

Gender, Race, and the Construction of the American West

Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies

Fall 2014

WGS. 640

Mondays, 5:00-8:00

MIT Building 56 Room 154

Karen V. Hansen, Professor

Department of Sociology

Brandeis University

khansen@brandeis.edu

781-736-2651

Lynn Johnson, Professor

Department of History

Boston College

johnsohi@bc.edu

617-552-8453

Lois Rudnick, Professor Emerita

American Studies Program

University of Massachusetts, Boston

lois.rudnick@umb.edu

508-259-6843

Instructor availability: Each of the faculty is reachable by email and by phone. We will make ourselves available to students for the hour before class and by appointment.

Overview

The North American West of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provides a fascinating case study of the shifting meanings of gender, race, citizenship, and power in border societies. As the site of migration, settlement, and displacement, it spawned contests over land, labor disputes, inter-ethnic conflicts and peaceful relations, and many kinds of cultural productions.

This course explores how gender shapes the historical experiences and cultural productions in the North American West during the time it was being explored, settled, and imagined. Challenging the myths of western expansion as an exclusively male endeavor, and the formation of western myth and enterprise as exclusively male domains, the course pays particular attention to the roles of women in promoting, resisting, transforming, and constructing the trans-Mississippi West as reality and imaginary.

The course uses primary sources (diaries, letters, novels, photographs) and secondary source readings to examine gender identity and practice across racial-ethnic groups, geographic region, local economies, and class lines. It does so through the lenses of social and cultural theory, history, sociology, film, literature, craft, and art. The readings consistently prompt questions about the sources of evidence -- whose voice is recorded, whose image is captured, whose art is preserved -- and how the twenty-first century scholar can interpret them. The methodological limitations of certain sources and the

implications of their use will be part and parcel of our quest to understand this multi-faceted history.

Course Requirements

Course requirements include ongoing participation (40%) and a research paper (60%). Participation consists of: attendance, active and thoughtful contributions, and circulation of discussion questions 24 hours in advance of the class (two separate weeks), in collaboration with other presenters. The research paper, expected to be 15 to 20 pages, will be related to the themes of the course, on a topic of the student's choosing. It can be a secondary literature review or an analysis of primary source materials.

Required Readings

- Babb, Sanora, *Whose Names Are Unknown* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2004)
- Bernardin, Susan, Melody Graulich, Lisa MacFarlane, and Nicole Tonkovich, *Trading Gazes: Euro-American Women Photographers and Native North Americans, 1880-1940* (Rutgers University Press, 2003)
- Calof, Rachel, *Rachel Calof's Story: Jewish Homesteader on the Northern Plains* (Indiana University Press, 1995; repr. 1936)
- Cather, Willa, *My Antonia*, ed. Joseph R. Urgo (Broadview Literary Texts, 1918; 2003)
- Gordon, Linda, *Great Orphan Abduction* (Harvard University Press, 1999)
- Hansen, Karen V. *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and the Dispossession of Dakota Indians* (Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Lee, Mary Paik, *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (University of Washington Press, 1990)
- Silko, Leslie. *Ceremony* (Penguin Classics, 2006; repr. 1976) with introduction by Larry McMurtry.

**Articles below designated by an asterisk will be available via the MIT website constructed for the course.

Course Outline

Week 1—September 8: Introduction and Overview of the Course

- *Limerick, Patricia, "Region and Reason," in *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions*, ed. Edward L. Ayers et al. (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 83-104
- *Rich, Adrienne, "Notes toward a Politics of Location," *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985* (W.W. Norton, 1986), pp. 210-231

FILM: "Nobody's Girls: Five Women of the American West" (1995--90 min.)

Week 2—Theoretical Overview: Constructing Gender, Race-Ethnicity and “the West”

- *Anzaldúa, Gloria “La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness,” *Borderlands/La Frontera* (aunt lute books, 1987), pp. 77-91
- *Fur, Gunlog, “Immigrants and Indians,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33:3 (Spring 2014): 55-76
- *Gershon, Ilana and Dhooleka Sarhadi Raj, “Symbolic Capital of Ignorance,” *Social Analysis* 44:2 (November 2000): 3-14
- *Glenn, Evelyn Nakano, “Integrating Race and Gender,” *Unequal Freedom* (Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 6-17
- *Jacobs, Margaret, “Getting Out of a Rut: Decolonizing Western Women’s History,” *Pacific Historical Review* (2010): 585-604
- *Pratt, Mary Louise, “Introduction,” *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Routledge, 1992), pp. 1-11
- *Rudnick, Lois, “Re-naming the Land: Anglo-Expatriate Women in the Southwest,” *The Desert is No Lady: Southwestern Landscapes in Women’s Writing and Art*, eds. Vera Norwood & Janice Monk (University of Arizona Press, 1987), 10-26; 239-44

Week 3—September 22: The Great Plains and the Farm Frontier

Calof, Rachel, *Rachel Calof’s Story*

Hansen, Karen V., *Encounter on the Great Plains*, Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8

