POL 286/ WGS377

AMERICA'S FIRST LADIES

SPRING 2023

Professor Melissa Harris-Perry
Maya Angelou Presidential Chair
Department of Politics and International Affairs
Department of Women and Gender Studies
WEDNESDAYS 3:30-6:00 PM



This seminar explores American First Ladies as political and social actors. Our primary question is, what does American history and politics look like when told through the stories of women with great access to power but with little formal power of their own? We will trace the evolution of the role of First Lady and explore how individual women who have played this role have understood it and adapted it. Students are expected to read assigned materials thoroughly and be prepared for extensive, detailed conversation about key themes and ideas. This course has a substantial writing component.

*Created by Melissa Harris-Perry January 2023

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Students will critically engage a wide range of scholarly and literary texts addressing the lives of America's First Ladies. These are texts both written about and written by these women. Students will develop skills of critical assessment of primary and secondary historical documents as a window to understanding American politics.

Students will become familiar with broad themes and approaches to social scientific, historical, literary, and pedagogical study of America's First Ladies.

Students will be introduced to multiple contested ideas for understanding the connections between personal identities and the political world.

Students will develop familiarity with history and scholarship on American First Ladies.

Students will develop skills of critical analysis and scholarly reflection.

Students will gain competency with college level analysis, speaking, and writing.

Students may find it easier to follow the course plan through the course Canvas Site. This version of our syllabus contains the same information. To assist with organization and legibility, it is organized in "modules." This is a lot of information! Students do not need to memorize all of this. Students will receive reminders, nudges, and explanations and have many opportunities to ask questions.

COURSE OUTLINE/ MODULES

MODULE 1 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Jan 11 Introduction

MODULE 2 **FOUNDING FIRST LADIES**

2.1 Jan 18 Abigail Adams

2.2 Jan 25 Dolley Madison

MODULE 3 **FIRST LADIES DURING PARTISAN CHANGE**

3.1 Feb 1 Jacqueline Kennedy/ Lady Bird Johnson

3.2 Feb 8 Nancy Reagan

MODULE 4 **INDEPENDENT FIRST LADIES**

4.1 Feb 15 Eleanor Roosevelt

4.2 Feb 22 Betty Ford

MODULE 5 **REVIEW**

5.1 MAR 1 Asynchronous Review

MODULE 6 **AFRICAN AMERICAN FIRST LADIES**

6.1 MAR 15 Sally Hemings

6.2 MAR 22 Michelle Obama

MODULE 7 **PRESIDENTIAL FIRST LADIES**

7.1 MAR 29 Edith Wilson

7.2 APR 5 Hillary Clinton

MODULE 8 **REVILED FIRST LADIES**

8.1 APR 12 Mary Todd Lincoln / Melania Trump

MODULE 9 **REVIEW**

9.1 APR 19 Asynchronous Review

MODULE 10 **EDUCATOR FIRST LADIES**

10.1 APR 26 Laura Bush/ Jill Biden

MODULE 11 **EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES**

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR

MELISSA HARRIS-PERRY
Maya Angelou Presidential Chair
Department of Politics and International Affairs
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Founder and President, Anna Julia Cooper Center
Host and Managing Editor, The Takeaway
She, Her, Hers



VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS
Weekly: **Tuesdays 3:00 PM -5:00 PM ET or by Appointment**
Students **must make an appointment** for a meeting, whether during office hours or at another time.

EMAIL POLICY
Professor Harris-Perry typically responds to all necessary and appropriate emails directly related to course matters within three business days. Professor Harris-Perry does not respond to unsolicited student emails from Friday at 3:00 PM until Monday at 12:00 PM unless specifically designated. Please be aware that Professor Harris-Perry will provide regular updates to the syllabus and various course materials on CANVAS.

PRO TIPS ABOUT PROF MHP

- How to address me: Professor Harris-Perry, Professor MHP, Prof MHP, Prof are all acceptable. "Melissa" is not.
- I get a lot of email... If you don't get an immediate response, do not take it personally. I will respond as soon as I can.
- If you get stuck about small or big issues, please ask for help!

I love/adore/write about Beyonce. Feel free to illustrate any communications with appropriate Beyonce GIFS.

