Study of Gender and Sexuality: Amazons and Historical Theory

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Spring 2013
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M/W 3:30-4:45 PM
Office Hours: Mon. 1-1:30 PM
Sched. #: 21547
Tues. 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO POSSIBLE REVISION AT THE INSTRUCTOR’S DISCRETION.

Course Description:

This course will explore Amazons and women warriors in various historical settings, beginning with the Amazons of antiquity and working up towards women in the modern U.S. military. We will examine not only specific women warriors, but also the broad historical contexts in which they lived and in which their legends were recorded and passed on. The subject of Amazons will be a theme used to familiarize students with Queer, Structuralist, Feminist, and Postcolonial Theories, which we will use to situate and understand the realities of women who took up the sword and fought for themselves. Using these theoretical precepts, we will strive to understand “gender queerness” as a cultural construct that is both time and place specific. The course will also lend itself to an understanding of Feminism through the study of key texts, such as the Republic of Plato, as well as female masculinity through the study of Judith Halberstam’s groundbreaking Female Masculinity. We will also explore women in the modern U.S. military as well as other nations, with keen attention on studies and evidence demonstrating the ability of women to serve in military settings.

REQUIRED BOOKS (Available at SDSU Bookstore):
Judith Halberstam, Female Masculinity.
Plato The Republic (Penguin edition ONLY)
Rosemarie Skaines, Women in Combat

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1) To isolate the social construction of gender roles and sexual orientation in specific historical and geographical contexts.
2) To articulate an understanding of gender queerness, other basic precepts of Queer Theory, and Feminist thought.
3) To understand the relationship between normative and non-normative gender roles.
4) To understand the complex relationship of female masculinity to lesbian and other sexual (i.e. straight, bisexual) and transgendered orientations.
5) To identify the means by which women in the military and political spheres challenge traditional masculinities and patriarchal configurations of power.
6) To realize how Structuralist theory has denied the reality of Amazons and other women warriors.
7) To conceptualize how queer theory and feminist thought, invested as they are in Western precepts, can be “queered” through the use of Postcolonial Theory by de-centering Europe in the historical narrative.
8) To write history from a queer, feminist perspective.
9) To grasp the precepts of Structuralist Theory and to understand its relationship to other bodies of theory, i.e. Feminist/Queer Theory.
10) To investigate the historical, non-European reality behind Amazons and other women warriors in Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance European texts.
11) To historicize the roles of women bodyguards in Asian cultures such as India through the investigation of both the historical record and artwork.
12) To understand how courage has been perceived as a male trait traditionally in light of numerous accounts of courageous women that contradict such perceptions.
13) To gain insight into the means by which courage or boldness (or lack thereof) has been used as a means to gauge gender variance in both men and women in the Western tradition.
14) To understand the iconography and dress of Amazons on vases and in other artwork.
15) To understand the function of women warriors and other famous women in Utopian literary thought, such as Plato’s Republic.
16) To analyze data from sporting events and military training to understand the true physical capacities of women to serve in the armed forces.

Class Procedures:
LAPTOPS, TABLETS, AND OTHER SMART DEVICES ARE TO BE USED FOR TAKING NOTES AND LOOKING AT COURSE-RELATED DOCUMENTS ONLY. Students who are using laptops for any other reason will lose the privilege of using a laptop in the classroom. NO EXCEPTIONS. When you use a laptop for reasons other than classwork, this distracts other students. STUDENTS WHO WISH TO USE LAPTOPS MUST SIT IN THE FRONT ROWS OF THE CLASSROOM. THIS POLICY WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED--NO EXCEPTIONS. Spot checks will be conducted at random. Anyone caught on facebook will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Cell phones MUST be turned off before class, NO EXCEPTIONS. Anyone caught using a cell phone will be asked to leave class immediately.

Use of IPods and other electronic devices is prohibited in class. AnyOne caught using an electronic device, including but not limited to cell phones, IPods, or PDAs during an examination will automatically receive an F on the exam. Once
an examination or quiz begins, noone is permitted to leave the room until they have turned in their paper.

**Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism can consist of five words or fifty pages. **If you are using someone else’s ideas, you must cite your source. If you are using someone else’s words, make sure you place them in quotes, and cite your source.** All persons caught plagiarizing or cheating will receive an F for the course. For more information on what constitutes cheating and plagiarism, see: [http://its.sdsu.edu/resources/turnitin/pdf/Plagiarism_AcadSen.pdf](http://its.sdsu.edu/resources/turnitin/pdf/Plagiarism_AcadSen.pdf)

**Turnitin.com**

All essays must be submitted using turnitin.com on BlackBoard. No exceptions—no essay on turnitin = no grade.

**GRADING:**

**Quizzes:**
Periodic quizzes will be given in class. Quizzes may not be announced in advanced. Be sure to keep up on your reading.

**Examinations:**
Students will take a mid-term and final examination. Students are required to have completed all readings and are responsible for all materials covered in lectures. Lectures are designed to supplement rather than retell readings. Make sure that you do your reading prior to each class. **Students are not permitted to leave class after an examination has started. NO EXCEPTIONS. THERE ARE NO MAKEUP EXAMINATIONS.**

**Attendance:**
Attendance is required. Students are responsible for all lectures upon examination. Class Participation makes up 10% of the student’s final grade.

**Undergraduate Essays:**
Each undergraduate student will be required to write a short research paper of approximately 7-10 pages in length. Topics will be posted on BlackBoard ([https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/](https://blackboard.sdsu.edu/)). (Quality is more important than quantity here). **Late Essays will be graded down by 10% for each class session late.**

**Reference:**

**Grading Breakdown – Undergraduate Credit**
Midterm Examination 25%
Expository Essay 25%
Final Examination 25%
Quizzes 15%
Attendance and Participation 10%

**Graduate Student Research**
Students taking this course for research credit will be responsible for conducting original research related to the course topic. Graduate Student Research Papers should be 10-15 pages in length and are due on Apr. 21, 2013. Students should submit a proposal of their project with a bibliography no later than Mar. 1, 2013.

**Grading Breakdown – Graduate Credit**
Midterm Examination 25%
Final Examination 25%
Research Paper 25%
Quizzes 15%
Attendance and Participation 10%

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Jan. 23**  
*Introduction*. Syllabus. Amazons in Greek thought: Fiction or Reality?

**Jan. 28**  
*Female Masculinity*. Gender Queerness, Queer Theory.

**Reading:** Halberstam xi-43.

**Jan. 30**  
*Female Masculinity in History*. Androgynes, Tribades, the Female Husband: Anne Lister.

**Reading:** Halberstam, 44-73. Ancient texts (BlackBoard).

**Feb. 4**  
Sex/Gender Inversion.

**Reading:** Halberstam, 75-110.

**Feb. 6**  
Amazons in Greek Thought: Female Masculinity Plus
Reader: Herodotus 4.110-119; Lysias 2.4; Arctinus, Aithiopis; Diodorus Siculus, selections.

Feb. 11 Amazons in Greek Artwork. Statuaries and Reliefs.


Feb. 13 Structural Theory and the Amazons of Antiquity. What did the Amazons mean to the ancient Greeks?


Reading: Postmodern Glossary of Terms


Feb. 25 Amazons and Postmodernism

Reading: To Be Determined

Feb. 27 Amazons in Archaeology—The Postcolonial Amazon


Website:

Plato Republic pp. xiii-lvi.

Mar. 6 Female Masculinity in Utopia: Plato's Republic. Setting the Stage: Justice.

Plato Republic pp. 2-52.

Mar. 11 Female Masculinity in Utopia: Plato's Republic. Principles of Social Organization and Education.

Plato Republic pp. 53-111.


Plato Republic pp. 112-156.

Mar. 18 Female Masculinity in Utopia: Plato’s Republic. Women Guardians.

Plato Republic pp. 157-204.

Mar. 20 MIDTERM EXAMINATION.

Mar. 25 Artemisia I and II: Historical “Amazons” or Literary Functionaries?

Reader: Vitruvius deArchitectura 2.8.14-15


Mar. 27 The Warrior Queens and Princesses of Macedonia. Who is the warrior queen in the “Tomb of Philip”? 


Apr. 1 SPRING BREAK

Apr. 3 SPRING BREAK

Apr. 8 Alexander and the Amazons

Reader: Plutarch *Alexander* 46; Arrian 7.13.

Apr. 10 Women Bodyguards in India


Apr. 15 Joan of Arc. Prophesy, Cross-Dressing, and a Real Life Woman Warrior in the Age of Christine de Pisan.


Apr. 17 Catherine de Medici and Queen Artemisia, the Icon.


Apr. 22 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER DUE. Queen Califia and California, the Island of Amazons. Amazons in Spanish literature of the age of the Conquistadors. The discovery and naming of California: from Cortez to Cabrillo.


Apr. 24 Women in Combat in the U.S. Military

Rosemarie Skaine, *Women in Combat*, xiii-32

Apr. 29 Women in the U.S. Military (cont’d.)

Rosemarie Skaine, *Women in Combat*, 33-81

May 1 GRADUATE RESEARCH PAPER DUE. Women in International Militaries

Skaine, 83-117.
May 6       **Chronology and Highlights of Women in Military History 1775-2010**

Skaine, Chronology chapter.

Exercise: Student group presentations on women in battle.

**May 8**       **Wrap-up.**

**May 15**       **3:30-5:30 PM Final Examination**