

Professor Jennifer Selwyn

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## HISTORY 452: Women in European History, ca. 1700-2016



Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797)



Italian Feminist Demo, 1970s  
"Enough with the violence. We are sick of it!"

This online course explores changing ideas about women, gender, and sexuality in the transition from early modern society to the modern/post-modern ages in Europe, ca. 1700-2016. What did it mean to be a woman during the Enlightenment, through periods of revolution, industrialization, and times of war? What were the gender norms and practices and how were they changing? What about the costs to those who could not, or would not subscribe to these dominant values and practices? What were the emerging attitudes about sexuality in the modern period that was undergoing such dramatic transformations and how did they represent a break with the past (or did they)? In this class, we will investigate a wide range of themes related to modern/post-modern women's history through a close examination of primary and secondary sources related to the history of women, gender and sexuality in Europe, ca. 1700-2016.

**Required Texts** (At the PSU Bookstore, online booksellers, and on short-term reserve at the PSU Library. Additional readings available to download at course site, under "Course Content" for the week for which they are each assigned.

Aleramo, Sibilla *A Woman*. (University of California Press, 1983)

ISBN: 0520049497 [Listed new copies on Amazon for \$28.95; used copies from \$3.00]

Di Caprio, Lisa and Merry Wiesner, eds. *Lives and Voices. Sources in European Women's History* (Cengage, 2000) ISBN: 0395970520 [Listed new copies on Amazon for \$92.00; buy used copies from \$32.98.

Timm, Annette A. and Joshua Sanborn, *Gender, Sex, and the Shaping of Modern Europe. A History from the French Revolution to the Present Day*. Second Edition. (Bloomsbury Academic, 2016) ISBN: 1472583809 [Listed New Copies on Amazon for \$29.95; used from \$20.00]

**Course Requirements and Policies:** You must submit *all required assignments* in order to pass this course. I do not accept late papers, except in extraordinary circumstances. If you need to arrange an extension, due to an *emergency*, please contact me *prior* to the due date. I do not provide students with *incomplete* grades, either. If you discover early on in the course that it is not the one for you, please choose to drop the course. No hard feelings. I would prefer that you do this than simply disappear and have to receive an “X” grade.

As you know, all of your work must be original. When you cite the work of another author, you must give her/him their due by providing either a parenthetical citation, or a footnote/endnote. For the short paper assignments, I will accept either Chicago-style footnotes or parenthetical citations. Guidelines will be provided on our D2L course site, in the “Start Here” Module. Anyone who presents another person’s work as their own is guilty of plagiarism and could potentially fail this course and face disciplinary action from Portland State University. When in doubt, always cite any sources from which you borrowed ideas, whether you are quoting directly, or paraphrasing. Always err on the side of caution! For a fuller definition of what constitutes plagiarism and the procedures followed by Portland State University in cases where it is suspected, please go the following website: <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conductcode.html#Code> [See, especially, the section on “Proscribed Conduct,” Item #2, and “Procedures for Complaints” regarding cases of academic dishonesty].

**Final Grade Criteria:** The following point totals represent the *maximum* number of points that a student may earn for each category of class performance.

**\*Participation/Discussion:** 50 points. Please see below for more information on the Discussion/Participation component of this course.

**First Essay: 25 pts.** (6 pages) Due Friday, October 28, 2016 by 11:59PM (This analytical paper will be based on common course readings. Students will be given a choice of topics).

**Second Essay: 25 pts** (6 pages) Due Wed., December 7th, 2016 by 11:59PM (This analytical paper will be based on common course readings, unless a student chooses to do additional reading on a topic of their choice. In that case, please contact me by Nov. 25th with your topic idea and to consult with me about sources)

Fuller descriptions of the individual writing assignments, as well as paper guidelines, are available at the “Assignments” folder under “Course Content” and posted on the Home Page as a “News” item.

