

From Abolition to Progressivism: Women in Public Life

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Overview

This assignment introduces students to the history of women's suffrage in the context of other nineteenth and twentieth century reform movements using a combination of photographs and written documents. The goal is to teach "form" along with "content," so that students will look at both the images and the written documents for their uses of gendered rhetoric in addition to their more obvious content. The project starts with a "slideshow" that students can either do at home or that the teacher can show in class (or both) and finishes with group discussions and an individual writing assignment.

Goals

1. Introduce students to a wide array of women's reform activities and the history of the struggle for suffrage.
2. Introduce students to analysis of representation and rhetoric in both speech and photography
3. Students will learn to use gender as a framework of analysis in understanding women reformers:
4. Students will think about how audience affects "message," as they observe how women reformers were "read" by the public not just as "reformers" but as "women reformers."
5. Students will critically analyze the use of gender in political reform movements as they discuss: "Did these gendered representations make the women reformers more or less effective?"
6. Students will understand the inter-relationship of women's reform movements around lynching, temperance, and labor rights and the ongoing struggle for women's suffrage.

Notes to instructors about origins of exercise:

Many discussions of women reformers of the 19th and early 20th centuries in college textbooks mention the women's use of their status as middle-class women to make their reforms more effective. People like Frances Willard, Florence Kelley and others, who were among the most successful at being heard presented themselves as women who should be listened to because as "respectable" women they were seen as "mothers" or nurturers, as vehicles of moral concern. In my experience, it is difficult to teach this to students when only using documents that address particular reforms. Students are very interested in temperance reform, women's suffrage and labor regulation, but the rhetorical strategies being used remain invisible. Most students don't have any experience with analyzing rhetoric unless they have specific course work that addresses these things. I believe that starting with visual analysis and discussion of gender will bring the gendered status of the speakers into the foreground and that students will be able to move more easily to the next step of rhetorical analysis of speeches that reference motherhood, purity and other "feminine" qualities.



Election Day, 1909

Four Part Exercise

1. "Slide-show" (below) to which students respond by free-writing in class (a computer lab) after a lecture/reading assignment on the history of women's suffrage and its connection to other progressive activism by women from 1848 until 1917.
2. Homework to read documents and write a blackboard post—Students will read documents by women reformers and do homework assignment using blackboard to discuss the documents on two different levels: in terms of what issues the women address and in terms of how the women use "feminine" characteristics to persuade their audience.
3. Second Day: In class(lab) discussion
4. Paper

From Abolition to Progressivism: Women in Public Life Slide Show



Wendell Phillips

The illustration is from 3 May 1851 Gleason's Pictorial, a popular nineteenth-century publication. It shows reformer Wendell Phillips (1811-1884) addressing an April 11, 1851 meeting to protest the case of Thomas Sims, a fugitive slave being tried in Boston. Phillips was a member of the Boston Committee of Vigilance that tried to prevent the court from returning Sims to slavery. Anti-Slavery Meeting on the [Boston] Common From Gleason's Pictorial, May 3, 1851 Photomural from woodcut Prints and Photographs Division (52)

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam006.html>



"A Seamstress"

c. 1853, daguerreotype, unknown photographer "a seamstress" one of many portrait studies of workers posed with their tools.



Sojourner Truth

Sojourner Truth, carte de visite, 1864



*A DownWright Gabbler,
or a goose that deserves to be hissed.—*

Fanny Wright

"A DownWright Gabbler" J. Akin Philadelphia, date unknown.



Sarah Grimke

Wood engraving copy appears in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *History of Woman Suffrage*, 1881.



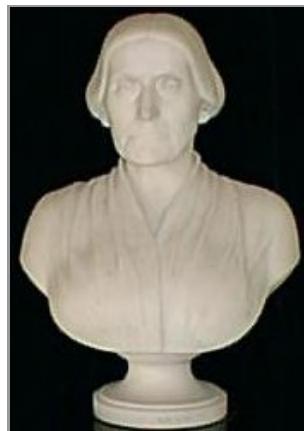
Amelia Bloomer

In her Bloomer costume, From *The Water-Cure Journal*, October 1851 (The Water Cure Journal was in publication from 1845 until 1860, and was dedicated to popular health theories of the 19th century, mostly the benefits of cold water baths, but later expanded to include articles on phrenology, pre-natal care, diet, exercise and other 19th century health crazes.)



Susan B. Anthony

Carte de visite inscribed to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, no date.



Sculpture by Adelaide Johnson, displayed at the Women's Exhibition at the Chicago World's Fair, 1893.



*Susan B. Anthony
Charles Lewis Bartholomew, 1892-1896.*



W.E.B. Du Bois



Victoria Woodhull

Original caption: "portrait of an American feminist," c. 1872.



