**History of Female Activists**

Course Information

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This course is open to all classes, but mainly offered to freshman. This is a basic level course which is offered to students as an honors credit. This course does not reflect any major in particular but is recommended to someone who is pursuing their education in female history studies. This is just a good ground level course which will prepare students for future honors courses.

Course Description

History of Female Activists: This course will provide the student with a better understanding of female activism dating from the early 1800’s to today. This course is divided into seven sections of the varying important female activists from these time periods.

Course Schedule

**Unit 1: Sojourner Truth (1797-1883)**

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| **BIG Question:** *What was Sojourner Truth’s influence in women’s rights activism?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Sojourner Truth was known as an escaped slave that fought for the rights of slaves and pushed for freedom. She also worked to get equal rights for females in situations where they were looked at as half of a human. |
| **Key Words:** *“Ain’t I A Woman?”.* |
| **Link to Reading:** [*Sojourner Truth: Ain't I A Woman?*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VPOyYxhPthaOYcfpmf-MhazubkxliPNc/view?usp=sharing) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** Sojourner Truth was majority seen as a human rights activist, but she was also very well known for her women’s rights activism speech. Her speech was regarding the rights of both African Americans and all women during and after the civil war. Her speech referenced the unfairness in the way women are spoken about compared to the way they are treated. One part of the speech, she comments about how women are supposed to be “helped into carriages,” but she never is. Hence the meaning of “Ain’t I A Woman?” Farther throughout, she explains how men also openly mention that “women can’t have as much rights as men, because Christ wasn’t a woman.” She then follows this statement up with an explanation of how all men have to come from a strong powerful woman to birth them. All of this information Truth provides is a great example of the first steps women made toward a lifelong battle with women’s activism. |

**Unit 2: Elizabeth Cady-Stanton (1815-1912)**

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| **BIG Question:** *What was Elizabeth Cady- Stanton’s influence in women’s rights activism?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Elizabeth Cady-Stanton was a very popular women’s rights activist around the 1840’s. She, like Sojourner Truth, also worked to abolish slavery during the civil war. She later went on, working with Susan B Anthony, to promote women’s rights acivism. |
| **Key Words:** *Seneca Falls Convention, Declaration of Sentiments, NWSA* |
| **Link to Reading:**[*Elizabeth Cady-Stanton Biography*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TQGmxX8vKnCVrqLwmGUjUVOhLGL-aDES/view?usp=sharing.) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** Elizabeth Cady-Stanton was born into a household that thought boys were superior to girls. She began her activism after graduating in 1832 and going on to the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Here, she joined other women to protest their exclusion from the assembly. After this event, Stanton, along with several other women, held the Seneca Falls Convention in July 1848. This is where they drew up the “Declaration of Sentiments” which called for equal treatment for men and women. Along with this, she also protested for women to have the right to vote along with other women’s rights and reforms. After taking a break to fight to abolish slavery during the civil war, in 1869, Stanton (along with Susan B Anthony) came back to women’s suffrage and founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). Stanton served as the president of this organization for several years. |

**Unit 3: Margaret Sanger (1879-1966)**

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| **BIG Question:** *What was Margaret Sanger’s influence in women’s rights activism?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Margaret Sanger played a very important role in the history of reproductive control. She made it her lifelong goal to educate women on how to properly use contraceptives. She also fought to overthrow the Comstock Law. |
| **Key Words:** Comstock Law, contraceptives |
| **Link to Reading:** [*Women as Political Bodies in the International Speeches of Margaret Sanger*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mSXSi9LkG5QVEh2WXsNRRlgqQiaFyn50/view?usp=sharing) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** Margaret Sanger is probably one of the first women to challenge women’s reproductive control. Her activism for birth control sprouted from her early life experiences, mainly from her mother, as well as her nursing practice. Her mother underwent eighteen pregnancies, with only eleven being live births. She also saw a lot of women come in to be treated for self-induced abortions which led to serious side effects. In order to overturn this Comstock Law that was in place making contraceptives illegal, Sanger decided to just break the law. Sanger made it a point to share her knowledge of safe contraceptives to as many women as possible, especially poor and uneducated women. Along with her activism came much hate regarding her attempts to create a “perfect race” much like Hitler. Therefore, Sanger made it clear that she did not strictly work with Eugenics and she only wanted to make conditions safer for women trying to prevent pregnancy. |

**Unit 4: Lucy Burns (1879-1966)**

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| **BIG Question:** *What was Lucy Burns’ influence in women’s rights activism?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Lucy Burns was known for her women’s voting right activism. She worked with Alice Paul to try to overturn women’s rights to vote. She succeeded in 190 when the 19th amendment was created to guarantee all women the equal right to voting. |
| **Key Words:** *19th amendment, National American Woman Suffrage Association, National Woman’s Party* |
| **Link to Reading:** [*Lucy Burns Biography*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1N_aFmLzOgWz7MskPe96tHmJB4Z7nad4L/view?usp=sharing) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** Lucy Burns became involved in politics in England not long after the graduated from Oxford. She met fellow American suffragist, Alice Paul, while she was serving with the Women’s Suffrage Political Union. The two women decided to return to the United States in order to work to secure women’s rights to vote. The two women led their first march, with the help of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The women along with NAWSA was shot down many times, which caused them to create a new group called the National Woman’s Party in 1916. While NAWSA worked to secure women’s rights to vote in each state, NWP worked to create an amendment granting women’s suffrage. The women went to great extremes, such as starving themselves in front of the White House and putting up banners in the nation’s capital. Finally, the government listened and ratified the 19th Amendment giving all women the right to vote. |

**Unit 5: Lee Minto (1927-)**

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| **BIG Question:** *What was Lee Minto’s influence in women’s rights activism?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Lee Minto was the executive director of Planned Parenthood in Settle for nearly two centuries. She was also an avid activist for legalizing abortion in the state of Washington. |
| **Key Words:** abortion, Washington Citizens for Abortion Reform |
| **Link to Reading:** [*Lee Minto, Director of Planned Parenthood from 1967 to 1993, recalls the history of abortion reform*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/10Or6g2g94XdiypcsukGlitvKlqjDi1Lk/view?usp=sharing) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** Lee Minto wanted to create a safer and legal way to provide women with abortions. Her and a group of women came together in Seattle to think of the best way to change the law in Washington state. The women made every attempt possible to get in contact with the law makers in the state to try to overturn the laws. In 1967, the ball was rolling and they were making steps towards changing the law. In 1970, they were still fighting, but now under the group name of the Washington Citizens for Abortion Reform. This referendum was in the air for a while, and “was probably the most thoroughly discussed bill that Washington voters had ever had a chance to vote on.” Finally, with a 56.5 percent vote for approval, the law was passed which made abortion a decision that could be made between a doctor and a woman. Shortly after, in 1973, Roe V. Wade was passed for all states. |

**Unit 6: Gloria Steinem (1933-)**

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| **BIG Question:** *What was Gloria Steinem’s influence in women’s rights activism?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Gloria Steinem was known for involvement in the women’s liberation movement. She began her studies overseas but soon ventured back to the United States in search of a journalist job. Although, she was unable to find a job because many business owners turned her down since she wasn’t a man. After years of searching, she was finally recruited to do a big article referring to women’s rights activism. |
| **Key Words:** gender equality, women’s liberation, feminist |
| **Link to Reading:** [*Gloria Steinem*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nFju6fPC_RFqwOJh8-P62MinqY1MBrjB/view?usp=sharing) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** Gloria Steinem was brought up without a father, thus caused her to be interested in bettering the rights of women. She spent most of her childhood caring for her ill mother, until she finally was able to move out and go to college. In college, she studied government and soon after pursued her interest in women’s liberation in India for two years. She started her career in journalism in New York. She wrote small pieces but couldn’t move up in the ranks to find the job she really wanted. Thus, formed the fire and gave her more reason to push for women’s liberation. She finally gained national attention when *Show* magazine requested she do a piece on the working conditions for the women at Hugh Hefner’s Playboy Club. However, it still took some time for Steinem to land the roll as a journalist for the New York Magazine. After securing a job, Gloria Steinem continued to give speeches and lead marches with other feminist to support gender equality. |

**Unit 7: Janet Mock (1983-)**

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| **BIG Question:** *What was Janet Mocks’ influence in women’s rights activism?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Janet Mock is known as one of the most popular trans activists. She was brought up in a place where being unisex was acceptable, but when she came to the United States her fight for trans rights began. |
| **Key Words:** trans people liberation |
| **Link to Reading*:***[*Janet Mock: ‘I’d never seen a young trans woman who was thriving in the world – I was looking for that’*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/14QCcOoadJSYFLiRj3ugcRV27B9QcGKoG/view?usp=sharing) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** Janet Mock not only decided to transition to a woman, but she also decided she wanted to fight for trans people’s liberation. She spoke on the topic of how she was forced to undergo inappropriate sex acts in order to pay for her surgery; now she speaks out about her hardships of transitioning. She speaks on the behalf of safety in the streets for trans people as well. Jane Mock has given many speeches regarding all forms of women’s activism and how it has changed throughout the years. Mock says she kept the fact that she was trans to herself for a long time just because she was scared of the judgement that would come with disclosing her secret. However, even with her hardships she was able to secure a job at People magazine as an editor and writer. She is now an avid activist for equal rights for trans people in the work place and just in life in general. |