

GENDER AND EMPIRE IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN

History 332, Fall 2009

T/Th 2:15-4:05, Mears 202

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Fall office hours: Mon 1:15-4:05; Wed & Fri 9:00-10:50; & by appointment

This course examines the centrality of women and gender to British colonialism in the “long nineteenth century.” In recent years, women’s historians have begun to recover the central role of women in what has long been cast as a male imperial enterprise. At the same time, postcolonial and poststructuralist theory has suggested avenues for investigating gender as a crucial site for the construction, negotiation, and contestation of colonial power. We will therefore explore the connections between ideological and material structures of power and the historical experience of groups and individuals, asking in particular how women used an imperial framework to assert and question authority, and how gender operated in relation to other social categories such as race, class, sexuality, and religion.

Course requirements:

The semester is divided into two sections, both of which focus on the historian’s craft through the thematic lens of “gender and empire.” In the first eight weeks, we will explore three related themes through a group of common secondary readings: women’s experience in the empire through travel, emigration, and philanthropy; the role of a national-imperial identity in shaping feminist reform movements; and the gendered axes of colonial power and imperial culture. These readings will also form the basis for a historiographical investigation of feminist and gender theory, postcolonial theory, and poststructuralism. Each of you is responsible for doing your part to make our class discussions productive and provocative. This includes doing a close reading of the assigned texts, thinking carefully about the assigned questions in advance, and sharing your responses to the texts, questions, and other classmates’ perspectives during our group discussions. For every secondary source (i.e. scholarly book or article) you read, you should address the following questions:

- 1) What is the historical question/problem the author is posing?
- 2) What is the answer to that question? Where does the author state his/her thesis? What are the subarguments that bolster the overall argument?
- 3) What previous and/or dominant views on this topic is the author adding to or arguing against? What is the larger significance of the revised, “correct” interpretation?
- 4) What is the broader interpretive and historical context in which the author is working? How does the author’s story shed light on a larger story?
- 5) What sources & methods of reading them does the author employ as evidence? Are any key terms and concepts used to frame the analysis?
- 6) How does the author organize the discussion, building and developing the argument throughout the article or book?
- 7) What common ground and points of conflict emerge when you hold this piece up to other readings assigned for that day, and/or to other readings we have encountered in the course?

Additionally, each of you will be responsible for crafting specific discussion questions about the reading and emailing them to the class by 7:00 the night before each class meeting. You will formulate these questions in groups of two or three; please plan to meet with me as a group to discuss the questions before circulating them.

The second half of the semester will be focused on developing a paper of original research, and class meetings will center on the craft of historical writing through your particular projects. The outcome

of this project should be a critical, article-length essay (20-25 pages) which uses primary sources to develop a historical argument and secondary sources to situate this argument in a larger field of scholarly inquiry. The only requirement is that you use women and/or gender as a central category of analysis in investigating a historical dimension of British imperialism.

Final grades will be evaluated according to the following distribution:

- Participation (class contribution, preparation, and discussion questions; feedback in research group meetings): 50%
- Stages of the research paper, including proposals, bibliography, intro, and full draft: 20%
- Final draft: 30%

Course texts:

The following required texts are available for purchase in the campus bookstore or on reserve in Burling.

Other required readings are available on P-web, E-reserve, or as handouts (as noted below).

Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Indiana, 1991)

Margaret Strobel & Nupur Chaudhuri, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Indiana, 1992); also available as an E-book through Burling catalogue – referred to on the syllabus as “*WW&I*”

Clare Midgley, ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester, 1998) – referred to on the syllabus as “*G&I*”

Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (Routledge, 2003)

Schedule of class meetings and assignments

(Note: Please do the readings in the order in which they are listed each day.)

Week 1: Terms and debates

Thurs, Aug 27

- Jane Purvis, "From 'Women Worthies' to Post-Structuralism?," in *The European Women's History Reader*, eds. Fiona Montgomery and Christine Collette (Routledge, 2002), 44-7 .
- Kathleen Canning, "Feminist History after the Linguistic Turn: Historicizing Discourse and Experience," *Signs*, 19 (Winter 1994), 368-404.
- Margaret Strobel, "Women's History, Gender History, and European Colonialism," in Gregory Blue, Martin Bunton, and Ralph Croizier, eds., *Colonialism and the Modern World* (M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 51-68.