**\*More on Participation/Discussion:** 50 points. (Each discussion will be worth a possible 5 points, including two original posts and one substantive response. Students may substitute a **substantive question** to another student for a discussion response. Students are welcome to contribute additional posts, if so motivated, and also be sure to post any questions of fact or interpretation, either on the “Questions for Professor Selwyn” section of the Discussion Board, or via D2L email. On any given week, there will often be more than two discussion questions, so feel free to respond to those that interest you most. The reading load may sometimes feel heavy, so learn to read the textbook efficiently, so that you can give your attention to the more challenging, but usually more stimulating primary and secondary sources.

Online courses offer a unique opportunity to build a non-traditional learning community, but because we do not meet face to face, both students and instructor must be that much more committed to making the course atmosphere for our class to achieve our shared

learning objectives and be meaningful for each of us, we need to participate actively in the “virtual” classroom environment, as we engage with the readings and with one another online. This means that each of us must participate in *each* discussion with substantive comments/posts that help to illuminate the course readings and the larger themes that they bring to life. Let’s commit ourselves to creating an informal, but intellectually serious, and lively learning community in which all participants can engage. I welcome your feedback throughout the term on ways to improve our class community.

Please refer to the “Discussion Posts” icon on the course homepage for general guidelines for online discussion participation and “netiquette.” For my part, I promise to read all students’ posts with great care, and participate in all discussions, although I cannot respond to each post each week. If you have an individual question or matter to discuss with me, you are welcome to write me via the Blackboard mail function. I will check my mail at least twice a day and respond to you in a timely manner (normally within 12 hours, or less).

Each week, students can earn up to five points for participating in discussion. Students should plan to respond to two discussion questions (and/or make original posts relevant to the week’s readings/key themes) and also offer at least one substantive response/critique of fellow students’ posts. These critiques are *not* intended to be personal attacks, nor should students feel shy about debating points of interpretation from the readings. Rather, they are intended to help each of us to read carefully and thoughtfully and help our classmates to do the same. We are critiquing one another’s arguments, *not* individuals.

Because this is a fairly small class, students will rely upon one another’s participation for their own success, so please do your part! Discussion posts should go up early in the week to give ample time for responses and all posts should be in by the end of the weekend (Sunday evening), so that we can move on to the next topic/set of readings. If I find that students are not posting/responding with critiques in a timely manner, I reserve the right to “lock” discussion topics” with ample advanced notice given to all students. In the event that a student does not have sufficient posts to which to respond with a critique, you are invited to make an additional post(s), and the class will address this matter as a group and come up with a collective solution.

*Please note that responses to fellow students’ posts that do not contribute anything substantive, such as: “Great comment, Jane, I hadn’t thought of that;” or that are vague, like: “I agree with you that Rousseau’s comments about women and education is interesting,” will not earn one point. Try to be expansive in your comments and **use text material as often as possible to illustrate and support your arguments.***

**Paper Due Dates:** (Descriptions of all written assignments can be found at the Home Page under “News.” The prompts can also be viewed at the Drop Box. All papers should be submitted through the “Assignment Drop Box.” If you are unfamiliar with D2L, please take advantage of the tutorial available at the Home page, which will acquaint you with all aspects of navigating the website, submitting assignments, using the Discussion Board...)

First Paper: Friday, October 28th, 2016 (11:59PM)

Second Paper: Wednesday, December 7th, 2016 (11:59PM)

## Course Schedule

[N.B.: All reading should be completed by the beginning of the week assigned].

**Week One (9/26-10/2):** Introductions/Women/Gender/Sexuality in Contemporary Europe.

Introduce yourself to the class, let folks know what brought you to History 452, and share a work of historical fiction, film, artwork, musical piece, etc. that is meaningful to you and explain why.

Read and present an article on contemporary European women, gender, and/or sexuality. These articles/webpages can be about a particular country, or a topic of interest (i.e., reproductive rights, violence against women, LGBT rights...). In your extended post, you should provide a couple of paragraphs that synthesize the article for classmates, including its main point and some specific examples in the form of direct quotes, and respond to its main argument(s). Also, please include the link, so that we will have a database of links to discussions of 21<sup>st</sup> century European women to share with the rest of the class. [You may define "Europe" broadly to include areas such as Turkey and the republics of the former Soviet Union, if you wish]. All posts should be uploaded by Sunday, Oct. 2nd, 2016.

