



## Sex and European Feminism during the “long nineteenth century”

Bartlett Hall Rm 121  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:15pm

Kirsten Leng  
kleng@umass.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-3:50pm  
11D Bartlett Hall



## Course Description

Why has sex been a central preoccupation for feminism throughout its history? How have feminist attitudes towards sex changed over time, and how have attitudes varied amongst feminists themselves? What connections did feminists make between sexual reform, women's rights, and broader social, political, and economic change? And what are the legacies of past feminist sexual politics for the present day?

This course addresses these questions by exploring the history of feminist sexual politics in Europe over the course of the "long nineteenth century" (1789-1914), and will focus on developments in Britain, France, and Germany. We will examine feminists' writings on and activism surrounding sex and sexuality to understand how definitions of sex, feminism, and sexual politics changed over time, and how issues of class and race shaped feminist sexual politics. We will also analyze contradictions, tensions, and continuities within diverse feminist approaches to sexuality, and assess similarities and differences amongst feminists from different national backgrounds. By adopting a focus on feminism and sexuality, this course offers a unique lens on the major events of modern European history.

## Requirements and Evaluation

*Participation: 30%*

This course will combine lecture and seminar formats. Each class, students are expected to complete the readings and actively participate in class discussions. If for any reason a student is unable to participate in this manner, s/he should contact me as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements.

As preparation for discussion, each student is expected to bring to each class meeting:

1. 2 questions about the readings
2. at least 2 passages from each reading they found particularly illuminating, and be prepared to explain why s/he chose those passages
3. 2 things you learned from the readings

Please submit these by the end of the day on Moodle; the cut-off is 8pm on day of class meeting. You don't need to do this when we don't have readings to discuss.

*Written Work: 70%*

The major assignment for this course is a research project, worth 35% of your final grade, to be submitted at the end of the term. This project can be on a topic of your own choosing; however, it should have something to do with sex and European feminism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. You are also allowed to do a project that compares developments in Europe to those happening simultaneously in the United States or elsewhere in the world.

Leading up to the submission of the final project, we will complete a number of smaller assignments to help us start and progress on our projects. These include:

- a. Project Proposal (5%): due FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6 AT 5PM on MOODLE
- b. Primary Source Analysis (5%): due FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27 AT 5PM on MOODLE
- c. Annotated Bibliography (10%): due TUESDAY, MARCH 24 AT 5PM on MOODLE
- d. Paper Outline (5%): due FRIDAY, APRIL 10 AT 5PM on MOODLE
- e. Workshopping Paper Drafts in Class (5%): due TUESDAY, APRIL 21

Instructions on how to do these assignments are appended to this syllabus, and are available on Moodle.

In our last class sessions (Thursday, April 23 and Tuesday, April 28) you will present your project to the class for 5-10 minutes. Presentation = 5% of your grade. Final Project due **May 4**.

**\*\*Bonus Opportunity!** The Civil Liberties and Public Policy Reproductive Justice Conference will be held at Hampshire College from April 10 to 12<sup>th</sup>. Given that reproduction is a topic of great interest to this course, you can receive an extra **2%** towards your participation grade if you attend the conference and prepare a 1-2 page, double-spaced report on your observations and what you learned at the conference.

### **Late Policy**

Barring family and health emergencies or major technological disasters, *late assignments will not be accepted*. Period.

### **Readings**

We will read a range of primary and secondary sources related to the theme at hand. It is imperative that everyone completes the readings, every week, both to ensure individual comprehension and to foster vibrant discussion. Almost all of the readings are available through e-reserves and Moodle; the password to access e-reserves is “feminism15.” To access e-reserves, you will need to set up an account. The information needed to set up this account is attached.

The only required text is Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Sexuality and the Early Feminists* (1995); it should be available through the campus bookstore or other book purveyor. It is also available at the Reserves desk in the library.

### **Writing Resources**

For free (!) help with your writing assignments, visit the Writing Center, located in the Learning Commons of the W. E. B DuBois library. For more information about their services, scheduling procedures, hours of operation, etc., please visit: <https://www.umass.edu/writingcenter/>

### **Academic Dishonesty**

This course follows the university guidelines for academic honesty. According to the Dean of Students Office, academic dishonesty is the attempt to secure unfair advantage for oneself or another in any academic exercise. For our course, this includes plagiarism and facilitating dishonesty. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty and require further information regarding the Dean of Students’ policy, please see [http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/#A](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/#A)

### **Students with Disabilities**

To arrange accommodation, please contact Disability Services (<http://www.umass.edu/disability/index.html>) and be in touch with me as soon as possible.