CLASS MEETINGS

- As of January 2023 this class is scheduled to meet in-person, face-to-face format.
- Class meets **once a week**. **WEDNESDAYS 3:30-6:00 PM**
- All students are expected to arrive promptly and to stay until the end of class.
- If it is necessary to shift to remote learning as a result of policy changes by the university or as a result of illness or other unexpected challenges, your professor will clearly communicate all changes in course schedule and expectations.
- This course meets only once a week. Attendance is crucial. **Missing more than THREE (3) unexcused classes during the semester will result in a ⅓ grade reduction** from the final grade for the course.

PRO TIPS FOR ATTENDING CLASS MEETINGS

- Do the reading and be prepared.
- Ask questions.
- Feel free to disagree, raise concerns, and offer alternate perspectives.
- Remember: your own experience is a GREAT place to generate hypotheses, but a lousy place to test them. Evidence based analysis is key for productive discussions.
- Make use of the weekly office hours whenever you have questions that cannot be readily addressed during class or via email.

Health and Wellbeing

We continue to live with the long term consequences of a multiyear global pandemic. No assignment, meeting, discussion, or any other aspect of this class is more important than our individual and collective physical, mental, and emotional health.

Please prioritize your health and the health of others. If any assignments, meetings or expectations of class are likely to negatively impact your health please discuss alternatives with Prof MHP .

PRO TIPS for HEALTH and WELL BEING



- Drink more water than you think you need.
- When possible, take a nap. (If possible, avoid napping during class, but you know sometimes it happens!)
- It's a long class. We will take a short break in each class, but always feel free to stand up, leave class briefly, or use the restroom. Be considerate of others and work to ensure you do not distract the overall learning environment.
- Do you need a bit more support? The Counseling Center is a great place to start.
- Always feel free to make an office hours appointment if you fall behind or just want to discuss ideas or concerns related to class.

CLASS POLICIES

Late Assignment Policy

All students have **ONE FREE LATE PASS** to be used on any assignments except the final paper. This means any ONE (1) assignment can be turned in up to 48 hours late with no questions asked and no negative consequences for the grade. After the FREE PASS is used, any assignment submitted late will be subject to the late assignment policy.

Assignments submitted late will lose 1/3 letter grade for any late submission within the first 48 hours. Each additional 24 hours results in another 1/3 letter grade reduction. Exceptions to this policy will only be made for emergencies or health challenges that are documented by a physician, university administrator, or other reasonable source.

If any student or student's family members become ill during the semester, the late assignment policy will be adjusted appropriately to accommodate concerns.

Attendance Policies

Missing more than three (3) unexcused class sessions during the semester will result in 1/3 letter grade reduction from the final grade of the course. However, students can be excused for a variety of valid concerns.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious violation of ethical conduct and academic integrity. Plagiarism need not be intentional. All cases of plagiarism – the theft of words, ideas, sources, and conclusions whether from written, audio, oral, or digital materials –is unacceptable.

At the same time, learning and completing assignments online can make it difficult to discern precisely how to ensure your use of sources, information, images, and ideas is appropriate. Please see the Canvas site for a primer about Academic Integrity and proper citation practices online. And if you are stuck or confused, ask!

Expectations for Classroom Conduct

We will each do our very best to be present, prepared, and engaged.

We acknowledge that racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of interpersonal and institutionalized forms of inequality exist in society. This does not mean we all agree on the causes, consequences, or solutions for these forms of inequality. It does mean we agree to do our best to better understand them, refrain from repeating misinformation, and refrain from personal attack.

No student is expected to have all the answers. Mistakes and questions are welcomed in the spirit of cooperative learning.

We will work to create an atmosphere where:

We keep an open mind and listen;
Everyone is valued and respected;
Everyone can work and learn;
Everyone engages in the thoughtful presentation of ideas, shares the floor, and can critically assess each other's ideas;
No individual is ridiculed or demeaned for sharing personal experiences and ideas;
Personal experiences shared in the context of the classroom remain confidential unless otherwise agreed;
No individual is expected to be a representative spokesperson for a given group of people because there is intra-group diversity of skills, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.

Disability and Accommodations

Students with disabilities requiring accommodations should contact Professor Harris-Perry to ensure appropriate accommodations are available. Be certain to also connect with the Center for Learning, Access, and Student Success at Wake Forest.

Tutoring and Writing Assistance

Wake Forest offers trained peer tutors and effective writing and assignment assistance through The Writing Center @ Wake Forest University. This is a great resource if you need assistance with course assignments.