Begin "Introduction," *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe*.

**Week Two (10/3-10/9): Women and Enlightenment**

Reading: Finish "Introduction" & read Ch. 1, 19-28, *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe*; Enlightenment documents, *Lives and Voices*, 243-255,

Discussion Questions:

1. How do Timm and Sanborn characterize emerging (or "evolving?") ideas about gender in the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment movements of that period? Be specific.
2. Discuss Thomas's "Essay on the Character, Morals and Mind of Women," Louise D'Epinay's response to it in her letter to Abbé Galiani, as well as the exchange between Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Mary Wollstonecraft. What is the nature of these two debates as they relate to questions of gender and education? What role might it play that D'Epinay was a so-called *salonnière*, hosting many great thinkers of her day in her own home? Be specific.

**Week Three (10/10-10/16): The Revolutionary Moment**

Reading: Ch. 1, 28-62 in *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe*, ; French Revolution and *Napoleonic Code* documents, *Lives and Voices*, 256-271.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did the French Revolution (and those that it inspired) put questions of gender and sexuality front and center in the late eighteenth century? Examples?
2. Comparing the various documents from the period of the French Revolution, what were some of the grievances that women express during this period? What changes did they demand? What can we learn about the working and living conditions of common women during this period from documents like the "Petition of Indigent Women Workers" and the letter to the President of the Republic from the "Femme Berlin?"

**Week Four (10/17-10/23): Gender, Sexuality, and Industrialization; Feminisms in the Long Nineteenth Century.**

Reading: Ch. 2, *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe; Lives and Voices*, 275-288, 355-360.

Discussion Questions [Answer Question 1 and at least one of the questions on the primary sources]:

1. What were some of the some of the significant new challenges to traditional gender roles and ideologies that arose in the era of industrialization and the transition to wage labor in various parts of Europe during the nineteenth century? How did urbanization affect gender roles and emerging sexualities? Provide specific examples.
2. Compare the analyses and recommendations of the French female reformer, Julie-Victoire Daubié with her English counterpart in the Chartist Movement in terms of their recommendations for supporting working class women in France and England, respectively. Be specific.
3. Compare the writings of Harriet Taylor and Harriet Martineau on the oppressiveness of conventional marriage for women and female dress, respectively. What do they share in their visions for gender reforms, if anything, and how do they differ? Be specific.

**Week Five (10/24-10/30): Socialism, Feminism & Socialist Women's Movements (19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> centuries) For this week, just write one extended post and reply to a classmate for five points.**

Reading:; Flora Tristan, " " *Lives and Voices*, ?; ; Russian Revolution Documents, *Lives and Voices*, 433-447; Rosa Luxemburg, "Manifesto for International Women's Day," *Lives and Voices*, 453-455.

Discussion Question:

1. Compare some of the primary source readings on women and socialism, from Tristan's mid-nineteenth century brand of utopian socialism to the writings of Russian and German revolutionaries of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, like Alexandra Kollontai and Rosa Luxemburg. Which visions do they offer for how women's conditions might improve in revolutionary Russia? What is the message that Luxemburg conveys about the source of women's oppression in her "Manifesto"?

**First Paper Due on Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 11:59PM**

**Week Six (10/31-11/6): Gender, Sex & Empire**

**Reading:** Ch. 3, *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe; Women and Colonialism documents, Lives and Voices*, 323-339. (Begin Sibilla Aleramo, *A Woman* for next week).

Discussion Questions [Answer Question One and at least one of the questions on the primary sources]:

1. What does Chapter Three in *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe* reveal about how gender and sexuality were tied to European ideas of "civilization" and "barbarism" in the era of European imperialism? Be specific.
2. Compare the two documents on women in colonial India. How do the authors of *The Complete Indian Housekeeper* and Annie Besant's "The Education of Indian Girls," view Indian society, gender, and British rule? Which ideals do they hold, respectively?

3. The letters exchanged between the German feminist, Minna Cauer and the colonial General Leutwein reveal divergent views of German women's ideal roles in the colonial setting of German-controlled, Southwest Africa (modern-day, Namibia). What does this exchange reveal about that tension and how do the letters from prospective German female emigrants add to this conversation? Provide specific examples.

