Fall 2020 Graduate Course Descriptions

WSGS 506/HIST 506/CLSX 506 Ancient and Medieval Gynecology
T 6:00-8:40 (Online) S. Miller

This course examines the representations of female bodies, anatomies, and physiological processes in texts and material artifacts from ancient Greece, Rome, and Medieval Europe. It will focus on contextualizing ancient and medieval gynecological theory and practice within diverse—convergent, overlapping, and divisive—frameworks to unveil the beliefs, desires, and fears that centered on the various "phases" of the female body: virgin, fertile, maternal, menopausal. Primary texts will come from genres including medical handbooks, natural philosophy, ancient history, the pseudo-Gospels, and medieval mystical literature. Primary authors will include selections from the Hippocratic Corpus, Aristotle, Plato, Pliny, Galen, Soranus, Avicenna, Averroes, the Trotula texts, and Hildegard of Bingen. Material primary sources will include grave stelai, votive offerings depicting female anatomy, medical manuscript drawings, and medieval iconography of the Virgin Mary and some early-Christian martyrs. The course investigates what it meant to be a “woman” and have a “female body” within this contextual framework of cultural, familial, and religious expectations, but also how this array of evidence problematized gender and sexuality by way of gynecological theory and practice.

WSGS 521/MDIA 521 Sex, Myth, and the Media
T/Th 4:30-5:45 (Campus) M. Patterson

This course will examine the role of mass media in reinforcing or challenging common cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity and power relationships between the sexes. In analyzing various mass media—including print, television, Internet publishing, electronic games, and film—we will apply gender theory and connect these artifacts to their historical moment. Students' own experiences, insights, questions, and ideas are a key part of this course. Throughout the term, we will consider not only what is in terms of gender roles, but also what might be.

WSGS 568-61/ENGL 558 SPTP: Modernism and Feminist the Context
M 6:00-8:40 (Campus) L. Kinnahan

In both Britain and America, the early decades of the twentieth century were marked by a vigorous and often radical movement to advance women's equality in political rights, educational opportunities, labor practices, sexual expression, and medical/reproductive choice and treatment, along with concurrent movements sexology, eugenics, and even occultism. Gaining a degree of economic and social independence in the late nineteenth century, the "New Woman" was a matter of public attention and debate at the turn of the century, transfiguring into the image of the "feministe" by 1910. How did First Wave Feminism both shape and draw upon ideas of the "modern" that involved writers and artists of the period?
How does the literature register the challenges to gender structures wrought by this multifaceted and often conflicted movement, and how might these very challenges be said to contribute to the experiments in form and subject matter characterizing Anglo-American "modernisms"? Addressing these questions, we will look at works of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction prose written by American and British writers during the years of 1900-1945 (tentatively including May Sinclair, Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Nella Larsen, Mina Loy, Lola Ridge, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Marianne Moore, Virginia Woolf, Georgia Douglas Johnson). We will also explore little magazines of the Modernist era, such as The Freewoman & The New Freewoman, The Woman Rebel, The Egoist, Others, The New Age, Poetry Review, Poetry, The Little Review, Clarion, and The Masses as sites for intersections of feminist and modernist thought, debate, and activity.

**WSGS 568-62/ENGL 569-61 Spectacle in Theater and Novel**  
W 6:00-8:40 (Campus) L. Engel

This course will trace the dynamic relationship between the theater and the novel from late eighteenth-century masquerade and gothic drama to Victorian sensation fiction and its melodramatic stage adaptations, to the subversive invocation of the new woman in turn of the century novels and plays. Focusing primarily on lesser-known works, we will pay particular attention to the complexities of female characters in these texts alongside theatrical history of actresses, celebrity, and material culture. We will think about how the dynamics of spectacle and sensation worked to construct ideas about gender, sexuality, class, race, and embodiment across genres and materials. Primary texts may include: Hannah Cowley’s The Belle Stratagem, Jane Austen’s Lady Susan, Matthew Lewis’s The Castle Spectre, Mary Wollstonecraft’s Maria: Or the Wrongs of Women, Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s Lady Audley’s Secret, Ellen Wood’s East Lynne, Ouida’s Moths, George Bernard Shaw’s Mrs. Warren’s Profession. We will read selections from leading theorists of the theater and the novel during this period including: Emily Allen, Matthew Buckley, Sharon Marcus, Joseph Roach, Nancy Armstrong, Gail Marshall, Joseph Litvak, Tracy Davis, Nina Auerbach, and Martin Meisel.

**WSGS 640/PHIL 640 Queer Theory & Transgender Studies**  
T/Th 10:50-12:05 (Campus) L. Rodemeyer

Sexuality, gender, and embodiment have been understood in dramatically new ways since the mid-20th century. This course will begin with a brief overview of Foucault's and Butler's philosophies, focusing on how they present sexuality, gender, and embodiment as discursive and/or performative, and how their arguments ground subsequent positions in both queer theory and trans studies. Then we will turn to articles in queer theory and transgender studies to demonstrate how each of these movements developed, the dialogues within each area, and the discussions--and criticisms--between these two regions of study.