REQUIRED BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Most assigned readings are available through links on our Canvas site

You will need to purchase or rent the books listed below. You are welcome to have these texts in print or ebook format. Please let Prof MHP know if you need assistance acquiring these books.

1. Schwartz, Marie Jenkins. *Ties That Bound: Founding First Ladies and Slaves. Chicago: The University of Chicago* Press, 2017.

2. Annette Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy*

3. Rebecca Boggs Roberts *Untold Power The Fascinating Rise and Complex Legacy of First Lady Edith Wilson* Penguin Random House. 2023 (This book is not available until March)

ASSIGNMENTS, ASSESSMENTS, GRADE SCALE

Students earn points for various assignments and activities throughout the semester. Points translate into the following grading scale. NOTE: Prof MHP reserves the right to make changes to point allocations and scale with reasonable notice.

Grading Scale:

A	100-94	C+	79.9-77
A-	93.9-90	C	76.9-73
B+	89.9-87	C-	72.9-70
B	86.9-83	D	69.9-60
B-	82.9-80	F	Under 59.5

COURSE ENGAGEMENT: All students are expected to be actively engaged in the course. Course engagement will be measured by weekly attendance and participation and by active leadership of class discussion during one week.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PERCENT of FINAL GRADE
Class Discussion Leadership	During most weeks of the semester one student (in a few cases two students) are responsible for: ● formulating discussion questions, ● posting them to CANVAS by 8pm on Tuesday evening before class, ● and leading the class in discussion. Students are encouraged, but not required, to use slides, video, and other resources during the class presentation. All students are expected to regularly attend class, to complete reading assignments and to participate in a meaningful way.	10
	TOTAL PERCENT of FINAL GRADE	**10%**

THREE PAPERS (75%)

Each student will complete THREE (3) short papers. Each paper is to be 4-6 pages long.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PERCENT of FINAL GRADE
Short Papers	Each student will complete THREE (3) short papers. Each paper is to be 4-6 pages long. The paper should not be simply a summary of what we have read in class. Instead each paper should critically and analytically engage the story of the First Lady or First Ladies it explores. The short paper should tell a bit about the First Lady's biography, her historical epoch, and the tone and quality of her role as First Lady. You *must* develop an original thesis of some kind in each paper and provide evidence from the readings to support your thesis. Each paper is worth 25% of your grade for a total of 75%	25% per paper Due dates and grading rubric are on the course canvas site.
	TOTAL PERCENT of FINAL GRADE	**75%**

FINAL ESSAY (15%)

All students will write a final exam. This is a take-home essay exam. The exam will be comprehensive and will ask you to compare and contrast two or more of the First Ladies we have studied.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PERCENT of FINAL GRADE
Final Essay	All students will write a final exam. This is a take-home essay exam. The exam will be comprehensive and will ask you to compare and contrast two or more of the First Ladies we have studied.	15%
	TOTAL PERCENT of FINAL GRADE	**15%**

EXTRA CREDIT : Professor Harris-Perry will make a variety of experiences available for students to engage issues and ideas raised throughout the course. To earn extra credit students will submit brief reflections in response to these experiences.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	MAX POINTS POSSIBLE
Prof MHP will make several options available for in-person and virtual extra credit throughout the semester.	GUIDELINES FOR EXTRA CREDIT REFLECTION Write an essay of about 100 words. The essay should be organized into three main parts. You need not be rigid in your response, use these prompts as a guide. However, the best responses will explicitly address the three main themes of summary, connection to course readings, and reflection on personal learning outcomes. Brief summary/ description of the event/ speaker/ film/ reading etc. Connect the experience to the assigned readings of the course. What broad themes and specific examples from the assigned readings are relevant and tied to this experience? Use clear citations. Link the lessons/arguments/ themes/claims of the authors in our course to the event/experience. Did your experience reinforce or contradict the claims made in the assigned texts? How would you adjudicate contradictions? Why are these connections valuable? Reflect on your own learning outcomes. Do you believe something different than you believed before the event? Are you more certain of your existing beliefs? Are you surprised, distressed, or excited by some aspect of the experience? What lasting lessons will you likely carry with you? Was the experience valuable? How might you connect it to other learning experiences you have had?	3
	TOTAL GENERAL EXTRA CREDIT POINTS POSSIBLE	**3**

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION

1 .1 INTRODUCTION -JANUARY 11

Login to the Canvas site for the course. Look around to familiarize yourself with the upcoming content, expectations, and tools.

