

Historian James McGovern has argued that freedom for women has coincided with urbanization in the United States. Women and Cities will interrogate McGovern's argument by considering the degree to which urbanization has afforded American women more freedom and the degree to which it has exposed them to new perils and problems. The course will examine the lot of urban women from the early Republic through the present through the prisms of race, class, ethnicity, and religion as reflected in social and cultural history, oral history, popular culture, literature, and film. Students in the course will be required to complete several short written assignments, to moderate and assist in the moderation of class discussions, and to write an 8-10 page analytical research paper.

Possible readings for the course might include Christine Stansell's *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (1987); Timothy Gilfoyle's *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (1994); Tera W. Hunter's *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (1997); Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900); Jane Addams' *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910); Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905); Joanne Meyerowitz's *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (1988); Toni Morrison's *Jazz* (1992); Mary McCarthy's *The Group* (1964); Jacqueline Susann's *Valley of the Dolls* (1966); Elliot Liebow's *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women* (1993); and Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City* (1996).

Films for the course might include the white slavery exposé *Traffic in Souls* (1913); *The Women of Hull-House* (1992); the only film of blues queen Bessie Smith, *St. Louis Blues* (1933); selections from the first season of *Sex and the City* (1999); and *Last Call at Maud's* (1993), a documentary about the closing of the world's oldest and longest-running lesbian-owned bar, located in San Francisco's Haight Ashbury.