

# Women of Color in United States History I

## WGSS 16A

Fall 2025 Sections 01, **80** In Person 3 Unit(s) 08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025 Modified 08/19/2025

### Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Susana L. Gallardo
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Office Hours:	Mon 1 – 3 pm
Class Days/Time:	SECTION 1 (16A.1) MW 9 - 10:15 am
Classroom:	DMH 357

### Course Information

This course examines the history of women of color in the United States from the pre-colonial period until 1865. By centering women of color and incorporating issues of sexuality and gender, this course offers a more inclusive and complicated perspective on the conventional narrative of U.S. history.

Students consider the intersections of race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality in shaping women's experiences, as well as the tensions between gender expectations, gender performances, and gender identities. We will consider women's efforts to expand their access to equal rights, full citizenship status, and bodily autonomy, whether through public activism or private acts of agency.

This course is the FIRST of a two-semester sequence that meets the General Education requirements for both Area D Social Science and American Institutions US123.

*Note: to satisfy American Institutions (US 123), both 16A and 16B must be completed.*

## Course Description and Requisites

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Course examines the history of women of color in the United States from the pre-colonial period until 1865. Centering women of color and incorporating issues of sexuality and gender, course offers a more inclusive and complicated perspective on the conventional narrative of U.S. history.

*Satisfies GE Area: 4. Social and Behavioral Sciences (Formerly Area D).*

**Grading:** Letter Graded

**Note(s):** Must complete entire sequence (WGSS 16A and WGSS 16B) to satisfy American Institutions (US123).

## \* Classroom Protocols

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Please read this syllabus carefully! This is our contract for the semester and it contains all the information you need to be successful in this class. I will do everything I can to support your learning, so please please keep in touch with me. If you are having problems keeping it together, let me know early so we can strategize together how you can make the best use of your time and get you through the semester.

- **LATE WORK** - All assigned work is due at the time indicated on Canvas. **LATE work will be documented on Canvas and downgraded 10% the first day it is late, and 5% every day thereafter.** I would rather you do the work late than not do it all, so I will almost always accept late work for partial credit. If you have some sort of unavoidable conflict, come see me *before* the deadline. *I do not accept any late work after Dec 1.*
- **Office/Drop-in hours** – I will always be available for drop-in hours at my office on Wednesdays 12-2 pm. You do not need to make an appointment to come by to chat or ask a question or just check in. You can also just call me during office hours by phone (408.840.3087) or find me on Canvas chat. Seeing your professor during office hours is an excellent habit to establish – you can ask a question, clarify your understanding of lecture material, we can just chat about how you are doing in class, or you can ask about my daughter
- **Grade checks** – If you require a midterm grade check of any kind (athletic, EOP, fraternity/sorority, etc., personal), please contact me *at least a week before* your deadline, and I will either email you the form or send it to the appropriate party.
- **Pronoun Use:** How we refer to each other is a basic sign of respect, both names and pronouns. Students in this class will be referred to by the name and pronoun they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. Please advise me as soon as possible if your name and pronoun differ from my course list (mysjsu) so that I and the class may address you properly.

## Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](#) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

## Plagiarism & AI

From my perspective, there is nothing worse you can do in this class than plagiarism. Plagiarism is the academic dishonesty of presenting someone else's work as your own, and it will not be tolerated. For better or worse, do your own work. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. If you are unclear about this, please see the library Plagiarism tutorial linked in our top Canvas module.

You *may* use artificial intelligence (AI) programs, e.g., ChatGPT, to help generate ideas and brainstorm. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material. However, you should note that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. Know that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

And finally, this is an introductory course required for the WGSS major and/or minor. Our **WGSS Program Learning Outcomes** state that upon graduation, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies students will be able to:

1. Identify and analyze the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, class, and nation social and institutional contexts.
2. Identify and describe major theories and political movements central to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, placing contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and embodied contexts.
3. Describe the global span of feminist movements and the connection among gender and sexual minorities around the world.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking and research skills through written, oral and creative means.

*The WGSS Minor requires only 15 units and is a terrific critical-thinking complement to majors in Science, Business, or Engineering. Ask me about it! 😊*

# Program Information

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Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

**Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

**Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

**Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website \(https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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### Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences

*The CSU requires students to complete General Education courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences in at least two different disciplines. Students may meet this requirement by either 1) taking two lower-division Area 4 courses in different disciplines, or 2) taking two lower-division Area 4 courses in the same discipline and an UD Area 4 upper-division GE course in a different discipline.*

### GE Area 4 Learning Outcomes

This course is the FIRST of a two-semester sequence that meets the General Education requirements for both Area D Social Science and American Institutions US123.

