Early Modern European Women's History

Fall 2012

Dr. Allyson M. Poska
Monroe 226 x1478
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 12-1pm Tuesday-Thursday 2-3pm

This course will examine the history of women in Europe from approximately 1400 to 1800. Traditionally marginalized or neglected by historical study, women's history has become a thriving and expanding part of the historical discipline. Unlike many other history courses that rely on the traditional historical narrative, this class will be more thematic, exploring key issues in women's lives including religion, family, work, culture, and politics.

Course Goals and Objectives:
- Ability to analyze sources and arguments
- Ability to read critically primary sources and modern authorities
- Ability to write with clarity about the past
- Ability to communicate in a group setting

This course counts as Human Experience and Society. As such, you will learn
- to explain human and social experiences and activities from multiple perspectives
- to draw appropriate conclusions based on evidence
- to transfer knowledge and skills learned to a novel situation.

This course counts in the History major, the Women’s and Gender Studies major, and as an IA support course

Books available for Purchase:
Thomas Cohen, Love and Death in Renaissance Italy (Chicago)
Catalina de Erauso, The Lieutenant Nun: The Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World (Beacon, 1997)
John Lynn, Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge)
Caroline Weber, Queen of Fashion: What Marie Antoinette Wore to the Revolution (Pan Macmillan)

Articles on Canvas or online:
Case of Thomas Hall (on canvas)
Deborah Harkness, “A View from the Streets: Women and Medical Work in Elizabethan London”
Course Requirements:
There will be a Midterm (25%) and a Final Exam (25%).

Class participation (25%)
Your class participation grade will be determined by your participation in class activities including in-class writing assignments, group work, and class discussion. You should come to class having completed the readings for the week and prepared to discuss them on paper, in groups, or as a part of class discussion. You are not expected to be brilliant each class period. Questions, comments, and thoughtful opinions are all crucial parts of classroom learning. You are encouraged to participate in whatever form that you are able. This class will include some serious, scholarly critiques of some patriarchal institutions, expectations of women as expressed by both men and women in both the past and the present, and the historical discipline. Much of women’s history is based on exactly those critiques. However, students should be careful not to base their critiques on gender-stereotyping of either men or women.

PAPERS:
The rest of your grade (25%) will be determined by two six-page papers.
Paper assignment number 1) You will find two short texts about religion by women who lived between 1300 and 1800. You will write a six page essay comparing and contrasting the way that each woman treats gender in her text. Be sure to choose two women of the same religion! This essay is due Monday October 1

Paper assignment number 2) You will find two short texts by women writers (non-religious) and/or paintings by women artists who lived between 1300 and 1800. Choose either paintings or texts, not a combination of the two. You will write a six page essay comparing and contrasting the way that each woman treated gender in her text or artwork. This essay is due Monday November 19.

When you use texts, I prefer that you choose a complete text; however, should the entire piece not be translated, you may consult with me about using an excerpt of substantial length.

If the text does not seem to deal with gender in any way, DON’T USE IT. Choose something else.

When you use paintings, you must do some additional research to know the meaning of objects in paintings. Do not just guess. For instance, objects considered feminine in the 20th century did not necessarily have the same connotation in the 16th century.

There are many useful collections and websites. I would recommend browsing the website A celebration of Women Writers http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/
The Emory Women Writers Resource project http://chaucer.library.emory.edu/wwrp/
A number of websites available through earlymodernweb.org
I would also suggest works in the University of Chicago’s *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe* series, many of which are available in our library (especially on Netlibrary) and all of which are available at Amazon.com.

All your work is bound by the UMW honor code. Papers are due at the BEGINNING of the class. Computer breakdowns are NOT an excuse. Late papers (even one minute late), will be penalized one grade for each 24 hour period.

Papers will be in 12 pt font, double-spaced and will have 1” margins. If you have any questions about format or footnoting see Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. Be sure to proofread your papers before turning them in. **Spell check and grammar check. Set the default on your grammar check to FORMAL.** This will avoid embarrassing errors. Below are examples of correct footnotes:

a first reference


a second reference to the same material immediately following the first:

2 Ibid., 68.

Check your paper to ensure that
1) You have a thesis, something to argue
2) The thesis is stated clearly
3) Each paragraph is asserts something that relates back to the thesis
4) This assertion is backed up by specific evidence
5) Each paragraph contains some of your own ideas
6) The conclusion reasserts the paper’s argument clearly and concisely

I encourage you to discuss your papers with me and I am willing to read any drafts, except in the last 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Grade scale
A 95-100; A- 90-94; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 63-66

Students with an average of 69 or lower will receive an unsatisfactory on mid-semester reports.

