

HIST 4310.001: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Spring 2013. Wed. 6:30-9:20. WH 212. Dr. Morris. Office: WH265. (940) 565-4216.
mmorris@unt.edu Office hours: T 3:30-5:30 and by appointment.

DESCRIPTION: This course covers the *querelle des femmes* or ‘woman debate’ that raged from the late fourteenth to late eighteenth centuries and had repercussions for perceptions of the nature and role of men as well. It examines the continuities and changes in marriage, same-sex relations, and gender norms in the context of political, economic, and cultural developments. The class will address the problem of how one can talk about sexuality before the notion of sexual orientation existed—the words homosexual and heterosexual did not appear in print until 1869 and 1870. What impact did sexuality have upon the construction of individual identities during the eighteenth century, an era that featured the ‘birth of the subject’? Did the escalation of sodomy prosecutions and moral reform campaigns result from public perceptions of a dangerous sodomitical subculture or was this a political backlash against the libertinism associated with the aristocracy? Or did the condemnation of same-sex sexuality of this period come out of economic fears regarding population decline? Were early modern women’s political influence and resistance to patriarchy undermined by a movement against aristocratic values or by a cult of domesticity and an ideology of separate spheres?

OBJECTIVES: In addition to gaining a familiarity with the times and places under study, students will become conversant with theoretical constructs and historical models that should aid them in their analysis of primary sources.

REQUIREMENTS: Midterm exam = 20% (**makeup exams must be arranged before 8pm on the test day; the exam may differ in form**); 2 papers@ 15% each (due 2/15 and 4/3 at beginning of class; late papers will suffer grade penalties), final exam = 30%; Participation, including attendance, contributions to discussion, and pop reading quizzes that can be administered at any time (no makeups) = 20%. This class requires students to be committed and fully attentive. I will silently deduct points every time I see you distracting yourself with electronic devices, even held under the desk, while class is in session. Students who habitually leave the room or conduct personal conversations while class is in session will be docked on participation. If you are not interested in learning about early modern European gender and sexuality, you should not be taking this course. You are required to bring the primary-source readings to class on the days assigned. **Cell phones must be turned off and kept out of sight.**

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate.

Plagiarism (handing in as your own work material lifted wholesale from any book, the Internet, or another student) can result in a failing grade and disciplinary action.

The instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus as the need arises and has no obligation to excuse students from requirements due to work or vacation schedules.

Grade of Incomplete: given only after completion of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the coursework, regular attendance, and informing the instructor of a dire emergency in a timely manner.

The material covered in this course will offend everyone in some way. You must make every effort to analyze and understand rather than to condemn and dismiss.

The 2 PAPERS: MUST be one page only, SINGLE spaced in Times New Roman 12 (this font). Quote relevant phrases from texts to support your argument, but avoid stringing together quotations. No long block quotations. Paraphrase and analyze.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Jo Manning, *My Lady Scandalous: The Amazing Life and Outrageous Times of Grace Dalrymple Elliott, Royal Courtesan*.

Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edn.

Ian McCormick, ed., *Secret Sexualities: A Sourcebook*

Isabelle de Charrière [*née* Belle de Zuylen], *Letters of Mistress Henley Published by Her Friend*, trans. Philip Stewart and Jean Vache.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION REQUEST PROCEDURE:

Any student with special circumstances covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA), Suite 322, University Union Building, and also inform the instructor of the class. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the special needs of students with disabilities where such adjustments are necessary to provide equality of educational access. Students who have registered with the ODA should make an appointment to discuss their disabilities accommodation requests with the instructor. Students with special circumstances covered by the ADA may also consult with the History Department's ADA liaison.

ASSIGNED READINGS AND CLASS SCHEDULE:

Readings must be done before class so that you will understand the lecture, be able to participate in discussion, and do well on a possible quiz. Bring the McCormick reader and the Charrière novel to class on the days they are assigned, as we will be examining and discussing specific passages in these texts.