"Mrs. Satan" by Thomas Nast

Full page cartoon in Harper's Weekly, February 1872. Nast was one of the most famous cartoonists of his generation.



Caption: Mary Church Terrell, a teacher with a cause : "Mary Church Terrell, Three-Quarter Length Portrait, Seated, Facing Front." Between 1880 and 1900. Library of Congress.



Theodore Roosevelt
Portrait, 1905.



Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, 1892. Harper's novel, "Iola Leroy, Or Shadows Uplifted."



Frances Willard

Probably from her book How I learned to Ride a Bicycle, 1893; about learning to ride the bicycle at the age of 53.



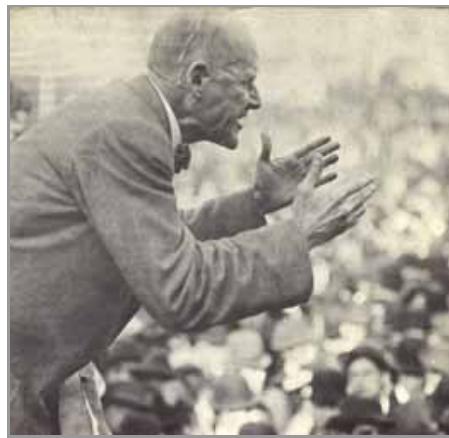
Caption: Nannie Helen Burroughs, between ca. 1900 and 1907.



Clara Lemlich
No date.



Alice Paul, (standing w/glass) Sept. 1920, photo copyright by shortly after the ratification of the 19th amendment (Aug 1920) note that she is raising a glass in her right hand.



Eugene V. Debs delivering his anti-war speech in Canton, Ohio on Jun 16, 1918. He would later be jailed for the speech.



Clarence Darrow, United States Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.



Jane Addams (1860-1935), American social reformer. Photograph, 1914.



Jane Addams on the left holding the U.S. flag CREDIT: "Jane Addams and Mary McDowell(?), Full-Length Portrait, Standing, Holding U.S. Flag and Peace Banner." Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.



Carrie Chapman Catt
Wisconsin State Historical Society Archives, 1917.



Election Day!
Cartoon, EW Guston, 1909.



Harriet Stanton Blatch

Harriet Stanton Blatch speaking to a large crowd of men, between 1915-1920, from the records of the League of Women Voters.

Background Information for Slideshow

Photography was relatively new at the beginning of the suffrage era. The first photographs, invented at the end of the 1830s, were called daguerrotypes; the technology was expensive, and at first photography was a hobby only for the wealthy. However, rapid changes in technology led to the spread of portrait photography and snapshots across class lines in the United States.

Indicating the popularity of photography in the nineteenth century, many of the photographs in this slide-show are cartes de visites, the 19th century version of the snapshot, and would have been printed and traded among friends. For information about the cartes des visites, go to the American Museum of Photography(<http://www.photographymuseum.com/histsw.htm>) website.

Others, especially later images, which come from the Library of Congress "American Memory" exhibit (http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/076_vfw.html) on "votes for women," are photographs from publicity campaigns. For example, as a fundraising and publicity device, suffrage activists in California sold photographs of famous suffragists to donors for \$2.00 a piece. For more information from the library of congress go to:

Both the visiting cards and the formal portrait prints were most likely done in professional studios and would have allowed their subjects quite a bit of control in choosing how to represent themselves.

Part 1

Students read the background statement first, or teacher can instead give a lecture which includes something of the following basic information on the history of women's suffrage and the issue of public presentation.

Background Information for Slideshow

The national women's suffrage movement emerged at a time of widespread reform in American society, in which two reform movements, one to abolish slavery and the other to pass laws against the sale of alcohol, were the most influential. Based in evangelical churches, these reform movements called for the end of slavery as a sinful practice that interrupted the relationship between man and God by making one man the ruler over another. Sara and Angelina Grimke, the daughters of a slave-holding family, became involved in the abolition struggle and made a sensation not just through their opposition to the institution of slavery, but because they were women who spoke in public. In the nineteenth century, it was not considered appropriate for women to engage in political life or to appear in front of mixed gatherings. Even Emma Willard, the founder of one of the first schools for women in 1819 said that her school would not produce female speakers. (see Emma Willard's "Plan for Female Education" at: <http://www.emmawillard.org/archive/mrs-willards-plan-education>)

When the Grimkes, both devout Christians, began speaking on platforms set up by the American Anti-Slavery Society, the Congregationalist Ministers of Massachusetts issued a Pastoral letter warning of the dangers of women as political leaders. According to the pastors,