READ Watson, Robert P. "'Source Material': Toward the Study of the First Lady: The State of Scholarship." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (2003): 423–41.

EXPLORE information about the First Ladies National Historic Site online

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What can you expect from this course?
What will this course expect from you?
Why study First Ladies?

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. RESPOND TO DISCUSSION BOARD PROMPT:Which First Lady or Ladie) most inspire your curiosity**?**
2. Sign up on Canvas for a week to lead class.



MODULE 2: FOUNDING FIRST LADIES

MODULE 2

2.1 Abigail Adams, January 18

2.2 Dolley Madison, January 25



Pastel portrait of Abigail Smith Adams (1744-1818) Painted by Benjamin Blyth (1746-1787?) circa 1766, shortly after she married John Adams.



Portrait of Dolley Payne Madison by Gilbert Stuart in 1804

2.1 Abigail Adams - Founding First Ladies

PRIMARY SOURCES

READ Abigail Adams official White House page

READ Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March 1776

OVERVIEW/ CONTEXT

READ Chapter 1: Setting Precedents (pages 1-13) from *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama*

BIOGRAPHY AND ANALYSIS

READ Chapters 4 , 9, and 25 from Holton, Woody. 2009 *Abigail Adams*. Free Press: New York, NY.

READ Crane, Elaine Forman. "Political Dialogue and the Spring of Abigail's Discontent." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (1999): 745–74.

READ Crane, Elaine Forman. (2013). Abigail Adams and Feminism. In A Companion to John Adams and John Quincy Adams, D. Waldstreicher (Ed.).

READ Winner, Viola Hopkins. "Abigail Adams and 'The Rage of Fashion." *Dress* 28.1 (2001): 64–76.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How does Adams help to define/ shape the role of First Lady?
2. Is Adams a feminist?
3. How does Adams wield power/ influence?
4. What does Adams teach us about the constraints and possibilities facing 18th and early 19th century women?

2.2 Dolley Madison - Founding First Ladies

PRIMARY SOURCES

📖 READ Dolley Madison official White House page

OVERVIEW/ CONTEXT

📖 Chapter 1: Setting Precedents (pages 13-18) *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama*

📖 Thomas Fleming. When Dolley Madison Took Command of the White House . Smithsonian Magazine. March 2010

BIOGRAPHY and ANALYSIS

📖 PART 3 MADISON in Schwartz, Marie Jenkins. *Ties That Bound : Founding First Ladies and Slaves. Chicago: The University of Chicago* Press, 2017. (pages 247-348)

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What is the legend of Dolley Madison?
2. What are some of the points of disjuncture between the myth of Madison and the analysis in Ties that Bound?
3. How did Dolley Madison generate legitimacy and create an "American way" of engaging public life?
4. What does Madison teach us about the constraints and possibilities facing 18th and early 19th century women?

MODULE 3: FIRST LADIES DURING PARTISAN CHANGE

MODULE 3 FIRST LADIES DURING PARTISAN CHANGE

3.1 Jacqueline Kennedy/ Lady Bird Johnson

3.2 Nancy Reagan





Jackie Kennedy and Lady Bird Johnson, October 29th, 1960. FROM BETTMAN/ GETTY IMAGES.	DIRCK HALSTEAD/THE LIFE IMAGES COLLECTION/ GETTY IMAGES

3.1 Jacqueline Kennedy and Lady Bird Johnson

PRIMARY SOURCES
READ Jacqueline Kennedy official White House page
READ "Lady Bird" Johnson official White House page
LISTEN CSPAN podcast, First Ladies in their Own Words: Lady Bird Johnson

OVERVIEW/ CONTEXT
READ Chapter 8: The Turbulent Sixties from *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama*
READ PAGES 109-118 from First Women: *The Grace and Power of America's Modern First Ladies*
READ The Story of Jackie Kennedy Onassis and Lady Bird Johnson. Excerpt from Lady Bird Johnson: *Hiding in Plain Sight* as republished in *Vanity Fair* 2021

BIOGRAPHY and ANALYSIS
Schwalbe, Carol B. "Jacqueline Kennedy and Cold War Propaganda." Journal of broadcasting & electronic media 49, no. 1 (2005): 111–127.