Week 2: White women in the empire

Tues, Sept 1:

- Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (entire)

Thurs, Sept 3

- Helen Callaway and Dorothy O'Helly, "Crusader for Empire," in *WW&I*
- Mrinalini Sinha, "'Chathams, Pitts, and Gladstones in Petticoats,'" in *WW&I*
- Mary Procida, "All in the Family: Marriage, Gender, and the Family Business of Imperialism," in *Colonialism and the Modern World*, 167-181 – P-web

Week 3: Interrogating "emancipation"

Tues, Sept 8:

- Barbara Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, Indian Women's Rights, and Indian Independence," in Gail Minault, ed., *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan* (Chanakya, 1981), 109-150 – P-web
- Janaki Nair, "Uncovering the *Zenana*: Visions of Indian Womanhood in Englishwomen's Writings, 1813-1940," *Journal of Women's History*, 211 (Spring 1990), 8-34 – P-web
- Antoinette Burton, "The White Woman's Burden," in *WW&I*
- Padma Anogol, "Indian Christian Women and Indigenous Feminism," in *G&I*

Thurs, Sept 10

- Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The debate on sati in colonial India," in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, eds., *Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History* (Rutgers, 1988) – E-reserve
- Hilary McD. Beckles, "Taking Liberties: Enslaved Women and Anti-Slavery in the Caribbean," in *G&I*

Weeks 4 & 5: Empire and sexuality

Tues, Sept 15

Research workshop – meet in Burling Library, downstairs in the computer room

Thurs, Sept 17

- Ronald Hyam, “Empire and Sexual Opportunity,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 14 (Jan 1986), 34-89 – E-reserve
- Mark T. Berger, “Imperialism and Sexual Exploitation: A Response to Ronald Hyam’s ‘Empire and Sexual Opportunity,’” *JICH*, 17 (Oct 1988), 83-9 – E-reserve

Tues, Sept 22

- Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics* (entire)

Thurs, Sept 24

- Himani Bannerji, “Age of Consent and Hegemonic Social Reform,” in *G&I*
- Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism* (Indiana 2001), ch. 6 & 7 – E-reserve

Weeks 6 & 7: Missions and gender

Tues, Sept 29:

- Jean and John Comaroff, “Home-Made Hegemony: Modernity, Domesticity, and Colonialism in South Africa,” in Karen Tranberg Hansen, ed., *African Encounters with Domesticity* (Rutgers, 1992), 37-74 – E-reserve
- Patricia Grimshaw, “Faith, Missionary Life, and the Family,” in Philippa Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire* (Oxford, 2004), 260-280 – E-reserve

Thurs, Oct 1

- Jane Haggis, “White Women and Colonialism: Toward a Non-Recuperative History,” in *G&I*

Tues, Oct 6

- Nakanyiki Musisi, “The Politics of Perception or Perception as Politics? Colonial and Missionary Representations of Baganda Women, 1900-1945,” in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Musisi, eds., *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Indiana, 2002), 95-115 – E-reserve
- Missionary documents (handout)

Thurs, Oct 8

Preliminary proposal due in class

This should be a one-page document narrating your general topic and research question, and the main primary source base(s) through which you will address them – the proposal must demonstrate that you have actually looked at these sources!!

Week 8: Gendered nationalisms

Tues, Oct 13

- Catherine Hall, “Going A-Trolloping: Imperial Man Travels the Empire,” in *G&I*
- Mrinalini Sinha, “Nations in an Imperial Crucible,” in *Gender and Empire*, 181-202 – E-reserve

Thurs, Oct 15

No class – use the rest of the week to work on your research. I will be available in my office during class time for individual consultation.

FALL BREAK

Week 9: Taking stock

Assignment: In preparation for the first group meetings, you should 1) get a solid grip on the specific historical context of your topic, and 2) be ready to give a brief progress report on your research.

Tues, Oct 27

2:15-3:15 Research group A meets in my office

3:15-4:05 Research group B meets in my office

Thurs, Oct 29

2:15-3:15 Research group C meets in my office

3:15-4:05 Research group D meets in my office

Week 10: Sources

Assignment: Email your bibliography to me and your group members by 7 p.m. the night before your group is meeting. Divide the bibliography into primary and secondary sources. Put a star next to the most important sources in each category and be ready to discuss them with the group. In particular, you should address the following: 1) What have the secondary sources already shown about your topic, and what questions, problems, gaps, or angles do they offer for further investigation and interrogation? 2) How do your primary sources help answer those questions? What patterns do the primary sources reveal, and what kind of story do they tell?