We invite your attention to the dangers which at present seem to threaten the female character with widespread and permanent injury. The appropriate duties and influence of women are clearly stated in the New Testament. Those duties and that influence are unobtrusive and private, but the sources of mighty power. When the mild, dependent, softening influence upon the sternness of man's opinions is fully exercised, society feels the effect of it in a thousand forms. The power of woman is her dependence, flowing from the consciousness of that weakness which God has given her for her protection. We appreciate the unostentatious prayers of woman in advancing the cause of religion at home and abroad; in Sabbath schools, in leading religious inquirers to the pastors for instruction; and in all such associated efforts as become the modesty of her sex...But when she assumes the place and tone of man as a public reformer...she yields the power which God has given her for her protection, and her character becomes unnatural. If the vine, whose strength and beauty is to lean on the trellis-work and half conceal its cluster, thinks to assume the independence and overshadowing nature of the elm, it will not only cease to bear fruit, but fall in shame and dishonor in the dust." Because of their experiences meeting such opposition, the Grimke sisters began to see, to speak about, and write about, the connections between slavery and the treatment of women, who were not only prohibited from voting, but in many states lived under the condition of "coverture" which meant that married women's property and all rights related to its ownership were subordinated to her husband's. (for more information on coverture see: Married Women's Property Laws (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awlaw3/property_law.html)). Once the Grimkes began making arguments in favor of women's rights, other women joined them and in 1848, women gathered in Seneca Falls to deliver the historic "Declaration" that formally began the national movement for women's suffrage. In the early suffrage movement, the issues most frequently addressed were property rights and the vote, while more radical subjects, such as divorce laws, were eventually moved to the side as too controversial. While they tried to avoid scandal, many of the issues that early women's rights' advocates addressed related to the sphere of life that many would call "private" For example, these women also took part in the temperance movement, which called for personal, spiritual reform, and revealed the problems faced by women whose property was lost to husbands who drank. Another important issue associated with women's rights, anti-slavery and other 19th century reforms was "free love," originally associated with reform communities and with activists such as Fanny Wright in the 1820s and Victoria Woodhull after the Civil War. Both Wright and Woodhull had trouble being taken seriously or being heard because their criticisms of sexual roles were seen as outside the boundaries of respectability for women.

As women became more engaged in public life, whether as workers in the new factories in Lowell, Massachusetts that brought young women from farms into the urban labor force, or as anti-slavery speakers, women also called for more rational forms of dress for women. Temperance activist, Amelia Bloomer wore an outfit with no corset and with pants that were eventually named for her: "Bloomers." Some of the most prominent suffrage advocates tried to promote the new way of dressing. The issue of dress was not a trivial one, but symbolized the role that women occupied in American society.

Early opponents of the women's rights movement were alarmed by these "cultural" issues, which they considered radical challenges to the structure of the family and to women's place in society. Women's rights activists responded to some opposition by backing away from dress reform; for example, suffrage activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton stopped wearing the "bloomer" costume and wrote to Susan B. Anthony, explaining why: "we put the dress on for greater freedom, but what is physical freedom compared with mental bondage?" (Flexner, 79) The way women looked when they spoke was important to the way they were described in the media, as you can see from this passage describing a speech on free-love given by Victoria Woodhull, according to the *New York Herald, March 1872* (<http://www.victoria-woodhull.com/wc030200.htm>)

"Mrs. Woodhull came on the stage in a quiet black dress, her hair cut short and allowed to float freely on her shoulders. There was a pleased flush on her cheeks as she looked first into the parquette, then into the dress circle, and finally into the amphitheater, and smiled 'victoriously' at the tiers upon tiers of eager faces. Victoria read from her notes slowly and with precision, and so distinctly that she was heard all over the Academy. It is a popular belief that Victoria Woodhull is a sort of Bacchante, cut on the bias, with low neck and short sleeves, whatever she may be she has achieved success and has at last secured an audience."

The next major phase in the woman's suffrage movement came following the Civil War, when Stanton and Anthony opposed the 15th amendment to the Constitution, because it specifically said that Black men would be eligible to vote. The debate over the 15th amendment divided the women's suffrage movement into those who argued that this was "the negro's hour" and those who said that once the amendment became part of the constitution that the word "male" would be officially tied to the right to vote for the first time in national law. The two women's suffrage associations continued to push for women's right to vote, arguing that the national constitution must be amended to allow women's voting.

In the 1880s, women's status as workers, and the new immigrants to the country both took a much more significant place in the effort to win women's right to vote. Most labor movement activists argued that wages for men should enable them to support their families so that their wives could achieve the "domestic ideal" of the woman who stayed at home, tending to her children's and husband's needs. This notion of the "family wage" implied that women shouldn't work or that women's work was merely temporary and supplementary and made it hard for women to argue for equal pay with men. For activists like Florence Kelley and the earlier Sojourner Truth, the fact that women could and did work was an argument for women's equal status with men, proof that the idea of the woman's domestic and fragile nature was wrong.

