London Women's Social History from Aphra Behn to the Blitz
CAS WS 310/HI 249 (Elective A)

Course Description
This course will examine the lives of women in London over the past three centuries from a social history perspective. You will study the position of women in the late 17th and 18th centuries, the context of the burgeoning feminist movement of the 19th century, and the critical importance of the campaign for the vote and women’s role in two world wars in the long march to equality.

The course is organised chronologically, beginning with women’s lives in the middle of the 17th century, the tail-end of the early modern age where women were routinely described and treated as the ‘weaker vessel’; the invention of ‘domestic ideology’ in the late 18th century; the rise of feminism and feminists’ relationship with Queen Victoria who was the most powerful woman in the world; the struggle for legal and political equality, the moderate and militant campaign for women’s suffrage; the role of women in two world wars and the impact on women’s lives in the 1920s and 1930s, and the 1950s and 1960s.

The course assumes no prior knowledge. The focus throughout will be on illustrated lectures, close readings of primary sources, textual, visual and oral from London women’s social history. Texts, images and sound will be placed in their historical contexts in the period under review. The four grading elements will include formative and summative assignments to practice the application of knowledge and skills developed throughout the course. Field study visits to museums, galleries and specialist libraries and a guided walk, will enable you to study artefacts and paintings and interactive displays to better understand and contextualise women’s lives in the three centuries under review. Film clips and excerpts of oral history will add another dimension to your knowledge and enhance your analytical skills.

Course Objectives

1. Hub-aligned

*Historical Consciousness Learning Objective 1*
You will create historical narratives of the London women’s experience, read secondary sources based on your exposure to and analysis of primary source material and sites and construct historical arguments using these sources.

**Historical Consciousness Learning Objective 2**
You will interpret primary sources, including visual sources, textual sources, oral history testimony and landmarks, and deploy a range of narrative and interpretive skills locating these materials and sites in the historical contexts of the social and political movements for suffrage in London.

**Historical Consciousness Learning Objective 3**
Through sustained, guided and independent research for your final essay, and in your written answers to the mid-term and final examinations, you will demonstrate your knowledge of intellectual paradigms, forms of political organisation and the socio-economic, legal and political forces that shaped British women’s lives in the period under review.

**Research and Information Literacy Learning Objective 1**
Through visits to archival and subject specialist libraries, permanent collections and temporary exhibitions in London galleries and museums and public sites of historical interest to suffrage in the time period studied, you will compile primary and secondary source material sufficient to identify and briefly discuss such resources in the mid-term examination, to broadly and deeply structure an essay of original research with inclusively interrogated thesis statement, and to develop a historical argument with appropriate citation and context in a final, open-book examination.

**Research and Information Literacy Learning Objective 2**
You will be guided through the development of the skills necessary to structure and create a comprehensive research paper by the professor in class and through assignments involving primary source material throughout the course, culminating in a 3500-word (14 double-spaced pages) work of original scholarship.

2. **Discipline-specific**
You will gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the social history of women who lived in London from the 1660s to the end of the Second World War in 1945. Visits to museums, galleries, archives and sites of protest in the struggle for equality will take this subject from words on a page to historical artefacts, documents and places at the heart of such important challenges and long-lasting change.

**Course Assessment**
Mid-term examination: 20% of final grade
Final examination: 20% of final grade
Research paper: 50% of final grade
Classwork: 10% of final grade

1. The mid-term examination will test your factual knowledge of the key facts of the course content thus far, including information gathered on field study visits, and familiarity with primary sources analysed in class. It will be a thirty-minute exercise of 10 questions requiring short answers, some one-word answers, and some short paragraphs.

2. The final examination will be a two-hour open-book examination. Presented with a choice of three questions on the major areas of the course: domestic ideology; the militant campaign for the women’s suffrage, and the role of women during EITHER the First World War, OR the Second World War, you will be asked to write ONE long essay to demonstrate your
understanding and engagement with that particular subject. The professor will be looking at how you develop and demonstrate the historical arguments of your essay. You will be expected to deploy the primary and secondary sources analysed and discussed in class, the information acquired on field study visits, and other course materials attached to each class session on Blackboard. Grades awarded will be based on: relevance of your answer to the question posed; clarity of expression; analysis central to the question asked; quality of the arguments you present, and evidence of wider reading around the subject and connections made to field study visits.

