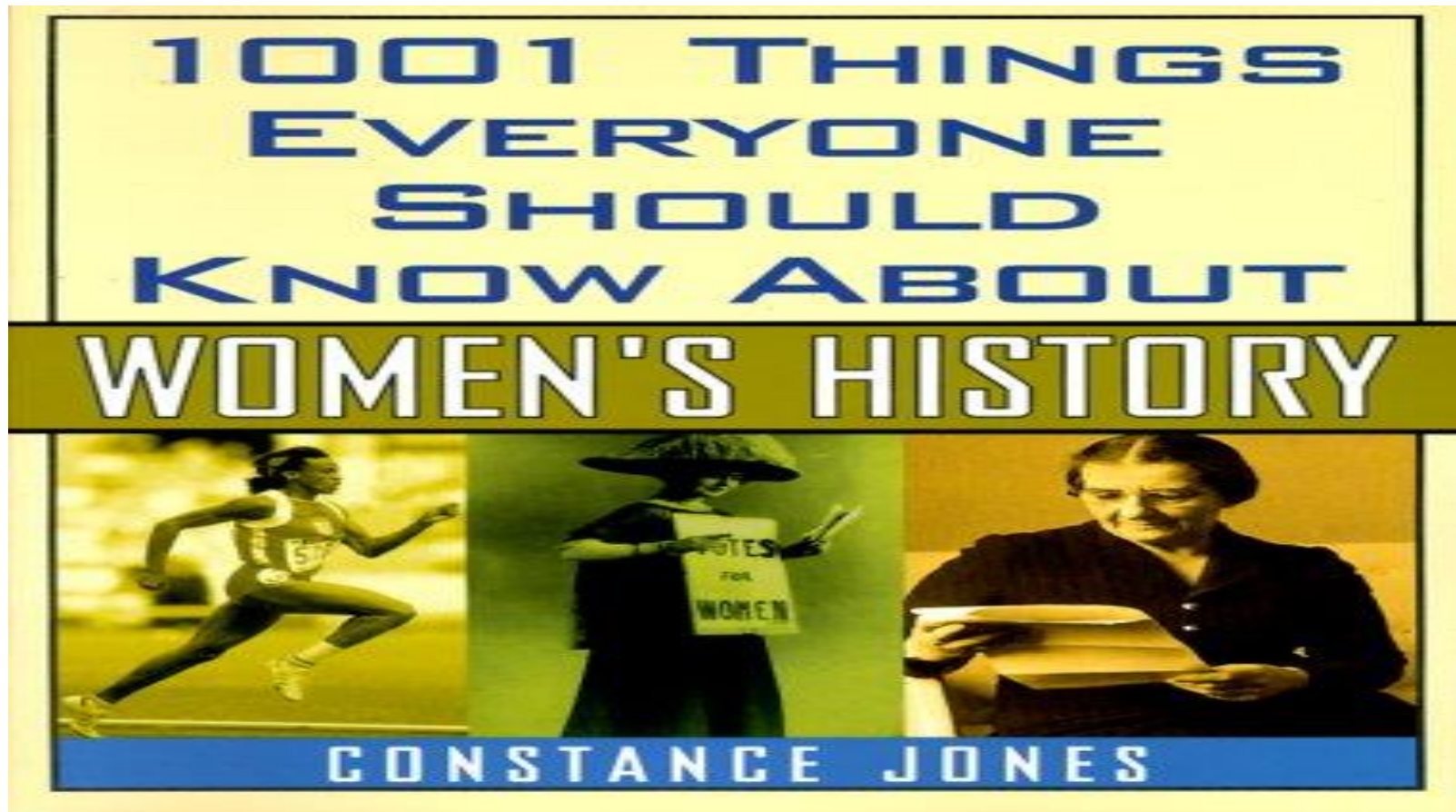


WHY STUDY WOMEN'S HISTORY?



WOMEN'S HISTORY PRESUPPOSES

- that women's experiences are a valid field of study
- that the study of women's actions and reactions can tell us something about the society and the nation
- that women's experiences are just as important as the experiences of men in the society
- that diversity among women is also a valid area of study



BEGINNING OF WOMEN'S HISTORY

○ Second Wave of Feminism

- Well educated dissatisfied middle/upper class white women – Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 1963
- Young female college students who joined the Civil Rights movement (SNCC), Anti-war movement, and Student movement (SDS)
- Formed National Organization for Women (NOW)
- Campaigned for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)
- Entered the paid workforce in greater numbers than ever before
- Push for the study of women in college and university programs



STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN WOMEN'S HISTORY

- Victimization history
 - Women kept down by male systems
 - Patriarchal family, government, etc
- Heroine history/contribution history
 - Strong women; important contributions to society
- Broaden the definition of historical importance
 - Adding women to important hallmarks in history
- Gendered experiences of women
 - Differences between male and female reactions to same circumstances and situations



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS /DICHOTOMIES OF WOMEN'S HISTORY

- Nature versus Culture – mainly in U.S., early 1970s
 - Are women's reactions innate or developed by the culture in which they live?
- Work versus Family – originated in Europe
 - Challenged the nature of work – Does mothering, taking care of the home constitute work? If it is unpaid labor, is it “work?”
- Public versus Private – “the personal is political”
 - power is not confined to “high politics”
 - Women's spheres of influence
 - Household
 - Family
 - Church



COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DICHOTOMIES

- Linked to gender
 - Public – male; private – female
 - Work – male; family - female
- Rooted in European/western traditions of gender perception
 - How the West understands the roles of men and women
- Crucial conceptual frameworks in women's history
 - Important in the development of
- Validity for the perception of gender relations has been thoroughly challenged
 - Scholar challenged the importance of these categories



GENDER AND WOMEN'S HISTORY

- In 1986, historian Joan W. Scott in an article entitled “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” posited that
 - Gender was a useful descriptive term
 - Gender could be used as an analytical tool
 - Provided the foundation for gender history



NEW CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

- Sex versus Gender
 - initially a linguistic-grammatical construction
 - now a major theoretical framework
- Equality versus Difference
 - sexual or gender equality an analytical tool
 - difference played down
- Integration versus Autonomy
 - Separate women and gender studies programs or combined
 - risk of women being made invisible again



WHAT THE COURSE COVERS

- In a broad way, the course will cover many of these frameworks and dichotomies
- Emphasize will be placed on race, class and ethnicity
 - Highlighting the fact that different women experienced American life differently
 - Readings will highlight various women and aspects of womanhood
 - Readings will be supplemented with documentary and motion picture films
 - Students will read, write, listen and discuss issues related to women and history