As women left home-work and went into factories, they were able to insist on their rights as members of the public, who did all the things that men did and therefore deserved equal rights. As women became involved in the labor movement, they argued that the vote was their right as American workers. During this same era, Blacks in the South lost the voting rights they had won following the Civil War, and several women came to the fore in the struggle for Black voting rights and an end to segregation. While these women focused extensive attention on the victimization of Black men by lynching, they also insisted that voting rights for women would help all African-American people.

In this time of social conflict, white middle-class activists were both sympathetic to the demands of workers and concerned about the possibility of class conflict, revolution, and violence. These middle class activists, who called themselves "progressives" sought to reform American society from what they defined as the worst ills of rapid industrialization, urbanization and concentration of wealth. Florence Kelley, Jane Addams and Ida B. Wells all worked with working-class women in the settlement houses that they created in New York and Chicago. Like the previous generation, many of these activists were Christians, and brought moral arguments to their reforms. Progressives called for the 8 hour day, the end of child labor, safety regulations in factories, "trust busting" and compulsory public schooling, as well as reforms more associated with individual behavior, such as the movement to ban the sale of alcohol and

crackdown on prostitution they called a “purity crusade” Many of the most famous progressive activists were women, and they argued that if they had the vote, American society would undergo great moral improvement. More so than the activists of the pre-Civil War era, these progressives argued that women, as mothers, would bring a positive moral influence into American politics.

Frances Willard and other members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union argued that if women won the right to vote that they would act as the nation's house-keepers, making the world more “home-like” and purifying society, eliminating not only drinking, but other social ills that stemmed from the newly industrialized society. Now, instead of explicitly challenging women's presumed moral role in the home, this new group of suffrage activists self-consciously argued that woman's maternal nature fitted her for both reform work and voting. Only women, they argued, would care enough to pass laws against child labor, to fight for equal wages for women workers, or to ban the sale of alcohol. More insidiously, these women sometimes made racist arguments for women's suffrage by arguing that (white, middle-class) women should win the vote in order to counter the votes of European immigrant and Black men. (For more on the history of prohibition see Prohibition: A Case Study of Progressive Reform at <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/progress/prohib/>.)

The suffrage movement lapsed in strength towards the beginning of the twentieth century, but was revitalized by two competing groups of activists during the First World War. Alice Paul and her National Women's Party adopted the militant tactics of English suffragists, violating all rules of social propriety by picketing and going on hunger strikes. They also made sure that in those states where women could vote, that they vote against President Woodrow Wilson because of his refusal to support the suffrage amendment. In contrast, Carrie Chapman Catt negotiated behind the scenes with Wilson and Democrats in congress, calling for the ballot as the just reward of women for helping the United States during the First World War. Probably as a combined result of the efforts of both groups, the 19 th amendment to the constitution was passed by congress in 1919 and ratified by the states in 1920. While Black women and immigrant women argued for the vote as part of the struggles of their ethnic communities, white-middle class women also argued for the vote to empower a white race which they feared was increasingly threatened by the presence and power of Blacks and European immigrants.

Student Activity Day One: Slide Show on the Representation of Gender Differences

First, go through the images and just look at them. After the slideshow, the students can take five to ten minutes to free write a response to the images. Before writing, consider the following questions:

- How is the person positioned - Sitting or standing? Leaning on something? Outside? Inside? Is the picture a formal portrait that was planned and set up? Do you think it was “candid” or informal? Why?
- What do you imagine about this person? What kind of person is he/she?
- What image do you think this person wanted you to see when this picture was taken? How was she trying to present herself/himself? If the picture was a cartoon, what do you think that the artist was trying to say about the person pictured?
- Do you see any commonalities between the different pictures?
- Are the pictures of the men different from the women? If so, how?

Discussion following the free write:

After free writing, ask students volunteer to share their comments with the large group for a general discussion, or have the students meet briefly with one other student and then share their ideas about the slideshow as a team.

Once you have free-written your responses, meet with at least one other student and compose a blackboard post explaining what you saw in the images. In your post, answer this question: Did you think the women were pictured in a way that was different from the way men were portrayed? If you find these pictures representative, what qualities do you think were associated with “womanliness” for the people of this era?

Student Activity Part Two: homework assignment:

Read Documents, take notes and respond to discussion questions on blackboard.