# Syllabus

## **Tuesday, January 20: Introduction**

- Introductions to each other, course and its objectives, typical class structure
- \*LECTURE: Setting the Scene—Why Europe? Why the 19<sup>th</sup> Century? What is ‘sex’? Why begin in France?

## **Thursday, January 22: Introduction II**

- Doing research on the history of women, gender, sexuality, and feminism in the Pioneer Valley: a visit from UMass Amherst and Smith expert librarians and archivists

## **Tuesday, January 27: Setting the Stage—the French Revolution**

### *Primary Sources*

- Olympe de Gouge, Declaration of the Rights of Woman, 1791  
<https://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/293/>
- Women’s Petition to the National Assembly 1789 <https://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/629/>

### *Secondary Sources*

- Karen Offen, *European Feminisms 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 50-66

## **Thursday, January 29: Saint-Simonian feminism in France 1820s-1830s: Women’s rights, Sexual Reform, and Social Change**

### **\*LECTURE: REACTIONS TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION**

### *Primary Sources*

- Selected articles from “Tribune des Femmes,” in Claire Goldberg Moses and Leslie Wahl Rabine, *Feminism, Socialism and French Romanticism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 282-296 \*Available on Moodle

### *Secondary Sources*

- Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984), Chs. 3 and 4, 41-87 \*Available on Moodle

## **Tuesday, February 3: Setting the Stage: The Industrial Revolution, Class, Gender, and Sexuality**

### **\*LECTURE: INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: EFFECTS AND RESISTANCES**

### *Primary Sources*

- Coventry Patmore, “Canto IX. Sahara. Preludes: The Wife’s Tragedy,” in *Angel in the House* (1854), p. 74: see <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4099/4099-h/4099-h.htm#page32>
- Hannah More, “Introduction,” *Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies* (1777), pp. 1-14: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19595/19595-h/19595-h.htm>

### *Secondary Source*

- Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 149, 162-192

**Thursday, February 5: Cleavages of sex and class in Popular Working-Class Movements, 1840s-1850s**

*Primary Sources*

- Contributors to *The Northern Star*, in *Women and Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century Vol. I: Specific Controversies*, edited by Mike Saunders (London: Routledge, 2001)

*Secondary Sources*

- Anna Clark, “A Difficult Ideal: Domesticity in Popular Culture and Practice,” in *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): 248-263

**\*\*\*FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 5PM EST: PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE\*\*\***

**Tuesday, February 10: Utopian Socialism as Response to the Industrial Revolution 1820s-1830s**

*Primary Sources*

- William Thompson and Anna Wheeler, excerpt from *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, To Retain Them in Political and Thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery; In Reply to a Paragraph of Mr. Mill's Celebrated "Article On Government"* (London: Richard Taylor, 1825). Reprinted in Marie Mulvey Roberts and Tamae Mizuta, eds., *The Reformers: Socialist Feminism* (London: Routledge and Thoemmes Press, 1995), pp. 187-92, 196-202. <http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/awrm/doc4.htm>

*Secondary Sources*

- Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), Introduction, Ch. 2 Ch. 6 \*Available on Moodle

**Thursday, February 12: A Grave Social Problem? Prostitution, State Regulation, and Civil Society c. 1860-1870**

**\*LECTURE: STATE REGULATION OF PROSTITUTION IN BRITAIN**

*Primary Sources*

- Ellen Vokes, “Unjustly accused of prostitution!” in *Victorian Women*, 423-428

*Secondary Sources*

- Frank Mort, “Female Sexuality” and “Male Desire” in *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 2000): 60-67
- Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), Ch. 1, 13-31 \*Available on Moodle

**Tuesday, February 17: NO CLASS—MONDAY SCHEDULE**

**Thursday, February 19: British Women’s Campaigns against the state regulation of prostitution and their aftermath, 1870s-1880s**

## **\*LECTURE: CAMPAIGNS AGAINST PROSTITUTION**

### *Primary Sources*

- Articles by the Ladies National Association, in Sheila Jeffreys, ed. *The Sexuality Debates* (London: Routledge, 1987), 191-202

### *Secondary Sources*

- Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, Chs. 6 and 7, 113-147 **\*Available on Moodle**

## **Tuesday, February 24: The International Abolitionist Movement: The Spread of Agitation against the State Regulation of Prostitution Across Europe, 1870s-1900**

