

## English 401-02: Gender in the Renaissance Seminar

Spring 2010, W 11–1:30 in Smith 324

Christine Coch

Office hours: W 1:30–3:30, R 3:30–4:30, & by appointment, in Fenwick 224

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### Description:

In the age of “self-fashioning,” what models of behavior were open to women? How did they relate to the models available to men? This course examines a wide range of canonical and non-canonical texts to explore ways that both genders were constructed in early modern England. Focusing especially on the second half of the sixteenth century, we will consider not only the cultural conventions that limited gender roles, but also the ways writers reimagined these conventions to lend marginalized voices new authority. In the process, we will investigate how writers of both sexes, including Queen Elizabeth herself, responded to the paradox of a female ruler.

### Goals:

- ☛ To investigate how Renaissance writers constructed competing models of both genders
- ☛ To broaden and deepen our experience of Renaissance literature by reading canonical texts alongside pamphlets, letters, speeches, handbooks, and works by women writers
- ☛ To hone close reading skills by learning to ask and answer interesting questions
- ☛ To explore the strengths and limitations of a historicist approach to literature
- ☛ To contribute to the ongoing critical conversation about representations of gender in Renaissance England

### Texts:

Please use the listed editions so we can refer to passages quickly and easily in class. Always bring the assigned texts with you to our meetings. On days when one of your classmates is reporting on an article you are not required to read, please print out that article and bring it to class for easy reference.

- ☛ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (Penguin)

- ☛ Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, eds., *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540–1640* (U Illinois P)
- ☛ Anne Askew, *The Examinations of Anne Askew*, ed. Elaine Beilin (Oxford)
- ☛ Mary Wroth, *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts (Louisiana State UP) [arriving late at HC bookstore]
- ☛ William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, ed. David Bevington (Bantam)
- ☛ *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney, and Aemilia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, ed. Danielle Clarke (Penguin)
- ☛ Elizabeth Tudor, *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, eds. Leah Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (U of Chicago P)
- ☛ William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice* and Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry*, ed. Clare Carroll (Longman)
- ☛ John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, ed. Leah Marcus (Arden)
- ☛ Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition with 2009 MLA Update (Bedford)
- ☛ numerous shorter texts available on ERes (password=gender)
- ☛ Luminarium <<http://www.luminarium.org>>

## Expectations:

**Class participation (15%):** you will be expected to read all material closely, to reflect on it independently, and to participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussion. Be forewarned: seminars are reading-intensive, and you will not be able to prepare adequately for class if you wait until Tuesday to begin the week's work! Because we have only 14 meetings, multiple absences will lower your final grade. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to borrow the notes from another student, acquire any materials that were handed out, and learn if changes have been made to the syllabus.

**Email discussion (5%):** to counter the disconnectedness that can result from meeting only once per week, I will ask you to participate in an ongoing email discussion of our texts and topics. Occasionally I will enter into the discussion to pose questions or offer suggestions, but its direction and substance will be largely of your own making as a group. You may participate as frequently as you like, and your entries may be as short or as long as you wish, but at a minimum each student must contribute **four entries of no less than 150 words each by April 14<sup>th</sup>**. Please do not wait to begin contributing until late in the semester, as this defeats the purpose of the discussion and will lower your grade for the requirement.

**Report (10%):** you will present on a critical essay to open class discussion. Plan to speak for 10–15 minutes, referring to notes or an outline rather than reading written prose aloud. Time yourself at home so you can cut or add as necessary.

The report should accomplish three objectives. First, it should state the thesis of the critical essay in a concise sentence or two and then summarize its argument in some detail. Second, it should offer your own evaluation of the essay. Finally, it should end with a jumping-off point for discussion of the Renaissance text(s) assigned for the day: a question the article raises for you, a puzzle it fails to resolve, or a critical controversy.

I encourage you to make use of the “Reading Criticism Critically” handout in preparing your report. Please do not simply run through the handout’s list of questions, however; instead, incorporate your responses into a coherent presentation structured around the three objectives described above. You will hand in your notes (they need not be typed) and an MLA-formatted list of your sources.

