

AP/ HUMANITIES 1950 0.6A
CONCEPTS OF THE MALE AND THE FEMALE IN THE WEST
Fall/ Winter 2022-23
online

Course Director: John Bell

Course Description

An examination of the origins of, and the interrelationships among, gender, male and female concepts and roles through myth, literature, art and artifacts from various Western cultures, past and present.

We shall discuss what the concepts of “female” and “male” are (or seem to be). We shall inquire how such concepts affect societies' and individuals' attitudes to “femaleness” and “maleness”, in the way that societies treat boys and men, girls and women. We shall also consider how boys and girls, men and women internalize concepts of gender and incorporate them into their own identity.

Topics studied in relation to concepts of “female” and “male” will include religious concepts, laws, love, marriage, work, economics, sexuality, war, sports, creativity. We shall also consider how concepts of “female” and “male” intersect in the West with concepts of class and race.

In our exploration of the topics of this course, we shall examine the culturally accepted opposition between female and male, femininity and masculinity—such as the dichotomization of Nature/ Culture, Emotion/ Reason, and Body/ Mind (or Soul).

We shall proceed in a roughly chronological order beginning with writings from ancient times, i. e. Biblical writings and writings from classical Greece and Rome; moving on to works covering several subsequent periods in Europe and North America; and including several works from our own century, including two works that deal with issues of gender and immigration from non-Western societies to the West.

Requirements: 1000-word essay (10%); 2 1500-word essays (18% each); discussion forums—best 11 out of 20 (33%—each forum worth a maximum of 3%); final examination (21%)

Reading List:

Joseph Bédier, *The Romance of Tristan and Iseult* (Random)
Marie-Claire Blais, *Mad Shadows* (New Canadian Library)
Emily Carr, *Growing Pains* (Douglas & McIntyre)
Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls* (Methuen)
Colette, *Chéri* (Dover)

Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll House* in *Four Major Plays, Vol. I* (Oxford)
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Harvard)
Ayn Rand, *The Night of January 16th* in *Three Plays* (Signet)
Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Ballantine)
William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (Signet)
Sophocles, "Antigone" & Euripides, "Trojan Women" in Moses Hadas, ed. *Greek Drama* (Bantam)
Michel Tremblay, *Hosanna* (Talonbooks)
Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (New Directions)
Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* (Grove)
Course Kit
pdfs on the course website

Required Films/ Videos:

Beauty and the Beast (La Belle et La Bête)
Bend it Like Beckham
The Loving Story
The Strange Life and Death of Dr. Turing