### *Primary Sources*

- Anna Pappritz, “Are there born Prostitutes? [Gibt es geborene Prostitutierte?]” *Der Abolitionist* 2, no. 8 (1903): 63-67 **\*Available on Moodle**
- Ghénia Avril de Sainte-Croix, in *Feminisms of the Belle Époque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, edited by Jennifer R. Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1994): 169-176
- Case Studies of Belle Époque Prostitutes, in *Feminisms of the Belle Époque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, 177-183

### *Secondary Sources*

- Kerstin Wolff, “Herrenmoral: Anna Pappritz and Abolitionism in Germany,” *Women’s History Review* 17, no. 2 (2008): 225-237
- Anne Summers, “Which Women? What Europe? Josephine Butler and the International Abolitionist Federation,” *History Workshop Journal* 62 (Autumn 2006): 214-231.

## **Thursday, February 26: Aftermath of the Campaigns against Prostitution: Feminists and Moral Regulation in Britain, 1880s-1890s**

## **\*LECTURE: MORAL REGULATION**

### *Primary Sources*

- Laura Ormiston Chant, *Why We Attacked the Empire* (1895), 2-16 (available as ebook through UMass Amherst Library)
- Laura Ormiston Chant, *Women and the Streets, Public Morals* **\*Available on Moodle**
- Ellice Hopkins, “The Power of Womanhood,” in *The Sexuality Debates*, edited by Sheila Jeffreys (London: Routledge, 1987), 446-457

### *Secondary Sources*

- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Sexuality and the Early Feminists* (New York: New Press, 1995), Ch. 3

## **Tuesday, March 3: The Woman Question and the rise of the “New Woman”**

## **\*LECTURE: CHANGING UNDERSTANDINGS OF WOMANHOOD**

### *Primary Sources*

- Eleanor Marx Aveling and Edward Aveling, “The Woman Question,” *Westminster Review* (1886): <https://www.marxists.org/archive/eleanor-marx/works/womanq.htm>

- Sarah Grand, “The New Aspect of the Woman Question,” *North American Review* 158, no. 448 (March 1894), pp. 270-276

*Secondary Sources*

- “The Woman Question,” *Nineteenth Century Britain Blog*  
<http://nineteenthcenturybritain.blogspot.com/2010/02/woman-question.html>
- Karen Offen, “Feminist Challenges and Antifeminist Responses, 1890-1914,” in *European Feminisms 1700-1950* (Stanford University Press, 2000): 188-196

**Thursday, March 5: New Women [and Old Men]**

*Primary Sources*

- Sarah Grand, “The New Aspect of the Woman Question”; Sarah Grand, “The New woman and the Old”; Lady Jeune, “The New Woman and the Old: A Reply to Sarah Grand,” *The Late Victorian Marriage Question: A Collection of Key New Woman Texts, Vol. II*, edited by Ann Heilmann (Routledge 1998), 270-76; 466-70; 600-4
- Helene Stöcker, “The Modern Woman [Die moderne Frau],” in *Die Liebe und Die Frauen* (J. C. C. Bruns’ Verlag, 1906): 19-23 \*Available on Moodle

*Secondary Sources*

- Mary Louise Roberts, “The New Woman,” in *Disruptive Acts: the new woman in fin-de-siècle France* (University of Chicago, 2002): 19-28
- Elaine Showalter, “The New Woman,” *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the fin-de-siècle* (New York: Penguin, 1990): 38-58

**Tuesday, March 10: “Is Marriage a Failure?” Feminists Debate the Fate of Marriage**

**\*LECTURE: MARRIAGE QUESTION**

*Primary Sources*

- Mona Caird, *The Morality of Marriage, and Other Essays on the Status and Destiny of Women* (London: George Redway, 1897): 138-149
- Louise-Marie Compain, selection from *L’Un vers l’autre*, in *Feminisms of the Belle Epoque*, 202-210

*Secondary Sources*

- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, Ch. 4

**Thursday, March 12: GO DO SOME RESEARCH!!**

**Tuesday, March 17 & Thursday, March 19: SPRING BREAK!**

**Tuesday, March 24: Rethinking Female [Heterosexual] Desire: Feminism, Sexual Expression, and Free Love**

**\*LECTURE: FEMALE DESIRE**

*Primary Sources*



- August Bebel, *Woman in the Past, Present, and Future*, trans. H. B Adams Walther (London: Modern Press, 1885), 43-50
- Havelock Ellis, “The Sexual Impulse in Women.” *American Journal of Dermatology* 6, no. 3 (March 1902): 1-12. \*Available on Moodle
- Jane Clapperton, Annie Besant, and Elizabeth Blackwell in *OsW*, 17-19
- Helene Stöcker, “On the Reform of Sexual Ethics [Zur Reform der sexuellen Ethik],” *Mutterschutz* 1, no. 1 (1905): 3-12 \*Available on Moodle

