MSc Gender History

Option: Gender and Empire: Contested Meanings and Divergent Practices

20 credits (semester one) option
School of History and Classics

Course Organiser: Dr Francesca Locatelli
Course Co-organisers: Dr Tina Picton Phillipps, Prof Paul Nugent and Dr Crispin Bates

Rationale
Drawing on recent historical research that introduced gender as an analytical concept into the study of empire, this course seeks to explore a variety of discourses and practices that forged the notions of masculinities and femininities in imperial consciousness and redefined the roles of men and women in colonised societies. Moving between pre-colonial, colonial and contemporary times, the course examines the continuities and changes in gender relations in the context of the variety of economic, social and cultural systems which developed in Africa, India and Australasia.

Course Aims and Objectives
The course aims to provide an understanding of the historiographical debates and main themes within the history of gender and empire. Following the examination of the impact of ‘empire’ (in the widest use of the term) on the formation of European consciousness and political practices, the course analyses the extent to which these policies affected gender relations by examining particular cases studies in specific geographical contexts (primarily Africa and India). It chiefly looks at the main transformation of gender relations throughout the colonial and post-colonial periods, although attention will be also given to the features of the relationship between men and women in pre-colonial contexts. Topics include: the impact of imperial possessions on both literature and on masculinities and femininities, pre-colonial patterns of gender relations in Africa and India, the impact of colonial policies on the status of men and women and different forms of resistance against, collaboration with and adaptation to imperial policies and cultural models.

Learning Outcomes
This course aims to:
- enhance student understanding of important themes in gender history
- broaden student understanding of alternative ‘world views’ on gender relations
- enhance student knowledge of competing historiographical viewpoints on gender relations
- enhance student historical and transferable verbal skills in a team work situation, through the preparation and presentation of seminar papers, and collective engagement in informed discussion and debate of seminar topics
- enhance writing skills through the preparation and submission of essays exhibiting empirical rigour, theoretical and analytical skills and narrative and literary skills.

Content of the Course
The course employs chronological and thematic approaches and is divided into the following sessions:

1) Empire and Literature (TPP)
This will enable students to critically examine the impact of ‘Empire’ (in the widest use of the term) on the metropolitan consciousness through contemporary popular novels as well as teachers’ handbooks and school texts. Clearly the works of Edward Said (and his critics) are fundamental – as part of a History M.Sc. students should be aware of the need to identify the chronology of dates
of publication, as well as linking these with events in the relevant parts of the British Empire. The timeframe will be primarily the early twentieth century to the inter-war period.

2) Gendered Imperialism (TPP)
The aim of this seminar is to alert students to the ascription of appropriate roles for men and women during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A critical approach to the formation of both masculinities and femininities during this period will alert students to an awareness of the attempt to mould and reshape the bourgeois population into ‘servants of empire’.

3) [En]gendering Transportation (TPP)
The focus of this seminar will be on the Australian penal colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land and on the shaping of plebeian gender relations. The aim of this seminar will be for students to engage critically with the academic literature over the last fifty years which has seen a transformation in the ways in which both male and female convicts have been portrayed. This literature owes much to feminist theorists in the earlier period. As a colonial settler community, the two penal colonies, New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land, offer an opportunity to explore repressive aspects of the administration across a period of 70 years.

4) Gender and the state in pre-colonial Africa (PN)
This session will focus on the often prominent place of women in pre-colonial states and stateless societies.

5) Men, women and the colonial interpretation of ‘customary’ law in Africa (FL)
This session will examine how the colonial codification of customs and traditions affected the patterns of gender relations in Africa, in terms of structures of families and roles of women and men in local societies.

6) Trade and West Africa (PN)
This session will analyse why some forms of trade in West Africa came to be dominated by women, whereas other were associated with men. Long distance African trade and trans-Atlantic trade will be considered alongside the trade in foodstuffs.

7) Sati, gender and social reform (British and Indian) in 19th century India (CB)
The outlawing of Sati, the self-immolation of Hindu widows, in 1829 was presented as a great achievement in the company's 'civilising mission', yet oddly the company had overseen and authorised the custom only a few years before. What evidence there is suggests an increase rather than a decline in both sati and female infanticide in the years following abolition. What therefore was really at stake in these controversies and how far did they impact on the relationship between colonial governments and Indian women?

8) Gender and labour relations in colonial Africa (FL)
In this seminar we will discuss the extent to which colonial policy impacted upon African economies. We will focus primarily on the changes in patterns of labour and gender relations, i.e the shift from slave to wage labour, the development of casual labour and its impact on the structure of families, women migrants and prostitution.