Week 4—September 29: The Farm Frontier—Literary Perspectives

Cather, Willa, *My Antonia*

- *Fetterley, Judith and Marjorie Pryse, “Redefinitions,” “Locating Regionalism in American Literary History,” *Writing Out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and American Literary Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 2003), pp. 1-45
- *Roberson, Susan, “Narratives of Relocation and Dislocation: An Introduction,” *Women, America, and Movement* (University of Missouri Press, 1998), pp. 1-16

Week 5—October 6: The Borderlands

Gordon, Linda, *Great Orphan Abduction* (Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 1-208, 246-53, 275-313

- *Jacobs, Margaret, “Breaking and Remaking Families: The Fostering and Adoption of Native American Children in Non-Native Families in the American West, 1880-

1940,” in David Wallace Adams and Crista DeLuzio, eds. *On the Borders of Love and Power: Families and Kinship in the Intercultural American Southwest* (University of California Press, 2012), pp. 19-46

Week 6—October 13 (Columbus Day): NO CLASS

Week 7—October 29: Challenges to Gender and Sexuality

*****Prospectus and Short Bibliography for final paper due**

- *Boag, Peter, “Go West Young Man, Go East Young Woman: Searching for the Trans in Western Gender History,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 36:4 (Winter 2005): 477-498
- *Connell, Raewyn, “Transsexual Women and Feminist Thought: Toward New Understanding and New Politics,” *Signs*, 37:4, Sex: A Thematic Issue (Summer 2012): 857-881
- *Schlatter, Evelyn A., “Drag’s a Life: Women, Gender, and Cross-Dressing in the Nineteenth-Century West,” in *Writing the Range*, ed. Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage (University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), pp. 334-348

FILM: “Battle of Little Joe” (1993--121 minutes) – watch ahead of time.

Week 8—October 27: Immigration, Migration, and Farm Labor on the West Coast

Lee, Mary Paik, *Quiet Odyssey*

- *Chiu, Monica, “Constructing ‘Home’ in Mary Paik Lee’s *Quiet Odyssey*,” in Susan Roberson, ed., *Women, America, and Movement: Narratives of Relocation* (University of Missouri Press, 1998), pp. 121-36

Week 9—November 3: Women, Politics, and the Radical West

- *Lorence, James, “A Chance Meeting and the Birth of an Idea: the Origins of *Salt of the Earth*,” in *The Suppression of ‘Salt of the Earth’: How Hollywood, Big Labor, and Politics Blacklisted a Movie in Cold War America* (University of New Mexico Press, 1999)
- *Baker, Ellen, “The Woman’s Picket,” Chs. 5 and 6, in *On Strike and On Film: Mexican American Families and Blacklisted Filmmakers in Cold War America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

FILM: “Salt of the Earth” (1954--90 minutes)—screen in class.

Week 10—November 10 (Veteran’s Day): Cultural Brokers and Moral Reform

*****First 7-9 pages of final paper due**

- *Cabeza de Baca, Fabiola, *We Fed Them Cactus* (University of New Mexico Press, 1950; 1994), selections
- *Scharff, Virginia, "So Many Miles to a Person: Fabiola Cabeza de Baca Makes New Mexico," *Twenty Thousand Roads: Women, Movement and the West* (University of California Press, 2003), pp. 115-135
- *Spack, Ruth, "Introduction;" "Transforming Women: Zitkala-Sa's *American Indian Stories*," in *America's Second Tongue: American Indian Education and the Ownership of English, 1860-1900* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp. 1-11; 144-170
- *Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonin), *American Indian Stories* (University of Nebraska Press, 1921; 2003), "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," pp. 7-47

Week 11—November 17: Cultural Brokers via the "Empire of the Lens"

Bernandin, Susan, et al., *Trading Gazes*

Week 12—November 24: The Great Depression and World War II

Babb, Sanora, *Whose Names Are Unknown*

- *Johnson, Marilyn, "Boomtowns and the Control of Urban Space" in *The Second Gold Rush* (University of California Press, 1993), 143-150 & 171-181.
- *Lemke-Santangelo, Gretchen. *Abiding Courage: African American Migrant Women and the East Bay Community*, Chs. 3 & 4

FILM: "Wartime Richmond" National Park Service, 2013 (screen in class)

Week 13—December 1: Representations of the West: Writers, Artists & Mythmakers

Silko, Leslie, *Ceremony*

- *Owens, Louis, "The Very Essence of Our Lives: Leslie Silko's Webs of Identity," in *Leslie Marmon Silko's "Ceremony: A Casebook"*, ed. Allan Chavkin (Oxford University Press, 2002)
- *Zamir, Shamoan, "Literature in a 'National Sacrifice Area': Leslie Silko's 'Ceremony,'" in *New Voices in Native American Literature*, ed. Arnold Krupat (Smithsonian, 1993)

Week 14—December 9: Student Presentations on Term Projects & Professor Rudnick's Slide show on O'Keeffe

Student Presentations on Final Papers
Professor Rudnick Lecture & Slide Show on Georgia O'Keeffe's West

FINAL PAPER DUE – December 12