

# UC Santa Barbara

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### Title

The Rights of Women: The Authoritative ACLU Guide to Women's Rights

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and students to resist “the dichotomy of women as historical actors, engaged in consumer culture’s activities, and women as passive recipients of the messages of manufacturers, advertisers, and the men in their individual lives” (p.124). She offers ideas for classroom activities designed to help students locate the “absent women” in women’s magazines and advertisements (p.128).

Although this book’s essays focus explicitly on women’s history rather than gender history, they do discuss the triumvirate of race, class, and gender. Erica Ball argues in Chapter 9 that in order to integrate the stories of women and other “invisible” groups into the narrative of U.S. history, “historians and teachers must pay attention to the ways race, class, and gender work together,” which is something that this book as a whole accomplishes (p.150). Even more to the point, she provides an example of how to do this with a classroom discussion addressing media coverage of the 2008 presidential election and the media’s insistence that women supported Clinton and African Americans supported Obama (p.150). This type of discussion is designed to help students realize “that categories of identification like race, class, and gender [are] neither competing nor additive, but instead, thoroughly integrated into an individual’s overall sense of self” (p.150).

Part III, “Teaching and Learning Women’s History: Strategies and Resources,” is the strongest and most useful section. Like the chapters in Part II, the five here are case studies, but with a more explicit emphasis on pedagogy and teaching tools. The authors of these essays tell their readers what they tried, what worked, and what didn’t — it has the feel of a friendly conversation or conference roundtable on peda-

gogy. Chapter 14, “Teaching Women’s History with Visual Images,” by Tracy Weiss, successfully explains the pedagogy of using images in the classroom, while offering very specific assignments and strategies for classroom activities. Weiss’s approach is certainly “student-centered,” a theme throughout the book (p.7). The essays in this section are simply good pedagogy — they could be employed by any history teacher. What’s more, the notes include many examples of Web-based primary sources and lesson ideas that can be used to supplement existing syllabi.

Part IV, “What We Know (and Don’t Know) About Teaching Women’s History,” is perhaps the weakest part of the book and contains only a single essay: “What Educational Research Says about Teaching and Learning Women’s History.” Essentially: not much. Ending with this call for more educational research saps some of the power of the book, the strength of which lies in the application of strategies and techniques.

Slightly more than nine pages of “Additional Resources,” including books, journal articles and book chapters, and websites, follow the essays. Many of the websites are collections of primary sources and are current — an excellent resource for both subject librarians and classroom instructors.

This work includes the occasional generalization, difficult to avoid in a volume that moves across so much space and time. Although the introduction acknowledges the impossibility of being completely comprehensive, it might have been helpful if the book had included case studies about women who are not white or African American. Introductions to each of the book’s parts would also be helpful, especially for those who plan/need to use this book as a reference. In some ways the distinction between “conceptualizing

issues in U.S. women’s history” in Part II and the teaching and learning strategies of Part III seems artificial. This is an extremely small quibble, however.

“Teachers can better prepare students for the twenty-first century,” writes Mary E. Frederickson in Chapter 12, “by giving them access to a history that is as complex and interconnected as the society in which they live and work” (p.201). *Clio in the Classroom* is an attempt to do just that. This book will be a valuable resource to any instructor who teaches women’s history. Although it is specific to U.S. women’s history, many of the pedagogical approaches and suggested resources could be incorporated into a variety of instructional settings.

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## **WOMEN’S RIGHTS**

Lenora M. Lapidus, Emily J. Martin, & Namita Luthra, *THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN: THE AUTHORITY ACU GUIDE TO WOMEN’S RIGHTS*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: New York University Press, 2009. 412p. \$75.00, ISBN 978-0814752302; pap., \$19.00, ISBN 978-0814752296.

*Reviewed by Sherri L. Barnes*

When I agreed to review the fourth edition of this handbook, my first thought was of the recently passed (January 29, 2009) Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, which extends the statute of limitations for filing a lawsuit claiming pay discrimination. Since this particular women’s rights issue (following the Supreme Court case *Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.*, 550 U.S. 618 [2007]) was so recently resolved, you won’t find coverage of it in this

volume. The ACLU Women's Rights Project, which is responsible for the guide, focuses on "enforcing rights that are already established ... [and] expanding interpretations of laws so as to provide greater protection" (p.xvi).

Nonetheless, coverage of one of the fundamental areas in which women have been fighting for equality — employment — is substantial in this book, with one of the eleven chapters devoted to "Employment: Discrimination and Parenting Issues." Some of the other chapters are "Education," "Violence Against Women," "Reproductive Freedom," "Family Law," "The Criminal Justice System," "Housing," and "Public Accommodations and Private Clubs." Chapters new to this edition are "Trafficking and Forced Labor of Women Workers" and "TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families]/Welfare." The first chapter, "Constitutional Rights: Equal Protection," provides a wonderful overview of the legal framework within which many challenges to gender inequality are raised

— the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Student researchers will find significant coverage of other trendy topics within these chapters. For instance, legal information related to women offenders, including the parental and reproductive rights of incarcerated mothers, is covered in the chapter on the criminal justice system, as is information about illegal sex work. Same-sex and transgender issues related to marriage, civil unions, and domestic partnerships are addressed in the chapter on family law. The authors are also aware of the roles that race, class, and citizenship play in the realization of rights for all women.

Each chapter is set up in a question-and-answer format, and subheadings are included as appropriate (e.g., "Adoption" is a subsection within "Family Law"). There are extensive cited references to case law and other primary sources. Unlike the previous edition, this one has an index, although it would be more useful if sub-

headings were used in cases where there is a long string of page numbers after a main heading.

The ACLU's guiding principle is that "an informed citizenry is the best guarantee that the government will respect individual liberties" (p.ix). The authors state accordingly that they "hope that this book will help to provide basic information about the legal principles applicable to this area of law and will, as well, suggest arguments that you might make on your own behalf to secure your rights" (p.xii). Given its purpose and audience (general), the strengths of this handbook are that it is enormously practical and accessible. Even the brief description of the court system is extremely easy to understand. I'd recommend it not just for academic and public libraries, but also for personal libraries, especially if there are young women in the household.

[*Sherri L. Barnes is the feminist studies librarian at the library of the University of California, Santa Barbara.*]



*Miriam Greenwald*

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