3. The research paper of a minimum of 3,500 words on a subject of your choice from the period under review is worth 50% of the final grade. Heavily supported by guidance and support from the professor, you will be asked to choose a subject on which to write a paper which must demonstrate evidence of wide secondary reading and the use of primary sources to illuminate and illustrate your thesis statement. Visits to archives, museums and specialist libraries will be encouraged. Electronic sources will also play a role in the completion of this task. Given the compressed timescale, production of the paper will be closely structured by the professor with milestones included in this syllabus in Session 1, viz., Session 3, topic chosen; Session 5, rough working title to be produced and Session 7, paper plan to be handed in and signed off by the professor. The hard copy of the research paper will be handed to the professor in Session 10.

4. Attendance, participation in class discussions, reflections on the readings on Blackboard, engagement in the tasks carried out in class such as document analysis and field study visits will be worth 10% of the final grade. Interaction with the professor in the research gathering and writing of the research paper will also be included in the calibration of the final grade.

Grading
The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University’s Study Abroad London Programmes.

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Honour Points</th>
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<td>A-</td>
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Grading Criteria
‘Incomplete’ or I grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow ‘Audits’ (AU), ‘Withdrawals’ (W), or ‘Pass/Fail’ (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

A This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.
A- Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

B+, B, B- This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

C+, C, C- Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student’s own work except where properly cited.

D A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.

F The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:
- Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- So poorly written as to defy understanding
- So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
- Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism. *Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

**Attendance**

**Classes**

All Boston University Study Abroad London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, tutorial, and field trip in order to fulfil the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

**Authorised Absence**

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness, for which students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor’s note as soon as possible). The form can be found here: [https://www.bu.edu/london/report-absence/](https://www.bu.edu/london/report-absence/)
Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- Illness (first day of sickness): If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student’s lecturer).
- Illness (multiple days): If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call in to the Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs Office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence
Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a 4% grade penalty to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs Office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a ‘Fail’ in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Religious Holidays
Boston University’s Office of the University Registrar states:

‘The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.’

Special Accommodations
Each student will need to contact Disability and Access Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-DAS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from BU-DAS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to DAS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

Lateness
Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

Course Chronology
Session 1: Introduction to London Women’s Social History

Introduction and orientation to the course syllabus and assessment

Discussion: what do you know about women’s history? Who was Aphra Behn?

Lecture: ‘The Weaker Vessel’: attitudes to women in the 17th and 18th centuries. By focussing on this orthodoxy whose origins are in the Bible, and hobbled girls’ and women’s lives, this illustrated talk introduces students to the task of creating an historical narrative of women’s lives from the 1660s to 1945.

Primary source analysis: ‘William Mompesson’s Letter to his Children on the Death of their Mother, 31 August 1666.’ This document will familiarise students with an antique vocabulary that was widely used to construct the paradigm of the perfect wife and mother, and is a helpful exercise in preparing for the use of primary sources in the writing of their research paper.

Field study visit led by the professor to the Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2, to complete the assignment, ‘Where Are The Women?’


Preparation: Elizabeth Eger and Lucy Peltz, Brilliant Women: 18th Century Bluestockings, Chapter 1, The Bluestocking Circle: Friendship, Patronage and Learning, pp.21-56

Research Preparation: Investigate a subject for the research paper. Choice to be finalised before the end of Session 3.

Session 2: Field study visit to the National Portrait Gallery, St Martin’s Place, London WC2, and guided walk in search of monuments of 19th century women.

Led by the professor you will complete the assignment, ‘Women’s Portraiture at the National Portrait Gallery’. You will be asked to locate and interrogate the imagery of more than a dozen women’s portraits of the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Part 2 of the session will be a guided walk by the professor to locate monuments of 19th century women.


Read Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850, Chapter 3, ‘The Nursery of Virtue’: domestic ideology and the middle class, pp. 149-192

Session 3: ‘The Angel of the House’: Domestic Ideology and Women’s Lives in the 18th and 19th centuries

Discussion of assignments completed at the Museum of London and the National Portrait Gallery.

Discussion of ‘The Bluestocking Circle’, definition, origins and key personnel.


In our on-going construction of the historical narrative of women’s lives the class will be alerted to the creation of a new and more constraining dogma - the confinement of women to the domestic sphere – and feminists’ arguments challenging conservative and enduring notions of the role of women.


