

## History 241: Women from 1350-1750

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Office hours by appointment

### **Required Texts:**

Jennifer Ward, *Women in Medieval Europe: 1200-1500*  
Merry Wiesner-Hands, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
Handouts posted on Canvas  
Scholarly articles posted on Canvas

### **Description:**

This course will examine the position of women in the period from about 1200 to 1750. This period is one of enormous importance. It sees the emergence of new views on issues of marriage, family, work, and religion that continue to shape Western society's views on women.

The course aims to familiarize students with some of the major figures in women's history and to look at some of the major scholarly issues relevant to this period. It will also focus on helping students learn to read primary sources with more nuance and comprehension.

### **Course Requirements and Grading:**

**Readings:** As an online course, this course will operate somewhat differently than a traditional in-class lecture course. Each week will have two topics assigned for it. For each topic, students should read the assigned readings **in the order they are listed**. Reading in a different order may leave students confused; lectures will sometimes make direct comments on the readings.

**Discussion:** In place of an in-class discussion, this course will use an online discussion forum hosted on Canvas. Each lecture is paired with a Discussion Topic that includes a list of questions (some questions will address previous readings). Each student will be required to make two (2) substantive posts in the Discussion forum each week, using the following rules:

- 1) Students will be divided into two groups, an Answering group and a Responding group (the two groups will flip each week, so that the group that Answers one week will Respond the next).
- 2) Students in the Answering group are required to post a substantive answer to one of the topic's questions. They must post one (1) answer in each forum. Once a student has posted an answer to a particular question, other Answering students may not start a new thread on that same question, unless all of the questions have been Answered once, in which case a student may 'recycle' one of the questions. The purpose of this is to

ensure that all of the questions get some discussion. Since these questions feed into things that will turn up on the exams, if the class consistently avoids certain issues (like how to read and analyze primary sources), students will struggle on the exam.

3) Students in the Responding group are required to post a response to someone else's post (either an Answering or a Responding student). So Answering students initiate the discussion of each question, and Responding students continue it.

4) Once an Answer has been Responded to, any student in either group may continue the discussion of that thread. The goal here is to foster student discussion of the material. My job as instructor will be to nudge the discussion along with new questions or comments, as well as to correct mistakes or confusions that might turn up in the conversation

5) Students who post twice a week will earn a C for the Discussion grade. Students who post more frequently or who make particularly substantive posts will earn a higher grade. A substantive comment might be something like "Christine di Pizan's *Letter from the God of Love* challenges Andreas Capellanus' notions of women as the ones who gossip maliciously. She is intentionally inverting some of his ideas as a way to challenge misogyny" or "I don't think Susan's right when she said that the period after the Black Death was a golden age for women. Judith Bennett's point that the continuity of women's poor economic position outweighs any short-term fluctuations in things like employment opportunities." Non-substantive comments include things like "John made a really good point. I totally agree." or factual statements like "Well, Eleanor of Aquitaine died in 1204." Non-substantive posts will not earn any Discussion credit.

Students should not be afraid of making mistakes in discussion or of pointing them out, since recognizing and discussing mistakes can be extremely valuable learning opportunities, but students are warned to keep discussions polite and civil.

6) Answers are due by Tues for the First Topic and Thurs by the Second Topic. (For the first week, this rule is not enforced, since students are just getting oriented.) Initial Responses are due by Wed and Fri. Discussion forums will close at midnight on Sun, at which point students cannot gain further credit for that week's Discussions.

7) The purpose of this system is to generate an effective discussion of the material we are reading. Everything discussed in the Discussion forum is fair game for the exams, so students are expected to read these conversations and contribute to them. Some of the most important issues in the course will only become clear as we discuss them.

**Exams:** There will be two exams, a mid-term halfway through the course and a final exam after the last week of class. Both exams will be take-home essay exams. Each exam will offer the student a choice of questions and the student will have to write a 3-4 page essay answering that question. Exams will be uploaded to the Canvas dropbox. Late exams **will not be accepted** unless the student can demonstrate a medical emergency, death of an immediate family member, or other extreme situation. Students who are concerned about deadline conflicts should contact me **before the deadline** to discuss the possibility of an extension. Extensions will not be given the day something is due, unless the student can document a serious emergency (such as hospitalization).

**Term Paper:** Each student will be required to write an 8-12 page term paper on some topic relevant to the subject of the Women in period from 1200-1750 or so. Students will

choose the topic in consultation with me as explained in the Writing Assignment. This will involve submitting a 1-page Paper Proposal, which I will offer feedback on. Once approved, the student will write and submit the term paper. Unlike the exams, late term papers will be accepted, but with a grade penalty. Under no circumstances will a term paper be accepted after the last week of lectures.

Students are encouraged to submit both the paper proposal and the term paper itself before the due date. Once the proposal has been approved, the paper may be submitted at any time. Papers may NOT be submitted until the proposal is due.

The Short Paper, the Paper Proposal, and the Term Paper will all be explained in the Writing Assignment handout, posted on Canvas.

**Grading:** The final grade in the course will be based on the following distribution:

First Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Term Paper: 30%

Discussion: 20%

### **Standard Policies**

A listing of standard class policies for all UWM courses can be found at [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news\\_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/news_events/upload/Syllabus-Links.pdf). These include the policies on students called to active military duty, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, complaint procedures, and procedures to appeal grades.

### **Religious Observances**

Students who feel they need special accommodation for religious issues should contact Dr. Larsen within the first three weeks of class to discuss any particular arrangements that need to be made, in accordance with university policy: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>. The instructor will do his best to accommodate any religious needs (such as days off for religious observation), but the online nature of the course will hopefully give students the flexibility to work around any religious observations.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students who need special accommodation should contact Dr. Larsen within the first two weeks of class to discuss any particular arrangements that need to be made. They should also contact the Accessibility Resource Center at <http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACltr.pdf>.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, is a very serious matter and will be pursued as aggressively as possible under university policies, available at <http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/>. Students who commit academic misconduct will, *at a minimum*, receive a 0 for the assignment in

question and may receive harsher penalties, up to and including academic probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university. If a student is uncertain what constitutes plagiarism or other academic misconduct, she or he should speak with Dr. Larsen, who will be happy to help the student understand the issues and how to avoid academic misconduct.