**Week Seven (11/7-11/13): The "New Woman": Trials and Triumphs; Changing Attitudes about Sexuality in pre-WWI Europe.**

Reading: Sibilla Aleramo, *A Woman* (1906) (finish the entire novel); *Lives and Voices*, 360-370.

Discussion Question:

1. How does Aleramo's novel, *A Woman*, reflect the complexities of life for an educated, middle-class woman in turn-of-the-century Italy? Why do you think that the book has been hailed as a path-breaking novel for its time?
2. How do the very different writings of Josephine Butler, campaigning on behalf of prostitutes against the "Contagious Diseases Acts," and the German feminist, Anna Rueling's arguments in "What Interest does the Women's Movement Have in the Homosexual Question" suggest shifting sexual mores and political approaches between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup>-centuries? Be specific.

**Week Eight (11/14-11/20): World Wars, Fascism, and the "Woman Question" Revisited**

Reading: Ch. 4, *Gender, Sex and the Shape of Modern Europe*; Teresa Noce, "Women and Italian Fascism;" Vérine, "God, Work, Family, and Fatherland;" Marta Appel, "Memoirs," *Lives and Voices*, 497-499; 502-508.

Discussion Questions :

1. What do Timm and Sanborn mean early on in this chapter when they note that: "It is no contradiction to argue both that the era of total war brought about massive transformation in European gender relations and that those transformations were not all "progressive?" Provide specific examples from the chapter to illustrate this idea.
2. If Noce, Vérine, and Appel were to meet and discuss the relative crimes or merits of Fascism, what might they say to one another? Imagine a dialogue between the two (though one is Italian, one is French, and the third is a German Jew), given their experiences, positions, and points of view.

**Week Nine (11/21-11/27): Women in Post-War Europe, the Sexual Revolution & Second Wave Feminist Struggles**

Reading: Ch. 5, *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe*; Juliet Mitchell, "Women: The Longest Revolution;" "The Right to Choose: Abortion on Trial in France;" Simone de Beauvoir, "I am a Feminist;" "Wages for Housework in Italy," *Lives and Voices*, 558-580. You may also wish to review the optional videos under "Course Content."

Discussion Questions:

1. How did post-World War II state policies in Western and Central/Eastern European, and changing ideas about sexuality impact gender roles? How did women, men and sexual minorities respond on the ground? Be specific.
2. Considering the primary sources, how did key feminists, such as Juliet Mitchell and Simone De Beauvoir define women's oppression and the tasks ahead for feminist struggles? Compare the campaigns for abortion rights and wages for housework in 1970s France and Italy, respectively. What do these two movements tell us about the strategies and rhetoric of Second Wave European feminism? Be specific.

**Week Ten: (11/28-12/4): Sex and Gender in the "New Europe" at the Turn of the Millennium**

Reading: Ch. 6, *Gender, Sex and the Shaping of Modern Europe*; "The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp; Pragna Patel, "Third Wave Feminism and Black Women's Activism in Britain" *Lives and Voices*, 591-594; 612-616; Masha Gessen, "When Putin declared war on gay families, it was time for mine to Leave Russia" [http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2013/08/26/when\\_putin\\_declared\\_war\\_on\\_gay\\_families\\_it\\_was\\_time\\_for\\_mine\\_to\\_leave\\_russia.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2013/08/26/when_putin_declared_war_on_gay_families_it_was_time_for_mine_to_leave_russia.html) Optional: On making of documentary about the Russian feminist punk rockers/activists, Pussy Riot, "Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer" (2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tH4hjg83Mt8>.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the major issues and challenges surrounding gender and sexuality facing Europe in the current period and how do they relate to its longer past? Be specific.
2. Based upon the primary and secondary sources, how have new perspectives on the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality shifted the perspectives and priorities of late 20<sup>th</sup>-early 21<sup>st</sup>-century activists? Be specific.

**Second/Final Paper Due on Wednesday, December 7th, 2016**