

**History 1203-31**

**Fall 2017**

**WOMEN IN HISTORY**

**Dr. Meyer**

**Office E-mail: [JUDITH.P.MEYER@UCONN.EDU](mailto:JUDITH.P.MEYER@UCONN.EDU)**

**Office Hours: Tues. 1-3 p.m.; Thurs., 1-2 p.m., or by appointment, Room 212**

**Office Tel.: (203) 236-9850**

## **SYLLABUS**

### **Course Objectives**

Traditionally men have been the primary record-keepers of civilization. They have largely determined what was important in their societies and what should be remembered by later generations. Since the activities and accomplishments of women were not usually judged as significant, our understanding of the lives of women in history is far from complete.

This course will study the historical experience of women in Western civilization from classical times to the twentieth century. It will examine both how and why women's lives have changed over time. It will focus on the position and roles of women in society from many vantage-points: law and politics, the economy, the family, education, religion, and morality.

The course of women's lives in the West, however, has been profoundly shaped by the attitudes of Western men. Historically in Western society women have in theory been generally viewed as subordinate to men, if not openly inferior. Hence another important focus of this course is to examine the attitudes and assumptions about women by men through the centuries and how they have affected women's lives. Very often there was quite a gap between a philosophical ideal and the actual life-experience of women. For example, medieval peasant women may have been abstractly viewed as inferior, but their importance as workers for the family's survival gave them enormous power in practice. Along the way, the historical experience of men should be more clearly illuminated as well.

For the sake of convenience, the course is organized according to the traditional periodization of Western civilization, but the course of women's history offers a challenge to that periodization. Another question that this course will examine is: What factors have been most decisive in altering women's experience in society? Finally, which historical eras gave women the greatest opportunities for advancement?

## Course Requirements

This course will consist of lectures, readings, and discussions. **Requirements for the course include reading, class participation (15%), one 30-minute quiz (10%), several short quizzes on the readings (5% total), a 75-minute midterm examination (20%), one 6-8 page research paper (20%), and a 2-hour final examination (30%).**

- Class participation includes the following: class attendance, active participation in class discussions, and several written and graded homework assignments. These written homework assignments will be linked to our class discussions of the readings and will only be accepted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. **Late homework assignments will not be accepted.**
- Two class absences will be excused, but any absences beyond that will be penalized with a grade depreciation. An excessive number of class absences may result in a failing grade for class participation.
- Students are expected to be present for all quizzes and exams. **If absent, students will incur a grade penalty on make-up quizzes and exams, except in cases where the circumstances are considered extenuating by the instructor. Students are not automatically given the option of a make-up quiz or exam just because they are absent from class on the day of the quiz or exam. Students need to discuss their situation with the instructor. NOTE: There will be no make-up quizzes for the short quizzes on the readings.**
- Students must complete the paper assignment in order to pass the course.
- Evidence of plagiarism in any aspect of coursework will result in an automatic “0” for the assignment, and a letter detailing the plagiarism will be placed on file with Dr. Stuart Brown, Director of Student Services.

## Extra Credit

There will be several opportunities to earn extra credit outside of class. Details will be given in class, but save the dates of Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup> during the free period (12:15-2:00 p.m.).

## Class Etiquette

- Please turn off all cell phones/electronic devices before class.
- **Texting and the use of cell phones/electronic devices during class are not permitted.** Failure to comply with this will result in referral to Dr. Stuart Brown for violation of the Student Conduct Code and potential disciplinary action.
- Once class has begun, please do not leave class unless absolutely necessary.
- During class, please refrain from conversation with others around you.
- If you arrive late for class, please enter as quietly as possible.

### **Required Books**

Readings Packet: Selections from Lisa DiCaprio and Merry E. Wiesner, eds., Lives and Voices: Sources in European Women's History (Houghton Mifflin)

Judith M. Bennett, A Medieval Life: Cecilia Penifader of Brigstock, c. 1295-1344 (McGraw-Hill College)

Steven Ozment, Magdalena and Balthasar (Yale University Press)

Joan Perkin, Victorian Women (New York University Press)

There may be a few copies of this book available for purchase in the bookstore, but it is more likely that you will need to purchase it on your own. A number of used copies are available through Amazon, and here is another site to use for shopping for this book:

<https://www.abebooks.com/book-search/title/victorian-women/author/joan-perkin/>

Prices on these sites are very reasonable. This is a required book for the course.

