

University of Western Ontario
Department of History
Winter 2013

Women in the Workforce
History 2183B

Instructor: Dr. Jeffery Vacante
Email: jvacant2@uwo.ca
Office hours: Tues. 1:30-3:30pm
in Lawson Hall 2245

Class: Mon. 2:30-4:30pm
in Lawson Hall 2205

This course explores women's experiences with paid and unpaid labour during the modern era. It will explore the manner in which the value of women's work in the home was transformed with the development of wage labour as well as the institutional and structural impediments that women have faced as they sought entry into the paid labour force. Women who sought entry into the paid workforce encountered considerable resistance both from employers, who often paid them less than men, and from male co-workers, who felt threatened by the prospect of working alongside women. The state, too, worked to preserve the workplace as a masculine space both by promoting moral regulations that upheld the idea that women were destined for motherhood and by proposing social welfare policies that served to reinforce notions like the breadwinner's wage, which was designed to reduce a family's dependence on women's paid labour outside the home.

While it has been said that capitalism can only succeed if men are released from their domestic duties so that they can go off to work, this has usually applied to the managerial classes. The emergence of the industrial workplace, in fact, along with the rise of consumer capitalism, created the need for a larger, less skilled, and less-well-paid labour force, which led to a growing reliance on female labour. The middle-class desire to promote the ideal of female domesticity to the working classes thus clashed with the demands of a market economy increasingly organized around mass production. Moreover, many women fought for the right to enter the paid workforce as part of a larger struggle for equality and full citizenship. And yet, the very workplace that they were fighting to join was said to be exploitative and dehumanizing for men. As we consider these tensions, it is important to keep in mind that the vast majority of women worked out of economic necessity rather than out of choice or as part of a larger struggle for equality.

The lectures will proceed under the assumption that women's experiences in the workplace reflect changing economic, social, and political circumstances. And so, by the end of the twentieth century, there was what could be termed legal equality in the workplace, but there remained considerable structural impediments to women's full participation in the workplace, as well as only limited state efforts to accommodate mothers who work outside the home. It must also be acknowledged that for all the advances women have made in the paid workforce they also must confront the persistent view that women's primary duty remains in the home as mother.

By the end of the course, then, students will have explored the manner in which women's work functions within the context of a capitalist economy, considered how the meaning of work has evolved, and become more familiar with some of the major historiographical debates about women, capitalism, and labour. In the process students will acquire a greater historical consciousness that will permit them to more fully understand the reasons for women's continued marginalization in today's workforce. And by reading the books and articles assigned in the course students will also improve the analytical skills that are expected of historians at this level and become more engaged with the debates about women and work today.

Readings:

Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work*
Christine Stansell, *City of Women*
Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother*
Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring*
Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*

These books, which are available at the university bookstore and on reserve at the Weldon library, will be supplemented by other readings to be made available on the course website.

Evaluation: Because of the small size of the class we are presented with the opportunity to discuss in some depth the issues arising in the course. In each class, I will introduce the readings and the major themes of the week, and provide the context and background necessary to fully come to terms with the readings. These lectures could stand alone as formally defined parts of each class to be followed by an equally formal period of discussion. Or these lectures might be more informal and more integrated into the discussion of the material whereby students would feel free to punctuate the lecture with questions or thoughts. One approach may work best with one topic but less well for another one, and so every week may provide us with the opportunity to approach the issues differently. Whatever approach we do adopt for the classes, the main purpose of the lectures and of the discussions is to encourage students to come to terms fully with the issues being raised in the readings and to develop a much richer understanding of women's work. Effective **participation** is achieved when a student demonstrates a full understanding of the week's readings, is willing to engage critically with these readings, and can effectively situate a particular text within its historiographical or thematic contexts. True participation occurs when a student can move beyond merely summarizing an argument to critically engage with a particular text. An effective participant is also someone who is capable of listening while others talk and of considering as well as respecting the views of other members of the class.

Students will write a **midterm exam** on **February 11** as well as a **final exam** during the exam period in April.

Midterm Exam	40%
Participation	20%
Final Exam	40%

Lecture Schedule:

Jan. 7: Introduction

Jan. 14: Pre-Industrial Work

• Joan Scott and Louise Tilly, "The Family Economy in Pre-Industrial England and France," in *Women, Work, and Family* (New York 1978): 10-60.

Jan. 21: The Early Industrial Home

• Boydston, *Home and Work*

Jan. 28: The Early Industrial City

• Stansell, *City of Women*, 1-168.

Feb. 4: The Morality of Women's Work
• Stansell, *City of Women*, 169-224.

Feb. 11: Midterm Exam

Reading Week: Feb. 18-22

Feb. 25: Modern Housework
• Cowan, *More Work for Mother*

Mar. 4: Postwar Feminism I
• Coontz, *A Strange Stirring*

March 11: Postwar Feminism II

Mar. 18: De-Industrialization
• Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York 1991), ix-xxiii, 229-56, 363-99.

Mar. 25: The Service Economy
• Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*

Apr. 1: "Choice Feminism"
• Lisa Belkin, "The Opt-Out Revolution," *New York Times Magazine* (Oct. 26, 2003).
• Linda Hirshman, "Homeward Bound," *American Prospect* (Dec. 2005), 20-26.
• Anne-Marie Slaughter, "Why Women Still Can't Have it All," *The Atlantic* (Jul./Aug. 2012), 85-102.

Apr. 8: Conclusion

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for more information on these resources and on mental health.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

PLAGIARISM

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. Please go to <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf> to download the necessary form. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation is warranted. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once a decision has been made about accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for term tests, assignments, and exams.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or rdashfo@uwo.ca