Group One: "Declaration of Sentiments," Victoria Woodhull and Frances Willard

Group Two: "Declaration of Sentiments," Frances Harper, Florence Kelley, and Frances Willard

Group Three: "Declaration of Sentiments," Frances Harper, Florence Kelley and Carrie Chapman Catt

Group One: "Declaration of Sentiments," Victoria Woodhull and Frances Willard

Group One Documents

1. Declaration of Sentiments: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/senecafalls.asp>
2. Victoria Woodhull (below)
3. Frances Willard (below)

2. Victoria Woodhull

Victoria Woodhull, who came from a family of travelling performers and was herself a "spiritualist," became a hugely popular speaker in the suffrage movement and one of the few public advocates of "free love." She gave this speech in New York's Steinway Hall in November 1871 to a capacity crowd of 3,000 people. Before she spoke she was introduced by the popular minister, Theodore Tilton who said, "it may be that she is a fanatic. It may be that I am a fool. But before high Heaven I would rather be both fanatic and fool in one, than be such a coward as would deny this woman the sacred right of free speech." As she spoke, observers recorded that the crowd "burst into wild applause and cries of 'Hurrah,' but as Woodhull was heckled from the audience by her own sister with questions: "Are you a free lover?" She grew passionate in her responses, and the audience began hissing. You can see her answer to that provocative question at the end of the excerpt here. Despite the attacks on Woodhull in the press following the speech, Elizabeth Cady Stanton of NWSA said, "Shall we ignore a champion like this? ...Admit for the sake of argument that she has been or is a courtesan in sentiment and practice. When a woman of this class shall suddenly devote herself to the study of the grave problems of life...shall we not welcome her of the better place she desires to hold?" ...for more on Woodhull see Barbara Goldsmith, Other Powers: The Age of Suffrage, Spiritualism, and the Scandalous Victoria Woodhull NY: Harper, 1998

Victoria Woodhull, "And the truth shall make you free." A speech on the principles of social freedom, delivered in Steinway hall, Nov. 20, 1871

(edited by Rebecca Hill) from the full text at: <http://gos.sbc.edu/w/woodhull.html>

The world has come up to the present time through the outworking of religious, political, philosophical and scientific principles, and today we stand upon the *threshold of greater* in more *important* things than have ever interested the intellect of man. We have arrived where the very *foundation* of all that *has been* must be analyzed and understood--and this foundation is the relation of the sexes. These are the bases of society--the very last to secure attention, because the most comprehensive of subjects.

- Over the sexual relations, marriages have endeavored to preserve sway and to hold the people in subjection to what has been considered a standard of moral purity. Whether this has been successful or not may be determined from the fact that there are *scores of thousand* of women who are denominated prostitutes, and who are supported by *hundreds of thousands* of men who should, for like reasons, also be denominated prostitutes, since what will change a woman into a prostitute must also necessarily change a man into the same.
- This condition, called prostitution, seems to be the *great evil* at which religion and public morality hurl their *special* weapons of condemnation, as the sum total of all diabolism; since for a woman to be a prostitute is to deny her not only all Christian, but also all humanitarian rights.

- But let us inquire into this matter, to see just what it is; not in the vulgar or popular, or even legal sense, but in a purely *scientific* and *truly moral* sense.
- All the relations between the sexes that are recognized as *legitimate* are denominated marriage. *But of what does marriage consist?*
- The *courts* hold if the law solemnly pronounce two married, *that they are married, whether love is present or not. But this really such a marriage as this enlightened age should demand? No! It is a stupidly arbitrary law, which can find no analogies in nature. Nature proclaims in broadest terms*, and all her subjects re-echo the same *grand truth*, that sexual unions, which result in reproduction, are marriage. And sex exists wherever there is reproduction.
- Law cannot change what nature has already determined. Neither will love obey if law command. Law cannot compel two to love. It has nothing to do either *with* love or with its absence. Love is superior to all law, and so also is hate, indifference, disgust and all other human sentiments which are evoked in the relations of the sexes. It legitimately and logically follows, if *love* have *anything* to do with marriage, that *law* has *nothing* to do with it. And on the contrary, if *law* have anything to do with marriage, that *love* has nothing to do with it. And there is no escaping the deduction.
- Two persons, a male and a female, meet, and are drawn together by a *mutual* attraction--a *natural* feeling unconsciously arising within their natures of which *neither* has any control--which is denominated love. This a matter that concerns *these two*, and *no* other living soul has *any human* right to say aye, yes or no, since it is a matter in which none except the two have any right to be involved, and from which it is the duty of these two to exclude every other person, since no one can love for another or determine why another loves.
- thus is to say, they marry because they love, and they love because they can neither *prevent* nor *assist* it. Suppose after this marriage has continued an indefinite time, the *unity* between them departs, could they any more prevent it than they can prevent the love? It *came* without their bidding, may it not also go without their bidding? And if it go, does not the marriage cease, and should any third persons or parties, either as *individuals* or *government*, attempt to compel the *continuance* of a unity wherein *none* of the elements of the union remain?
- To love is a right *higher* than Constitutions or laws. It is a right which Constitutions and laws can *neither give* nor take, and with which they have nothing whatever to do, since in its *very nature* it is forever independent of both Constitutions and laws, and exists--comes and goes--in *spite* of them. Governments might just as well assume to determine how people shall exercise their right to *think* or to say that they shall not think at all, as to assume to determine that they shall not love, or how they may love, or that they shall love.
- It is certain by this Higher Law, that marriages of convenience, and, still more, marriages characterized by mutual or partial repugnance, are adulterous. And it does not matter whether the repugnance arises before or subsequently to the marriage ceremony. Compulsion, whether of the law or of a false public opinion, is detestable, as an element even, in the regulation of the most tender and important of all human relations.
- I do not care where it is that sexual commerce results from the dominant power of *one sex over the other*, compelling him or her to submission against the *instincts of love*, and where hate or disgust is present, whether it be in the gilded palaces of Fifth avenue or in the lowest purlieus of Greene street, *there is prostitution, and all the law that a thousand State Assemblies may pass cannot make it otherwise.*
- I know whereof I speak; I have seen the most *damning* misery resulting from legalized prostitution. Misery such as the most degraded of those against whom society has shut her doors never know. Thousands of poor, weak, unresisting wives are yearly murdered, who stand in spirit-life looking down upon the sickly, half made-up children left behind, imploring humanity for the sake of honor and virtue to look into this matter, to look into it to the very bottom, and bring out into the fair daylight all the blackened, sickening deformities that have so long been hidden by the screen of public opinion and a sham morality. It does not matter how much it may still be attempted to *gloss* these things over and to *label* them sound and pure; you, each and every one of you, *know* that what I say is truth, and if you question your own souls you *dare* not reply: it is not so. If these things to which I refer, but of which I shudder to

