

A History of Feminist Political Thought

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Blount 301-003

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Course Description

The history of political thought has long been equated with the history of men's political thought, with women excluded from the intellectual and public spheres. Yet it would be a grievous mistake to assume that women (including all who identify as such) were not actively engaged in debating issues of gender, sexuality, race, and class before the advent of modern feminism. Indeed, one of contemporary feminist scholars' greatest tasks has been to recover a long and rich history of ideas and texts written by and about women. This course utilizes primary materials and focuses on women's contributions to the history of political thought between 1400 and 1918.

Questions to be considered include: to what degree are ostensibly personal concerns - such as the relationship between a wife and husband or reproductive health decisions - also political concerns? How have women of color in particular navigated the intersecting political effects of gender and race? How have feminists understood the impact of class on women's opportunities? How has the movement for women's rights interacted with other struggles for liberation? And how does the history of feminist political thought continue to reverberate in our current political moment?

Students will become familiar with major schools of feminist political thought, including anarchism, conservatism, liberalism, and socialism, as well as historical modes of thought, such as absolutism and humanism.

Reading Schedule

Week 1 | Thinking What We Are Doing

W, 1/13 Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil, Jr., "The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: Introduction to the Series" (1996)

Penny Weiss, "Ode to Wollstonecraft" (2020)

F, 1/15 Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91.5 (1986): 1053-1075.

* *Practice annotation:* after reading *Annotation Tips for Students*, access the annotation assignment labeled 'example syllabus' on Blackboard and familiarize yourself with the interface.

- Highlight the title of one of the readings that seems interesting to you.
- Look up one of the authors we will read and link their faculty page or Wikipedia page to their name in the syllabus.
- Pick one of the weekly headings and annotate it with one or two sentences about what you'd like to get out of this class.

Week 2 | Gender and the Body Politic

- M, 1/18 *MLK Day - no class*
- W, 1/20 Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), excerpt
- F, 1/22 * Laura Cereta, *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist* (before 1488), excerpt

Week 3 | The Family and the State

- M, 1/25 James I, “The Trew Law of Free Monarchies” (1598)
- W, 1/27 * Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), chapters 13-17 and 20
- F, 1/29 John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (1680/9), chapters 1-8 and 15

Week 4 | Absolutism

- M, 2/1 * Mary Astell, *Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700/30)
- W, 2/3 Astell, *Reflections Upon Marriage*
- F, 2/5 Astell, *Reflections Upon Marriage*

Week 5 | Life of the Mind: Women’s Learning

- M, 2/8 Sor Filotea (The Bishop of Puebla), *A Letter to Sor Juana* (1691)
- W, 2/10 * Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *La Respuesta* (1691)
- F, 2/12 Sor Juana, *La Respuesta*

Week 6 | Reason and Sentiment

- M, 2/15 * Kaibara Ekken, *Greater Learning for Women* (1729), excerpt
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or On Education* (1762), excerpt in *VRW*
- Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education* (1790), excerpt in *VRW*
- W, 2/17 Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798), prefaces and chapters 1-7

F, 2/19 Wollstonecraft, *Maria*, chapters 8-conclusion

Week 7 | Revolution (in Reason and Sentiment)!

M, 2/22 *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* (1789) in *VRW*

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), excerpt in *VRW*

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), excerpt in *VRW*

Olympe de Gouges, "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Female Citizen" (1791) in *VRW*

W, 2/24 Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), dedicatory letter and chapters 1-4

F, 2/26 *Peer review workshop*

Week 8 | Slavery and Its Afterlives

M, 3/1 Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007), excerpt

W, 3/3 Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, excerpt

F, 3/5 Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (2004), excerpt

Midterm paper due

Week 9 | Socialism

M, 3/8 Flora Tristan, "Why I Mention Women," in *The Workers' Union* (1843)

W, 3/10 Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (1983), excerpt

F, 3/12 * Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), excerpt

Week 10 | Liberalism

- M, 3/15 *No class*
- W, 3/17 John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (1869), entire
- F, 3/19 * Fukuzawa Yukichi, *The New Greater Learning for Women* (1899), excerpt

Week 11 | The History of Sexuality

- M, 3/22 Ann Ducille, “‘Othered’ Matters: Reconceptualizing Dominance and Difference in the History of Sexuality in America,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1.1 (1990): 102-27.
- W, 3/24 Judith Bennett, “‘Lesbian-Like’ and the Social History of Lesbianisms,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9.1/2 (2000): 1-24.
- Farah Jasmine Griffin, ed., *Beloved Sisters and Loving Friends: Letters from Rebecca Primus of Royal Oak, Maryland, and Addie Brown of Hartford, Connecticut, 1854-1868* (1999), excerpt
- F, 3/26 * Jen Manion, “The Pillar of the Community,” in *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (2020), pp. 44-67.

