ENG 3903-001: Renaissance Women Writers in Context

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English 3903-001: Renaissance Women Writers in Context
Fall 2012

Dr. Campbell
CH 3572
Office hours TTH 8:30-9:30am, 12:15-12:45pm, W 2:30-3:30pm, and by appointment.

TTH 11:00-12:15
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Texts
Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (3rd ed.)
Cerasano and Wynne-Davies, *Renaissance Drama by Women*
Stortoni and Lillie, *Women Poets of the Italian Renaissance*
Lawall and Mack, *Norton Anthology of Western Literature*, vol. 1 (8th ed.)
Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*
Tasso, *Aminta*
Andreini, *La Mirtilla*
Wroth, *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*.

E-Reserves
Plato, *Symposium*
Speroni, *Dialogue on Love*
Farrell, Labé, “To Clemence de Bourges” and poems.
Larson, The Dames de Roches, “Introduction” and poems.
Klosowska, L’Aubespine, “Introduction” and poems.
Will, “Camille de Morel…”
Teague, “Queen of England, Elizabeth I.”
Lewalski, “Revising Genres…Mary Wroth’s Oeuvre.”
Lewalski, “Exercising Power…The Countess of Bedford.”
Freer, “Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney.”
Lewalski, “Imagining Female Community…Aemilia Lanyer.”
Abrams et al, Lanyer and Jonson poems.
Anger, “Jane Anger, her Protection for women…”
Gosynhill, “Mulierum Paean”
Gosynhill, “Schoolhouse of Women”
“Hic Mulier”
“Haec-Vir”
Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night’s Dream; Much Ado About Nothing*

Course Focus
The pious expressions of Renaissance noblewomen and the seductive gazes of courtesans that grace the canvases of Renaissance artists from Bronzino to Tintoretto disguise the clever wits of women complicit with the strictures of their circumstances yet, in many cases, active as writers who participated in Renaissance literary society. This phenomenon of women portrayed in very limited ways, but who were actually well-educated, vocal, influential participants in literary circles was a fixture of Renaissance culture as it spread across Europe to England during the late fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries. In this course, we will look at the lives and works of several women writers from a variety of social strata, and we will examine their writing in tandem with some works by their male contemporaries. The major
theme that we will explore is the discontinuity of received history regarding Renaissance women, i.e., the notions that women were to be silent, chaste, and obedient, and were to be objects of spiritual and artistic inspiration for men vs. the facts that women were actively and vocally participating in salon and academic society, writing, publishing, and otherwise circulating their work, and searching for ways to represent women’s experiences in life and love, all the while pushing the boundaries of women’s place in intellectual and literary discourse.

Policies
--The English Department statement on plagiarism stipulates that any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.
--Hand papers in on time. **Papers more than a class day late without a University-approved excuse will not be accepted. Any in-class writing and in-class group work cannot be made up.**
--If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
--Be prepared for class. You'll get a lot more out of class discussions if you are participating in them, and I'll notice if you do not seem prepared to participate.

Requirements and Grades

--Three exams ...................... 45% (15% each of final grade)
--One 7-10 page research paper ........ 20%
--One research report with annotated bibliography .................. 10%
--One presentation ..................... 10%
--Response writings .................. 15%

The three exams will cover the three units of study. The third exam (the final) will contain some comprehensive elements in addition to covering the third unit.

The paper topic will be chosen from the assigned texts and issues related to them. I will give you a list of possible areas of study to consider early in the semester because you will be expected to select a topic and begin research as the semester proceeds. The paper will be 10-12 pages long. You will use at least 5 outside sources to support your arguments, and they should consist of scholarly books, journal articles, and Internet sources of well-known scholarly repute—no citations from Wikipedia will be accepted. You will use MLA Parenthetical Style, with a Works Cited page, for documentation. Around midterm, you will have a preliminary research report with an annotated bibliography due to show the progress that you have made regarding your research project. Do not worry that we haven’t covered the topic that interests you in class—this portion of our study is meant to be independent exploration of a topic that may be completely new to you. Your independent study is meant to augment for you what is covered in class and to broaden the scope of the course as a whole.

