

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **Making Waves: Women's Activism in the Atlantic World**

Course Number and Section

HISTORY

2813F 550

Instructor Name(s): Nina Reid-Maroney

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

The historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's well-known observation that "well-behaved women seldom make history" provides a thematic starting point for our course about women who wanted to change the world. The course seeks to examine human aspirations for social and political reform through the lens of women's experience.

Beginning with the intellectual origins of feminism in the Enlightenment and concluding with the "third wave" of the modern women's movement, the course material explores women's activism, both on their own behalf, and in movements for temperance, abolition, labour, peace, and civil rights. The course is organized chronologically, but we will be focused on specific examples of women's activism, rather than on a survey of women's history. The examples we discuss in class will mainly concern North America, placed in the wider context of the Atlantic world. They will help us to explore themes of the course. Is women's activism always feminist activism? How does the definition of feminism change over time? Does it make sense to use the metaphor of first and second waves of women's movements, and if so, what shapes a third wave? How do class, race, and identity intersect with assumptions about gender, women, and the public sphere? How does our understanding of contemporary women's movements change when informed by history?

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

Recognize and define major themes in the history of women's movements, from the late 18th century through the 20th

Find and analyze primary sources, including rare books in Western's ARCC;

Recognize the sources and interpretive frameworks that have shaped the way in which women's history is written, and the way in which it has also been forgotten.

Consider the contemporary relevance of engaging with the history of women's activism.

Understand the links between women's activism and print culture.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Dawn Durante, comp., Women’s Activist Organizing in US History
Cost: \$39.80

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Participation	weekly	20
2. Book History Primary Source exercise	October 1 (class time)	10
3.Research check-in	October 29 (in class)	10
4. Chatham field trip or Letterpress exercise, and reflection	November 19 (in class)	10
5. Research paper	December 3	20
Final Exam	Final exam	30

Wednesday, August 5, 2026

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For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.