

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



### Faculty Contact Information

**Name:**

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### 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

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

	<b>Relevance</b>  Questions are interpreted correctly;  Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout;  Discussion is focused on topic of the questions;  Irrelevant content and discussion are not included	<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>  Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately;  Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight;  There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module	<b>Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning</b>  Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning;  Originality in argument;  Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions;  Integration of connections and experiences outside of the formal classroom	<b>Scholarship and Style</b>  Conclusions are well justified and complete;  Facts reported and statements made are accurate;  Writing is clear and fluent;  All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style;  All work is the student's own
<b>A</b>  93-100 %	Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Excellent and thorough thesis development	Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and extensive wider reading	Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and	Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, conclusions are well-justified;

			original critical insight;  Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Accurate and thorough referencing
<b>A-</b> 90-92%	Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Very strong thesis	Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading	Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight;  Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language, conclusions are full and justified;  Accurate referencing
<b>B+</b> 87-89%	Appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Good thesis throughout	Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading	Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence;  Shows critical insight;  Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified;  Accurate referencing
<b>B</b> 83-86%	Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Thesis is clear	Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading	Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence;  Shows critical insight;  Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language;  Conclusions are justified;  Accurate referencing

<b>B-</b> 80-82%	Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Thesis is underdeveloped but clear	Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading	Sound analytical skills;  Sound evaluation of data;  Shows some critical judgement identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;  Conclusions are coherent;  Sound use of referencing conventions
<b>C+</b> 77-79%	Some appropriate interpretation and relevant;  Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading	Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills;  Some evaluation of data;  Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive;  Identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;  Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported;  Sound use of referencing conventions
<b>C</b> 73-76%	May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material;  Thesis lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood;  Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills;  Some evaluation of data;  Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive;  Identifies experiential connections	Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language;  Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported;  Sound use of referencing conventions
<b>C-</b> 70-72%	Limited interpretation and relevance;  Thesis is inconsistent	Weak understanding of evidence;  Limited reading beyond material	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills;  Some evaluation of data;	Inconsistent written fluency;  Weak use of appropriate language;

		introduced in module	Lacks critical judgement;  Little integration experiential learning	Weak justification for conclusions;  Adequate use of referencing conventions
<b>D</b> 60-69%	Limited interpretation and relevance;  Lacks thesis	Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading	Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of evidence, lacks critical insight;  Little integration of experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency;  No justification for conclusions;  Inaccurate use of referencing
<b>F</b> 0-59%	Significant misinterpretation and irrelevant material	Lacks understanding of evidence and inappropriate or no wider reading	Lacks analytical skills, lacks evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement;  Lacks integration of experiential learning	Poorly written with little fluency;  No justification for conclusions;  Poor referencing;  Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI

### 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 notes. 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 in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline, including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the 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](http://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 offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counsellor, simply email [studentlife@fie.org.uk](mailto:studentlife@fie.org.uk). If you have a counsellor 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.