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# History 392

## Women and Gender in Modern Europe, 1750 to the Present

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Professor Mary Louise Roberts ([maryroberts@wisc.edu](mailto:maryroberts@wisc.edu))

Spring 2023 TR 1:00-2:15, 1651 Humanities

Office hours: T, 2:30-4:00



**Description:** This course is a survey of women’s lives from the mid-seventeenth century to the present in Europe. It focuses equally on the ways in which gender constructed power and identity in all spheres of life during this period, including work, politics, science, Empire-building and war. In the first part of the course, we focus on the creation of the domestic model established in the wake of the twin revolutions. This model, which dictated that a woman’s “natural” role was domestic and maternal, was primarily middle-class. Working-class women dealt with a whole other set of expectations concerning love and work. In the second part of the course, we focus on a diversity of ways in which women throughout the nineteenth century subverted this domestic model, not only through organized politics such as feminism, but also through unconventional sexual behavior, female “exceptionality,” and the opportunities provided by a growing urban, consumer culture. In the final part of the course, we study women and war, more specifically the roles played by women on the battlefield and the home front, and the way in which total war undermined certain gendered constructions of politics and work. Still another important theme will be sexuality, including the medical insistence on one “true” sex, the construction of race through sexuality, the creation of a homosexual identity, and the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

**Goals:** The credit standard for this 3 credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor: student meeting times, reading, writing, and other student work as described in the syllabus. By the end of the class, students should understand the daily activities, activism and achievements of women in Europe from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to present day; and the emergence of modern gender norms and the role of gender in European politics and culture. The students should have developed the following skills: how to interpret historical primary sources and write about them within a specific historical context; how to critically analyse gender issues in the past as well as in our contemporary world.

**Requirements:**

- Attendance and Participation in Lecture Discussions (20%)
- Two papers, 1500 words due **February 17** and **April 21** (15% and 20%)
- One midterm in-class exam : **March 9**–Essay and Multiple Choice (20%)
- One final exam: **May 4-8**: Essay and Multiple choice (25%)

Excellent (90-100)	Good (80-90)	Competent (70-80)	Inadequate (60-70)	Fail (0-60)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mastery over readings and previous discussion</li> <li>-Explores questions rigorously</li> <li>-Comes to class with interpretations and questions</li> <li>-Engages others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Knows readings well</li> <li>-Consistent preparation and involvement</li> <li>-Offers analysis of texts in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Basic grasp of reading</li> <li>-Mostly offers facts or surface-level interpretations</li> <li>-Contributes when called upon but not actively engaged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Insufficient command of reading</li> <li>-Attempts to contribute facts or interpretations when called but unable to offer substance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Uninvolved</li> <li>-Unexcused</li> <li>-Disruptive</li> </ul>

## Discussion Participation and Moderation Rubric

### **Books to Purchase:**

Lucie Aubrac, *Outwitting the Gestapo*  
Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*  
Colette, *The Vagabond*  
Michel Foucault, *Herculine Barbin*  
Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star*  
Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus*

### **Additional Materials:**

Shorter readings are on Canvas class website  
FILM “**Suffragette**” available on Canvas

### **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

##### **Week One**

- 1.24: What is Gender History?  
1.26 Women’s Lives in 1750—the Patriarchal Model  
Readings:  
New York Times articles  
Paisley Currah and Lisa Moore, “We won’t Know who you are” Canvas

#### **II. THE DOMESTIC SYSTEM**

##### **Week Two: The Patriarchal Model and its Transformation**

- 1.31 The Enlightenment and Science  
2.2 The French Revolution and Liberal Feminism  
Readings:  
Walter Laqueur, “Discovery of the Sexes,” Chapter Five, *Making Sex*, pp.149-192.  
Londa Schiebinger, “Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy” Canvas  
Rousseau, “Emile,” excerpt

##### **Week Three: The Impact of the Revolutions**

- 2.7 The Transformation in Women’s work  
2.9 The Domestic Ideal  
Readings:  
“Declaration of the Rights of Man”; Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Women”; and “The National Convention Outlaws Clubs and Popular Societies of Women” all on Canvas  
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Chaps. 2, part of 5

### **Week Four: Domesticity and Class**

2.14 Motherhood, Prostitution and the Working Class Woman

2.16 Sexuality/Sexual Orientation

Readings:

“Textile Workers in Leeds and Nottingham,” “Women Miners in the English Coal Pits,”

Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, excerpts, all in Canvas

Florence Nightingale, *Cassandra*, on Canvas

Friedrich Engel, “Bourgeois Marriage” Canvas

### **Friday February 17 FIRST PAPER DUE**

### **Week Five: Sexuality and Race**

2.21 : Orientalism

2.23: Gender, Nationalism and Empire

Readings:

Josephine Butler, “The Double Standard of Morality,” (*The Philanthropist*, 1886) Canvas

William Acton, “Want of Sexual Feeling in the Female” and “Causes of Prostitution”

Canvas

Foucault, *Herculine Barbin*

## **II. RESISTANCE TO THE DOMESTIC SYSTEM**

### **Week Six: Race and Politics**

2.28 Feminism

3.2. Militant Feminism

Readings:

Crais and Scully, *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus*, Chaps. 1-6

Movie: “Suffragette” Canvas

### **Week Seven: Working the Margins**

3.7 Exceptional Women

3.9 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Readings:

Lytton Strachey, “Florence Nightingale,” from *Eminent Victorians* ®

## **SPRING VACATION MARCH 14-18**

### **Week Eight : Fin-de-siècle Transformations**

3.21: The New Woman

3.23 Urbanization/Consumption

Readings:

Colette, *The Vagabond*

#### **IV. WOMEN, GENDER AND TOTAL WAR**

##### **Week Nine—A World at War**

3.28 The Great War

3.30 The Russian Revolution

Readings:

Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*, Chaps 1-2,. 4-5

##### **Week Ten: New Constructions of Female Identity**

4.4 The 1920s: Fashion and the Modern Body

4.6 New Sexualities, the Modern Woman and the Fascist Mother

Readings (All on Canvas)

Alexandria Kollontai, “Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations”

MOGA, “The Modern Girl Around the World”

M.L. Roberts, “Samson and Delilah Revisited: the Politics of Fashion in 1920s France”

##### **Week Eleven—Towards Total War**

4.11 Women on the Battlefield

4.13 Inside Nazi Europe

Readings:

Svetlana Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*, excerpts, Canvas

Start reading Aubrac, *Outwitting the Gestapo*

##### **Week Twelve—Women in Total War**

4.18 Women and the Holocaust

4.20 Women under Stalinism

Readings:

Finish Aubrac, *Outwitting the Gestapo*

Liana Millu, “Lili Marlene” and “High Tension,” *Smoke over Birkenau*

#### **SECOND PAPER DUE, FRIDAY APRIL 21**

##### **Week Thirteen: Postwar Blues**

4.25 Recovering From the War

4:27 : Simone de Beauvoir and Second Wave Feminism

Reading:

Heda Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star*

#### **V. THE SECOND WAVE**

##### **Week Fourteen: Feminism and Sex**

5.2 The Sexual Revolution

5.4 Objective part of the exam; Review

Reading:

*The Second Sex*, xix-xxxvi, 267-299, 716-732

**Take home essay due May 8**