think, are not abuses of the sexual relations, what are? You may or may not think there is help for them, but I say Heaven help us if such barbarism cannot be cured.

- Yes, I am a Free Lover. I have an *inalienable, constitutional and natural* right to love whom I may, to love as *long* or as *short* a period as I can; to *change* that love *every day* if I please, and with *that* right neither you nor any *law* you can frame have *any* right to interfere. And I have the *further* right to demand a free and unrestricted exercise of that right, and it is *your duty* not only to *accord* it, but, as a community, to see that I am protected in it. I trust that I am fully understood, for I mean *just* that, and nothing less!

3. Frances Willard

Frances Willard was one of the most popular and effective reformers of the progressive era. She began her career as a teacher, and ultimately became the president of an important women's college in Illinois, but left this job to become a full-time activist in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a group which sought to ban the sale of alcohol. Although she initially had conflicts with some in temperance leadership over whether to mix the issues of woman's suffrage and temperance, she continually worked to bring temperance activism and women's suffrage together, first by making an effort to gain women the vote on temperance matters through a "home protection ballot," and in 1892, by attempting to bring the WCTU into a coalition with the with the populist, or "people's party." She was the president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union from 1878 until her death in 1898, and is credited by some historians as bringing women's suffrage, which had been a radical cause associated with New England abolitionism, into the conservative American mainstream of the 1880s. Despite the seeming conservatism of some of her views by today's standards, Willard's life was far from conventional. She never married, but rather, lived with a female companion, Anna Gordon, for most of her life; she was a world traveller, and an advocate of bicycle riding! At the end of her life, after spending time in England with Fabian socialists, she came to believe that poverty, rather than alcohol was the primary cause of social problems.

In these two excerpts from her speeches, Willard discusses several different issues important to women reformers of the time including the vote for women, the temperance issue, and dress reform. for more on Willard, see Bordin, Frances Willard a Biography, Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1986 and

http://search.eb.com/women/articles/Willard_Frances_Elizabeth_Caroline.html

ADDRESS OF FRANCES E WILLIARD, PRESIDENT OF THE WOMAN'S NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES, (FOUNDED IN 1888) AT ITS FIRST TRIENNIAL MEETING, ALBAUGH'S OPERA HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C., FEBRUARY 22-25, 1891

This document came from the Library of Congress server, in the Women's Suffrage collection. (Excerpted by Rebecca Hill)

RUFUS H. DARBY, PRINTER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

* ** Locally a woman's council should, in the interest of that "mothering" which is the central idea of our new movement, seek to secure for women admission to all school committees, library associations, hospital and other institutional boards intrusted with the care of the defective, dependent, and delinquent classes, also to boards of trustees in school and college and all professional and business associations; also to all college and professional schools that have not yet set before us an open door; and each local council should have the power to call in the united influence of its own State council, or, in special instances, of the National Council, if its own influence did not suffice.