**Reading Responses (10%):** To help you think critically about our readings and practice the skills you will need for the research project, you will write three reading responses on topics I will provide. Since the writing in these short exercises is informal and exploratory, they will receive general marks (✓, ✓-, or ✓+) based on how thorough and thoughtful they are. Reading responses must be typed and submitted on time to receive credit.

**Papers (60%):** one 4–5pp paper (15%) and one 15–20pp research project (10% prospectus and bibliography, 35% final project). We will discuss specific requirements for each paper in advance. I strongly encourage you to consult with me in developing your own paper topics. I find that email is not an effective medium for substantive discussion, so I ask that you come to talk with me in person, either in office hours or by other arrangement. To ensure that I can be helpful to you, please come in well before a paper is due. I will gladly sit down with you anytime up until two days before a due date. Please plan your drafting schedule with this timetable in mind. Papers must be submitted at the times specified in the Schedule to receive credit. There will be no extension of paper deadlines.

Papers must be printed single-sided, in a conventional twelve-point text font (like Times) and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. In the upper left corner of the first page, list your name, my name, the course number, and the date on separate lines. At the center of the next line, please provide a title designed to prepare your reader for your argument. Remember to proofread carefully for spelling and mechanical errors before you print. I will not read papers whose pages are not numbered and stapled.

**Academic Honesty:** Your work should be your own and should be prepared specifically for this class. Whenever you make use of outside sources for language **or ideas** (*including web sites, books, roommates, etc.*) you must acknowledge them in formal citations. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, a serious academic offense. First-time plagiarists earn a zero on the assignment, a letter in their college file, and two semesters of academic probation. Second-time offenders will be suspended for a year, and third-time offenders will be dismissed from the college. If you ever have questions about what needs to be cited and what does not, please ask me.

Please use MLA format for all citations. You’ll find an overview of MLA format in *A Pocket Style Manual*. For issues the overview doesn’t address, consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* in the Dinand Library reference room

## Schedule:

This schedule offers a tentative outline of the course; it may change as the course progresses.

### Wed. 1/20: **Self-fashioning**

Readings: Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*  
Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (ERes, 22pp)

### Wed. 1/27: **Conduct and controversy**

Readings: Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, "The Inherited Tradition," "The Pamphlet Wars in Renaissance England," and "Popular Stereotypes and Real Women" in the introduction to *Half Humankind*, pp. 3–20 and 47–63.  
Edward Gosynhill, *The Schoolhouse of women* and *Mulierum Paean* (HH pp. 136–71)  
Jane Anger, *Her Protection for women* (HH pp. 172–88)  
Joseph Swetnam, *The Arraignment of Lewd, idle, froward, and unconstant women* (HH pp. 189–216)  
Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" (ERes, 31pp)

Discussion of reports; sign up for reports

## **READING RESPONSE 1 DUE**

### Wed. 2/3: **Women under attack**

Readings: Pages 485–93 of Norton introduction to *The Sixteenth Century, 1485–1603* (ERes)  
Anne Askew, *The Examinations*. Please read Beilin's introduction pp. xv–xxxix. Then, in the text proper, skim Bale's commentary; read Askew's sections closely.  
Witchcraft pamphlets: Francis Coxe, John Walsh, Chelmsford and Windsor witches (ERes, 38pp)  
Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, Book I (ERes, 10pp)  
Stephen Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder" (ERes, 23pp)

Report on Catherine Belsey, "Silence and Speech" pp. 149–60 and 178–91 (ERes)

### Wed. 2/10: **The sonneteers and the Petrarchan beloved**

Readings: Pages 498–506 of Norton introduction to *The Sixteenth Century, 1485–1603* (ERes)

Brief introduction to Petrarch: go to library home page, then “Databases by subject,” “English, Modern Languages, & Literature,” and “Oxford Reference Books: Literature.” Select *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* and search “Petrarch.” Petrarch, *Rime sparse* 23 (ERes)  
 Luminarium: Renaissance, Sir Philip Sidney  
 Philip Sidney, selected sonnets from *Astrophil and Stella*: 1, 9, 11, 23, 28, 29, 45, 67, 71, 90 (ERes)  
 Luminarium: Renaissance, Edmund Spenser  
 Edmund Spenser: selected sonnets from *Amoretti*: i, viii, xv, xxvii, xxviii, xxix, liv, lxv, lxvii, lxxiv (ERes)  
 Luminarium: Renaissance, William Shakespeare  
 William Shakespeare, sonnets 1, 29, 35, 106, 129, 130, 138, 144 (ERes)  
 Arthur F. Marotti, “Love Is Not Love”: Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order” (ERes, 32pp)