The research report and annotated bibliography will cover the preliminary research that you do for your research paper and presentation. The report will address the topic, why you chose the topic, and the avenues of research that you chose to explore. The annotated bibliography will consist of bibliographic
citations of at least five sources with your notes on each work that describe the document, summarize why it may be useful to your project, and include possible quotations that you might use in the paper.

The response writings will be short essays in which you reflect on specific issues from the three units. You will use MLA Style for any documented research.

Tentative Schedule

T. Aug. 21—Introduction to course.
Homework: Read the Introduction and Ideas and Laws Regarding Women in Women and Gender. (See group questions.) Note—we will use this text as a background source throughout the semester. Read the sonnet handout, as well as Petrarch’s sonnets in Norton and Michelangelo’s sonnet 235 to Vittoria Colonna, in Norton.

Unit One—Italy

Th. Aug. 23—Discuss the Renaissance woman—the ideal and the real. Discuss the group questions over Women and Gender reading. (See also Christine de Pizan in Norton, p. 1862).
Start Petrarch and Renaissance poetry.
Homework: Note: always read the biographical introductions to each author. In Women Poets of the Italian Renaissance, read Veronica Gambara (1, 2, 3, 10, 17; 21); Vittoria Colonna (1, 19, 45, 64); Laura Battiferri Ammannati (When the sun, Before the color...); Tullia d’Aragona (To Ochino, To Muzio, To Manelli, Love once consumed me); Veronica Franco (Sonnet 1, terza rime 16, letter 22).

T. Aug. 28—Women, class, and poetry in Renaissance Italy.
Homework: Read Aminta; read also The Female Life-Cycle in Women and Gender.

Th. Aug. 30—Continue discussion of Italian women poets. Begin discussing drama and the influence of the pastoral: Aminta. Consider especially from Women and Gender the implications of cross-dressing in reality vs. on stage (see especially p. 72).
Homework: Read La Mirtilla and in Women Poets of the Italian Renaissance, Andreini’s letter On the Birth of Women.

T. Sept. 4—Continue with Tasso and compare with Andreini. What does a female actor and playwright do with the traditions of the pastoral? La Mirtilla and Andreini’s letter.
Homework: Read Plato’s Symposium and Speroni’s Dialogue on Love, (E-Reserves).

Th. Sept. 6—Discuss the genre of the Renaissance dialogue. Discuss Plato and Speroni’s works. What roles do women have in them? In particular, what roles do courtesans have?
Homework: Read Aragona’s Dialogue on the Infinity of Love. Do Response Writing for this unit.


Th. Sept. 13—Exam One
Homework: Read Christine de Pizan, Letter from the God of Love (Norton) and the chapters, Literacy and Learning and Religion in Women and Gender.
Unit Two—France

T. Sept. 18—Consider the beginnings of the literary quarrel called the *Querelle des femmes* and Christine de Pizan. Discuss also chapters from *Women and Gender*.
**Homework:** Read Boccaccio’s Prologue to *The Decameron*, The Sixth Story of the Ninth Day (Pinuccio and Nicolosa), and The Tenth Story of the Tenth Day (Griselda) (*Norton*).

Th. Sept. 20—Discuss Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and issues from the *Querelle des femmes* that we see addressed there.
**Homework:** Read Marguerite de Navarre’s *Heptameron* (*Norton*).

T. Sept. 25—Consider the French court, patronage, and Marguerite de Navarre’s literary career, as well as her friendship with Vittoria Colonna. *Heptameron* and *Decameron* discussion. Where do you see Marguerite de Navarre engaging in the *querelle*?
**Homework:** Read Louise Labé selections, Madeleine de l’Aubespine selections, and Dames des Roches selections, as well as “Salon Hostesses in Paris, Sixteenth Century” (E-Reserves).

Th. Sept. 27—Discuss French salons/literary circles and the poetry of women who participated in them. Note especially the examples of sonnets and other poems exchanged by male and female participants in the L’Aubespine readings.

