

HI2C9-15 War, Sex & Gender in the United States: from Civil War to WWII

20/21

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Susan Carruthers

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

War has played a central role in shaping politics, society, and culture in the United States since its inception. This module explores the multiple ways in which wartime mobilisation has both drawn on and reconfigured American gender constructs in consequential ways, some more durable than others. Organized around three thematic blocs, the module will examine martial processes that sought to remodel over the decades from the Civil War to the end of World War II.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The structure of the module will encourage students to interrogate how gender norms have been manipulated to build support for conflict and to sustain morale; how women have been recruited to perform various forms of gendered war work; and, finally, how processes of postwar reconstruction-- demobilisation, mourning, and healing-- have often sought to rehabilitate traditional gender identities. Over the course of the module, students will be exposed to the ways in which war generates not only pressures for conformity but also resistance, analysing how ethnicity, class, sexuality, and race have complicated the wartime expectations and experiences of

many non-elite Americans.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Part I: Mobilisation

1. Gender crises as a cause of war?
2. Pacifism, feminism and anti-war resistance
3. Forging martial masculinity

Part II: Gendered War Work

- 4) Nursing and the “feminine” duty of care
- 5) Women auxiliaries in the US military in World War I and II
- 6) Reading Week
- 7) Entertainment and morale in the “Good War” Film Screening: *The Best Years of our Lives* (1946)

Part III: Aftermaths

- 8) Mourning: Grieving widows and mothers
- 9) Wounded bodies and the gendered work of rehabilitation

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the multiple ways in which gender is imbricated with war mobilisation, combat motivation, and postwar reconstruction.
- Communicate ideas and findings, adapting to a range of situations, audiences and degrees of complexity.
- Generate ideas through the analysis of a broad range of primary source material.
- Analyse and evaluate the contributions made by existing scholarship.
- Act with limited supervision and direction within defined guidelines, accepting responsibility for achieving deadlines.

Indicative reading list

- Beth L. Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992)
- Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1990) [e-book]
- Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: NYU Press, 1997)
- D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984)
- Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century*

America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009)

- Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (eds), *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)
- Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (eds), *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) [e-book]
- Caroline Cox, "Invisible Wounds: The American Legion, Shell Shocked Veterans, and Mental Illness, 1919-1924" in *Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870-1930*, ed. Mark S. Micale and Paul Lerner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- Lynn Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017)
- Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Random House, 2009)
- Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Violence, Honor and Manhood in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) [e-book]
- Susan Grayzel, "Women and Men," in John Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I* (WileyBlackwell, 2010) [e-book]
- Edward A. Gutiérrez, *Doughboys on the Great War: How American Soldiers Viewed Their Military Experience* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014)
- Michaela Hampf, *Release a Man for Combat: The Women's Army Corps During World War II* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2010)
- Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1982)
- Marilyn E. Hegarty, *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality During World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2008)
- Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000)
- Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984)
- Pearl James (ed.), *Picture This: World War I Posters and Visual Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009)
- Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010)
- Kimberley Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008)
- Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001)
- Jennifer D. Keene, "Protest and Disability: A New Look at African American Soldiers During the First World War," in Pierre Purseigle (ed), *Warfare and Belligerence: Perspectives in First World War Studies* (Brill, 2005) [e-book]
- Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998)
- Adrian Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009)
- Melissa McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front, 1941-1945* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010) [e-book]

- Leisa D. Meyer, *Creating GI Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's Army Corps During World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996)
- Robert Nye, "Western Masculinities in War and Peace," *American Historical Review* 111, 2 (2007): 417-38
- Ann Pfau, *Miss Yourlovin: GIs, Gender, and Domesticity during World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) [e-book]
- Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of US Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) [e-book]
- Gerald E. Shenk, *Work or Fight! Race, Gender and the Draft in World War One* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) [e-book]
- Laura Sjoberg, *Gender, War, and Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014)
- Charissa Threat, *Nursing Civil Rights: Gender and Race in the Army Nurse Corps* (Champaign: University Press, 2015) [e-book]

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Tutorials	1 session of 1 hour (1%)
Private study	131 hours (87%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time
Essay	50%	
Source Review	40%	
Oral Participation	10%	

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback provided via Tabula; optional oral feedback in office hours.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy

This module is Option list B for:

- UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
 - Year 2 of V100 History
 - Year 2 of V100 History
- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics
 - Year 2 of VM11 History and Politics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology