

Angels, Whores and Angry Birds: Representations and Realities of British Women's Lives Since 1850



Faculty Contact Information

Name:

Email:

Office Hour information:

Course Information

Course Description

From the 'virtuous' Angel in the House to the 'unsexed' bluestocking, the 'depraved' prostitute to the 'angry' feminist, modern British women have been praised, pitied and feared, beset by stereotypes. This module examines the representations and realities of women's lives from the start of Queen Victoria's reign in the nineteenth century to the election of the first female prime minister at the end of the twentieth century.

Course Goals

This course will consider women's shifting social, economic, and political circumstances in a period of unprecedented change, the constraints on them in war and peace, education and paid work, marriage, motherhood and family as their roles and rights developed over time. These years saw changes in divorce legislation (1857), female suffrage, increased educational opportunities in the wake of the Butler Education Act (1944), the acceptance that married women might work, sexual freedoms during the 'love revolution', the legalisation of abortion (1967), the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the women's liberation movement of the 1970s and 80s. And yet stubborn inequalities remain, which we will interrogate together from contemporary perspectives.

Throughout the course, we will celebrate the rebels, non-conformists, pioneers, and freedom fighters, and use a range of sources including women's own testimonies, in our exploration of the history of modern British women.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the lives and experiences of women in modern Britain.
2. Discuss the historiographical arguments and traditions that have characterised women's history.
3. Apply historical knowledge and understanding of British women's history to contemporary debates and issues related to gender equality, social justice, and women's rights, demonstrating the relevance of historical perspectives to contemporary society.

4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills through analysis of primary and secondary sources, interpret historical evidence, and construct well-supported arguments about the experiences and contributions of British women.

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Reading Response Journal	30%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Primary Source Analysis	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Research Project	30%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Reading Response Journal (5,000 words)

Due:

You will keep an online journal in which you will compile summaries and reflections on readings and documentaries that you are required to complete in advance of class each week. For each entry you should aim for a 750-word summary of the arguments and ideas in the readings and the documentaries, written in full and coherent sentences and paragraphs.

Assessment 2: Primary Source Analysis (1,000 words)

Due:

You will select a primary source on a topic of history that we have studied and write a detailed analysis of it. This could be one that we have read together in a seminar, from the textbook, one that you find via your own research online, or one that you see whilst we are on a field trip. Your analysis should aim to provide a nuanced reading of the source: introduce the historical context of the source, details of the author and their credibility, describe and contextualise the type of source (newspaper article, legal document, photo, etc.), its audience or readership (who was it meant to inform or persuade), what the source is about, and what perspectives it offers the historian today. You should think about its reliability and biases, its limitations etc.

Assessment 3: Research Project (2,500 words)

Due:

You will select one female historical figure (since 1830) and research her life. You will construct an understanding of her life, achievements, and the broader historical context in which she lived. Your chosen figure should be someone whose life and contributions intrigue you and offer significant potential for exploration through primary sources that are available to you online (and potentially on field trips). These primary sources may include, but are not limited to letters, diaries, and personal correspondence, official documents and records, newspaper articles and editorials, speeches and interviews, visual materials etc.

Examine the primary sources you have gathered, paying close attention to the insights they offer into your chosen figure's life, beliefs, actions, and impact. Consider the perspectives of different individuals and groups represented in the sources, as well as the biases and limitations inherent

in historical documents. Based on your analysis of the primary sources and supporting information from secondary sources, compose a research paper that provides a comprehensive portrayal of your chosen historical figure. Your paper should include biographical details, including her upbringing, education, family background, and any significant life events, and discuss her contributions, achievements, and notable actions, highlighting their significance within the context of her time and subsequent historical developments. Your paper must include insights from at least five primary sources you have examined, using specific examples to support your arguments and interpretations.

Grading

Grade	Knowledge & Content	Methodology & Structure, Language & Style	Understanding, Reflection & Critique	Integrative thinking & demonstration of experiential learning
A (93- 100%) A- (90-92%)	Interesting topic handled with intelligence, originality, and depth; wealth of supporting material, smoothly integrated into the text; tone is evident and maintained throughout; no factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; organization is clear, logical and purposeful throughout the essay; well-chosen examples. Uses sophisticated sentences effectively; usually chooses words aptly; observes conventions of written English and manuscript format; makes few minor or technical errors	Well-chosen examples; persuasive reasoning used to develop and support thesis consistently: uses quotations and citations effectively; causal connections between ideas are evident	Gives full insight into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves complete integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue. Shows clear understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
B+ (87-89%) B (83-86%) B- (80-82%)	Content is above average; worthwhile topic; satisfactory depth of development; supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences are specific, concrete, and plentiful; has only minor factual inaccuracies	Material is unified and well focused; pattern of organization is clear, logical, and well executed; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically. Some mechanical difficulties or stylistic problems; may make occasional problematic word choices or awkward syntax errors; a few spelling or punctuation errors or cliché; usually presents quotations effectively	Pursues thesis consistently: develops a main argument with clear major points and appropriate textual evidence and supporting detail; makes an effort to organize paragraphs topically	Gives some insights into the nature of an event, experience, or artifact; achieves partial integration of knowledge from diverse disciplines to interpret an issue; some understanding of cultural impact through appropriate examples
C+ (77-79%) C (73-76%) C- (70-72%)	Worthwhile topic; supporting material for thesis and topic sentences is general and abstract rather than specific and concrete; most information is correct	Organization is clear, logical, and coherent; some ideas unsupported; fails to integrate quotations appropriately. More frequent wordiness; several unclear or awkward sentences;	Only partially develops the argument; shallow analysis; some ideas and generalizations undeveloped or unsupported; makes limited use of textual evidence; fails to	Able to explain to a limited extent, the quality of a performance, event, or artifact; gives few insights into event, experience; discusses few qualities of an experience; a limited understanding of

		imprecise use of words or over-reliance on passive voice; one or two major grammatical errors	integrate quotations appropriately	cultural impact with few examples
D (60-69%)	Trivial subject; very few supporting details for the thesis and topic sentences; has some correct & incorrect information	Not logically organized; digresses from one topic to another; no clear organizational pattern. Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement; sentence fragments); language marred by clichés	Frequently only narrates; digresses from one topic to another without developing ideas or terms; makes insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Little integration of experience and narrative; limited insight of issues and insufficient understanding of cultural impact
F (0-59%)	Consists of unsupported generalities and/or the repetition of commonplace ideas; lacks originality and insight; information is inaccurate or absent	Does not follow the instructions; rambling, disorganized and incoherent. Numerous grammatical errors	Little or no development; may list incorrect facts or misinformation; uses no quotations or fails to cite sources or plagiarizes	Little or no integration experience and narrative; lack of insight and fails to understand cultural impact

Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise noted. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission from the faculty. Credit is not given for work received late, except in exceptional circumstances of personal illness or similar (which must be made known to FIE at the time). Documentation of exceptional circumstances from a third party, such as a doctor's note, may be required. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be committed to writing and include information on the exceptional circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.
- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive

subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- [See the full attendance policy here](#)

Required Readings

Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class* (Cambridge, 1992)

Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns 1780-1870* (London, 1992)

Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (London, 1995)

Helen Rogers, *Women and the People: Authority, Authorship and the Radical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot, 2000)

Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender and Political Culture in Britain 1815-1867* (Oxford, 2009)

Helen McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood in Britain* (Bloomsbury, 2020)

Natalie Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England, 1968-1993* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2016)

Lynn Abrams, 'Liberating the Female Self: Epiphanies, Conflict and Coherence in the Life Stories of Post-War British Women', *Social History*, 39/1 (2014)