First Lady as Catalyst: Lady Bird Johnson and Highway Beautification in the 1960s. Lewis L. Gould *Environmental Review: ER*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), pp. 76-92

Beil, Gail K. "Four Marshallites' Roles in the Passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 106, no. 1 (2002): 1–29.

Jacqueline Kennedy: The Rhetorical Construction of Camelot by Elizabeth J. Natalie from Inventing *a Voice: The Rhetoric of American First Ladies of the Twentieth Century*

Lady Bird Johnson: The Making of a Public First Lady with Private Influence by Diana B. Carli from I*nventing a Voice: The Rhetoric of American First Ladies of the Twentieth Century.*

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How did Kennedy and Johnson navigate changing expectations of womanhood?
2. How are these women minimized/ mischaracterized in mainstream popular understanding of their time in the White House?
3. What do they teach us about the constraints and possibilities facing women in the mid-twentieth century?

3.2 Nancy Reagan

PRIMARY SOURCES
READ Nancy Reagan official White House page

OVERVIEW/ CONTEXT

READ 2016 *New York Times* 2016 Obituary
LISTEN C-SPAN podcast First Ladies in Their Own Words: Nancy Reagan (about 40 min)

BIOGRAPHY and ANALYSIS

READ Chapters 2, 3, 4 of Benze, James . *Nancy Reagan on the White House Stage*

READ BENZE, JAMES G. "Nancy Reagan: China Doll or Dragon Lady?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1990): 777–90

READ Stimpson, Catharine R. "Nancy Reagan Wears a Hat: Feminism and Its Cultural Consensus." *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 2 (1988): 223–43

READ Mosendz, Polly, Nancy Reagan's HIV-AIDS Legacy *Teen Vogue*. MARCH 9, 2016

READ Butler Nattinger A, Hoffmann RG, Howell-Pelz A, Goodwin JS. Effect of Nancy Reagan's Mastectomy on Choice of Surgery for Breast Cancer by US Women. *JAMA.* 1998;279(10):762–766.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What made Nancy Reagan controversial during her time as First Lady and what do those controversies reveal about American politics and society in the 1980s?
2. How did Nancy Reagan wield power and influence during her time as First Lady and what does it tell us about how power operates within American politics?
3. What and the consistencies and disjunctures in contemporary understandings of Mrs. Reagan?
4. What does Nancy Reagan teach us about the constraints and possibilities facing women in the mid-twentieth century?

MODULE 4: INDEPENDENT FIRST LADIES

MODULE 3 FIRST LADIES DURING PARTISAN CHANGE

4.1 Eleanor Roosevelt

4.2 Betty Ford





Eleanor Roosevelt by Yousuf Kars	Betty Ford by Peter Zambouros

4.1 Eleanor Roosevelt -February 15

PRIMARY SOURCES

READ Eleanor Roosevelt official White House page.
EXPLORE Eleanor Roosevelt My Day Column

OVERVIEW/ CONTEXT

LISTEN BBC Documentary podcast- Eleanor Roosevelt (about 30 min)

BIOGRAPHY and ANALYSIS

READ Reed, Jennifer. 2016. "Queering Eleanor Roosevelt." *The Journal of American Culture* 39 (1) (03): 9-19.

READ Cohen, R. 2017. Out of the closet and into history?: The Eleanor Roosevelt–Lorena Hickok affair. *Reviews in American History, 45*(2), 314-322.

READ Review of The Firebrand and the First Lady: Portrait of a Friendship by Patricia Bell-Scott in *The Boston Review*

Watch Patricia Bell-Scott speaking about The Firebrand and the First Lady: Portrait of a Friendship by Patricia Bell-Scott in *The Boston Review* (about one hour)

READ Lenart, Camelia. "A Trustworthy Collaboration: Eleanor Roosevelt and Martha Graham's Pioneering of American Cultural Diplomacy." *European Journal of American Studies* 12, no. 1 (Spring, 2017)

READ Marcellus, Jane. "'It's Up to the Women': Edward Bernays, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Feminist Resistance to Shopping for Patriotism." Feminist media studies 12, no. 3 (2012): 389–405.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Why is Eleanor Roosevelt most frequently cited as the nation's most important First Lady?
2. How did she expand the possibilities inherent in this role?
3. What difference does it make to queer Eleanor Roosevelt?
4. How should we understand her engagement with movements for Black American human and civil rights?
5. What does Eleanor Roosevelt teach us about the possibilities and constraints on American women in the 20th century?