- ☛ For each Luminarium reading on the syllabus, please do the following:
  1. Go to <http://www.luminarium.org>
  2. Select the relevant time period (Renaissance or 17<sup>th</sup> Century)
  3. Select the relevant writer’s name
  4. Select the “Life of” link and read what appears. It will be limited, but usually a good start.
  5. Select the link variously labeled “Additional sources” or “Links” or “More” to read around in additional biographical material. You will need this to supplement (and often update) the limited material in the “Life of” link.

Report on Nancy Vickers, “Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme” (ERes, 15pp)

## READING RESPONSE 2 DUE

Wed. 2/17: Readings: Josephine A. Roberts, introduction to *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, pp. 3–49 and 58–60  
 Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, pp. 85–145  
 Katharine Eisaman Maus, selection from *Inwardness and Theater in The English Renaissance* (ERes, 3pp)

Report on Nona Fienberg, “Mary Wroth and the Invention of Female Poetic Subjectivity” (ERes, 16pp)

Wed. 2/24: **Sexual difference and cross-dressing**  
 Readings: Pages 506–11 of Norton introduction to *The Sixteenth Century, 1485–1603* (ERes)  
 William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, with Bevington’s introduction

Valerie Traub, selection from *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (ERes, 15pp)  
Stephen Greenblatt, “Fiction and Friction” (ERes, 28pp)

### READING RESPONSE 3 DUE

Discussion of short paper, prospectus, and research project

Working with secondary sources and online bibliographies

Wed. 2/31: Spring break. No class.

Wed. 3/10: **Devotion**

Readings: Selection from Norton introduction to *The Early Seventeenth Century, 1603–1660* (ERes, 17pp)

Luminarium: Renaissance, Aemilia Lanyer

Aemilia Lanyer, selections from *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum, Renaissance Women Poets* pp. 205–80. On your first time through each of these poems, please read the endnotes at the back of the book as you go. Then read each poem again without interruption. Take copious notes and re-read until you feel you have a good grasp of structure and meaning.

Luminarium: 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Ben Jonson

Ben Jonson, “To Penshurst” (ERes)

Report on Barbara K. Lewalski, “The Lady of the Country-House Poem” (ERes, 14 double-column pp)

Report on Su Fang Ng, “Aemilia Lanyer and the Politics of Praise” (ERes, 18pp)

Review of strategies for structuring a persuasive argument

Wed. 3/17: **The body butt of a weake and feble woman . . .  
the harte and stomack of a kinge”**

Readings: Pages 493–96 and 511 of Norton introduction to *The Sixteenth Century, 1485–1603* (ERes)

Brief biography of Elizabeth I: go to library home page, then “Databases by subject.” Under “General Databases,” select *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online* and search “Elizabeth I.”

Preface to *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, pp. xi–top of xiv  
Elizabeth Tudor,

Accession speech (1558), pp. 51–52

Speeches concerning the reign and the succession (1559–76), pp. 56–58, 70–77, 79–86, 93–98, 167–71

“The Doubt of Future Foes” (c. 1571), pp. 133–34  
 Speech to the troops at Tilbury after the initial attack of the  
 Spanish Armada (1588), pp. 325–26  
 Prayer after the Armada’s defeat (1588), pp. 424–25  
 Letters to and about “Monsieur,” a prospective husband  
 (1579–1584), pp. 237–56, 258–61  
 “On Monsieur’s Departure” (c. 1582), pp. 302–3  
 Golden Speech (1601), pp. 342–44  
 Last speech (1601), pp. 346–51

Report on Susan Frye, “Who Represents Elizabeth?” (ERes, 18pp)

## SHORT PAPER DUE

Wed. 3/24: **Women writers and Elizabeth I**

Readings: Norton headnote, “Mary (Sidney) Herbert, Countess of  
 Pembroke” (ERes, 2pp)

