

Early Modern European Women's History

Fall 2016

Dr. Allyson M. Poska

Monroe 226 x1478

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 12-1pm Tuesday-Thursday 1-2pm

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:

Merry Wiesner Hanks, *Convents confront the Reformation* (Marquette)

Catalina de Erauso, *The Lieutenant Nun: The Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World* (Beacon)

Caroline Weber, *Queen of Fashion: What Marie Antoinette Wore to the Revolution* (Pan Macmillan)

Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins* (Harvard)

E. William Monter, *The Rise of Female Kings* (Yale)

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 five-page papers. You must write five full pages of text to receive full credit.

Paper assignment number 1) You will find a text about religion/spirituality by a woman who lived between 1300 and 1800. Your essay will analyze the following:

- 1) How the author understands women's role in early modern society
- 2) Compare and contrast that with the author's understanding of her religion's (either Protestantism or Catholicism) expectations of women
- 3) How her spirituality or religious activity was influenced by her sex/gender

This essay is due Monday September 26

Paper assignment number 2) You will find a text by a women writer who lived between 1300 and 1800 about something OTHER THAN religion. Most texts focus on either motherhood, marriage, or education

Your five page essay will analyze:

- 1) How the author understands women's role in early modern society
- 2) Compare and contrast that with the author understanding of early modern society's expectations

This essay is due Monday November 14.

When you use texts, I prefer that you choose a complete text; however, if the entire piece is not available in translation, 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. It may be useful for you to do some basic research on the author to ensure that you understand why she wrote the text.

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 *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

You must fill out, pledge, and attach the **Paper checksheet** (at Files on Canvas) to each paper and the **Putting feedback to use** (at Files on Canvas) sheet to your second paper.

UMW Honor Code

All of your work is subject to the UMW honor code. You must pledge and sign all of your assignments. Details of the UMW Honor System are available at <http://students.umw.edu/honor-system/> and <http://honor.umwblogs.org/honor-2-0/f-a-q/>

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. Be sure to ***Spell check and grammar check***. This will avoid embarrassing errors.

You must fill out and attach the **Paper checksheet** (at Files on Canvas) to each paper and the **Putting feedback to use** (at Files on Canvas) sheet to your second paper.

Below are examples of correct footnotes:

a first reference

¹John Hope Franklin, *George Washington Williams: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 54.

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 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. Cellphones must be turned off and remain out of sight at all times.

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, Joseph Swetnam's "The Arraignment of Lewd, idle, froward, and unconstant women or the vanity of them" (1615) and excerpt from Cornelius Agrippa's *Declamation on the Nobility and Excellence of women* (all on Canvas)

Week 2

No class Monday Labor Day

Return of Martin Guerre

Week 3 *Catholic Women*

Female Mysticism Discuss: Excerpts from Julian of Norwich (on Canvas)

Female Monasticism

Discuss: Zemon Davis, chapter 2 "New Worlds – Marie de l'Incarnation

Read: Excerpts from Julian of Norwich (on Canvas)

Week 4 *Women and the Protestant Reformation*

Luther and Women

Discuss: Excerpts from *Luther on Women* (on Canvas)

Read: Excerpts from *Luther on Women* (on Canvas)

Week 5 *More on Women and the Reformation*

Discuss: Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents confront the Reformation*

Women and the Radical Reformation

Catholic laywomen after the Catholic Reformation

Read: Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents confront the Reformation*

Week 6 *Jewish and Muslim Women*

Muslim Life

Jewish Life

Discuss: Zemon Davis, chapter 1 Arguing with God — Glikl bas Judah Leib

Read: Zemon Davis, chapter 1 Arguing with God — Glikl bas Judah Leib

Week 7 *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" *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Volume 82, Number 1(Spring 2008), 52-85 (available at Project Muse)

Read: Primary sources on work (on Canvas) and "A View from the Streets: Women and Medical Work in Elizabethan London" at Project Muse

Week 8

Monday NO CLASS FALL BREAK

Wednesday Medical knowledge and the female body

Friday Discuss: Laura Gowing, "Secret Births and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 156 (August 1997): 87-115 (on-line at JSTOR) and "The perils of procreation" (on Canvas)

Read: "Secret Births and Infanticide" at JSTOR and "The perils of procreation" (on Canvas)

Week 9 *Women and the law*

Dowry and Inheritance Discuss: Primary Sources on Property (on Canvas)

Women and the Courts

Friday MIDTERM

Week 10 *Early Modern Queenship*

The problems of queens

Other types of queens

Discuss: Monter, *The Rise of Female Kings*

Read: Monter, *The Rise of Female Kings*

Week 11 *Gender, Power, and Fashion*

Discuss Weber, *Queen of Fashion* chaps. 1-5

Discuss, Weber, *Queen of Fashion* chaps. 5-end

Read: Weber, *Queen of Fashion* and watch Sophia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* (2006)

Week 12 *Women and Artistic Production*

Female Artists

Female Patronage

Discuss: Frederika H. Jacobs, "Woman's Capacity to Create: The Unusual Case of Sofonisba

Anguissola" *Renaissance Quarterly* vol. 47, No. 1 (Spring, 1994): 74-101 (available at JSTOR)

Read: Jacobs, "Women's Capacity to Create"

Week 13 *Women and Science*

Discuss: Zemon Davis, chapter 3 *Metamorphoses* — Maria Sibylla Merian

Wednesday NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

FRIDAY NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

Read: Zemon Davis, chapter 3 *Metamorphoses* — Maria Sibylla Merian

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>