’s Labor after the End of Slavery

To ‘Joy My Freedom: Southern Black women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War
By Tera Hunter

February 18
Working Girls in the City

Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century New York
By Kathy Peiss

February 25
A Transnational View of Women’s Work in WWI
(*All essays are in Behind the Lines, edited by Margaret and Patrice Higonnet, except for last essay on Webcampus. Choose one of these essays to write your reflection paper on.)


March 4
Radical Labor and the Myth of a Woman

Mother Jones: the Most Dangerous Woman in America
By Elliott Gorn

March 11
Women and Gender in the Great Depression
(*All of these essays are on Webcampus. Choose one of these essays to write your reflection paper on.)


*Book review is due in class today.

March 25
A Transnational View of Women’s Work in World War II
(*All essays are in Behind the Lines. Choose one essay to write your reflection paper on.)

“Redefining Resistance: Women’s Activism in Wartime France,” p141-153; “American
April 1
Mother-Work and Nations
(*All essays in The Politics of Motherhood, edited by Jetter, Orleck, and Taylor. Choose an essay to write your reflection paper on.)


April 8
The Politics of the “Feminine Mystique”

Homeward Bound: American families in the Cold War era
By Elaine Tyler May

April 15
Women and Political Resistance to the State
(*All essays again from The Politics of Motherhood, except for last essay on Webcampus Choose an essay for your reflection paper.)


*Draft of historiographical essay due in class today.

April 22
Global Woman: Women’s Work in Contemporary Times

Selections from Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy by Barbara Ehrenreich, Arlie Russell Hochschild.

April 29
Global Woman: Women’s Work in Contemporary Times continued

More selections from Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy

May 6
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