### **Reading Schedule**

#### **Introduction to Women in History**

Women in prehistoric societies

August 29 – September 5

#### **Women in the Ancient World: Greece**

Lives of women in classical and Hellenistic Greece and formation of attitudes/assumptions about women's subordination and inferiority

September 7 – September 19

### **PAPER TOPICS DUE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH**

Readings Packet: DiCaprio and Wiesner, Lives and Voices, pp. 35-48, 59-64:

Chapter 2, "The Greek World (600 B.C.E.-200 B.C.E.)," pp. 35-37

12. Plato, "The Republic," pp. 38-45

13. Aristotle, "The Politics," pp. 45-48

20. Plato, "Timaeus," pp. 59-60

21. Hippocrates, "On Virgins" and "Diseases of Women," pp. 60-62

22. Galen, "On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body," pp. 62-64

**Women in the Ancient World: Rome and Christianity**

Lives of women in republican and imperial Rome and under impact of Christianity; early Christian attitudes toward women

September 19 – October 3

**PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH**

Readings Packet: DiCaprio and Wiesner, Lives and Voices, pp. 16-19, 65-67, 77-87, 89-95, 98-100:

2. Genesis, pp. 16-19

Chapter 3, “The Roman World (Fifth Century B.C.E.-Sixth Century C.E.),” pp. 65-67

27. Descriptions of Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, pp. 77-78

28. Funerary Inscriptions and Tomb Sculpture, Second Century B.C.E.-Second Century C.E., p. 79

29. Turia Inscription, pp. 80-84

30. New Testament, Letters of Paul and Ascribed to Paul (I Corinthians, Galatians, and I Timothy), pp. 85-87

32. Martyrdom of Perpetua, pp. 89-95

34. Jerome, “Against Jovinian,” pp. 98-100

“Parables of Jesus . . .” (Class handout)

**Women in the Early Middle Ages: 500-1000**

Lives of women during early medieval period under Germanic society, development of Christian monasticism

October 3 – October 5

Readings Packet: DiCaprio and Wiesner, Lives and Voices, pp. 102-104, 132-136:

Chapter 4, “The Early and High Middle Ages (Fifth-Fourteenth Centuries),” pp. 102-104

45. Hildegard of Bingen, “Causes and Cures,” pp. 132-136

**Women in the High Middle Ages: 1000-1400**

Lives of women during height of medieval civilization under impact of greater political centralization, ecclesiastical independence, and ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas

October 10 – October 24

Readings Packet: DiCaprio and Wiesner, Lives and Voices, pp. 136-139:  
Thomas Aquinas, “Summa Theologica,” pp. 136-139

Bennett, A Medieval Life (entire)

### **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12TH: MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

#### **Women during the Early Modern Era: Renaissance and Reformation**

Did women experience a renaissance during the revival of classical antiquity in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries? How did women’s lives change under impact of Luther’s break with Roman Catholic Church and renunciation of clerical celibacy?

October 24 – November 7

Readings Packet: DiCaprio and Wiesner, Lives and Voices, pp. 140-142, 176-178, 210-212:

Chapter 5, “The Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance (Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries),” pp. 140-142

Chapter 6, “Early Modern Social and Economic Developments (1500-1750),” pp. 176-178

Chapter 7, “Early Modern Religious and Intellectual Developments (1500-1800),” pp. 210-212

Ozment, Magdalena and Balthasar (entire)

#### **Women and the Enlightenment and the French Revolution**

Did the philosophers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century apply their insights to the status and function of women? Role of women during French Revolution and impact of French Revolution on lives of women: Did women achieve “equality?”

November 7 – November 9

[Recommended: Readings Packet: DiCaprio and Wiesner, Lives and Voices, pp. 252-255:

92. Mary Wollstonecraft, “Vindication of the Rights of Women,” 1792, pp. 252-255]

**Women, the Industrial Revolution, and the Victorian Age**

Did the change from a household economy to an industrial one significantly change women's lives for the better? How did development of the bourgeois ideal of domesticity affect women??