WEEK 1—(1/16): Introduction to the course. Historical models.

WEEK 2—(1/23): Sexual Mores of the *Haut Ton*.

Have Manning, pp. 1-128 read. How did wives, courtesans, and prostitutes compare in power and status? What factors placed upper-class marriages under strain in the eighteenth century? How was print culture shaping sexual attitudes and practices? What were criminal conversation (crim. con.) and cuckoldom and what do they reveal about gender relations? How do you think the lower classes viewed the aristocracy?

WEEK 3—(1/30): Sex and Politics.

Have Manning, pp. 129-251 read. How did monarchical government give women opportunities to play a role in politics? How did aristocratic men use culture to reinforce their status? Why did personal ties between individuals in Britain and France endure when the two countries were at war? Do you find anything troubling about Manning's characterization of Horace Walpole?

WEEK 4—(2/6): Language, Ideas, and Identities.

Have Wiesner-Hanks's introduction and chapter 1 read as well as the McCormick glossary and documents on pp. 237-39, 21-34, 83-85, 126-31. How has the study of women, gender, and sexuality evolved since the 1970s? Do you see any sources of conflict among the different subfields? Think about the different institutions and traditions of thought that have shaped perceptions of women and the consequences of these perceptions. For example, how did traditional notions of sex difference influence

scientific inquiry? In what ways do you think laws governing marriage were both beneficial and detrimental to the lives of men and women?

Are the excerpts from the *Gentleman's Magazine* serious or satirical? How can one tell? Armed with the analytical perspective Wiesner-Hanks provides, what does the glossary and the language used in the documents tell you about the origin and purpose of slang terms and jargon ('cant')? How can language reveal the dominant attitudes of a particular historical period? What connections did the writings on eunuchs and bachelors make between women and effeminate men? How are men and women defined? How do the writings invoke authority? How do they use scientific reasoning and stereotyping? What do you think were the motives of the authors?

WEEK 5—(2/13): The Global Perspective.

Wiesner-Hanks, chapter 9 and McCormick, pp. 15-18, 34-48, 198-202. How did growing European awareness of the wider world shape ideas about gender? How did colonial endeavors both reinforce and subvert traditional social and gender hierarchies? How did Europeans use non-European cultures to define themselves? How were social and racial identities constructed? How do stories about sex serve political ends?

PAPER 1: Select one or more of this week's McCormick texts for analysis. How and why did these English writers use Continental as well as non-European peoples as a means of discussing non-normative gender attributes and sexual practices? Drawing upon Wiesner-Hanks's analytical models, assess the intentions of the author/s.

WEEK 6—(2/20): Bodily Functions.

Wiesner-Hanks, chapter 2 and McCormick, pp. 18-21, 134-43, 177-82, 184-87, 215-16, 220-22. What were the perceptual consequences of considering the male body as normative? How did ideas about women's bodies affect attitudes toward and regulation of sexuality? Was it possible for women to achieve sexual autonomy? How did economics and social class affect sexual behavior? How did representations of male and female same-sex sexuality differ? Do men and women inhabit their bodies in the same way; i.e. is the relation between mind and body the same for both sexes?

WEEK 7—(2/27): Midterm Exam.

WEEK 8—(3/6): Economic Forces.

Re: Wiesner-Hanks, chapter 3: On what principles was the gendered division of labor based? Did the relation between the household and the workplace change over the course of the early modern period? What effects did economic conditions have over beliefs and practices? Why has prostitution been tolerated through the ages and sometimes been legal? How did social class affect an individual's opportunities and autonomy? **Read excerpts from Cleland's work in the following order: McCormick, pp. 216-20, 158-60.** On p. 160 McCormick omits a paragraph from the first edition:

