Grounding our work in the current scholarship in lesbian history, this course will explore lesbian communities, cultures, and activism. While becoming familiar with the existing narratives about lesbian lives, students will be introduced to the method of oral history as a key documentation strategy in the production of lesbian history. What are the gaps in the literature and how can oral history assist in filling in the spaces? What does a historical narrative that privileges categories of gender and sexuality look like? And how do we need to adapt our research methods, including oral history, in order to talk about lesbian lives? Our texts will include secondary literature on 20th century lesbian culture and politics, oral history theory and methodology, and primary sources from the Sophia Smith Collection (SSC). Students will conduct, transcribe, edit, and interpret their own interviews for their final project. The course objectives are: an understanding of modern lesbian movements and cultures from a historical perspective, basic skills in and knowledge of oral history methods, and the rich experience of being historians by creating new records of lesbian lives. SWG 150 is a prerequisite for this class.

Requirements for the class include mandatory attendance and full participation in class discussions, short reaction papers, an annotated bibliography, two essays based on research at the Sophia Smith Collection, an interview guide, and a transcribed, edited oral history. Students will also present their oral history to the class.

The oral histories collected for this class will become a part of the permanent collection at the SSC and available to future researchers. Students will therefore follow the SSC’s oral history protocol and will complete the necessary approval and training required by IRB.

Office hours will be held from 9:30-11am on Wednesdays at my office in the Sophia Smith Collection, x 2979.

Your grade will be based on the following breakdown:

- Attendance and active participation  25%
- Short writing assignments  25%
- Finalized Oral History Transcript  50%

Required texts:


All books are on reserve at Neilson. Articles assigned will be sent to you electronically.

** This syllabus is a work-in-progress and may be revised.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 30</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>A Lesbian Life: One Couple’s Story</td>
<td>Faderman, Introduction</td>
<td>Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8</td>
<td>Lesbian Histories, 1930s-1950s</td>
<td>Beemyn, Chapters 2, 6-7, Faderman, Chapter 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>Lesbian Histories, 1950s-1970s</td>
<td>Gallo, Prologue, Chapters 1, 6-7, Faderman, Chapter 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>A Life of Activism</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Secret Anymore: The Times of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon</td>
<td>In preparation for this class and JEB’s upcoming visit, please skim Biren’s oral history online [<a href="http://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/vof/transcripts/Biren.pdf">http://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/vof/transcripts/Biren.pdf</a>] and look at the online exhibit about her. [<a href="http://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/pwv/pwv-jeb.html">http://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/pwv/pwv-jeb.html</a>] We will discuss both of these after the film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>Nielson Library session with Elizabeth Foster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 22</td>
<td>Lesbian Histories, 1980s-present</td>
<td>Gallo, Chapter 10 &amp; Epilogue, Faderman, Chapters 10-11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>Guest: Joan E. Biren</td>
<td></td>
<td>Note: class will take place in Seelye 207</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February 27  Lesbian and Trans Histories

Reading:  Nan Boyd, “Bodies in Motion: Lesbian and Transsexual Histories,” from Stryker and Whittle, eds., *The Transgender Studies Reader*
Nan Boyd, “Lesbians Talk Transgender”

Film:  *Mind if I Call You Sir?*

February 29  Sophia Smith Collection visit with Karen Kukil
Meet in the SSC, Alum Gym

**Annotated Bibliography and Name of Narrator Due**

March 2  Camera Workshop with Jeff Heath in the CMP
(half of you will attend)

March 5  Oral History Theory and Method

Reading:  Alessandro Portelli, “What Makes Oral History Different,” from *The Oral History Reader*
Charlton, Chapter 11
Gluck and Patai, Chapters 2 and 9

March 7  Queer Methodologies


**First SSC Essay Due**

March 9  Camera Workshop with Jeff Heath in the CMP
(half of you will attend)

March 12  Creating an Interview Guide

Reading:  Charlton, Chapter 5

**Second SSC Essay Due**

March 14  Mini-Interview Report Back

**Mini Interviews Complete**

March 19-23  Spring Break

March 26  Interview Guide Workshop
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Transcribing and Editing/ Interview Guide Workshop</td>
<td>Charlton, Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Theory and Interpretation</td>
<td>Charlton, Chapter 9, Gluck and Patai, Chapter 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>Performances and Exhibits</td>
<td>Charlton, Chapter 15, Fousekis, “Experiencing History: A Journey from Oral History to Performance,” from <em>Remembering: Oral History Performance</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>Finalizing Transcripts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>Synthesis/Performances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Synthesis/Performances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignments:

- I may ask you for short reaction papers over the semester. These assignments will be given out in class the meeting before they are due and will be graded only as pass/fail.
  **Due date: TBD**

- You must complete an online training course in oral history in order to be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB oversees all studies involving human subjects, including oral history, and you must be certified by the IRB before you begin your interviews. Please go to [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org) to complete the training by February 20th. Please allow at least a couple of hours to complete the course.
  **Due date: February 20**

- In preparation for your oral history, you will need to compile a short annotated bibliography related to the woman you are going to interview. Tell me who your narrator is and describe her in a brief paragraph. Your bibliography should contain at least three secondary sources (articles, books, films) and each entry should be followed by a paragraph assessing the sources’ relevance and contribution to the subject you will pursue.
  **Due Date: February 29**

- We will visit the Sophia Smith Collection exploring documents related to 20th century lesbian history. You will choose one document (photo, article, poem, speech, etc) to work with and write a 3-4 page essay interpreting this document in historical context. You must use at least one secondary source in addition to class texts.
  **Due date: March 7**

- Please select one VOF oral history to explore—browse the transcript and watch a brief segment from one of the DVDs. All transcripts are available online at [www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/vof/vof-intro.html](http://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/vof/vof-intro.html). You will write a 2-3 page review of the interview.
  **Due date: March 12**

- After our camera training, you will conduct a short interview with a friend/colleague around campus in order to get comfortable with interviewing and with the equipment. I will ask you to reflect on the experience in class rather than turn in the tapes or something written. Be sure to reserve a camera well in advance.
  **Due date: March 14**

- You will prepare an interview guide for your oral history. We will spend one class discussing how to do this. In short, it is a brief bio of your narrator followed by a list of questions organized by chronologically and/or topically. These are due on a rolling basis; in other words, you must create this document before you go out on your interview. So when it’s finished, please email it to me for feedback.
  **Due Date: When it’s ready!**

- Your final project for this class is the taped interview and an edited transcript submitted in paper and electronic form.
  **Due Date: May 7, by 4pm, at the SSC**