

EARLY MODERN WOMEN WRITERS/ AP/EN 4515 6.0

Fall/Winter 2019-2020 | Wednesday, 11:30 am-2:30 pm, VH 1152

Dr. Natalia Khomenko

E-mail: khomenko@yorku.ca

Office: Atkinson 708

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:30-3:30 pm, or by appointment

In *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf pondered whether early modern women could be writers, considering the relatively rigid gender norms of their time. She concluded that, even if any early modern woman had been strong enough to fight the social constraints, “whatever she had written would have been twisted and deformed, issuing from a strained and morbid imagination.” Finally, she concluded that it would be “obviously impossible” for an early modern woman to be in the state of mind necessary to write drama or poetry. Nearly a century later, we know that Virginia Woolf underestimated early modern women: not only had they produced a rich and varied body of works, but their writing had directly participated in crucial social and political conversations. Woolf did not find works by women on library shelves because, until the second half of the twentieth century women’s writing was, for the most part, not considered part of the English literary history.

This course participates in the recovery of early modern women’s writing by exploring a wide range of texts, from poetry and full-length plays to political speeches, treatises, trial accounts, and religious pronouncements. We will also be reading a range of more personal records, such as letters, diaries, household records, and wills. Our readings are arranged in a roughly chronological order, beginning with a Protestant reformer Anne Askew in the first half of the sixteenth century, and culminating in a sustained examination of works produced in the second half of the seventeenth century by Aphra Behn, the first woman in England to support herself through her writing. Throughout the course, we will be conducting in-depth examinations of early modern women’s texts in their social, cultural, and political contexts.

Learning Outcomes

- Ability to read and analyze early modern texts, with particular attention to structure, intended audience, and cultural context.
- Familiarity with the Renaissance and Restoration as historical periods, and an understanding of their central concerns and preoccupations.
- Understanding of the social positions open to early modern women, and their use of writing in negotiating social identity.
- Knowledge of literary traditions and non-fictional writing in early modern England.
- Awareness of the scholarly attitudes toward women’s writing through the centuries, and of the changing perceptions of literary history today.
- Advanced critical thinking, ability to engage with scholarly arguments, and highly developed analytical and essay-writing skills.

Required texts:

Salzman, Paul (ed.) *Early Modern Women's Writing: An Anthology 1560-1700*. Oxford World's Classics.

Cary, Elizabeth. *The Tragedy of Mariam the Fair Queen of Jewry*. Ed. Stephanie Hodgson-Wright. Broadview.

Behn, Aphra. *Oroonoko: The Rover, and Other Works*. Ed. Janet Todd. Penguin.

Evaluation:

Fall term essay – 20%

Presentation & essay – 15%

Winter term annotated bibliography and essay proposal – 10%

Winter term essay – 25%

Reading responses – 20%

Participation – 10%

Weekly schedule:

Week 1: September 4

Introductions

Week 2: September 11: Women and the Reformation

Anne Askew, *The First Examination of Anne Askew, 1546*, A1r-A7v [Women Writers Online Database]

Anne Askew's Ballad, from the *Latter Examination of Anne Askew, 1547*

[<https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/ballad-which-anne-askew-made-and-sang-when-she-was-newgate>]

"A Ballad of Anne Askew," 1624? [in the Early English Ballads Online:

<https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/36045/citation>]

Week 3: September 18: Women and Political Power

Elizabeth I

- Speeches: The Marriage Speech (Extemporaneous version) 1559, The Tilbury Speech, 1588 (Aske's version) [available through the Women Writers Online Database]

Speech in Parliament, April 10, 1563 [<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizaspeech1563.htm>],

The Golden Speech, 1601 [<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/eliz1.html>]

- Poems: "The Doubt of Future Foes" [<https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/doubt-future-foes>],

"On Monsieur's Departure" [<https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/monsieurs-departure>]

- Exchanging Letters: to Mary Tudor, 1554 [<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizlet4.htm>], to

Mary Stuart, 1568 [<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizlet9.htm>], to James VI, 1587

[<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizlet6.htm>], to James VI, 1603

[<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizajames1603.htm>]

Week 4: September 25: Women and the Pamphlet Wars

Jane Anger Her Protection for Women, 1589

[<https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/anger/protection/protection.html>]

Joseph Swetnam, *The Araignment of Lewde, idle, forward, and unconstant women*, 1615

[<https://pages.uoregon.edu/dluebke/WesternCiv102/SwetnamArraignment1615.htm>]

Rachel Speght, *A Muzzle for Melastomus*, 1617 [<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/rachel.html>]

Ester Sowernam, *Ester hath hang'd Haman*, 1617 [<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/ester.htm>]

Week 5: October 2

Isabella Whitney [Salzman]

Mary Wroth, From “Pamphilia to Amphilanthus,” “Song” from Urania [Salzman]

Week 6: October 9

Mary Wroth, *Love's Victory* [Salzman]

FALL READING WEEK: October 12-18

Week 7: October 23

Aemilia Lanyer [Salzman]

Week 8: October 30: Religious Drama

Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, 1613

Week 9: November 6

Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam* continued

Week 10: November 13

Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Brackley, *The Concealed Fancies*, 1645 [in *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents*, ed. S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, electronic through York]