Mary (Sidney) Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, “Even now that  
 Care,” “To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Sir Phillip  
 Sidney,” and “A Dialogue betweene two shepheards, *Thenot*,  
 and *Piers*, in praise of Astrea.” Also Psalms 45, 50, 51, 68, 82,  
 and 139. *Renaissance Women Poets* pp. 47–55, 60–63, 82–86,  
 107–8, 176–78. To make sense of one of Sidney’s psalms, start  
 by reading the original biblical text (ERes). Then read Sidney’s  
 version, alongside its notes at the end of the book. Once you  
 have a grasp of what’s being said and why in the psalm, read  
 Sidney’s version several more times, attending to how it  
 transforms the biblical text and also how the content relates to  
 the music and artfulness of Sidney’s verse. Take detailed notes  
 on what you observe.

Headnote for Diana Primrose from *Kissing the Rod* (ERes, 1 p)

Diana Primrose, selections from *A Chaine of Pearle* (ERes)

Brief introduction to Anne Bradstreet: go to library home page,  
 then “Databases by subject,” “English, Modern Languages, &  
 Literature,” and “Oxford Reference Books: Literature.” Select  
*The Oxford Companion to American Literature* and search  
 “Bradstreet, Anne.”

Anne Bradstreet, “In Honour of that High and Mighty Princess  
 Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory” (ERes)

Margaret J. M. Ezell, “A Tradition of Our Own: Writing  
 Women’s Literary History in the Twentieth Century” (ERes,  
 24pp)

Report on Beth Wynne Fiskien, “Mary Sidney’s *Psalms*: Education and  
 Wisdom” (ERes, 17pp)

Wed. 3/31: **Marriage and motherhood**

- Readings: Edmund Spenser, *Epithalamion* (ERes, 17pp)  
Thomas Cranmer, *The Book of Common Prayer, 1559*: “The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony” and “The Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth, Commonly Called the Churching of Women” (ERes, 12pp)  
*A Homily of the State of Matrimony* (ERes, 16pp)  
Juan Luis Vives, selections from *The Instruction of a Christian Woman*, trans. Richard Hyrd (Eres, 15pp)  
Thomas Raynalde, selections from *The birth of mankinde, otherwise named The Womans Booke* (Eres, 14pp)  
Elizabeth Grymeston, selections from *Miscelanea. Meditations. Memoratives.* (Eres, 6pp)  
Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, “Women and Marriage” and “Women and Education” in the introduction to *Half Humankind*, pp. 72–92.  
Dympna Callaghan, introduction to *The Impact of Feminism in English Renaissance Studies* (Eres, 16pp)

Report on Gail Kern Paster, “Complying with the Dug: Narratives of Birth and the Reproduction of Shame,” pp. 163–197 (ERes)

**PROJECT PROSPECTUS & BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

Wed. 4/7: **Tragic Heroes and Heroines**

- Readings: Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry* with introduction pp. 135–39  
Tracts on Marriage, Cary/Shakespeare volume pp. 274, 278–292  
Mary Beth Rose, prologue to *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature* (ERes, 16pp)

Report on Dympna Callaghan, “Re-reading Elizabeth Cary’s *The Tragedie of Mariam, Faire Queene of Jewry*” (ERes, 15pp)

Wed. 4/14: Readings: Pages 496–498 of Norton introduction to *The Sixteenth Century, 1485–1603* (ERes)

- William Shakespeare, *Othello*  
A.C. Bradley, “The Substance of Shakespearean Tragedy” (ERes, 28pp)

Report on Edward Pechter, “‘Too Much Violence’: Murdering Wives in *Othello*” (ERes, 18pp)

Report on Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton, introduction to *Race in Early Modern England: A Documentary Companion* (ERes, 37pp)

Wed. 4/21: Readings: John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* with introduction pp. 1–38  
Martin White, “Poison in Jest’: Some comic (ir)resolutions”  
(ERes, 19pp)

Report on Dympna Callaghan, “Tragedy” (ERes, 24pp)

Wed. 4/28: **Peer reviews**

**FULL-LENGTH DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROJECT DUE**

**Tues. 5/4: RESEARCH PROJECT DUE** on my office door (Fenwick 224) at noon.  
No extensions.