Primary source analysis: extracts from Hannah More, Essay on Various Subjects Principally Designed for Young Ladies (1791); Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education (1799); Mary Wollstonecraft, Thoughts on the Education of Daughters (1787) and Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792).

Close reading of the texts of these important women will be a useful experience when you deploy historical documents in the writing of your research papers.

Discussion: Imagine an occasion such as a dinner party, where Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft were present. Consider how they might have interacted with each other in their discussions of their divergent views. Also envision the guests’ response to being in the presence of two women expressing such polarised views about what it means to be a woman.

Research Tutorial Discussion: You will discuss your choice of subject for the research paper. Having already considered the viability of the paper topic in the time available, the professor will direct you where appropriate to museums, specialist libraries and archives, including the Florence Nightingale Museum; the Wellcome Library; the Manuscripts Department of the British Library; the Suffrage Collections at the Museum of London, and electronic resources to pursue your research and writing.

Session 4: Field Study Visit to Guildhall Library

Led by the professor the visit to the Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London EC3, will provide you the opportunity to access primary and secondary source materials to assist in the completion of the research paper. In addition to historical documents an excellent selection of electronic resources is easily accessible.

Research Tutorial Discussion: Professor will assist you in the shaping of your secondary reading and primary source research. You will discuss your progress thus far, your thesis statement, and make a timetable of when your research trips will take place. In addition the professor will also offer additional support by email in the production of your research papers.
Preparation: Read Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox 1740-1832*, Chapter 1, Caroline and Emily, pp.5-82

Session 5: Marriage as a Business: Love and Marriage in the 18th and 19th centuries

Illustrated lecture: Marriage as a Business: Love and Marriage in 18th and 19th century England. The historical narrative of women’s lives is expanded to present more detailed insights into the personal experiences of the Lennox sisters, high-ranking women of the elite class.

Discussion: The implications of primogeniture, and the plight of unmarried daughters in the upper, gentry and middle classes.


Screening of the 2007 adaptation of Jane Austen’s novel, *Persuasion* and discussion of the film’s treatment of patriarchy, the impact of primogeniture and the prospects of unmarried daughters in the gentry class.

Research Tutorial Discussion: You will discuss your draft working title with the professor. Midway through the course, this is a timely moment for you to have a polished title and thesis as a milestone for the completion of secondary reading and the gathering of any outstanding primary sources.


Session 6: “Hyenas in Petticoats” and ‘Vixens in Velvet’: the rise of feminism in 19th century England


You will gain an in-depth look at the historical arguments that were used on both sides, for and against, female equality.

Discussion of case studies of Harriet Mordaunt, Caroline Norton and Josephine Butler who were victims of, and pamphleteers about, the sexual double standard.

Primary source analysis: Caroline Norton’s ‘Letter to Queen Victoria On Lord Chancellor Cranworth’s Marriage and Divorce Bill’, 1855.

Titled a ‘Letter’ this was in fact a 30,000-word pamphlet and is an excellent tool to familiarise students with the circumstances in which hundreds of thousands of women throughout the United Kingdom were trapped in bad marriages with no means of escape.

Screening of *Suffragette*, 2015
Session 7: Rise Up, Women! The Militant Campaign for the Vote, 1903-1914

Illustrated lecture: Rise Up, Women! The moderate and militant campaigns for women’s suffrage.
The historical arguments concerning why women should, and should not, have the vote are central to understanding the historical narrative of the women’s suffrage movement, founded in the mid 1860s.

Discussion of themes of Suffragette including routes to joining the militant women’s suffrage movement; intersectionality; the legal ownership of children in families and men’s involvement in the struggle for the vote will be explored.

Primary source analysis: A selection of a dozen anti women’s suffrage cartoons, and six pieces of propaganda material produced by the Women’s Social and Political Union. This activity presents students with some of the key primary sources to illuminate the political arguments for and against the enfranchisement of women, and further opportunities to enhance their expertise in analysing historical material.

Research Tutorial Discussion: You will discuss the paper plan of your research paper with the professor. The professor will steer you through your title, thesis statement, development of your argument and the structure of your paper.

A guided-walk round Westminster and Whitehall in the footsteps of the Suffragettes will be led by the professor who will take students to the sites of struggle and suffering presented during the illustrated lecture at the beginning of the class.

Preparation: Draft paper plan of research paper to be brought to Session 8 for professor to comment and sign off before writing commences.

Read Vera Brittain, Testament of Youth, Chapter 6, ‘When the Vision Dies’, pp. 239-289


Session 8: Women’s Work in the First World War, 1914-1918

The historical narrative is further developed in this discussion and description of the critical role of women’s work on the home front during the war and will alert and unpack the changing political landscape of the war period and its consequences for women in the post-1918 era.

Primary source analysis: photographs, posters and printed ephemera illuminating life on the home front between 1914 and 1918. This task will prepare students for the abundance of evidence of women’s lives displayed and interpreted at the Imperial War Museum.
Research Tutorial Discussion: Draft research paper plans to be handed to the professor in class. She will sign off papers to be proceeded with, or give further feedback to students if required.

Field study visit led by the professor to the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 where the assignments, ‘Where are the Women?’ in the First World War, and the Second World War galleries will be completed.


Session 9: Women, War and Electoral Reform, 1914-1918

Screening of excerpts of *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*, archive film and oral testimony compiled by the Imperial War Museum, 2014

Discussion of the assignment findings ‘Where are the Women?’ in the Imperial War Museum’s First World gallery.

Illustrated lecture: Women’s War Work, the Vote and the Impact of the Vote on Women’s Lives in the 1920s and 1930s. The socio-economic, political and legal forces that shaped women’s lives is illuminated in this major strand of the historical narrative, arguments and paradigms of the course.

Primary source analysis: material re Lady Nancy Astor, the first woman to take her seat in Parliament in 1919. Looking at the evidence of Nancy Astor’s parliamentary career students will see how politics are dynamic and organic: how an influential socialite who expressed no interest in votes for women - because of the enfranchisement of women - became an effective political campaigner for women and children.

Preparation: Read Mavis Nicolson (Ed.), *What did you do in the War, Mummy? The Experiences of Women at War*, pp. 17-22; 41-50; 71-76; 77-80; 81-90; 167-173; 175-79; 180-87.

Session 10: Women’s Lives During the Second World War

Discussion of the assignment findings, ‘Where are the Women? in the Imperial War Museum’s Second World War gallery.

Illustrated lecture: Women’s Lives in London, 1939 -1945. The final strand of the historical narrative of three hundreds of London women’s social history examines a variety of visual, textual and oral evidence of women’s experiences during the war; the students will now have a comprehensive understanding of the enormous changes in women’s lives in the period under review and be au fait with the historical contexts in which these changes took place.

Screening of *London Can Take It! The British Home Front at War*, archive film and oral history compiled by the Imperial War Museum, 2010
Screening of Women and Children At War: The British Home Front at War, archive film and oral testimony compiled by the Imperial War Museum, 2010

Discussion of themes featured in both screenings.

You will hand your research paper to the professor in class.

Readings
There is no core textbook for this course, therefore you will be directed to chapters in the following books which will be available for study from Blackboard presented below in the order in which the subjects are taught on the syllabus. Hard copies of these titles are also available at the BU London Library at 43 Harrington Gardens.

**Required Readings**


Davidoff, Leonore and Hall, Catherine, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, Hutchison, 1987


Thompson, Dorothy, *Queen Victoria: Gender and Power*, Virago, 1990

Taylor, Barbara, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the 19th Century*, Virago,


Nicolson Mavis (ed.) *What did you do in the War, Mummy? The experiences of women at war,*
Selective Bibliography

The selective bibliography suggests secondary source readings should you wish to explore themes covered in class as topics for their research essays. The professor will also direct you to primary sources during the class tutorials in Sessions 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8. This is in addition to support by the professor via email. If you select other subject areas for their research essays, the professor will provide relevant titles and full bibliographical information, where to locate primary sources and electronic materials.


Rendall, Jane (Ed), *Equal or Different?: Women’s Politics 1800-1914*, Basil Blackwell


Burnett, John (Ed), *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s*, Penguin Books, 1974


Hall, Catherine, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, Polity Press, 1992


Levine, Philippa, *Victorian Feminism 1850-1900*, Hutchinson, 1987


Pankhurst, Emmeline, *My Own Story*, 1914, reprinted Virago, 1980


Bush, Julia, *Women Against The Vote: Female Anti-Suffragism in Britain*, Oxford University Press, 2007

Pember Reeves, Maud, *Round About A Pound A Week*, 1913, reprinted by Virago Press 1979