Week 11: November 20: Reflecting on the Women's Position

Mary Sidney, “To the Thrice-Sacred Queen Elizabeth” (1599) [handout], “Dialogue between two Shepherds in Praise of Astraea” (1602) [Women Writers Online Database]

Anne Bradstreet, “In Honor of that High and Mighty Princess Queen Elizabeth of Happy Memory” (1650) [in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Jeannine Hensley, p. 195, electronic through York]

Bathsua Makin, “An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen” (1673) [Women Writer's Online Database and

<https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/makin/education/education.html>]

Week 12: November 27: Women's Religious Voices

Fall Essay due

Eleanor Davies [Salzman]

Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole [Salzman]

Hester Biddle [Salzman]

Margaret (Fell) Fox, *Women Speaking Justified* [on Moodle]

WINTER BREAK

Week 13: January 8: The Everyday

Anne Clifford, From her Diary [Salzman], *The Memoir of 1603* [in Anne Clifford, *The Memoir of 1603 and the Diary of 1616-1619*, ed. Katherine O. Acheson, electronic through York]

Week 14: January 15: Childbirth and Child-rearing

Frances Matthew, "The birthe of all my children" (1583-1629) [handout]

The Countesse of Lincolnes Nurserie (1622):

<https://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/clinton/nurserie/nurserie.html>

Elizabeth Jocelin, *The Mother's Legacy to Her Unborn Child* (1624) [on Moodle]

"The Mid-wives Just Petition" (1647) [<https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:kib804vah>]

Elizabeth Cellier, "To Dr. _____ An Answer to His Queries, Concerning the College of Midwives," 1663 [handout]

Week 15: January 22: Motherhood and Loss

Mary Carey, "Upon the Sight of my Abortive Birth," 1657 [handout]

Anne Bradstreet, "In Reference to Her Children," "In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Anne Bradstreet," "Before the Birth of One of Her Children" [[in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Jeannine Hensley, pp. 224, 232, 236, electronic through York]

Katherine Philips, "On the Death of My First and Dearest Child" [Salzman]

Susanna Bell, *The Legacy of a Dying Mother to her Mourning Children* (1673) [on Moodle]

Week 16: January 29: Letter-Writing

Dorothy Osborne, Letters [Salzman]

Anne Bradstreet, "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment" [in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Jeannine Hensley, p. 226, electronic through York]

Dorothy Leigh, *The Mother's Blessing*, 1640 [handout]

Short Remains of a Dead Gentlewoman and Wife (1690) [on Moodle]

February 3: Last day to drop a course without receiving a grade

Week 17: February 5

Katherine Philips, Poetry [Salzman]

Margaret Cavendish, "A World Made by Atoms," "Of the Ant," "The Hunting of the Hare,"

Preface to *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*, "The Matrimonial Agreement," "Of a Civil War" [Salzman]

Week 18: February 12

Margaret Cavendish, *Bell in Campo* [Salzman]

WINTER READING WEEK: February 15-21

Week 19: February 26

Aphra Behn, *The Rover* (1677) [Todd]

Week 20: March 4

Winter Essay Annotated Bibliography and Essay Proposal

Aphra Behn, *The Rover*, continued [Todd]

Week 21: March 11

Aphra Behn, *The City-Heiress* (1682) [Salzman]

Week 22: March 18

Aphra Behn, *The City-Heiress*, continued [Salzman]

Week 23: March 25

Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688) [Todd] and *The Wandering Beauty* (published after Behn's death) [Salzman]

Week 24: April 1

Final Essay due

Behn, poetry [Salzman]

April 5: Course Withdrawal Period Ends

Additional Information

Lateness Penalties and Extensions: All deadlines have one-day's grace: every assignment can be submitted one day late with no penalty (with the exception of the reading responses which must be handed in hard copy during class). Assignments submitted after that will be penalized 2% per day. I am open to the idea of extensions, but they should be discussed at least a week in advance of the due date. Exceptions may be made in cases of illness or emergency if proper supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor's letter) is provided.

Participation: Student participation is crucial in a seminar. Come to class having read the assigned works and ready to discuss them. Missing classes, or being physically present but mentally absent, can – and will – significantly affect your grade. There will be small activities (e.g. translating Middle English, group discussions, opportunity for Moodle posts) that will count toward your participation grade.

Technology in the Classroom: I am not, in principle, against laptops, tablets, or cellphones in the classroom: they can be useful when it comes to fact-checking or searching for a specific passage. However, they can also be distracting to you (and your neighbours), and make for less successful note-taking (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>). If you are overly enthusiastic about engaging with your device during our three hours together, you will be asked to put it away.

Special Accommodations: If you require special accommodations for assignments or classroom engagement, speak to me as early as possible.

The Writing Department: The Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies Writing Department offers one-on-one tutoring, as well as a series of non-credit writing workshops. If you need help with a specific writing assignment, book your appointment well in advance, as there are often waiting lists.

Academic Integrity: I expect that by now you are very familiar with the academic integrity definitions and policies (but here is the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty, just in case: <http://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-honesty-senate-policy-on/>). Plagiarism includes trying to pass off somebody else's words and ideas as your own (even if you are paraphrasing), as well as giving and receiving excessive assistance on an assignment. Substantial difference in writing style between assignments can be grounds for an academic honesty case. Please be aware that this course uses Turnitin for all substantial assignments. If you are having trouble with an assignment, please come talk to me. Academic dishonesty is never a good solution, and penalties for it are severe.