

DESCRIPTION: Europe: Gender, Sex, and Society

Why did the most powerful man in 17th Century Europe appear to our modern eyes to be dressed in drag for his official state portrait? What motivated some poor wives in the 18th century to participate in their own sale in the public market? How did gender shape class formation, industrialization and empire in the 19th century? This thematic course explores gender, sex, and society in Europe from the Enlightenment until the 20th century. The course emphasizes the varieties and particularities of gendered experiences across class, regional, ethnic, sexual, and racial lines. Interdisciplinary in approach and scope, it draws on literature, art history, women's studies, music, and political philosophy in charting major transformations in how men and women represented and experienced themselves as gendered subjects. Most lectures highlight the interplay between large-scale historical formations and individuals' understanding of their experiences. The course locates Europe within broader imperial and global systems. The class will combine informal lectures with regular discussion.