Week 12 | Suffrage

- M, 3/29 Louise Michele Newman, “The Making of White Female Citizenry: Suffragism, Antisuffragism, and Race,” in *White Women’s Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (1999)
- Cathleen D. Cahill and Sarah Deer, “In 1920, Native Women Sought the Vote. Here’s What’s Next,” *The New York Times* (July 31, 2020).
- W, 3/31 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et. al., “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” (1848)
- Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?” (1851)
- Victoria Woodhull, “Great Secession Speech” (1871)
- Susan B. Anthony, “Constitutional Argument” (1872)
- R, 4/1 film screening: *Suffragette* (2015) (tentative!)
- F, 4/2 * Ida B. Wells, “How Enfranchisement Stops Lynching” (1910)

Martha S. Jones, "Tackling a Century-Old Mystery: Did My Grandmother Vote?," *The New York Times* (August 14, 2020)

Jones, "What the 19th Amendment Meant for Black Women," *Politico* (August 26, 2020)

Week 13 | Political Economy

- M, 4/5 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, proem, preface, and chapters 1 and 2, in *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (1898)
- W, 4/7 * Ifi Amadiume, "Gender and the Economy" and "Women, Wealth, Titles and Power" in *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (1987)
- F, 4/9 *Honors Day - no class*

Week 14 | Gender, Race, and the Nation-State

- M, 4/12 Anna Julia Cooper, "Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race," in *A Voice from the South: By a Woman from the South* (1892)
- Mary Church Terrell, "A Plea for the White South by a Colored Woman" (1905)
- W, 4/14 Qasim Amin, "The Emancipation of Woman," from *The Liberation of Woman* (1899)
- Bahithat al-Badiya, "A Lecture in the Club of the Umma Party" (1910)
- F, 4/16 *Peer review workshop*

Week 15 | The First Wave Breaks

- M, 4/19 * Emma Goldman, "The Traffic in Women" (1910)
- Goldman, "Marriage and Love" (1914)
- W, 4/21 Luisa Capetillo, *Mi opinión* (1911), excerpt
- F, 4/23 Emmeline Pankhurst, "Freedom or Death" (November 13, 1913)

Required Texts

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Abridged, with Related Texts* (ISBN 978-1603849388) - there are many editions of this work available - please get this one! It is also available as an e-book via the library.

Optional Texts

All readings not found in the required text will be available via the course site, but many of the works we read will be available online. If you prefer to read a hard copy (which I recommend, but do not require), this editions of works we will read for more than one meeting are the best combination of quality and low cost:

- Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (978-1624667299)
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Selected Works* (978-0393351880)
- J.S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (978-0872200548)
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Maria: or, The Wrongs of Woman* (978-0199538904)

Further Reading

Sarah Apetrei, *Women, Feminism and Religion in Early Enlightenment England* (2010)

Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage, eds., *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women* (2015)

Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1400-1700* (2009)

Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, eds., *Virtue, Liberty, and Toleration: Political Ideas of European Women, 1400-1800* (2011)

Diana Coole, *Women in Political Theory: From Ancient Misogyny to Contemporary Feminism* (1987)

James Daybell and Svante Norrhem, eds., *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (2016)

Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (1995)

JoEllen DeLucia, *A Feminine Enlightenment: British Women Writers and the Philosophy of Progress, 1759-1820* (2015)

Ellen Carol Dubois and Linda Gordon, "Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Danger and Pleasure in Nineteenth-Century Feminist Sexual Thought," *Feminist Review* 9.1 (1983): 7-25.

Jean Bethke Elstain, ed., *The Family in Political Thought* (1982)

Nawar Al-Hassan Golley, "Is Feminism Relevant to Arab Women?" *Third World Quarterly* 25.3 (2004): 521-536.

C. S. Goto-Jones and L. P. Hartley. "If the Past Is a Different Country, Are Different Countries in the Past? On the Place of the Non-European in the History of Philosophy," *Philosophy* 80. 311 (2005): 29-51.

Karen Green, *A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1700-1800* (2014)

Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe, 1500-1800* (1995)

Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (1980)

---, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (1998)

Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes*: 1400-1789," in *Women, History, Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly* (1988), 65-109.

Joan B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (1988)

Sally McMillen, *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement* (2009)

Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (1984)

Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History* (2000)

- , *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870–1920* (2018)
- , *The Woman Question in France, 1400–1870* (2019)
- Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (2013 [1979])
- Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, eds., *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective* (2004)
- Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (1988)
- Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (1994)
- Sarah Gwyneth Ross, *The Birth of Feminism: Woman as Intellect in Renaissance Italy and England* (2009)
- Gordon Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought: the Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes in Seventeenth Century England* (1975)
- Mary Shanley and Carole Pateman, eds., *Feminist Interpretations and Political Theory* (1991)
- Kirsi Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation* (2009)
- Sylvana Tomaselli, "The Enlightenment Debate on Women," *History Workshop Journal* 20.1 (1985): 101-124.
- Sarah Tyson, *Where Are the Women? Why Expanding the Archive Makes Philosophy Better* (2018)
- Marta Vicente, *Debating Sex and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Spain* (2020)
- Merry E. Wisener-Hanks, *Gender in History: Global Perspectives* (2011 [2001])
- , *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (2008 [1993])