4.2 Betty Ford- February 22

PRIMARY SOURCES
READ Betty Ford official White House page

OVERVIEW/ CONTEXT
READ NYTimes Obituary 2011
LISTEN CSPAN podcast First Ladies in Their Own Words: Betty Ford

BIOGRAPHY and ANALYSIS

READ *Betty Ford: A Certain Comfort from a Candid First Lady by Nichola D. Gutgold, Linda B. Hobgood, from *Inventing a Voice: The Rhetoric of America's First Ladies*

READ Competing Conceptions of the First Ladyship: Public Responses to Betty Ford's "60 Minutes" Interview. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Sep., 2001), pp. 397-414

READ Betty Ford as First Lady: A Woman for Women. Leesa Tobin. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Modern First Ladies White House Organization (FALL 1990), pp. 761-767

READ Gutin, M.G. (2016). Betty Ford: "When Ordinary Becomes Extraordinary". In A Companion to First Ladies, K.A.S. Sibley (Ed.).

READ Part 3 of *Betty Ford: First Lady, Women's Advocate, Survivor, Trailblazer*

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How does being an "accidental" First Lady shape how Betty Ford engages the role?
2. How does Ford use power, authority, and influence?
3. What are the ways that candor and openness reshape the role of the First Lady?
4. What does Ford teach us about the possibilities and constraints on American women in the 20th century?

MODULE 5: ASYNCHRONOUS REVIEW



Michelle Obama photographed by Annie Leibovitz for *Vogue*

MODULE 5: MARCH 1
No new assigned materials for this week.
CLASS No regular class meeting. Review slides and materials Prof MHP will make available as review for this week.

***SPRING BREAK MARCH 8**

MODULE 6: AFRICAN AMERICAN FIRST LADIES

MODULE 6

6.1: Sally Hemings March 15

6.2: Michelle Obama March 22



6.1 SALLY HEMINGS March 15

PRIMARY SOURCES

READ *The Jefferson Hemings Report*

OVERVIEW/ CONTEXT

READ/EXPLORE The Life of Sally Hemings - Monticello
READ/EXPLORE Madison Hemings Family- Monticello
READ Sally Hemings Gets Her Own Room - Smithsonian Magazine 2017

BIOGRAPHY and ANALYSIS

READ Selections from *Annette Gordon-Reed, Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy*

READ *'She Was Part of This Family': Jefferson Descendants Reflect on Sally Hemings Exhibit. New York Times 2018*

READ *It's Time to Recognize Hemings as a First Lady. BY EVELIA JONES OpEd LATimes 2019*

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Should we study Sally Hemings as a First Lady?
2. How does doing so affect our understanding of the role/position/title?
3. What does Hemings teach us about the possibilities and constraints on African American and white American women in the 18th century?

6.2 MICHELLE OBAMA -March 22

PRIMARY SOURCES

READ Michelle Obama's official White House page.

LISTEN CSPAN podcast First Ladies in Their Own Words: Michelle Obama

OVERVIEW/CONTEXT

READ Chapter 11, Turning Points. From *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama.*

BIOGRAPHY AND ANALYSIS

READ Handau, M., & Simien, E. M. (2019). The cult of first ladyhood: Controlling images of white womanhood in the role of the first lady. *Politics & Gender, 15*(3), 484-513.

READ Badas, Alex and Katelyn E. Stauffer. "Michelle Obama as a Political Symbol: Race, Gender, and Public Opinion Toward the First Lady." *Politics & Gender* 15, no. 3 (09, 2019): 431-459.

READ Winston-Proctor, Cynthia E. "'It's Something to Own': A Psychobiographical Exploration of the Life Story of Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama." Journal of personality 91, no. 1 (2023): 150–164.

READ Knuckey, Jonathan, and Myunghee Kim. "Evaluations of Michelle Obama as First Lady: The Role of Racial Resentment: EVALUATIONS OF MICHELLE OBAMA." Presidential studies quarterly 46, no. 2 (2016):

READ Griffin, Farah Jasmine. "At Last ...?: Michelle Obama, Beyonce, Race & History." *Daedalus*, vol. 140, no. 1, winter 2011, pp. 131+.