**LAPTOP POLICY:** Laptops may be used in the classroom for *notetaking only*. I reserve the right to prohibit laptop use at any time for any reason.

**Students requiring special accommodations:**
If you already receive services through the Office of Disability Services and require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Please bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in the strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not contacted the Office of Disability Services and need special accommodations, please contact them at 540-654-1266.
Course Schedule:

Week 1 Introduction
The Aristotelian Model, Christian Theology, and the *Querelle des Femmes*
Discuss: Greek and Christian Excerpts, Swetnam, and Agrippa
**Read:** Greek and Christian Excerpts, Swetnam, and Agrippa
Joseph Swetnam’s “The Arraignment of Lewd, idle, froward, and unconstant women or the vanity of them” (1615)
And excerpt from Cornelius Agrippa’s *Declaration on the Nobility and Excellence of women* (On Canvas)

Week 2 Catholic Religious Women
Female Monasticism
Discuss: “New Worlds” Chapter 2 of *Women on the Margins*
Female Mysticism Discuss: Excerpts from Julian of Norwich (on canvas)
**Read:** “New Worlds” Chapter 2 of *Women on the Margins*

Week 3 Women and the Protestant Reformation
Luther and Women
Radical Reformers and gender
Discuss: Excerpts from *Luther on Women* (on Canvas)
**Read:** Excerpts from *Luther on Women* (on Canvas)

Week 4 Jewish and Muslim Women
Jewish Life
Muslim Life
Discuss: Chapter 1 “Arguing with God” in Davis, *Women on the Margins* and chapter 2 from Perry *The Handless Maiden* (on Canvas)
**Read:** Chapter 1 “Arguing with God” in Davis, *Women on the Margins* and chapter 2 from Perry *The Handless Maiden* (on Canvas)

Week 5 Women and Work
Traditional Occupations/Servitude
“Professional Women”
Discuss: Primary sources on work (on canvas) and Deborah Harkness, “A View from the Streets: Women and Medical Work in Elizabethan London”
**Read:** Primary sources on work (on canvas) and “A View from the Streets: Women and Medical Work in Elizabethan London”

Week 6 Women’s bodies
early modern demography
the stages of life
Discuss: “Secret Births and Infanticide” at JSTOR and “The perils of procreation” (on canvas)
**Read:** “Secret Births and Infanticide” and “The perils of procreation”
PAPER #1 Due Monday October 1

Week 7 Medical knowledge and the female body
Wednesday Discuss: “Elizabethan Birth Control and Puritan Attitudes” at JSTOR and excerpt
from gynecological manual (on canvas)
Friday Midterm
Read: “Elizabethan Birth Control and Puritan Attitudes” and excerpt from gynecological manual (on canvas)

**Week 8 NO CLASS MONDAY** Fall Break
Wednesday Gendering Conflict and Violence
Friday Discuss: Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*
Read: Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*

**Week 9 Women and Property**
Dowry and Inheritance
Discuss: Primary Sources on Property (on canvas)
**NO CLASS FRIDAY**

**Week 10 Women and the law**
Pursuing Litigation
Committing Crimes
Discuss: Cohen, *Love and Death in Renaissance Italy*
Read: Cohen, *Love and Death in Renaissance Italy*

**Week 11 Women and Artistic Production**
Female Artists
Female Patronage
Discuss: Jacobs, “Women’s Capacity to Create” (available at JSTOR) and chapter 3 “Metamorphoses” in Davis, *Women on the Margins*
Read: Jacobs, “Women’s Capacity to Create” (available at JSTOR) and chapter 3 “Metamorphoses” in Davis, *Women on the Margins*

**Week 12 The Politics of Gender/ the Gender of Politics**
The problem of queens
Discuss Weber, *Queen of Fashion*
Read: Weber, *Queen of Fashion*

**Week 13 Women and Science**
Discuss Schiebinger “The Philosopher’s Beard: Women and Gender in Science” (on canvas)
Wednesday NO CLASS THANKSGIVING
FRIDAY NO CLASS THANKSGIVING
Read: Schiebinger “The Philosopher’s Beard: Women and Gender in Science”
PAPER #2 DUE MONDAY November 19

**Week 14 Imperial Sexuality**
Native Women and Conquest
White women and the Imperial project
Discuss: *Lieutenant Nun* and excerpt on Thomas Hall (on Canvas)
Read: *Lieutenant Nun* and excerpt on Thomas Hall (on Canvas)
**Week 15** *Witchcraft*

Wednesday Discuss: An early modern witchtrial (on canvas) and the confessions etc… at
http://witching.org/content/witches-huntingdon

Friday—no class History Symposium

**Read:** An early modern witchtrial (on canvas) and the confessions etc… at
http://witching.org/content/witches-huntingdon