*Note: to satisfy American Institutions (US 123), both 16A and 16B must be completed.*

GE Area Learning Outcomes	Assessed with
<p>Area D</p> <p>1. demonstrate understanding of the ways in which social institutions, culture, and environment shape and are shaped by the behavior of individuals, both past and present;</p>	Quiz #1
<p>2. compare and contrast the dynamics of two or more social groups or social systems in a variety of historical and/or cultural contexts</p>	Quiz #2
<p>3. place contemporary social developments in cultural, environmental, geographical, and/or historical contexts; and</p>	Quiz #3
<p>4. draw on social/behavioral science information from various perspectives to formulate applications appropriate to historical and/or contemporary social issues.</p>	Final Exam takehome essay question

# US1. American Institutions - U.S. History

As students explore the historical development of the United States, they should be able to **evaluate and synthesize different positions**, support analysis with relevant evidence, and create evidence-based interpretations of:

- major subtopics in United States history, such as Native Americans and their interactions with the U.S. government; slavery and its legacies; the foundational ideals of the American Republic; colonization and territorial expansion; economic development; political reform and reaction; immigration to the United States and the experiences of immigrants; foreign relations; wars and conflicts; movements including religious, labor, civil rights, feminist, and environmental.
- multiple perspectives related to, for example, diverse cultures, communities, and environments; age, gender, and sexuality; the history and experience of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; the experiences of people with disabilities; and patterns of race and class relations.

1619 Padlet timeline assignment (see below)

And/or Final Exam takehome essay

**US2. American Institutions - U.S. Constitution and California Government**

As students explore the meaning and content of the democratic process as it has evolved in the United States, at a minimum they should be able to evaluate:

- the foundations of the political system, including the evolution of the U.S. Constitution, political culture, separation of powers, federalism, and relations among various levels of government. Students will also analyze the evolving institutions of government, including a study of the powers of the President, Congress, and the Judiciary as well as the bureaucracy;
- the links between the people and the political system of the United States, including voting and other forms of participation, as well as other content areas such as tribal governments, political parties, interest/lobbying groups, and public opinion and socialization. Students should also analyze the rights and obligations of citizens, which may include the tension between various freedoms of expression, including issues related to censorship and freedom of speech, due process, and the maintenance of order; and
- connections to issues of justice/injustice, including the efforts to end racial, gender, and other forms of discriminatory practices in both the public and private sectors.

Quiz 2

Final Exam essay question – Cherokee women

## US3. American Institutions - California Government

As students explore the operations of government at the state level, they should be able to evaluate:

- the **foundations of the California political system**, the similarities and differences between the California and U.S. Constitutions, and the relationship between state and local government in California; and
- the evolving relationships of state and local government with the federal government, such as the relationship with tribal governments; the generation and resolution of conflicts; the establishment of cooperative processes under the constitutions of both the state and nation; and the political processes involved.

Quiz 3 essay question

For the purposes of assessment, anonymized student work may be used in a regular cycle of General Education Program assessment. If you would prefer to EXCLUDE your work from this process, please sign in at [this document](#).

## Writing Requirement

The minimum writing requirement is 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

## Course Materials

**Required Textbook:** Various print/digital versions for sale/rent in Spartan Bookstore and online. *This is the only textbook for 16A and it will also be used if you continue with 16B next semester.* Two hardcopies of the textbook are on 2-hr reserve at the library.

Melissa E Blair, Vanessa M. Holden, Maeve Kane, *American Women's History: A New Narrative History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2023) 978-1-119-68382-7

All other readings will be provided on Canvas

## Course Requirements and Assignments

### Assignments and Grading Policy

20% Seven weekly reading notes (of 8), 10 points each	Grades are assigned on the following scale			
30% Three quizzes (on reading, films & lectures)	A-	98-100 A+	93-97 A	90-92
30% Participation assignments – study guides, freewrites, discussion posts	B-	88-89 B+	83-87 B	80-82
20% Takehome Essay & Final Exam	C-	78-79 C+	73-77 C	70-72
	D-	68-69 D+	63-67 D	60-62
				59- F



We design SJSU classes with the expectation that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

In this class, that means...