Please bring a copy of each bibliography in the group, including your own, to the meeting.

Tues, Nov 3

2:15-3:15 Research group A meets in my office

3:15-4:05 Research group B meets in my office

Thurs, Nov 5

2:15-3:15 Research group C meets in my office

3:15-4:05 Research group D meets in my office

Week 11: Refining your plan

Assignment: Submit an expanded proposal (2-3 pp) to me that addresses the following questions:

- 1) What is the research question and/or historical problem?*
- 2) How will your primary sources and method of reading them address this question?*
- 3) How is the argument shaping up? (i.e. how will you answer the research question?)*
(cont. below)

- 4) *How does your investigation relate to the relevant historiography? Who/what are you responding to or arguing against?*
- 5) *“Who cares?”: i.e., what is the larger significance of this investigation? How will your focused study help tell a larger story?*
- 6) *Your paper should have 2-4 subsections. What will each section accomplish, and how will it help answer the larger question?*

This proposal will serve as the basis for writing your paper introduction next week.

Tues, Nov 10

****Expanded proposal due via email as a Word attachment by 4:30 p.m.**** (You do not need to submit it to the other group members.)

Note: I will be at a conference from the 6th to the 10th. I will have occasional access to email during that time.

Thurs, Nov 12, 9:00- 4:00

Individual meetings

Week 12: Introduction

Assignment: Email your introduction (2-4 pp) to me and your group members by 7 p.m. the night before your group is meeting. The introduction should articulate all of the issues you included in your revised proposal: research question, argument, counterargument, sources/methodology, historiography, larger significance, and road map. Although you may find you need to revise the introduction after you have finished the body of the paper, you should use these opening paragraphs to lay out the interpretive and organizational framework of the project. Group members are then responsible for giving feedback to each person during our meeting. Please bring a copy of each introduction in the group, including your own, to the meeting.

Tip: although you are only responsible for submitting your introduction this week, I strongly recommend that you begin drafting the body of your paper at this stage as well. This maneuver will help you hone the introduction and make your life easier around Thanksgiving!

Tues, Nov 17

2:15-3:15 Research group A meets in my office

3:15-4:05 Research group B meets in my office

Thurs, Nov 19

2:15-3:15 Research group C meets in my office

3:15-4:05 Research group D meets in my office

Week 13: Body

Tues, Nov 24

No group meetings. I will be available in my office during class time for individual consultation.

THANKSGIVING

Week 14: Body and conclusion

Tues, Dec 1 & Thurs, Dec 3

No group meetings. I will be available in my office during class time for individual consultation.

Fri, Dec 4

Complete paper due in Mears by 4:30 p.m.

Week 15: Revision

Tues, Dec 8 & Thurs, Dec 10

Individual meetings

The day before we meet, you will receive your draft grade and my comments via email. Your assignment is to develop a plan for revision based on my comments and to report that plan during our meeting. I will be evaluating your draft on the following points:

- 1) *Argument: is the thesis clearly stated in one or two sentences toward the end of the introduction?*
- 2) *Framework: Does your introduction situate this argument by indicating the research question, the historical context, the counterargument, the relevant historiography, and a “road map” of the body of the paper?*
- 3) *Organization and prose: Do you develop the argument clearly throughout the paper, through a logical progression of ideas, effective transitions, and a descriptive and sharp use of language? Does each subsection have an introductory paragraph that conveys the overall point of that part of the discussion?*
- 4) *Evidence: Are the different components of the argument convincingly born out by your use of sources, properly cited in footnotes or endnotes in Chicago style? Do any components need to be developed further?*
- 5) *Broader significance: Is it clear why the reader should care about your study?*

Exam Week: Final revision and reflection

Mon, Dec 14

3:00-5:00: Afternoon tea and informal presentations at my house, 1215 4th Ave.

Thurs, Dec 17

Final paper draft due in Mears by 4:30

Please note that college policy dictates that all student work must be turned in by 5:00 on the Friday of exam week unless you are taking an incomplete in the course.