

History 3400F
Queenship and Power in Early Modern Europe, 1450-1800
Fall 2025

Instructor: **Dr. Sara Morrison**

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Office Hours: Monday 1:00-2:00; Tuesday 11:00-12:00

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description

This seminar course examines conflicts over gender and power, concerning the legitimacy of female rule in Europe 1450-1800. It emphasizes the political role and challenges of female rulers as queens regnant, queen-consorts, queen-mothers, and regents as they collaborated in the transmission of dynastic power through official and unofficial channels.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above, any module.

Course Syllabus

Medieval and early modern queens led richly complex lives and were highly visible women active in a man's world. Linked to kings by marriage, family and property, queens were vital to the institution of the monarchy. From the late fifteenth century several women had become ruling queens in their own right (or queens regnant), as for example in Spain, England, Scotland, and Sweden. Regnant queens inherited the throne in dynastic families without male heirs, and in countries where female rule was legitimate, they became female kings. Salic law in France prevented direct female rule except in cases of underage princes, where a queen mother functioned as a regent (in place of a king) for her young sons. Other female regents might include a wife, or queen consort, who ruled whilst her husband was in battle or visiting other countries. Within the Holy Roman Empire of the Habsburg family, the Emperor also relied on sisters, cousins, or daughters to rule as regents in his place. The concentration of female rulers in Europe between 1450-1700 led contemporaries such as Scottish reformer John Knox to voice disquiet concerning "the monstrous regiment of women."

This seminar course introduces students to pivotal research and sources in the rapidly evolving field of queenship studies. It also examines theories and practices of queenship in early modern Europe within the context of wider issues of gender, authority, and power. Students are encouraged to participate fully in oral discussions to develop both verbal and written communication skills in the smaller group setting of the seminar.

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Upon successful completion of this course:

- Students will become familiar with the historiography of the field, engaging with it through their research and writing. The ability to synthesize secondary literature and understand competing views is essential.
- Students will learn to develop their own research questions in consultation with faculty and pursue them through all available and appropriate primary and secondary sources, in this newly emerging field.
- Students will develop their writing skills, learning to develop a complex and sustained historical argument, properly supported with evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- Participation and communication skills are key elements of the course. Students will develop their oral skills in a small seminar setting and synthesize course materials in the process of writing history, and by reflecting on themes in their personal reflection journal.

Emphasis on seminar presentations encourages clear and effective delivery of the student's own research and foster positive feedback and discussion of other students' research.

Methods of Evaluation

Historiography Exercise	10%	6 October, TBA
Seminar article lead	10%	TBA, 15 September – 17 November.
Class Participation	15%	Participation, Attendance, Discussion, & 3 Questions
Journal	25%	21 November 2025
Research Paper	40%	8 December 2025

Advanced preparation, attendance, and participation are vital to the success of a seminar course. It is hard to do well in this course if you miss many classes; however, one major advantage of this reading seminar is that there is no final exam. Students participate in discussions, formulate questions for weekly topics, and later reflect on their growing knowledge and understanding within their reflection journal. It is advisable to keep up with this after every class (a paragraph or two) whilst it is fresh in your mind; trying to write this at the end will be very difficult and you will lack the required perspective. The result is that each student will end the course with a unique reminder of their progress in their own personalized reflection journal. During the term, each student will have the opportunity to present a journal article to the class and lead a short discussion. The weekly reading materials will assist you as you select a topic and develop the idea for your final essay. I encourage you to consult with me after seminars and during office hours, as you prepare a research question, essay proposal, and an annotated bibliography for your essay. The thesis will develop out of the question and the research. Towards the end of term, by sharing a progress report with the class, and engaging in peer review you will further clarify your ideas in the final writing and editing stage of your essay.

Historiographical Exercise (10%)**6 October TBA****Seminar Article Lead (10%)**

Students will take it in turn to function as seminar lead or class moderator for part of a seminar. We will determine these time slots during in the first week of class; generally this will be about 4 per week between **15 September and 17 November** for a class of 30. Length will vary with class size, up to 15 minutes. There is no need for PowerPoint. As seminar lead you focus on the chosen article: the argument; sorts of evidence used; the contribution it makes; its strengths and weaknesses. Is it part of a debate? Your job is to initiate discussion about the article from other class members. Your written submission before the start of the class will include the full details of the article, according to Chicago style. In class, provide me with a paper copy of this analysis of the article (2-3 pages) plus anything you use in class, such the questions to initiate discussion.

Article Choice: Make your selection based on what interests you most, but this is hard to know at the start of the term. It is not always advisable to select the last possible option because you will be running short of time for other assignments. Best to jump in and sign up so that you are familiar with talking in class. **Any accommodation for this assignment requires supporting documentation.** Students seeking academic accommodation or consideration regarding absence from this class lead role must contact their Academic Advisory office and provide formal supporting documentation. Please contact the professor before any absence for the lead discussant role; efforts will be made to accommodate your presentation during office hours.

NOTE: Your seminar lead topic does not have to be your essay subject, because you will hear about a number of different topics and you may wish to write a comparative essay or one related to historiography.

Essay (40%)

It is expected that everyone should consult the professor about their research paper more than once. Feel free to ask lots of questions. The schedule below lays out the process so that you are not just thinking about your essay the night before it is due.

Essay	40% includes:
Topic Choice	20 October
Essay Proposal	27 October
& Annotated Bibliography	
Oral Progress report	17-24 November
Peer Review	1 December
Final Essay (10-12 pages)	8 December. Digital copy & paper copy (in
History Dept drop box)	

This course provides flexibility in the selection of assignments (article seminar lead, essay topic & journal reflections.) You will be supported to refine your research topic and objectives.

NOTE: As this is a newly emerging field, some countries have received much more attention than others that do not yet have scholarship available in English; however, scholars are regularly contributing new articles and chapters to collections, especially in the *Queenship and Power* series (Macmillan Press.) A comparative approach may be helpful for subjects with less information available.

Class Preparation (15%)

Students should come to class, having read the weekly reading assignment, prepared to participate fully in discussions. Regular attendance and thoughtful conversation on the weekly topic/readings are necessary for participation grades: **5% based on attendance** is the easiest mark you can earn. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet and **provide 3 questions on an index card at the start of class.** The other **10% is for your overall contribution:** how closely have you been reading? What is your level of engagement in the course? Remember that you have a vested interest in preparation for class, but also for your journal.

ADVICE: It is helpful to write a brief 1-page summary on the articles, stating arguments, contribution to the topic. Participation marks are assessed by attendance & participation. At the beginning of each class on an INDEX CARD provide 3 questions you want to raise in discussion.

The seminar class is quite large so you will want to seize the opportunity to contribute your ideas. Each week the common class readings usually consists of 3-4 articles, with some background reading from the text for context.

Participation Evaluation Scheme

Fail (0) This grade is for a student who shows no engagement in the course. The student rarely comes to class, and when they do attend, they do not contribute to discussion.

Poor (2) This grade is for student who shows little engagement with the course. They rarely come to class (less than half), though they show some contribution to class discussion.

Fair (4) This grade is awarded to a student who exhibits a minimal level of engagement in the course but not enough to warrant a good grade. This grade would be awarded, for example, to a student who regularly attends class but rarely speaks. In

some circumstances this grade may be awarded to a student who participates to a high degree when present, but whose attendance is too sporadic to make a consistent contribution.

Good (7) This grade is for students who exhibit the level of participation I expect in this course. This is the student who attends class and makes regular contribution to discussion in a way that shows they have been keeping up with the weekly readings, but not always in a way that demonstrates a superior grasp of the material.

Excellent (10) This grade is reserved for the top students who make a substantial contribution to class discussion on a regular basis. Their questions and comments demonstrate a level of engagement that goes beyond simply keeping up with the weekly readings. Obviously, this is a high bar. Keep in mind, though, that this does not mean the student must dominate the conversation; one should allow others an opportunity to participate in the discussion. Also you should not expect to earn this grade unless you attend the vast majority of classes.

Reflection Journal (25%) (flexible deadline 19-21 Nov)

Due 21 November 2025

The journal is linked to class readings, discussions, and any questions raised in the seminar. This is your opportunity to reflect weekly themes and your growing knowledge and understanding over the term. Your first entry provides a baseline for how you enter the course; ask questions; also what are you hoping to get out of the course? How much do you know about Europe 1450-1800? It is advisable to keep up with this after every class (a paragraph or two) whilst it is fresh in your mind. NOTE: trying to write this at the end will be very difficult and you will lack the required perspective.

The result is that each student will end the course with a unique reminder of their progress in their own personalized reflection journal. You can pull it all together with a final reflection after the last weekly readings discussion.

Course-specific conditions

As this is a reading seminar course, attendance and participation is critical for success. You must complete all course assignments in order to pass this course.

- **Students must attend at more than half (at least 7 of 12) of the class meetings to pass the course, regardless of grades received for other assignments.**
- As the course is designated an **Essay Course (E/F/G)** students must demonstrate competence in essay writing **completing all course written assignments in order to pass the course.**

A late penalty (5% for the first day, 2% for subsequent days including weekends) will apply to final research papers, research proposals, and reviews not submitted by the deadline, unless there is a recommendation from academic advising for accommodation. **No papers can be accepted after the last day of classes**, unless there is a recommendation from academic advising for accommodation.

- **If you are not able to attend your article presentation Progress-Report (worth 10%)** on your scheduled day (due to medical/non-medical reasons), you may arrange to give your presentation to the professor in office hours.

Course Materials

Charles Beem *Queenship & Power in Early Modern Europe*. (2018)

Sarah Gristwood, *Game of Queens. The Women who made Sixteenth-Century Europe*. (2016) [This easy-to-read study contains very useful family trees and illustrates the number of women engaged in the courtly, matrimonial, and political world in 16th century Europe.]

A Weldon paper Library copy available and for purchase for the above two course materials (HIS 3400F: https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2025A&courses%5Bo%5D=001_UW/HIS3400F)

All other weekly readings will be made available through Weldon Library Course Reserves for History 3400F or on Brightspace.

Course Schedule and Themes

- Introduction: Gender & Power: Official and Unofficial
- Debating the Legitimacy of Female Rule; Challenges & Definitions
- The role of Queens: Regnant, Regent, Consort, Dowager Queens, & Queen Mothers
- Female Rule, Dynastic Networks & Patronage
- Spanish Queens Regnant: Isabella of Castile & Juana the Mad
- English Queens Regnant: Mary Tudor & Lady Jane Grey
- Regnant Queens and Male consorts
- Mary Stuart (French Queen Consort & Regnant Queen of Scotland)
- 17th century Queens Regnant: Christina of Sweden, Mary II, and Queen Anne
- 18th century Queens Regnant: Marie Therese and Catherine the Great
- The French Queen Mothers: Catherine de Medici, Marie de Medici & Anne of Austria; Spain: Marianna of Austria

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- Female Regents in the Habsburg empire: Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary & Margaret of Parma
- Queen Consorts: Tudors: Elizabeth of York, Catherine of Aragon (& Regent), Anne of Cleves, Katherine Parr (Step-mother & Dowager Queen) The Stuarts: Anna of Denmark, Henrietta Maria, Catherine of Braganza, Mary of Modena; Elizabeth Stuart of Palatinate & Bohemia.
- Equivalent to Queens: Dogressa of Venice & smaller Italian states.
- Patronage & Influential Kinship Networks.

Seminar Schedule

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| 1. 8 Sept | Introduction: Gender & Power: Official and Unofficial. |
| 2. 15 Sept | Legitimacy, Female Rule & Challenges. The King's Body. |
| 3. 22 Sept | Spanish Queens Regnant: Isabella of Castile; Juana the Mad. |
| 4. 29 Sept | English Queens Regnant: Lady Jane Grey & Mary Tudor. |
| 5. 6 Oct | Queen Mothers & Habsburg Regents. <i>Historiographical Exercise</i> . |
| 6. 13 Oct | THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY |
| 7. 20 Oct | Tudor Consorts: Elizabeth of York, Katherine of Aragon, Anne of Cleves & Katherine Parr.
<i>Register Essay Topic</i> |
| 8. 27 Oct | 17 th c Queens Regnant: Christina of Sweden; Mary II & Queen Anne.
<i>Essay Proposal, Research Question & Annotated Bibliography</i> |
| 3 Nov | READING BREAK |
| 9. 10 Nov | 17 th & 18 th c Consorts: Stuart Queens. |
| 10. 17 Nov | 18 th c Enlightened Despots: Empresses Maria Theresa, Catherine II.
<i>19-21 November flexible deadline: Journal due.</i> |
| 11. 24 Nov | Evaluating Female Rule: Success & Failure. Progress Reports. |
| 12. 1 Dec | Peer Review & Final editing.

1 December Last day to drop the course without penalty. |
| 13. 8 Dec | <i>Final Essay due</i> |

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Additional Statements

Communication policies: The best way to contact me is by email, after class or during office hours. All research essay topic require my approval, to ensure you have sufficient material for a successful essay.

Use of electronic devices: No use of audio or video recording devices in class.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) You may not make any use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in this course. Any use of such tools for assignments in this course may be considered a form of academic misconduct.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at:

https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.

1 June 2025