- **Reading Notes** are one typed or handprinted page of notes on the week's reading. This is an easy 10 points that will help you process the reading and have handy notes for class discussion and quizzes. You should complete reading notes for EIGHT weeks total.
- **Quizzes** are in-class quizzes of multiple-choice questions and one short essay question. The quizzes are intended to help you keep up with your reading, and to demonstrate your understanding of the subject matter in cultural, social and/or historical context by drawing on information from various perspectives. *You may bring your reading notes to the quiz!*
- **Participation Activities** are various assignments meant to more deeply engage you with the module reading and content. These activities include creative assignments, study guides, a timeline exercise, freewrites and other in-class activities that allow you to expand and/or demonstrate your learning.
- **The Final Exam** is a two-part comprehensive exam given at the time scheduled by the registrar. A week before the exam, you will be given a takehome essay assignment that is due the day of the exam. On exam day, the exam is fifty multiple-choice and short answer questions as well as the takehome essay.

## University Policies

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Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

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WGSS 16A Course Schedule -- *Tentative - to be finalized 8/25...*

*Subject to change at instructor's discretion or in event of another pandemic, earthquake, flood or apocalypse. Please see Canvas for complete course schedule.*

Wk	Reading	Assignments
Module 1. Introductions		
1	Intro	

2	Why Women of Color? Defining Terms	Intro disc post
3	Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, <i>Indigenous Peoples History of U.S.</i> , Introduction (1-14)	Reading Notes #1
<b>Module 2. Creation Stories: Contact, Colonialism, Race &amp; Gender</b>		
4	<i>AWH</i> Ch.1, "Sky Woman, Dawnland, Turtle Island" (1-17)	Reading Notes due
5	<i>AWH</i> Ch.2, "Settling and Unsettling, 1492-1600" (18-29)	Reading Notes due
6	<i>AWH</i> Ch.3, "Growth and Disruption 1600-1690" (32-45)  Hannah-Jones, <i>1619 Project</i> , Introduction	<b>QUIZ #1</b>
<b>Module 3. The Slave Codes. Women, War, and Revolution</b>		
7	<i>AWH</i> Ch.4, "Atlantic Connections" (47-56)  The Virginia Slave Codes, 1639-1705 (Canvas)	Reading Notes due
8	<i>AWH</i> Ch.5, "Rebellion & Revolution, 1750-1800" (58-72)  How the Iroquois shaped democracy (Canvas)	Reading Notes due
9	<i>AWH</i> Ch.6, "Expansion & Division: Women's Markets 1800-1820s" (75-85)  Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Woman</i> (excerpts)	<b>QUIZ #2</b>  1619 Padlet timeline exercise
10	Midterm Check-In and Evaluation  Film: TBA	Midterm Evaluation
<b>Module 4. Dislocation, Rape, and Trauma</b>		

11	<p>Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, "Orientalism Before Asian America" (ch.1 NHAA), 5-26.</p> <p>Theda Perdue, "Cherokee Women and the Trail of Tears" (<i>JWH</i> 1989)</p>	Reading Notes due
12	<p>Deborah A. Miranda, "The End of the World: Missionization 1770-1836" in <i>Bad Indians</i></p> <p>Sarah Deer, "Tribal Rape Law and Indigenous Feminisms" (<i>BER</i> 2015)</p> <p>In class video: Risling Baldy, "History of California Indians"</p>	<p>Reading Notes due</p> <p><i>Bad Indians</i> Study Guide</p>
13	<p>Castaneda, "Sexual Violence in the Politics &amp; Policies of Conquest...Alta California" (<i>SVCZ</i>, 2011)</p> <p>Linda Gordon, <i>Great Arizona Orphan Abduction</i>, intro</p> <p><i>AWH</i> ch. 7 Reform, Revolt &amp; Women's Rights (87-102)</p>	Quiz #3
<b>Module 5. Dred Scott</b>		
14	<p><i>AWH</i> ch. 8 Disunion (1850-1860)</p> <p>Heidenreich, "Raced Bodies in White Spaces" (ch.6 <i>TLWM</i>, 142-166)</p>	Reading Notes due
15	<p><i>AWH</i> ch. 9 the Civil War</p> <p>Harriet Tubman article</p>	
16	Review for final	

Final Exam: Venue and Time

One essay question assigned a week before

50 MC questions/short answer