Course Description:
In 1986, historian Joan Scott published a now-famous article that questioned natural sex categories and called attention to the systems of power that are constructed on the perceived differences between men and women. It was an important turning point in history as a discipline. Gender has since transformed historical analysis, moving out from women’s history to complicate fields where most women were absent or silent. Arguably, nowhere has this transformation and its political implications been more apparent than in medieval and early modern European history, whose fluid gender categories have often been used to destabilize our own.

This colloquium has two aims: to examine how and in what ways gender shaped medieval and early modern Europeans’ identities, experiences, imaginations and ideology, and also to consider the ways in which gender studies have transformed the doing of history. We will try to answer Joan Scott’s question for ourselves: is gender still a useful category of analysis for the medieval and early modern periods? Does gender tell us something fundamental about pre-modern people’s lives, both men and women? What have we gained by moving from women’s history to gender studies, and what have we lost? To this end we will analyze historians’ work on the topics of sexuality, spirituality and science, the family, political authority and economic production in premodern Europe. Moreover, I also hope you will not only gain insight into some of the key historiographic debates about gender in this period but also acquire some of the important tools of the historian. Through active discussion and written analysis of a number of articles and monographs, we will see how historians identify good questions, deploy various methodologies, analyze evidence and construct their arguments. Above all, I hope you will think of this course as just the beginning in your pursuit of new and exciting directions of thought, historical or otherwise.

This course also counts towards the GSFS major!
Required texts

Except for these texts, all readings will be available on Blackboard under Reading Assignments; some are available as e-resources through OBIS (will have a +) These texts will be on print reserve in the library.

Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (1993)

This course welcomes different perspectives and backgrounds from within the discipline of history and also outside it. For those without a background in European history (and even those with one!) I would recommend having a good textbook on hand for those moments of diachronic or synchronic confusion. Lynn Hunt et. al., *The Making of the West* (concise 2nd edition or 3rd edition) vol. I or Chambers and Hanawalt, *The Western Experience* Vol. B The Early Modern Era, are two reliable ones.

Requirements

All work must be turned in to receive credit for the course. The breakdown of grades is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation in Weekly Discussion (incl. taking notes one session)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical review Butler/Scott</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex, Science, Spirituality medieval conversation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th class/unit</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Grading based on the following: A+ 100-97; A 96-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D 65-69, F below 65.

Details

1. Readings must be completed before class and brought to class, and participation in class discussions counts heavily in the final course grade. Even if you are writing a paper for that class on one particular reading, you should prepare all the reading and be ready to discuss it. Because there is writing involved for every class session, it will not work to put off reading until the night before-it will take you all week to get through everything, take notes, process and write up your thoughts.

2. Written Assignments
   a. Critical review of Judith Butler and Joan Scott. 3 pp. Describe the thesis of each of these works, what are the implications of their arguments, and how do they complement/contradict each other?
   b. Response paper. 2 pp. Short informal assessment of the reading for that day. Please post to the rest of the class by Tuesday afternoon. Should include author’s thesis, sources and methodology and why you think the reading works or doesn’t work. You will also lead a short discussion in class based on your response. We will choose the second week of class.
   c. Medieval Conversation. 5-7 pp. After reading several books/articles on medieval notions of sex difference, sexuality and spirituality, you will take one of those themes and put several readings in conversation with each other. Do these authors reinforce each other’s work, criticize or provide new directions?
d. 14 th Class. 7-9 pp. Due the last class. This presentation and paper creates an imagined 14 th topic for this course. It could be inserted anywhere in the syllabus (you are not restricted chronologically except by the boundaries of the course). In your paper, make the pitch. You should describe the topic and explain why it is something that fits into this course syllabus and is worthy of inclusion. You may choose a cluster of texts, a mix of monographs and articles. Then, discuss the state of the field. What kinds of historical work has been done on it, and what readings would you choose to go with it? What are the strengths of those readings, and limitations? We will listen to all the choices and then vote on them-and use the winner next time this is taught!

Guidelines for all written work: There are only a few simple rules. 1. Be clear in your writing, specific rather than general in your claims, and faithful to the sources themselves. 2. Proofread!! 3. Please, please, please number your pages! 4. Papers should be one and a half or double-spaced, with at least 1” margins but not more. 5. When you are using primary sources and other historians’ work, you will need to include footnotes and a bibliography. To do this, refer to some of the reference guides from the Oberlin History Department that I have posted on Blackboard. When in doubt, get in touch with me.

Disabilities: If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to Jane Boomer in the Office of Disability Services in Peters G-27/G-28.

Lateness: Unexcused late assignments will be penalized by dropping 3 points from your grade every day a paper is late.

Plagiarism: All work turned in for this course must be your own. The College requires that students sign an "Honor Code" for all assignments. This pledge states: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." For further information, see the student Honor Code which you can access via Blackboard>Lookup/Directories>Honor Code. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, especially in the context of group assignments, please see me or raise it in class.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Part I: Theory, History and Methodologies

February 9: The Historian’s Dilemma

Readings
-Alice Kessler-Harris, "Do We Still Need Women’s History?" Chronicle of Higher Education, Dec. 7, 2007

Weekend field trip! New Film Visions: Hildegard von Bingen (2010) at Cleveland Cinematèque
February 16: Towards a Theory of Gender (we will also meet with Liliana Milkhova at AMAM)

Readings
-Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (1990), Chapter 1

Due: 3-page review of these two works

February 23: Getting Medieval

Readings
Frances and Joseph Gies, Women in the Middle Ages (1978) 3-12
Caroline Bynum, “Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother,” in Jesus as Mother (1982) 110-169

Part II: Medieval Science, Religion and the Body

March 2: One and Two Seeds, Three Genders?

Readings
-Joan Cadden, Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture (1993). Read Introduction and chapters 1, 4-7.

March 9: Learned Masculinities

Readings:
Dyan Elliott, “Pollution, Illusion, and Masculine Disarray: Nocturnal Emissions and the Sexuality of the Clergy,” in Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages (1999), 14-34

March 16: Spiritual Femininity

Reading:
Caroline Bynum, Holy Feast, Holy Fast (1987), Chapter 1, Chapters 4-10

March 23: The birthing of modern science

Reading:

Due: 5-7 page Medieval Conversation on sex difference, sexuality, the body or spirituality

March 30 Spring Break!
Part III. Economic, social and political orders

April 6: Marriage and Household Economies

Reading:

April 13: Patriarchy and Markets

Reading:

April 20: Renaissance Feminism?

Readings:
Sarah Gwyneth Ross, The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England (2009) (selections)

April 27: Family Politics

Reading:
Cynthia Herrup, A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven (1999)

May 4: Gender and the State

Readings:
Carole Pateman, The Sexual Contract (1988), Chapter 3, 39-60 only

May 11: Make your pitch!

Presentations on the 14th class of the semester. Paper due at the beginning of class.