\*\*\*ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE AT 5PM\*\*\*

**Thursday, March 26: Rethinking Female [Heterosexual] Desire: Feminism, Sexual Expression, and Free Love**

*Secondary Sources*

- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, Ch. 7
- Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and her enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930* (Pandora Press, 1985), Ch. 5

**Tuesday, March 31: Birth Control: A Feminist Campaign?**

**\*LECTURE: BIRTH CONTROL IN THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY**

*Primary Sources*

- Jane Hume Clapperton and Annie Besant in *OsW*, 31-33
- Frances Swiney, Maud Churton Braby, Cicely Hamilton, Margaret Stephens, Lucy Re-Bartlett, Christabel Pankhurst, Mary Scharlieb, Working Mothers, and Stella Browne, in *OsW*, 73-77
- Max Marcuse, “Survey of Abortion and Birth Control Methods,” Germany 1913, in *European Women: A Documentary History, 1789-1945*, edited by Eleanor S. Riemer and John C. Fout (New York: Schocken Books, 1980): 206-210
- Madeleine Pelletier on the right to an abortion, *Feminisms of the Belle Époque*, 253-265

**Thursday, April 2: Birth Control: A Feminist Campaign?**

*Secondary Sources*

- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, Ch. 5
- Elinor Accampo, “The Rhetoric of Reproduction and Reconfiguration of Womanhood in the French Birth Control Movement,” *Journal of Family History* 21 (1996): 351-371

**Tuesday, April 7: Maternalism and Eugenics**

**\*LECTURE: MATERNALISM, FEMINISM, EUGENICS**

*Primary Sources*

- Ellen Key, “The Renaissance of Motherhood,” in *European Women: A Documentary History, 1789-1945*, 171-176
- Articles by Blanche Edwards-Pilliet and Clara Linzen-Ernst in *Women, the Family, and Freedom: The Debate in Documents*, edited by Susan Groag Bell and Karen Offen, Vol. 2 (Stanford University Press, 1983): 145-47



### *Secondary Sources*

- Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890-1970* (2005), Ch. 3 and 4

### **Thursday, April 9: Maternalism and Eugenics**

#### *Primary Source*

- Grete Meisel-Hess, *The Sexual Crisis* (1909), 247-259, 276-283

#### *Secondary Sources*

- Ann Taylor Allen, "Feminism and Eugenics in Germany and Britain, 1900-1930: A Comparative Perspective," *German Studies Review* 23, no. 3 (October 2000), 477-505

**\*\*\*FRIDAY, APRIL 10: PAPER OUTLINE DUE AT 5PM\*\*\***

### **April 10-12 CLPP Conference**

### **Tuesday, April 14: What is 'female homosexuality'?**

#### **\*LECTURE: THEORIES OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

#### *Primary Sources*

- Anna Rüling, "What Interest Does the Women's Movement Have in the Homosexual Question," in *Lesbians in Germany: 1890s-1920s*, edited by Lillian Faderman and Brigitte Eriksson (Naiad Press, 1999): 83-94
- Johanna Elberskirchen, "What is Homosexuality? [Was ist Homosexualität?]" in *Was hat der Mann aus Weib, Kind und sich gemacht? Revolution und Erlösung des Weibes. Eine Abrechnung mit dem Mann—Ein Wegweiser in die Zukunft!* (1904): 3-10 **\*Available on Moodle**
- Havelock Ellis, "Sexual Inversion in Women," in Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Sexual Inversion: A Critical Edition*, edited by Ivan Crozier (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 159-180.

#### *Secondary Sources*

- Heike Bauer, "Theorizing Female Inversion: Sexology, Discipline and Gender at the fin-de-siècle," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18, no. 1 (January 2009): 84-102

### **Thursday, April 16: Accounting for the Past: The Legacy of Feminist Sexual Politics**

- Ellen C. Dubois and Linda Gordon, "Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Danger and Pleasure in Nineteenth-Century Feminist Sexual Thought," 9, no.1 *Feminist Studies* (Spring 1983), 7-26
- Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies*, Ch. 10, Afterword, 186-196

### **Tuesday, April 21: Workshopping Papers**

### **Thursday, April 23-Tuesday, April 28: Presenting Final Projects**

**\*\*\*MONDAY, MAY 4: FINAL PROJECTS DUE AT 5PM\*\*\***