All this, so criminal a scene, I had the patience to see to the an end, purely that I might gather more facts and certainty against them in my design to do their deserts instant justice; accordingly, when they had re-adjusted themselves and were preparing to go out, burning as I was with rage and indignation, I jump'd

down from the chair, in order to raise the house upon them, but with such an unlucky impetuosity, that some nail or ruggedness in the floor caught my foot, and flung me on my face with such violence, that I fell senseless on the ground, and must have lain there some time e're any one came to my relief: so that they, alarmed, I suppose, by the noise of my fall, had more than the necessary time to make a safe retreat. This they effected, as I learnt, with a precipitation nobody could account for, till, when come to myself, and compos'd enough to speak, I acquainted those of the house with the whole transaction I had been evidence to.

Bearing in mind that Fanny is a fictional character created by a male novelist, why does she not seem entirely truthful in her account of why she spent so much time observing the behavior of the young men? Why was Mrs. Cole, no paragon of morality, so condemnatory about their tastes? Why do you think that this whole episode was censored in subsequent editions of the novel? **Also read McCormick, pp. 147-50, 151-53, 204-7, 210-12.** What anxieties does this literature express regarding urbanization and the mixing of social classes? Why do you think masturbation became such a source of concern at this time—any economic consequences to the practice?

******SPRING BREAK******

WEEK 9—(3/20): Religious Imperatives.

Wiesner-Hanks, chapter 6 and McCormick, pp. 121-24, 161, 187-97. How did religious institutions both circumscribe and broaden women's choices and opportunities? How did the Protestant Reformation affect cross-sex relations? What factors influenced the nature of women's lives in convents? How did sexuality and spirituality coexist? How did political circumstances affect religious activities? What do the primary source readings tell you about both the direct traditional and the indirect, subversive ways in which Christianity affected perceptions of same-sex sexuality? Take into account English anti-Catholicism and French Enlightenment anti-clericalism as you read the documents.

WEEK 10—(3/27): More Sex and Politics.

Wiesner-Hanks, chapter 8 and McCormick, pp. 52-64, 124-25, 143-46, 150-51, 235. How did political expedience sometimes overturn traditional models of masculinity and femininity? What is the relation between the family and the state? On what principles were hierarchies of gender, class, and race based? How did the gender binarism really work—were there really only two genders? Were all biological males thought to belong to be one group? How were sexual metaphors deployed in political propaganda? Note the publication dates and think about who was in power at the time and what controversies were current. What sorts of political interests underlie these attacks on transgressive behaviors?

WEEK 11—(4/3): Crimes Unseen.

Wiesner-Hanks, chapter 7 and McCormick, pp. 64-82, 85-116, 131-34. What motivated the witch-hunts? Did the stereotypical early modern witch bear any resemblance to the eighteenth-century Sapphist? How or how not? Apply Wiesner-

Hanks's analytical points regarding the witch-hunts to your reading of the evidence in eighteenth-century sodomy trials. How do their motives and methods of prosecution compare? How were stereotypes a factor? What was the role of the *agent provocateur*? Note both dates of trials and dates of publication. Why do some periods see an upsurge in prosecutions of sex crimes? Is the definition of sodomy clear and consistent? How did reputation influence the proceedings against accused sodomites? What was the purpose of publishing accounts of these trials?

PAPER 2: What do the McCormick documents assigned this week reveal about either the cultural meaning of sodomy or the reasons why it was prosecuted?

WEEK 12—(4/10): The Power of Education.

Wiesner-Hanks, chapter 4; McCormick, pp. 182-84, 198, 202-4. What effects did increased female literacy and intellectual endeavor have upon politics and gender relations? Why was sexuality such a powerful force in royal courts? How did the salons both challenge and reinforce traditional hierarchies? Why was the distinction between the public and the private continually shifting and hard to determine? What do the primary sources reveal about the reasons for anxiety regarding women's reading habits?

Week 13—(4/17): Artists, Writers, and *Femmes Savantes*.