9) Masculinity and migrant labour in Southern Africa (PN)
This session will look not just at what happened to the women when the men went away on contract to the mines, but also how 'mine marriages' were formed between younger men, as 'wives', and senior men in the compounds. The seminar will provide an interrogation of masculinity in southern African history.
10) Gender and Indian nationalism: from 1857 to 1947 (CB)
The age of consent and the promoting of widow remarriage became a part of the colonial programme of improvement for India and a legitimation of the continuing colonial presence. At the same time imperial rule was maintained using a rigid classification of the population into 'loyal' and 'disloyal', 'martial' and 'effeminate' castes and races. Nationalists responded with programmes of women's education and movements of religious and social reform. Women were a part of Gandhi's nationalist agenda too, their role limited, nonetheless, by adherence to conservative ideas of Hindu 'tradition'. Were nationalist positions merely a reflection of those of their colonial masters? This seminar will examine how the 'modernisation' of Indian women tended to re-define traditional attitudes within a novel patriarchal framework, as much influenced by politics as by economic and social change.

11) Women and African national liberation struggles (FL)
This session will explore women’s involvement in national liberation struggles and examine women’s ability to resist the colonial imposition of values, patterns of life and social control. It will also look at women’s struggle to renegotiate their own position and power in independent African societies.

Organisation of Teaching
The course will be taught by Prof Paul Nugent, Dr Francesca Locatelli, Dr Tina Picton Phillipps and Dr Crispin Bates. The structure of the sessions will take the form of seminars or of guided reading and tutorials. This, however, will vary according to the student numbers and preference of the organiser of each session. It is proposed to run this option in semester two.
Contact hours: 2 hours a week for 11 weeks.

Student Assessment and Guidance
Students are required to write one essay of approximately 3000 words.

Bibliography


K. Alford, Production or Reproduction? An Economic History of Women in Australia 1788-1850, (Melbourne, 1984)


Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi, Women in African Colonial Histories (Bloomington, 2002)

K. Ballhatchet, Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905 (London, 1980)

Swapna Banerjee, Men, Women, and Domestics : Articulating Middle-Class Identity in Colonial Bengal (New Delhi, 2004)


U. Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: voices from the Partition of India* (New Delhi, 1998)

Sudhir Chandra, *Enslaved Daughters; Colonialism, Law and Women's Right* (New Delhi, 1998)


Gracia Clark, *Onions are My Husbands: Survival and Accumulation by West African Marketwomen* (London, 1994)


Frederick Cooper (ed.), *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labour, Capital and the State in Urban Africa* (Beverly Hills, 1983)


J. Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, sexuality and gender in Colonial Australia*, (Cambridge 1997)

K. Daniels, *Convict Women* (St Leonards, 1998)

Dagmar Engels, *Beyond Purdah? Women in Bengal* (New Delhi, 1996)


C. Gittings (ed.), *Imperialism and Gender: Constructions of Masculinity* (Hebden Bridge, 1996)

Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London, 1980)

Sandra Green, *Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: a History of the Anlo-Ewe* (Portsmouth, 1996)

C. Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, (London, 1992)


Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy, “*Wicked*” Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in *Africa* (Oxford, 2001)


Malavika Kasturi, *Embattled Identities Rajput Lineages and the Colonial State in Nineteenth-Century North India* (New Delhi, 2002)


Madhu Kishwar, *Gandhi on Women* (New Delhi, 1986)


J. A. Mangan & J. Walvin (eds), *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940*, (Manchester, 1987)

Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1998)


Andrea Major, "*Eternal Flames*": Suicide, Sinfulness And Insanity In "Western" Constructions of *Sati, 1500–1830* (New Delhi, forthcoming)

Katherine Mayo, *Mother India* (London, 1927)


T.C. McCaskie, *State and society in pre-colonial Asante* (Cambridge, 1995)


Claude Meillassoux (ed.), *Development of Indigenous Trade and Market in West Africa* (London, 1971)
Ritu Menon & Kamla Bhasin, *Borders & boundaries: women in India's partition* (New Delhi, 1998)

Menon, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Witness to freedom: how women experienced the partition of India* (New Delhi, 1997)

Jeffrey Meyers, *Fiction and the Colonial Experience*, (Ipswich, 1973)

Dunbar Moodie, *Going for Gold: men, mines and migration* (Berkeley, 1994)

Heidi Nast, *Concubines and Power: five hundred years in a Northern Nigerian Palace* (Minneapolis, 2004)


G. Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge, 2001)


Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London, 1993)


Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: the 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late 19th century* (Manchester, 1995)


V. Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London, 1992)


Wendy Woodward, Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley (eds), *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in South Africa* (Amsterdam, 2002)