Claire Langhamer, 'Feelings, Women and Work in the Long 1950s', *Women's History Review*, 26/1 (2017)

Judith Walkowitz, 'Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution in King's Cross in the 1980s', *TCBH*, 30/2 (2019)

Jonathan Moss, *Women, Workplace Protest and Political Identity in England, 1968-85* (MUP, 2019)

J. Dean, 'Who's Afraid of Third-Wave Feminism? On the Uses of the "third wave" in British Feminist Politics', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 11/3 (2009)

Heidi Safia Mirza, *Black British Feminism: A Reader* (Routledge, 1997)

Pamela Abbott and Geoff Payne (eds), *The Social Mobility of Women: Beyond Male Mobility Models* (Falmer, 1990)

June Purvis, *Women's history: Britain, 1850-1945: an introduction*

[Additional Resources and Readings](#)

See MyStudy

[MyStudy@FIE](#)

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

[FIE's Values in the Curriculum](#)

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see [Our Values](#).

[Topics](#)

The course takes a chronological approach to trace the evolution of British women's experiences, activism, and changing societal attitudes over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, highlighting key events, movements, and shifts in women's rights and roles. These are the topics that thread through this chronological approach to engage students in a diverse range of thematic issues and perspectives across time:

- **Women in the Workplace:** the changing roles of women in the workforce, including the impact of industrialisation, WWI and WWII; the post-war period on women's employment opportunities, discrimination, and the fight for equal pay.

- **Education and Intellectual Pursuits:** the expansion of educational opportunities for women, the struggle for access to universities, professional qualifications
- **Reproductive Rights and Health:** debates and developments surrounding knowledge of women's bodies, contraception, abortion, reproductive rights, women's health initiatives.
- **Feminist Movements and Activism:** the development of feminist thought and activism, including second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, and its impact on social attitudes, legislation and cultural representations of women. Intersectionality – the experiences and contributions of women from diverse ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds, how factors such as race, class and sexuality intersect with gender.
- **Domesticity and Gender Roles:** Evolving notions of domesticity, motherhood, and gender roles, including the impact of social norms and expectations on women's lives.
- **Women and War:** Roles of women during times of conflict, including their contributions to the war effort, experiences on the home front, and the lasting impacts of war on women's lives.
- **Media and Representation:** Portrayals of women in media, literature, art, and popular culture. The ways in which these representations both reflect and shape societal attitudes towards women.
- **Legal Rights and Reform:** Legal milestones and reforms affecting women's rights, including universal suffrage, changes in marriage and divorce laws, property rights, anti-discrimination legislation. The role of women's organizations, clubs, and networks in advocating for women's rights, providing support, and fostering solidarity among women.
- **Global Perspectives:** the impact of imperialism, colonialism, and globalisation on British women's lives.
- **Memory and Heritage:** Reflections on the preservation and commemoration of women's history, including the challenges of documenting and interpreting women's experiences, and the importance of recognizing and celebrating women's achievements.

Possible co-curricular activities

- Women of London history walking tour (various locations including Westminster, Bloomsbury, the East End) <https://www.womenoflondon.org.uk/>
- National Portrait Gallery (with a focus on the representation of women in art and the stories we tell about women in history now)
- The Women's Library (to look at archives and primary sources on subjects such as prostitution and trafficking, black and Asian women, women and the family, women and peace campaigning, women's lib etc)
- Imperial War Museum (women at war)
- Museum of London Docklands (huge 'women and the vote' archive) Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

[Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.](#)

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

[Writing and Language Support](#)

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

[Accommodations for Students](#)

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

[Additional Policies and Resources](#)

[Mental Health and Stress Management Support](#)

FIE's qualified and accredited counselor is Dr Deborah Hill, who offers appointments via video call and over the phone. The first three appointments are free of charge and ongoing sessions can be arranged directly with Dr Hill. To make an appointment with Dr Hill, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk.

If you have a counselor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

[Diversity and Inclusivity](#)

FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate, derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.