This seminar will examine women’s activism of the past fifty years with an emphasis on second-wave feminisms. Our texts will include secondary literature as well as primary sources from the Sophia Smith Collection, including oral histories. Students will be introduced to the techniques of oral history and will conduct, transcribe, edit and analyze their own interviews for their final project. The course objectives are: an understanding of contemporary women’s movements from a historical perspective, basic skills in and knowledge of oral history methods, and the rich experience of “playing historian” by creating new records of women’s lives.

Requirements for the class include mandatory attendance and full participation in class discussions, a short essay based on primary documents at the Sophia Smith Collection, an interview guide, and a transcribed, edited oral history. Students will also do one in-class presentation or performance based on the oral history they conduct. The assignments on the syllabus are due in class the date they are listed.

Office hours will be held following class on Tuesdays in Lilly Hall B02 C. The phone there is 585-3299. Please note that I will only be in that office from 3-4:30 on Tuesdays. Typically, you can find me at the Sophia Smith Collection, 585-2979 or on my cell phone at 413-522-4958. My email address is kpanders@email.smith.edu.

Required texts:


All articles listed in the syllabus are on Moodle. All required books and a few others pertaining to oral history are on reserve in Neilson.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Other Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Introduction to Feminisms</td>
<td>Freedman, <em>No Turning Back</em>, Parts I and II</td>
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<td>Assignment #1: Take a look at <em>We Don’t Need Another Wave</em>, edited by Melody Berger (2006), and <em>Sing, Whisper, Shout, Pray!</em> edited by Jacqui Alexander (2003), both on reserve in Neilson. What do these authors and activists tell us about the current state of feminism? What caught your attention? Do these collections point toward avenues of historical inquiry for you?</td>
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<td>September 23</td>
<td>Modern Feminisms</td>
<td>Freedman, <em>No Turning Back</em>, Parts III, IV, V</td>
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<td>Assignment: I will divide you into groups and you will collectively be responsible for an in-class presentation and discussion facilitation on a section of the Freedman reading.</td>
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<td>Film: <em>Sisters of ‘77</em>, by C. &amp; A. Mondell (2005)</td>
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<td>October 7</td>
<td>Feminism and Black Liberation</td>
<td>Valk, <em>Radical Sisters</em></td>
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<td>Film: <em>With A Vengeance</em>, by Lori Hiris (1989)</td>
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<td>October 14</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>Visit to the Sophia Smith Collection: Exploring Documents from Second-Wave Feminism</td>
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Elizabeth Kennedy, “Telling Tales: Oral History and the Construction of Pre-Stonewall Lesbian Identity,” from *A Queer World* |
Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different,” from *The Oral History Reader*
Donald Ritchie, “An Oral History of Our Time,” from *Doing Oral History*

** Short Essay Due **

November 4  
** What is Feminist Oral History? **

*Reading:* Gluck and Patai, *Women's Words*, Intro and Chapters 1,2,3,9,13

*Film:*  *The Vagina Monologues*, Eve Ensler (2002)

** Assignment:** Visit the SSC and look at one of the Voices of Feminism oral histories (transcript and DVD.) Does the interview contribute to our understanding of feminist activism? Where does her story fit into the broader historical narrative? What are your thoughts on interview method or style?

November 11  
** Interview Guides and Techniques **

*Reading:* Morrissey, “Oral History Interviews: From Inception to Closure,” from *Handbook of Oral History*

*Mazé,* “Conducting Interviews,” from *Doing Oral History*

** Assignment:**  
*Interview Guide Due—email to class by Sunday, November 9 for review **

November 18  
** Trial Interviews **

*Assignment:* Video-record a short oral history on topics of feminism and/or activism with a friend or colleague on campus and report back to the class. What questions did you ask? How was your rapport? What could you improve on? Bring in a short video clip.

November 25  
** Transcribing and Editing **

*Reading:* Fousekis, “Experiencing History: A Journey from Oral History to Performance,” from *Remembering: Oral History Performance*

*Mazé,* “The Uneasy Page: Transcribing and Editing Oral History,” from *Handbook of Oral History*

*Film:*  *Twilight, Los Angeles*, Anna Deveare Smith (2004)

December 2  
** Interview Report Back **

December 9  
** Presentations/Performances **

** Oral History Transcript and Front Matter Due **