I am confident that the development of this movement will impart to women such a sense of strength and courage, and their corporate self-respect will so increase, that such theatrical bills as we not see displayed will be not permitted for an hour, without our potent protest; and the exhibitions of women's forms and faces in the saloons and cigar stores, which women's self-respect will never let them enter, and the disgraceful literature now for sale on so many public newsstands, will not be tolerated by the womanhood of any town or city. An "Anatomical Museum" that I often pass on a Chicago street bears the words: "Gentlemen only admitted." Why do women passively accept these flaunting assumptions that men are expected to derive pleasures from objects that they would not for a moment permit their wives to see? Someday women will not accept them passively, and then these base exhibitions will cease, for women will purify every place they

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You and I are learning that not in the acquisition of a language, not in the mastery of a piano keyboard, lies the supreme good; but in teaching the tender feet never to stray from the sure path, and in going out to seek him who is "away in the mountains bleak and bare, away from the tender Shepherd's care." There it lies more than anywhere else on earth, and we are getting to believe it. Those who have been on tours of philanthropy, these Christian women, are getting more of an idea of making it a business. We have tasted the sweetness of benignant life. The truest, most nutritious food God has given us we find in well-doing. I think about it what a fine thing it is to know a language, and many of us will never know any but our mother tongue, but yet there are none here but can learn and teach the words of life, the language of Canaan. We may not be able to obtain the highest proficiency in mathematics; but you and I can help many a tangled, wicked life into a plain solution. It is a tender thing to be a sculptor and to chisel marble into beautiful shapes and forms, but it is sweeter to mold the clay of a child's character. It is a noble thing to be an architect and build grand cathedrals; but grander far to teach somebody who had not found it out, that the body and the soul were made on purpose to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, in which shall dwell nothing that is not pure and white and clean. It is a grand thing, surely, to be able to trace upon the canvas features of beauty, but ah! to restore the image of God to the face that is really the face that smiles back into your own, to restore there the image of God, which was lost, that is a better office; and to sweep the harps Aeolian, to strike the keys that tune with God's purpose in creation, that is a nobler kind of music than any ever learned from Beethoven or Mozart. That is for you, for me, and for every one of us, blessed be God's name.

Group Two: "Declaration of Sentiments," Frances Harper, Florence Kelley, and Frances Willard

Group Two Documents

1. Declaration of Sentiments: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/senecafalls.asp>
2. Frances Harper: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/search.php?function=detail&id=5316>
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4. Frances Willard (below)

Frances Willard

Frances Willard was one of the most popular and effective reformers of the progressive era. She began her career as a teacher, and ultimately became the president of an important women's college in Illinois, but left this job to become a full-time activist in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a group which sought to ban the sale of alcohol. Although she initially had conflicts with some in temperance leadership over whether to mix the issues of woman's suffrage and temperance, she continually worked to bring temperance activism and women's suffrage together, first by making an effort to gain women the vote on temperance matters through a "home protection ballot," and in 1892, by attempting to bring the WCTU into a coalition with the populist, or "people's party." She was the president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union from 1878 until her death in 1898, and is credited by some historians as bringing women's suffrage, which had been a radical cause associated with New England abolitionism, into the conservative American mainstream of the 1880s. Despite the seeming conservatism of some of her views by today's standards, Willard's life was far from conventional. She never married, but rather, lived with a female companion, Anna Gordon, for most of her life; she was a world traveller, and an advocate of bicycle riding! At the end of her life, after spending time in England with Fabian socialists, she came to believe that poverty, rather than alcohol was the primary cause of social problems.

In these two excerpts from her speeches, Willard discusses several different issues important to women reformers of the time including the vote for women, the temperance issue, and dress reform. for more on Willard, see Bordin, Frances Willard a Biography, Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1986 and

http://search.eb.com/women/articles/Willard_Frances_Elizabeth_Caroline.html

ADDRESS OF FRANCES E WILLIARD, PRESIDENT OF THE WOMAN'S NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES, (FOUNDED IN 1888) AT ITS FIRST TRIENNIAL MEETING, ALBAUGH'S OPERA HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C., FEBRUARY 22-25, 1891

This document came from the Library of Congress server, in the Women's Suffrage collection. (Excerpted by Rebecca Hill)

RUFUS H. DARBY, PRINTER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Group Three: "Declaration of Sentiments," Frances Harper, Florence Kelley and Carrie Chapman Catt

Group Three Documents

1. Declaration of Sentiments: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/senecafalls.asp>
2. Frances Harper "A Heritage of Scorn": <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/search.php?function=detail&id=5316>
3. Florence Kelley, "Strength in Numbers": <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/search.php?function=detail&id=5314>
4. Carrie Chapman Catt "Class Versus Gender": <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/search.php?function=detail&id=5318>

Questions to answer on blackboard:

After reading your assigned documents, answer the following questions in ONE blackboard post, using one or two paragraphs.

