

**Spring 2020**  
**EN 669: The Strode Seminar**  
**Early Modern Women's Writing**  
Dr. Michelle M. Dowd  
Mondays 2:00-4:30  
304 Morgan Hall

Office: 237 Morgan Hall  
Office Hours: T 1:30-3:30PM, and by appointment

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**Course Description:**

It has been ninety years since Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* lamented the supposed lack of women writers in Shakespeare's England. In the decades since, scholars have greatly enriched our understanding of the richness and diversity of women's writing from the period, but the literary histories of early women writers remain works-in-progress, ripe for further analysis and exploration. In this seminar, we will enter that critical conversation by considering a broad range of Englishwomen's writings from the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We will pay particular attention to formal development and experimentation as we examine texts from a wide variety of genres, including poetry, polemic, drama, and even early science fiction. We will also explore the critical history of early modern women's writing as a field of study and consider collectively what the future of this scholarship might look like.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with a range of writings by early modern women
- Analyze how early modern women experiment with literary genres and forms
- Critically evaluate secondary sources on early modern women's writing
- Hone pedagogical skills through carefully planned teaching demonstrations
- Develop and refine critical writing skills, research methods, and the skills of oral communication

**Required Texts:**

- Bowerbank, Sylvia and Sarah Mendelson, eds. *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader*. Broadview, 2000.
- Clarke, Danielle, ed. *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney, and Aemilia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*. Penguin, 2001.
- Hodgson-Wright, Stephanie, ed. *The Tragedy of Mariam*. By Elizabeth Cary. Broadview, 2000. (If you already own another edition, such as the Arden or the California edition, those are perfectly fine).
- Roberts, Josephine A., ed. *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*. LSU, 1992.
- Additional readings on Blackboard (**BB**)

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**

**Jan. 13:**      **Early Modern Women's Writing and Literary History**  
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (excerpt) (**BB**)

Margaret J.M. Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History*, Ch.1 ("A Tradition of Our Own") and Ch.2 ("The Myth of Judith Shakespeare") (BB)  
Jennifer Summit, "Literary History Without Women," in *Lost Property*, 203-10 (BB)

**Jan. 20:**       **Martin Luther King Jr. Day. No Class.**

**Jan. 27:**       **What Is (Early Modern) Women's Writing?**

Isabella Whitney, selections from *A Sweet Nosgay* and *The Copy of a Letter*, in Clarke. Please also take a look at the images of *A Sweet Nosgay* and *The Copy of a Letter* available on **Early English Books Online (EEBO)**.  
Margaret Ferguson, "Renaissance Conceptions of the Women Writer" (BB)  
Toril Moi, "I am not a woman writer," *Feminist Theory* 9.3 (2008): 259-271 (BB)

**Feb. 3:**       **Polemics and Debates: The *Querelles des Femmes***

Joseph Swetnam, *The Arraignment of Lewd, idle, forward, and unconstant women* (BB)  
Rachel Speght, *A Mouzzel for Melastomus* (BB)  
Christina Luckyj, "A Mouzell for Melastomus in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate," *ELR* 40.1 (2010): 113-131. (BB)  
**Guest Visitor:** Professor Mihoko Suzuki

NOTE: Professor Suzuki will also be giving a public lecture at 5PM on February 3 (attendance is required for seminar members)

**Feb. 10:**       **The Sonnet Sequence**

Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, in Roberts.  
Leila Watkins, "The Poetics of Consolation and Community in Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*." *Studies in Philology* 112.1 (2015): 139-61. (BB)

**Feb. 17:**       **Epic Poetry**

Aemilia Lanyer, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, in Clarke.  
Erin A. McCarthy, "Speculation and Multiple Dedications in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*," *SEL* 55.1 (2015): 45-72. (BB)

**Feb. 24:**       **"Filling the Shelf" Class Presentations & Discussion (proposals due via email to me by the start of class)**

**March 2:**       **Romance and Life Writing**

Dorothy Calthorpe, writings from her autograph manuscript (BB)  
Julie A. Eckerle, "Romancing the Self in Autobiographical Romance" (BB)  
**Guest Visitor:** Professor Julie A. Eckerle

NOTE: Professor Eckerle will also be giving a public lecture at 5PM on March 2 (attendance is required for seminar members)

**March 9: Lyric Experiments**

Katherine Philips, "Upon the Double Murder of King Charles," "Friendship's Mystery," "To My Excellent Lucasia," and "To Mrs. M.A. at Parting" (BB)

John Donne, "The Sun Rising" (BB)

Hester Pulter, "The Eclipse," "The Complaint of Thames, 1647," "Universal Dissolution," "On that Unparalleled Prince Charles the First," "Upon the Death of My Dear and Lovely Daughter," "Tell Me No More [On the Same]," "Upon the Imprisonment of His Sacred Majesty," "On the Horrid Murder," "The Revolution," "The Circle [1] ['In sighs and tears'],' "The Welcome [1]," "To Aurora [1] ['Fair rosy virgin'],' "The Center," "This Was Written in 1648," "A Solitary Discourse," "Why must I thus forever be confined." (Online: <http://pulterproject.northwestern.edu/>)

Alice Eardley, "'Shut up in a Countrey Grange': The Provenance of Lady Hester Pulter's Poetry and Prose and Women's Literary History," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 80.2 (2017): 345-59. (BB)

**March 16: Spring Break.** No class.

**March 23: No Class.** Work on seminar papers!

**March 30: Closet Drama 1**

Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, in Hodgson-Wright.