Wiesner-Hanks, chapter 5; McCormick, pp. 153-58, 162-68, 212-15, 222-35. How were different artistic forms gendered? What prejudices existed against women intellectuals and men in the theatre? How do the attacks on Garrick demonstrate both the power of the theatre to shape social perceptions and the consequences to those on the stage? What were the various motivations for cross-dressing—physical as well as literary—during this period? Do you think that John Cleland's translation of Catherine Vizzani's story was published with the same intent as the original text by the Italian medical doctor, Giovanni Bianchi?

WEEK 14—(4/24): One Woman's View of Marriage.

Charrière's *Letters from Mistress Henley*. What does this novel suggest about the notion of companionate marriage that was becoming popular at this time? About masculinity and femininity? About the current state of the *querelle des femmes*? When and why can the trivial be so significant? Do Master and Mistress Henley construct their identities in different ways?

WEEK 15—(5/1): Extraordinary Times Call for Extraordinary Measures.

Read Manning, pp. 253-385. What do you think of Manning's comparison of Grace Elliott and Helen Maria Williams? Can one draw any generalizations regarding the comparative ethics of monarchists and republicans? How were illegitimate births handled in the upper echelons of society? Think back to what you have learned about the consequences of illegitimacy in the middle and lower classes as well as the varying principles governing courtship and marriage and consider how social status affected gender conventions and the relative degree of autonomy that an individual possessed. How varied were models of masculinity and femininity among the social classes?

FINAL EXAM: Wed. 8 May, 6:30-8:30pm.

British History Timeline for Contextualizing *Secret Sexualities* Documents

TUDORS:

Henry VIII (1509-47): Act for the Punishment for the Vice of Buggery 1533-34

Elizabeth I (1558-1603): Sumptuary legislation peaked

EARLY STUARTS:

James VI [of Scotland] and I of England (1603-25): male favourites:

Robert Carr (earl of Somerset) and Sir Thomas Overbury murder scandal.

George Villiers (duke of Buckingham); Sir Francis Bacon impeached 1621.

Charles I (1625-49) and Henrietta Maria: cult of Platonic love, court masques.

Buckingham assassination (1628); Castlehaven case (1631).

INTERREGNUM:

Civil War—Puritan Revolution—Oliver Cromwell.

Theatres closed. Few cases of sodomy prosecuted.

LATE STUARTS:

Restoration—Charles II (1660-85): no legitimate heirs, lots of royal bastards.

Reopened playhouses, allowed women on stage (Nell Gwynn et al.).

Bisexual libertinism in anti-Puritan aristocracy.

James II (1685-88) m. Anne Hyde, had daughters Mary (m. William of Orange) and Anne (m. George of Denmark). 2d wife Mary of Modena, son James III or warming-pan baby or the Old Pretender. Overturned in Glorious Revolution of 1688.

William III (1689-1702) and Mary (d. 1694).

Societies for the Reformation of Manners 1690s, slowly declined 1725-38.

William accused of unnatural tastes by Jacobites (supporters of exiled Stuarts).

Anne (1702-14) ruined health with unproductive pregnancies. Female favourites:

Sarah Jennings Churchill (duchess of Marlborough); Abigail Hill Masham.

HANOVERIAN SUCCESSION:

George I (1714-27): arrived with mistress; queen left behind under house arrest for adultery. South Sea Bubble, rise of Sir Robert Walpole, luxury debate, Augustan Age.

George II (1727-60) and Queen Caroline: “uxorious” and had mistresses.

Opposition to Walpole’s Robinocracy: Alexander Pope, earl of Chesterfield, et al.

Supporters: John, Lord Hervey, courtier; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Grub St.

1740s: David Garrick’s campaign to make theatre a school of morals.

George III (1760-1820) and Queen Charlotte: domestication of royalty.

1760s-70s Wilkes and Liberty movement, homophobic libertinism.

1780s financial and moral reform, anti-aristocratic, French Revolution of 1789.