- What reforms did the women engage in?
- What reasons did the different women give as they argued for women's right to vote?
- How did the speakers connect the right to vote to other reform movements of the time?
- What role did the speaker's gender play in her speech: Did she talk about women as mothers? as guardians of morality? as special in some way? as just like men?
- What did you think was the role of race /or class in the speeches? Did the woman appeal to racial prejudices of the people of the time? Did she make her appeal for a particular class or race of women?
- What was the most persuasive argument made, in your opinion, and why?
- What do you imagine people of the time might have found most persuasive?
- Do you see a change in the arguments between the time of the "Declaration of Sentiments," written in 1848 by women involved in the abolitionist movement, and the later arguments of women in the Progressive era?

Alternative Homework Approach for more advanced classes:

Instructors may choose to offer more flexibility in their homework assignment questions to be less directive. Here is an alternative set of homework questions for the reading:

After reading your group of articles, write one or two paragraphs in a blackboard post in which you briefly summarize the main points made by each of the reformers. What were the major similarities and differences in their arguments? As activists, how did their strategies for winning the vote differ from each other? Why do you think this might be?

Large Group Discussion: Back in class. This can be done in a regular classroom setting or in a computer lab. The primary benefit of the lab for this exercise is the access to the images by the students as they have their discussion in the small group, but it is not essential.

Students who read the same articles should meet together in groups and discuss their blackboard posts from the night before. The students should then work together as a group to come up with a collective answer to the over-all discussion question and to identify for the class what their group found most important in their reading and viewing of the images. Students can review the slide show as part of this project.

Discussion question for group one: How did the way that these women made their arguments for suffrage change over time? What role did issues of personal morality and respectability play in the women's suffrage movement? What role do you think that issues of sex, marriage, and motherhood played in the effort to win the vote for women and why?

Discussion question for groups two and three: In the struggle to win the vote, how important do you think “gender” (how we define men and women) was and how important were the issues of race and class? How did these three “categories” influence the path of the movement?

Extension of the exercise into formal writing:

Essay. You may choose to have students write an essay incorporating the different sources. Note to instructors: some of these questions imply that the students would do research; others are more based on the documents in this module.

Suggested Essay Questions:

1. Write a 3 page essay about one or more of the images in the slideshow. In your essay, explain how the visual representation shows what was expected of women/men at that time, and what the rules were that people followed in order to remain “respectable.” Does this image challenge any of the rules of “gender respectability?” why/why not?
2. Based on your readings by and about women reformers, what do you think were the most persuasive arguments made for reform? How were the reforms limited? When considering the limitations of women’s reforms, think both about limits that came from inside the movement and limits that came from outside the movement.
3. In your opinion, what were the best ideas of the women reformers? Do you think that the women were successful in getting these ideas across to people in their own time? Why/why not?
4. What surprised you most in any of the documents or images? Why was this so surprising? How can you explain this unexpected idea/image by looking at the context of the time when it was made? What does this idea or image tell you about the historical moment when it was produced?
5. If you look at the reforms proposed here, you can see that some represent the “outer limits” and were not considered respectable – what were those? In today’s debates about women’s rights and marriage, what would you say the “outer limits” are? Are the limits to today’s debates at all similar to the limits facing reformers of a hundred years ago? Are the issues different now or the same? Why/why not?
6. The reformers in this unit are mostly middle-class progressives. Based on your reading in other parts of the course, how would you compare them and their views to other social activists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

Further Resources for Instructors

Catt Collection Suffrage Photographs: <http://triptych.brynmawr.edu/cdm/search/collection/suffragists>

Teaching With Documents: Woman Suffrage and the 19th Amendment:

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/woman-suffrage/>

Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony:

<http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/>

National Woman's History Project: <http://www.nwhp.org/>

Alice Paul Institute: <http://www.alicepaul.org/>

Frances Harper: <http://uudb.org/articles/francesharper.html>

Women and Social Movements in the United States: <http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/vfwhtml/vfwhome.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/naw/navshome.html>

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/>

<http://www.history.rochester.edu/class/suffrage/home.htm>

recent publications that relate to more specific aspects of the module:

Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz , The Journal of American History Vol. 87, No. 2 (Sep., 2000), pp. 403-434.:

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2568758>

Jean H. Baker, editor. *Votes for Women: The Struggle for Suffrage Revisited.* (Viewpoints on American Culture.) New York: Oxford University Press. 2002

Sandra Adickes, "Sisters not Demons: The Influence of British Suffragettes on the American Suffrage Movement," *Women's History Review*, v.11