Marta Straznicky, "'Profane Stoical Paradoxes': *The Tragedie of Mariam* and Sidnean Closet Drama." *English Literary Renaissance* 24:1 (1994): 104-135 (BB)

**ABSTRACTS AND WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE**

**April 6: Closet Drama 2**

Margaret Cavendish, *The Convent of Pleasure*, in Bowerbank.

Valerie Billing, "'Treble marriage': Margaret Cavendish, William Newcastle, and Collaborative Authorship," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11.2 (2011): 94-122. (BB)

**April 13: Speculative Fiction**

Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World Called the Blazing World*, in Bowerbank.

Sujata Iyengar, "Royalist, Romancist, Racialist: Rank, Gender, and Race in the Science and Fiction of Margaret Cavendish," *ELH* 69.3 (2002): 649-72 (BB)

**April 20: Filling the Shelf Readings and Discussion**

**Prophecy and Politics**

Anna Trapnel, *The Cry of the Stone* (selections) (BB)

Anna Trapnel, *Report and Plea* (BB)

Catie Gill, "'All the Monarchies of this World are Going Down the Hill': The Anti-Monarchism of Anna Trapnel's *The Cry of the Stone*" (BB)

Recommended:

Maria Magro, "Spiritual Autobiography and Radical Sectarian Women's Discourse: Anna Trapnel and the Bad Girls of the English Revolution" (**BB**)

Seminar Dinner TBA

**Monday, April 27, 5PM: FINAL PAPERS DUE**

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

Class Participation	20%
Classroom of Your Own Presentation	15%
Filling the Shelf Proposal & Presentation	15%
Abstract & Working Bibliography	5%
Seminar Paper/Final Project	45%

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to abide by UA's Code of Academic Conduct and the Academic Honor Code. Please use MLA or Chicago style to document your sources in written work.

**NOTE:** Please consult the OIRA Syllabus (link provided on Blackboard) for additional UA policies relevant to this class, including the Statement on Disability Accommodations and the Severe Weather Protocol.

**Classroom of Your Own Presentation:** During the semester (beginning with our class on Feb. 3), you will prepare a 15-minute timed lesson using a primary text we are reading for class (we'll make the schedule for these presentations on the first day of class). These teaching demonstrations will give you an opportunity to practice your pedagogical skills, and you should begin by situating your demonstration in the context of a course (Renaissance Lit Seminar? Introduction to Women's Writing? A survey course? A general literature course? A composition course?). Your fellow students and I will serve as students, and you should consider carefully how to teach your text to students in the type of course you have chosen. How will you situate it? Which aspects of the text will you emphasize? Which formal properties or methodological approaches would you like your students to understand? Why? Most importantly, you should consider **what you want students to learn:** what is the end goal of your lesson? What should your students know or be able to do? Have you tied an assignment to this lesson? An in-class activity? How does it relate to your goals and objectives for the course? These questions should inform your teaching demonstration (although you may not address them all explicitly). You should introduce your lesson in terms of: 1) the class in which it would be offered; 2) its pedagogical goals.

**Filling the Shelf Proposal & Presentation:** Once we have developed a working sense of our foundational questions in the opening weeks of the course, you will embark on an individual research project to identify primary and secondary materials related to the study of an early modern female author **not currently included in our readings**. Following the format of the syllabus, you will choose texts for our final week of class (one primary text and 1-2 secondary sources), and you will write a 2-3 page proposal explaining your choice, your rationale, and the

relationship of your texts to the questions we have begun to explore. Why will your author and this set of texts provide a fitting capstone to our course? You will submit your proposal to me by email on **Monday, February 24 by the beginning of class** and then **offer a five-minute oral presentation of your proposal** to your classmates during that day's class. As a group in class, you will determine which author and texts to add to the syllabus.

**Seminar Paper/Final Project:** You will write a 15-20-page original research paper (plus a bibliography or list of works cited) or equivalent research project (e.g. bibliographic essay and annotated bibliography) on a topic of your choice. Please use a standard 12-point font and double-space throughout (indented quotations may be single-spaced). For research papers: please include a 2-3 sentence lay summary with your final paper. Final papers/projects should be emailed to me by **5PM on Monday, April 27**.

250-word abstracts and working bibliographies are due (via email to me) by the beginning of class on **March 30**. I am happy to discuss research papers (and alternate project ideas) with you at any point, so please be in touch as you brainstorm ideas!

**Additional Ground Rules:**

- Excellent attendance is expected in a graduate seminar and is essential to your success in this course. I expect you to attend every class meeting, arrive on time, and participate actively in our discussions. Please inform me if you will be unable to attend class because you are participating in a conference or if you have an illness or emergency.
- All work is due in class on the dates assigned. Extensions to assignment deadlines will be considered at the discretion of the instructor; please communicate with me in advance if you anticipate needing an extension.
- Please bring to class either electronic or hard copies of readings for the day. You may bring laptops or tablets to class if you want to avoid printing out the reading and/or if you want to take notes electronically, as long as your primary focus remains on interactive class discussion and active participation. No social networking, emailing, etc.!
- Cellphones must be switched off.