READ Jenni Simon and Abby Brooks. "The First Coverages of the First Lady: E-racing the Mom-in-Chief '' Women *and Language* 40. Number 1. 2017/2018

READ Theresa Kulbaga and Spence, Leland. Fitness and the feminist First Lady: Gender, race, and body in Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Campaign. *Women and Language* 40. Number 1. 2017/2018

READ "Michelle" Chapter 7 in *Sister Citizen*: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America. Melissa Harris-Perry. 2014.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How does race shape the ways Michelle Obama embodied the role of First Lady?
2. What do we learn about contemporary notions of feminine ideals from how the media and the public responded to Michelle Obama?
4. How does Michelle Obama affect our understanding of what it means to be a First Lady ?
5. What does Obama teach us about the possibilities and constraints on African American and white American women in the 21st century?

MODULE 7: PRESIDENTIAL FIRST LADIES

7.1	Edith Wilson	March 29
7.2	Hillary Clinton	April 5





Edith Bolling Galt Wilson, 1913. Library of Congress	Hillary Clinton accepting Democratic Party nomination for President 2016. PHOTO: Andrew Harnik/AP

7.1 EDITH WILSON, March 29

PRIMARY SOURCES

READ Edith Wilson official White House page

OVERVIEW/CONTEXT

READ Chapter 5, The Office of the First Lady. From *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama.*

BIOGRAPHY AND ANALYSIS

READ Judith Weaver. Edith Bolling Wilson as First Lady: A Study in the Power of Personality, 1919-1920. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. Volume 15, Number 1

READ Edith Bolling Galt Wilson Actions Speak Louder than Words, Chapter 6 of *Inventing a Voice: the Rhetoric of American First Ladies*

LISTEN: EPISODES 6, ,7 and 8 of EDITH! Podcast from Crooked Media.

Selections TBA from *Untold Power The Fascinating Rise and Complex Legacy of First Lady Edith Wilson* Rebecca Boggs Roberts. Penguin Random House. 2023

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How did Edith Wilson exercise power?
2. Should we consider Wilson to be the first woman president?
3. What do we learn about the potential and the limitations of the role of First Lady from the ways Wilson served as First Lady?
4. What does Wilson teach us about the possibilities and constraints for American women in the 20 century?

7.2 HILLARY CLINTON, April 5

PRIMARY SOURCES

READ HIllary Clinton official White House page
WATCH/ READ Women's Rights Are Human Rights. Hillary Rodham Clinton
LISTEN CSPAN podcast First Ladies in Their Own Words: Hillary Clinton

OVERVIEW/CONTEXT

READ Chapter 10, A New Generation in the White House. From *First Ladies*: *From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama.*

BIOGRAPHY AND ANALYSIS

READ Templin, C. (1999). Hillary Clinton as Threat to Gender Norms: Cartoon Images of the First Lady. Journal of Communication Inquiry, 23(1), 20–36.

READ Burrell, Barbara C. "Hillary Rodham Clinton as First Lady: The People's Perspective." The Social science journal (Fort Collins) 37, no. 4 (2000): 529–546.

READ Oles-Acevedo, Denise. "Fixing the Hillary factor: Examining the trajectory of Hillary Clinton's image repair from political bumbler to political powerhouse." *American Communication Journal* 14, no. 1 (2012): 33-46.

READ Traister, Rebecca. Big Girls Don't Cry : the Election That Changed Everything for American Women. New York, NY: Free Press, 2010. CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3

READ Traister, Rebecca. The surreal post-election life of the woman who would have been president. New York Magazine. 201

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. In what ways was Hillary Clinton a transformative First Lady?
2. Does Clinton's independent political career as US Senator, Secretary of State, and Presidential candidate alter our understanding of her as a First Lady? If so, how?
3. What do we learn about the potential and the limitations of the role of First Lady from the ways Cilinton was received by the media and the public during her time as First Lady?
4. What does Clinton teach us about the possibilities and constraints for American women?

MODULE 8: REVILED FIRST LADIES

8.1 Mary Todd Lincoln and Melania Trump





Photograph by Mathew Brady, 1861	2017 Melania Trump Official White House photograph NOTE this NYTImes piece about the photo here.

8.1 Mary Todd Lincoln and Melania Trump, April 12

Primary Sources

READ: Mary Todd Lincoln Official White House page.

READ: Melania Trump Official White House page.

Biography and Analysis

READ Jean Baker. Mary Todd Lincoln: Managing Home, Husband and Children. *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association.* Volume 11. 1990.