T. Oct. 2—Continue with French women poets.
**Homework:** Read Samuel Will, “Camille de Morel” (E-Reserves) and start **Writing Response** for this unit.


T. Oct. 9—Catch-up and review for Exam Two. **Writing Response is due.**

Th. Oct. 11—Research Report with Annotated Bibliography is due. Exam Two
**Homework:** For Tues, read Women and the Creation of Culture in *Women and Gender* and Teague, “Queen of England, Elizabeth I” on e-reserves.

Unit Three—England

T. Oct. 16—Discuss the Renaissance in England and Queen Elizabeth’s prominence as an international intellectual. Also begin discussing the Sidney women and their influence on literary society. Consider how English women’s involvement in literary society resembled that of their French counterparts.
**Homework:** Read Lewalski, “Exercising Power…The Countess of Bedford” and Freer, “Countess of Pembroke, Mary Sidney” in e-reserves.

Th. Oct. 18—Discuss Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, and Lucy Harrington Russell, the Countess of Bedford.
**Homework:** Read Wroth’s and Philip Sidney’s sonnets in *sonnet handout*. See also Philip Sidney’s poems in *Norton*. Read Lewalski, “Revising Genres…Mary Wroth’s Oeuvre” in e-reserves. Begin reading Wroth’s *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*. 
T. Oct. 23—Compare Philip Sidney and Mary Wroth’s sonnet sequences. What are the Petrarch elements that you find?
**Homework:** Continue reading Wroth’s *Urania*.

Th. Oct. 25—SCSC Conference. No class meeting. You should use this time to finish reading Wroth’s *Urania* and work on your research projects. Also, take a look at/scan through Ludovio Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* in Norton. Consider elements of this Italian romance that made it a source for Wroth.

T. Oct. 30—Begin discussion of Wroth’s *Urania*. Discuss it in context with Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia*, as well as *Orlando Furioso*. How are women in the romance tradition typically portrayed? How does Wroth work in that tradition?
**Homework:** Group questions.

Th. Nov. 1—Continue discussion of *Urania*. Go over group questions.
**Homework:** Read Abrams et al., Lanyer and Jonson poems, and Lewalski, “Imagining Female Community…Aemilia Lanyer” in e-reserves.

T. Nov. 6—Discuss the world of female patronage that Lanyer pursues. Consider her country house poem in tandem with that of Jonson’s. Note how Jonson, too, pursues female patronage. Go over **Handout from Intro. To Half-Humankind**.

Th. Nov. 8—Fun with the English version of the *Querelle des femmes*. Discuss the English pamphlet wars and how the *querelle* is incorporated. What seem to be 4-5 key issues in the debates that you see in the pamphlets you’ve read?
**Homework:** Read Wroth’s *Love’s Victory* in *Renaissance Drama by Women* and Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* in e-reserves.

T. Nov. 13—Discuss Wroth’s and Shakespeare’s plays. Consider elements of the public stage in Wroth’s play; consider elements of the Italian stage in Shakespeare’s. What issues, *querelle* and otherwise, do you see at work in these plays? Where do we see reference to classical practice regarding the law and daughters? What do you see reflected in the father/daughter relationship that illustrates the extreme of Renaissance practice? What are the dangers for a young, unaccompanied woman? What happens when roles are reversed—and women pursue men? What are themes and issues from the entire semester that we see in the play?
**Homework:** Read Shakespeare’s *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Th. Nov. 15—Discuss *querelle* elements in *Much Ado*. How do you see attitudes and issues at work in this play that we have been discussing all semester? **Sign up for presentations.**
**Homework:** Be at work on research projects.

T. Nov. 20—Thanksgiving

Th. Nov. 22—Thanksgiving

T. Nov. 27—Catch-up day. Wrap up discussions and prepare for presentations.
Th. Nov. 29—Presentations.

T. Dec. 4 — Presentations.

Th. Dec. 6—Presentations. Research Papers are due.

Final Exam: Mon., Dec. 10, 10:15-12:15.