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EUH 4615

## *Family, Love, and Marriage in Premodern Europe*

Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30-1:45

GC279B

Welcome to History 4615: Family, Love, and Marriage in Premodern Europe! This semester we will study the structure and evolution of intimate personal relationships over nearly two thousand years of European history. We will consider domestic arrangements, childhood, and the personal, emotional attachments between parents and children, husbands and wives, lovers, and the people who shared the intimate space under a single roof. Through primary and secondary sources we will explore these topics in their own right, with regard to historical arguments, and in relation to changes in politics, religion, and economics.

Over the course of the semester we will:

- Challenge perceptions of and explore historical arguments about what family meant to different people, what roles people could fill, and where intimate relationships existed over the course of the premodern period.
- Gain a better understanding of the history of Europe in this period by exploring it from a new angle, with family and personal relationships at the center through primary evidence and secondary arguments.
- Build on and expand writing skills while working on numerous writing assignments.

This is a Global Learning Discipline Specific course that counts towards your graduation requirement. As such, by the end of the semester students will be able to:

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural developments to definitions and practices of familial and intimate relationships across premodern Europe. (Global Awareness)
- Students will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of family and intimate relationships in premodern Europe. (Global Perspective)
- Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving concerning definitions of family and sexuality across time and place. (Global Engagement)

Instructor:

Dr. Tovan Bender  
[tbender@fiu.edu](mailto:tbender@fiu.edu)

Office: DM 391C

Office Hours: Monday 2:30-3:30 and Tuesday 2:00-3:30

**I am here to help you and happy to answer questions.** The best way to reach me is via email. I will reply to all emails within 24 hours unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Come to my office. I am often in my office beyond office hours and am happy to meet with students. If you have questions or would like to continue the discussion, please swing by. You can also email me to find a mutually convenient time to meet outside of office hours.

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Required Texts:

- *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2004
- Madame de Lafayette. *Princess de Cleves*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1992.
- Brown, Judith C. *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Barbara Hanawalt. *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

These books are available through Library Reserve, at the FIU bookstore and through other booksellers. All other readings will be available online through Canvas.

You are free to purchase the texts at the bookstore or elsewhere, or to obtain them from a library (they are on reserve at Green Library). You are responsible for coming to class having read and prepared to discuss the reading listed for that day. Each student MUST have access to a copy of the rest day's readings in class. A book, a printout, a pre-arranged shared copy, or a laptop with access to the electronic copy are all acceptable.

Grade Distribution:

- Reading Quizzes 10%
- Participation 20%
- Short Writing Assignments (3 total) 30%
- Longer Writing Analysis 20%
- Character Manifesto 15%

Assignments:

Participation: Participation is not simply coming to class, although you certainly cannot participate if you are not there! It is participation only coming prepared, listening alertly or taking notes, while those are also very important. These things alone will earn you a participation grade around 50%.

Participation means contributing to the discussion. This can mean answering a question that I ask but it can also mean asking a question about something that confused you, responding to a comment made by a classmate, actively participating in group work, or bringing up something that particularly interested you. Your comments, questions, and responses to others make all of us better scholars.

Online Reading Quizzes: There will be 12 reading quizzes through the semester on days marked with a starisk(\*) in the syllabus. On those days, after you have finished the reading and before class go to blackboard and find that day's quiz in the assignments folder. There will be between a very short quiz. Once class has begun, you will no longer be able to take that day's quiz. You cannot make up quizzes. You can, however, take as many quizzes as you want and the best ten will count towards your grade.

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Short Writing Assignments: Over the course of the semester, you will have numerous opportunities to turn in a short writing assignment, 600-1000 words, either responding to a prompt or coming up with an argument of your own. These assignments will make an argument, articulated in the thesis statement and backed up with evidence from the texts for that section (and past sections, as appropriate). I will grade these assignments based on the coherence and execution of your argument (how well you use writing and the text—all of it—to create a persuasive argument) and the creativity of your use of the material (critical thinking). Prompts and the list of dates you can turn in an assignment are listed in the Short Writing Assignments handout on blackboard.

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day listed. No late assignments accepted. If you miss one, move on to the next. You may turn in up to four writing assignments. I will drop the lowest grade. Because of the size of the class, however, I cannot accept more than four.

Longer Writing Assignment:

This is a very short research paper, of 2100-2500 words and referencing at least 5 scholarly sources beyond those used in class. This paper combines the skills you have been building through the short writing assignments with a small amount of research on a topic of your choice. A list of suggested topics related to the thematic units of the class is available on blackboard but you are also permitted—with professor permission—to explore another topic, including related topics not covered in class.

**Due April 2**

Character Manifesto:

Tract on Love and Marriage: Pick ONE of the medical figures that we read about thus far this semester. Write a one-page, single-spaced, tract on marriage and/or love from the perspective of that individual. Then write a two-page explanation from your own perspective, of why you wrote what you did.

**Due April 23**

Class Policies:

Attendance and Participation: Historians, at any level, cannot work in isolation; we depend on the insights, experience and knowledge of colleagues to help us. In order to achieve this dialogue, you must come to class and do so prepared.

You may have two unexcused absences without repercussions in discussion sections. After that, it will affect your grade. Excused absences may be granted in the event of serious medical issues (with a doctor's note), religious holiday, the death of an immediate family member, military duty, a court date, and participation in some college events. In each of these cases, it is your responsibility to contact me in a timely manner and request that the absence be excused. I reserve the right to require documentation to excuse an absence.

If you are absent for any reason, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate.

Classroom Behavior: Arrive on time and stay until the end of class. Failure to do so will affect your attendance. If you must arrive late or leave early, do so with as little disturbance to others as possible. Please turn all cell phones OFF. If you cannot do this, let us know ahead of time.

In accordance with the Student Code of Standards (Student Handbook, p. 11 and following), you have the right to agree, disagree, challenge, and question the opinions and comments of others,

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including the instructor. You do not have the right to be disrespectful to anyone else in the classroom or to act in a way that makes others uncomfortable. **Such behavior will not be tolerated.**

Late Policy: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned day. The grade on any late written work is automatically reduced by one-third of a letter (B+ becomes a B) for each day the paper is late, including Saturday and Sunday, unless an extension is granted by me. No regular-semester work will be accepted beyond 5pm on the last day of this class.

Scholastic Dishonesty: According to the FIU student handbook (p. 11) “In meeting one of the major objectives of higher education, which is to develop self-reliance, it is expected that students will be responsible for the completion of their own academic work.” Please be aware that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing (representing someone else’s work as your own), cheating on assignments or examinations, or engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work. It will result in a penalty ranging from a zero on the assignment to failure in the course and reporting to the University. **If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism, see me.**

Note to Students with Disabilities: If you have or believe you might have a disability-related need for modification or reasonable accommodations in this class, contact the Disability Resources Center ([drc.fiu.edu](http://drc.fiu.edu)). I am very happy to work with you and with them to accommodate you in the best way possible.

Accommodations: If you foresee any possible problem meeting any of the requirements of this course—including attendance and prompt submission of all assignments—please see your TA or me as soon as possible. **It is much easier on all of us if we address an issue before it becomes a problem.**

I reserve the right to change the syllabus to facilitate better learning.  
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*Important dates*

1/19 – no class

1/28 – last day to drop/add

3/8 – last day to apply for graduation; last day to withdraw w/ 25% refund

3/9-14 Spring break

3/23 last day to drop w/ DR

Schedule:

Jan 13 – Intro

*The Early Middle Ages (400-1000): Christian and Pagan, Ideal and Reality*

Jan 15 – The Early Medieval Family: What is Known?

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- Lisa Bitel. *Women in Early Medieval Europe, 400-1100*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Ch 4: Survival by Kinship, Marriage and Motherhood (pp. 154-200) (Blackboard)

#### Jan 20 – Roman/ Germanic Families in Practice \*

- Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*. (written in the late 500s) 4.28, 5.34, 6.45, 6.46, 7.4, 7.5, 7.7, 7.14, 7.15, 7.19-20 (summary), 7.44 9.34.

#### Jan 22 The Family on the Edge of Christian Europe

- The Laxdaela Saga, Chapters 32-51. (written in the 1200s but the tales are set from 800s to the early 1000s and the tales were passed orally from that point forward) <http://omacl.org/Laxdaela/> (via blackboard)

#### High Middle Ages (1000-1300): Religion and Love, both Sinful and Holy

#### Jan 27 Understanding Sacred Love in Earthly Terms \*

- Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg” in *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Autumn, 1986) pp. 399-439. (blackboard)

#### Jan 29 Earthly Love and its Consequences

- *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*. (written in the early 1100s) Letter 1, Abelard to a Friend: The Story of his Misfortunes (3-46)

#### Feb 3 Lord, father, husband, brother... Religion and Family Love \*

- *Letters of Abelard and Heloise* letters 2-5 The Personal Letters (pp. 47-92)

#### Feb 5 – Earth and Heaven

- Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale (written in the late 1300s) available at <http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/kt-par1.htm> (via blackboard)

#### The Late Middle Ages (1300-1500) Children, Adults, The Grey in Between

#### Feb 10 Childhood in the Middle Ages\*

- Philip Aries. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. New York: Vintage, 1962. (pp. 33-50) (via blackboard)
- *Growing Up* (Introduction, 3-23)

#### Feb 12 Growing Up Medieval

- *Growing Up* Chs 2-5 (23-88)

#### Feb 17 Becoming a Man\*

- *Growing Up* Ch 7 (109-129)
- Ruth Mazo Karras. *From Boys to Men: Formation of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. “Masculinities, Youth, and the Late Middle Ages” (1-19) (blackboard)

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Feb 19 Becoming a Woman

- *Growing Up* Ch 9 (155-172)
- Kim Phillips. *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270-1540*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003. "Introduction." (1-22) (blackboard)

*Beyond the Heterosexual in Renaissance Italy (1400-1500)*

Feb 24 Sexual Identity and the Past \*

- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. (1-22) (blackboard)
- John Boswell. *Same Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*. New York: Villard Books, 1994. "Introduction" (xix-xxx) (blackboard)

Feb 26 The Male World Outside Marriage\*

- Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1996. Introduction and Ch. 1: "Great Love and Good Brotherhood": Sodomy and Male Sociability (pp. 1-19 and 128-195) (blackboard)

March 3 The L Word

- Judith C. Brown. *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986

March 5 Question of Language?\*

- Reviews of Brown

March 10 & 12 – Spring Break

*Structure of the Early Modern Family: Part One – Patriarchy and the Household*

March 17 Patriarchy, Family, and the Reformation

- Merry E. Wiesner. *Gender, Church, and State in Early Modern Germany*. Harlow, Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1998. Part One: Religion (36-78) (blackboard)

March 19 Witches: Women out of Order? \*

- Merry E. Wiesner. *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. "Witchcraft" (264-287) (blackboard)
- Lynda Roper. *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. "Prologue: The Witch at the Smithy" (1-12) (blackboard)

*Structure of the Early Modern Family: Part Two – Family and Film*

March 24 – Dysfunctional Early Modern Families

- Begin *The Return of Martin Guerre*

March 26 Who Belongs? \*

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- Finish *The Return of Martin Guerre*
- Begin film in class

March 31 Family and Film

- E Benson, 'Martin Guerre, the historian and the filmmaker' (interview with Natalie Davis), *Film & History* 13 (1983). (Avail on Ebsco Host)
- Finish film, discuss

April 2 Papers Due!

*Beyond the Traditional: Family on the Cusp of Modernity (1650-1800)*

April 7 - The Enlightenment and the Boudoir

- Anna Clark, *Desire: A History of European Sexuality*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Enlightening Desire: New Attitudes towards Sexuality in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> C. (102-122) (Blackboard)

April 9 Love, Scandal, and the Premodern Bestseller\*

- *Princess de Cleves* (written mid 1600s) (Skim Intro Read Parts 1 and 2)

April 14 - Love and Morals in 17<sup>th</sup> C. France

- *Princess de Cleves* (Parts 3 and 4)

April 16 - Family, Politics, and the Beginning of Modernity\*

- Lynn Hunt. *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Ch 1 and 4: "The Family Model of Politics" and "The Bad Mother" and "Epilogue: Paternity in the Past Tense?" (116; 89-123; 193-204) (Blackboard)

April 21 Family, Love, Marriage, and Premodern European History

- Mary S. Hartman, *The Household and the Making of History: A Subversive View of the Western Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Ch 7: Interpreting the Western Past with the Woman and the Households Left In, 1500-1800 (202-243) (blackboard)

April 23 – Wrap Up