READ Lisa Shawn Hogan (2013) Exposing Mary Lincoln: Elizabeth Keckley and the Rhetoric of Intimate Disclosure, Southern Communication Journal, 78:5, 405-426,

READ Jason Emerson, *The Madness of Mary Lincoln*

READ Pušnik, M., & Jontes, D. (2022). The nation as an imagined commodity: Branding 'Melania.' European Journal of Cultural Studies, 25(2), 703–722.

Katharina Wiedlack (2019) In/visibly different: Melania Trump and the othering of Eastern European women in US culture, Feminist Media Studies, 19:8, 1063-1078,

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the media portrayal of Melania Trump as First Lady. NOTE: This is a STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER. It is not a peer reviewed journal article

Alex Wagner, Melania Trump Derangement Syndrome The Atlantic. 2018

Steven Johnson and Lena FeltonThe Gender Trap of Being First Lady. The Atlantic. 2018

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How are public rejections of both Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Trump connected to the politics of a divided nation during their husband's time in office?
2. How do both Lincoln and Trump represent identities rejected by the administrations of their husbands?
3. How are madness/ insanity used as gendered ways of understanding both women? What are the consequences?
4. What do they teach us about the possibilities and constraints for American women?

MODULE 9: ASYNCHRONOUS REVIEW



MODULE 9: April 19
No new assigned materials for this week.
CLASS No regular class meeting. Review slides and materials Prof MHP will make available as review for this week.

MODULE 10: EDUCATOR FIRST LADIES

10.1 Laura Bush and Jill Biden April 25





Laura Bush White House photo by Krisanna Johnson	Jill Biden White House photo by Ralph Alswang

10.1 Laura Bush and Jill Biden, April 25

Primary Sources

READ Laura Bush official White House page
EXPLORE Laura Bush Twitter account

READ Dr. Jill Biden White House page
EXPLORE Dr. Jill Biden Twitter account

Overview/ Context

READ Chapter 10, A New Generation in the White House. From *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Michelle Obama.*

READ "Using the Magic of Words" to Educate and Advocate. *From Inventing a Voice: The Rhetoric of America's First Ladies*

Biography and Analysis

READ Dubriwny, Tasha N. "First Ladies and Feminism*: Laura Bush as Advocate for Women's and Children's Rights." Women's Studies in Communication 28, no. 1* (Spring, 2005): 84-114.

READ Berit von der Lippe and Tarja Väyrynen Co-opting feminist voices for the war on terror: Laura Bush meets Nordic feminism European Journal of Women's Studies 2011 18:1, 19-33

READ First professor: Jill Biden to make history as a first lady with a day job. Politico. 2020.

READ. Jill Biden's former students discuss the First Lady. The Washington Post.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the similarities and departures in the ways Bush and Biden understand and perform the role of educator?
2. How do they each use influence, power, and authority to address issues of education?
3. How do they each embrace or reject contemporary feminist frameworks?
4. What do they teach us about the possibilities and constraints for American women?

MODULE 11: EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

GUIDELINES FOR EXTRA CREDIT REFLECTION

Write an essay of about 100 words. The essay should be organized into three main parts. You need not be rigid in your response, use these prompts as a guide. However, the best responses will explicitly address the three main themes of summary, connection to course readings, and reflection on personal learning outcomes.

Brief summary/ description of the event/ speaker/ film/ reading etc.

Connect the experience to the assigned readings of the course. What broad themes and specific examples from the assigned readings are relevant and tied to this experience? Use clear citations. Link the lessons/arguments/ themes/claims of the authors in our course to the event/experience. Did your experience reinforce or contradict the claims made in the assigned texts? How would you adjudicate contradictions? Why are these connections valuable?

Reflect on your own learning outcomes. Do you believe something different than you believed before the event? Are you more certain of your existing beliefs? Are you surprised, distressed, or excited by some aspect of the experience? What lasting lessons will you likely carry with you? Was the experience valuable? How might you connect it to other learning experiences you have had?

Watch Film and Write Response
John & Abigail Adams. Films On Demand. 2005. (Approx 2 hours)

Watch Film and Write Response
Dolley Madison. Films On Demand. 2010. (Approx 2 hours)

Watch Film and Write Response

Lisa McCubbin and Mike Ford on the life of former First Lady Betty Ford.

Explore and Write a Response

Using various reported pieces connected to Sally Hemings in the NY Times.

PLEASE CHECK CANVAS SITE FOR ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES