HI 425: Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe

Spring 2012

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Office hours: Tu 12:30-2:30, Th 2:00-3:00, and by appointment

Historians call the period between the Renaissance and the French Revolution the “early modern era” because it witnessed many social, political, and intellectual changes associated with modernity. What part did women play in these changes, and how did they affect their lives? This course examines the realities of women’s lives against a background of the attitudes towards gender that shaped women’s lives in the early modern period. It begins with an overview of the ideas men formed centuries earlier about women’s nature and transmitted through the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, medicine, and natural philosophy. As we will see, these beliefs, which represented women as mentally and physically weak creatures, remained dominant through at least the seventeenth century and had an important impact on their domestic and public roles. Women nevertheless found ways to maneuver within—and around—the limits that men tried to impose on them. The realities of their lives and accomplishments often departed significantly from the restricted domestic sphere in which theories of womanly weakness attempted to contain them.

This course will be run as a seminar with a strong emphasis on both discussion of assigned readings and original, independent research. Assigned books include a text intended to give an overview and introduce key questions for further study (Wiesner’s *Women and Gender*), a path-breaking study of the strategies by which three early modern women expanded the boundaries of their lives (Davis’s *Women on the Margins*), and three books written by early modern women (Glückel’s *Memoirs*, Teresa of Avila’s *Book of Her Life*, and María de San José Salazar’s *Book for the Hour of Recreation*). These readings will be supplemented with online source materials and journal articles.

Written work will include a variety of short exercises, including thesis statements and discussion questions for assigned readings; a 6-8 page analytical essay on assigned readings; and a 15-20 page original research paper on a subject chosen in collaboration with the instructor. Students will also be graded on the quality of their participation in class discussion through the semester and on several required oral presentations.

Students should expect to participate actively in class discussion of common readings but also to share research findings, offer draft outlines and introductions for discussion in small study groups, and engage in constructive criticism of the work of others in the class. The more we can make this a mutually supportive enterprise, the more you will enjoy the course and the better your final papers will be.

**Books available for purchase at the Barnes & Noble BU Bookstore:**

Wiesner, Merry E., *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edition (Cambridge)
Mariá de San José Salazar and Alison Weber (editor), *Book for the Hour of Recreation* (U. Chicago)

Primary source documents relating to topics discussed in Wiesner’s *Women and Gender* are available online at the Cambridge University Press site for the book under “Ancillary materials” (www.cambridge.org/us/knowledge/isbn/item1164005/?site_locale=en_US). You should bookmark the
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site; we will be using it often.

Additional readings will be available through Mugar Library’s electronic resources or posted to the course’s Blackboard site (accessible through the Student Link) the week before they are due to be read and discussed in class.

Assignments:

The principal written assignment for the course is a paper of 15-20 pages based on original research in primary source documents. In addition, written work will consist of (1) a one-paragraph thesis statement and two discussion questions for the assigned journal articles and the book by Davis, (2) a 6-8 page essay due week 6, and (3) a research proposal due week 8. Students will also be graded on contributions made orally, including regular participation in class discussion and a 10 minute presentation of their research project during the final week of class. These assignments will be weighted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis statements, discussion questions, and research proposal</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>most wks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 page essay analyzing trial documents</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>wk 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation, document presentations, and final oral presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>all wks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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Students should consult the History Department’s Writing Guide for useful hints about both technical aspects of writing and conducting research (there is a link to the Writing Guide in the “Undergraduate Program” section of the department website). You may also find Michael Harvey’s *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* useful. For proper treatment of citations, see the *Chicago Manual of Style* (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html, accessible through Mugar Library’s home page. Under “Research Tips for Final Papers,” click on “Citing your sources” and then on “Chicago [or Turabian] style”).

Course Requirements:

Please note that, except where specified, all papers must be delivered in hard copy. I cannot assume responsibility for downloading and printing out your assignments. If you cannot bring a paper to me in class, bring it to the History Department office (226 Bay State Road, room 308) and give it to the department secretary, who will place it in my mailbox. As a safety feature, you should email me a back-up copy as a “doc” or “docx” file, so that I know exactly when the paper was turned in, but it is the hard copy that I will grade.

We have only thirteen class meetings; it is important that you attend them all. **Students who miss more than one class for an unexcused absence will have their grade for the course lowered one-half grade for every additional unexcused absence.** If you are sick or must miss class for another serious reason, you need to contact me ahead of time, to provide a valid excuse, and to make up the missed work as soon as possible. **Students who miss discussion of assigned books and articles are to hand in a two-page thesis statement and critical assessment for each reading missed within a week of the missed class.**

Unexcused late papers will be marked down a half grade (e.g.: B+ becomes B) for every weekday they are late. I expect students to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty as outlined in BU’s *Academic Conduct Code* (www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/). All work handed in for credit must be your own. I will refer cases of suspected academic misconduct to the
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Dean’s Office and assign a grade of “F” for the course to any student whose work is judged by the Dean after a hearing to be plagiarized. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism even after reading the relevant passages of the Academic Conduct Code, I would be happy to talk about this (or any other subject) with you in my office hours.

Cell phones and other communication devices should be neither seen nor heard in class.
They distract you, your fellow students, and me. For the same reason, you may use laptop computers only for taking notes or other class-related tasks. Students violating these policies will be asked to leave, and their absence will be considered unexcused.

Please note that the last day to drop courses without a “W” is Tuesday, February 21. The last day to drop with a “W” is Friday, March 30.

Course Outline
All readings are listed under the date on which they will be discussed and assignments under the date when they are due.

1. 1/19     Introduction to the Course and to Women’s Lives in Early Modern Europe

   Reading:

   Documents:
   – Ancillary Materials for Wiesner’s Women and Gender: Chapter 1, Original Sources # 10 and 11, and Chapter 2, Original Sources # 3, 5, 6, and 8.
   Assignment:
   – Write a one-paragraph thesis statement for the Ferraro and Rublack articles in which you explain clearly and concisely the basic argument of each. Email these to me, along with two questions for class discussion, as a “.doc” or “.docx” file by noon on Wednesday, 1/25.

2. 1/26     Ideas about Women and the Female Life Cycle

   Reading:
   – Wiesner, Women and Gender, chapters 3 and 4: “Women’s Economic Role” and “Literacy and Learning.”

   Documents:
   – Ancillary Materials for Wiesner’s Women and Gender: Chapter 2, Original Source # 24 and 25, Chapter 3, documents # 15 and 17.
   Assignment:
   – Locate Louise Bourgeois Boursier’s The Compleat Midwife’s Practice Enlarged in Early
English Books Online [Mugar Library, Databases, EEBO]. Browse the book and and read the first 12 pages or so. Prepare to discuss your reactions to the book. Why do you think she begins her book on midwifery with such seemingly strange cases?
– Examine some cases involving midwives in the Proceedings of the Old Bailey [www.oldbaileyonline.org/index.jsp]. What do these cases tell us about the professional expertise that midwives were expected to have and how they made use of this expertise?
– Write a one-paragraph thesis statement for the Harley and Gelbart articles. Email these to me, along with two questions for class discussion, as a “.doc” or “docx” file by noon on Wed., 2/1.

4. 2/9

Women and the Creation of Culture (with special attention to women artists)

Reading:
– Wiesner, Women and Gender, chapter 5: “Women and the Creation of Culture.”

Assignment:
– Look at self-portraits by some early modern women artists. (Self-portraits by Sofonisba Anguissola, Rosalba Carriera, Lavinia Fontana, Giovanna Garzoni, Artemesia Gentileschi, Judith Leyster, Elisabetta Sirani, Catharina van Hemessen, and Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, among others, are available in the Web Gallery of Art [www.wga.hu].) Drawing on both your reading and your own observations after looking at examples of self-portraits, prepare to discuss the ways in which these artists choose to present themselves in their self-portraits and the reasons they might have had for wanting to be seen in different ways.
– Write a one-paragraph thesis statement for the Garrard and Cohen articles. Email these to me, along with two questions for class discussion, as a “.doc” or “docx” file by noon on Wed., 2/8.

5. 2/16

Gender, Faith, and the Spirit World (with special attention to witches)

Reading:
– Wiesner, Women and Gender, chapters 6 and 7: “Religion” and “Witchcraft.”

Documents:
– Ancillary Materials: Chapter 6, Original Sources # 2, 4, 7, and 10.
– Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, The Malleus Maleficarum [1484], part 1, Question 6: “Concerning Witches who copulate with Devils. Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil Superstitions?” [online at http://www.malleusmaleficarum.org/]
– James Carmichael, Newes from Scotland, declaring the damnable life and death of Doctor Fian (London, 1592?) [Early English Books online; if you have too much trouble reading the old-fashioned gothic script in which it is printed, you can find a transcription at http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/kjd/index.htm, but do try to read the original.]

Assignment:
– Prepare to discuss the question of why women were so vulnerable to charges of witchcraft.
– Write a one-paragraph thesis statement for the Goodare article. Email it to me, along with two questions for class discussion, as a “.doc” or “docx” file by noon on Wed., 2/15.
6. 2/23 Gender, Sexuality, and Sexual Aggression

**Reading:**
- Michael Rocke, “Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy,” in *The Italian Renaissance*, ed. Paula Findlen, 192-211 [on Blackboard].

**Assignment:**
- Read at least 10 court cases concerning rape* from the Old Bailey Online website [www.oldbaileyonline.org] and write a 6-8 page essay in which you explore what these cases might tell us about gender relations and attitudes toward sexual aggression in eighteenth-century London. You should take your cases from the period between the 1720s and 1780s, when the proceedings are most detailed. Be sure to spend some time reading about the historical background to the proceedings, so as to understand both the crimes tried in the court and trial procedures. (*Alternatively, you may examine same-sex assaults, which will be found under the offence category “assault with sodimetical intent.”*)

7. 3/1 Gender and Honor

**Reading:**

**Assignment:**
- Write a one-paragraph thesis statement for the Foyster and Taylor articles. Email these to me, along with two questions for class discussion, as a “.doc” or “.docx” file by noon on Wed., 2/29.
- Begin thinking about a research paper topic. Come to class prepared to say what you plan to work on and to identify primary sources that will form the basis of your research.

8. 3/8 Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives

**Reading:** Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins*

**Assignment:** Write a one-paragraph thesis statement concisely explaining the basic argument of Davis’s book. Email this to me, along with two questions for discussion, by noon on Wed., 3/7.
- Prepare a two-page research proposal for class discussion and the instructor’s review. The proposal should include a two-page statement of the intended subject of research, a tentative thesis for the paper, and a list of at least 10 relevant secondary works (articles and books) and primary sources. Email the research proposal as a “doc” or “docx” file to other members of your group and to me by noon on Wednesday, March 7.

[3/15 No class: Enjoy your break!]

9. 3/22 Glikl in Her Own Words
Reading: The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln
Assignment:
– Prepare to discuss your reactions to reading Glikl’s memoirs, after reading Davis’s treatment of them. Which do you prefer, and why?
– Email me two discussion questions by noon on Wed., 3/21.
– Continue research for your paper. Revise and extend your research proposal to take advantage of comments from your group and the additional research you have now accomplished. Email the revised research proposal to me and to other members of your group by noon on Wednesday, March 21.

10. 3/29 Teresa of Avila in Her Own Words

Reading: St. Teresa of Avila, The Life.
Assignment:
– Prepare to discuss Teresa’s Life. How does Teresa’s sex affect both her achievements and her way of writing about them?
– Email me two discussion questions by noon on Wed., 3/28.
– Continue research for your paper. Write an introduction to your paper and share it, along with a one or two-page outline of the body of the projected paper, with me and your group, by noon on Wednesday, March 28. (Combine the introduction and outline into one “.doc” file.) Read the introductions and outlines written by other members of your group, and prepare to share your comments on them in small-group meetings.

11. 4/5 Gender, Convent Life, and Spiritual Authority

Reading: Maria de San José Salazar, Book for the Hour of Recreation
Assignment:
– Prepare to discuss how Maria de San José’s picture of Teresa’s achievements compares with Teresa’s own account of her life. Consider also how both women credit male religious authorities with both helping and hindering their spiritual development and religious foundations.
– Email me two discussion questions by noon on Wed., 4/4.
– Work on the first draft of your research paper. Email your draft-in-progress to members of your working group and to me by noon on Wed., 4/4.

12. 4/12 Small Group Discussion of Drafts in Progress

13. 4/19 Presentation of Research Projects

Assignment:
– Prepare an 8-10 minute presentation of your research paper. The presentation should be formal. That is to say, it should be clearly outlined (or written out in advance) and rehearsed. Time will be limited. You will be warned at the 8 minute point that you have two minutes left, and you will be cut off, in mid-sentence if necessary, at 12 minutes.

14. 4/26 No class: Small group meetings will be scheduled for Tuesday, 4/24, and Wednesday, 4/25, to discuss completed drafts of final paper.
Assignment:
– Finish a complete draft of your research paper and share it with the instructor and your group by noon on the day before your group meets. Read the drafts submitted by other members of your group, and prepare to discuss them in small group meetings in Tuesday’s class.

15. Tuesday, May 1: Final papers are due in my mailbox by noon.

Some possible areas for research. Each is very broad and would need first to be narrowed to a particular time and place and then narrowed still further to focus on a particular source or set of sources and a particular set of questions:

- childhood and the education of boys (or girls)
- pregnancy and childbirth; midwives and midwifery
- menstruation and the female body; body image, diet, and fasting
- masculinity (in theory, in practice, in art . . .)
- rape and sexual assault
- wife beating and violence against women
- infanticide and infant abandonment
- illegitimacy and its social and legal consequences
- same sex relationships
- prostitution
- dowries and the contracting of marriage
- marriage and marital relationships
- household management
- widowhood (in theory, in practice . . .)
- single women—choice or misfortune?
- women’s spirituality
- convent life (for contemplative nuns, nuns active as teachers or nurses, repentant prostitutes . . .)
- women in radical religious groups (ie., Quakers, Anabaptists, or other radical sects)
- servant women
- women as traders
- women artists
- poverty and gender
- charity hospitals and their inmates
- apprenticeship and the learning of trades
- gender and crime
- Jewish women
- gender and religious persecution
- witchcraft and demonic possession
- women rulers (in theory, in practice . . .)
- women in the English Civil War
- women in the French Revolution
- ethnic differences and gender on the colonial frontiers
- religious women in the colonial world

Some Useful Online sources for early modern history:

Witches, Demonic Possession, and Witch Hunting:
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- Survey of Scottish Witchcraft [www.shc.ed.ac.uk/Research/witches] Contains biographical information on more than 3000 accused witches; searchable by gender, type of crime, and other details. No cases, but could be useful in conjunction with published accounts of trials.
- Salem Witch Trials: Documentary Archive and Transcription Project [e textile.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft] Complete records on Salem Witch Trials. Searchable transcriptions of court records, plus additional information on the context and setting of the trials.
- Early English Books Online [eebo.chadwyck.com.exproxy.bu.edu/search/; access through Mugar Online Resources] searching for witchcraft and other words with “witch” in them produces hundreds of results in which witch trials and cases are featured. Using “advanced search” features, these cases can be narrowed by date, location, etc.

The Social History of Crime, Poverty, and Social Policy in Britain (17th-19th centuries):
- Harvard University Library Open Collection Program; Dying Speeches and Bloody Murders: Crime Broadsides More than 500 broadsides sold to crowds witnessing public executions in 18th and 19th century; includes cases of arson, assault, rape, murder, etc.
- British History Online [www.british-history.ac.uk] Links to many primary sources.

Miscellaneous other sources and bibliographical tools
- Early English Books Online [eebo.chadwyck.com.exproxy.bu.edu/search/; access through Mugar Digital Resources] Digital reproductions of all books published in English in the early modern period. Can be searched by subject or name; useful for finding famous trials and works on topics like midwifery, witchcraft, and other subjects with a gendered dimension.
- Women Writers Online [subscription database; connect through BU digital resources] A complete set of digital texts by women writers from the 16th-early 19th centuries. Includes writings both by famous women (eg., Elizabeth I) and less famous women. Can be used to find writings by female Quakers, such as Margaret Fell, as well as more specifically literary productions.
- Internet Library of Early Journals [eighteenth and nineteenth-century British journals; see for example, Gentleman’s Magazine (1731-1750) “a Britain-focused miscellany of information about people, places and events”]

See also the bibliographies in the Ancillary Materials for Merry Wiesner’s Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe [www.cambridge.org/us/knowledge/isbn/item1164005/site_locale=en_US].