

Midwives, Mothers, and Makers: Digital Approaches to Early Women's Writing

ENGL 301/HUM 300 | TTH 2:30-3:45PM | Watson Library 410A

Professor Whitney Sperrazza

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Office Hours: W 1:00-2:00PM, TH 3:45-5:00PM

This class focuses on women writers in England between 1500 and 1700—"Shakespeare's sisters" as Virginia Woolf later calls them. What are these women writing about? How do they engage with topics like gender, class, race, and power? How do they shape the cultures, conversations, and social spheres within which they participate?

To address these questions, we will explore female-authored texts that emerge from domestic and public spaces, both broadly defined. Our first unit will consider writing within and for domestic spaces: women writing about their roles as wives, mothers, and daughters, their work in the household, and their devotional practices. In the second half of the semester, we will consider women's engagement with a broader public: their role in politics and government, the early modern literary marketplace, and the Renaissance stage.

Early women's writing can still be difficult to find, particularly because much of it exists in manuscript. Consequently, we will look to digital projects, databases, and archives for our primary texts. As we read our primary sources, we will also study how such digital environments shape our engagement with these historical figures and their work. Our class discussions will always focus on the intersections between the content, form, and medium of our objects of inquiry.

Course requirements will include a midterm and final project, along with active participation, weekly journal entries, and contributions to our collaborative timeline project.

COURSE GOALS

1. develop familiarity with early women's writing (focused on England 1500-1700) in a range of genres and forms
2. explore the social, historical, and literary contexts within which early women's writing was produced, along with how women writers intervened in and helped shape those various contexts
3. cultivate a dynamic and nuanced sense of the "early modern archive" or "early modern canon," and explore how digital tools, resources, and projects help us rethink such a concept
4. engage critically with digital platforms and resources, with particular attention to the media's construction and its synthesis of content and form
5. develop and hone critical writing skills and research methods that make use of both digital and analog media

REQUIRED TEXTS

Knoppers, Laura Lunger, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Please bring your Cambridge anthology to class any day we have a reading assigned from it

All other readings and digital media for our study will be available on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Participation and Journal	30%
Timeline entries	15%
Midterm Project	25%
Final Project	30%

GRADE	CHARACTERISTICS
A	Exceptional. The work is focused, and coherently integrates examples with explanations and analysis. The work demonstrates awareness of its implications and/or limitations, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate. The work reflects <i>in-depth</i> engagement with the topic.
B	Satisfactory. The work is reasonably focused, with explanations and/or analysis that derive from specific examples. Fewer connections are made between ideas, however, and while new insights are offered, they are not fully developed. The work reflects <i>moderate</i> engagement with the topic.
C	Underdeveloped. The work is mostly description or summary, without consideration of alternative perspectives, and few connections are made between ideas. The work reflects <i>passing</i> engagement with the topic.
D	Limited. The work is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous comments, and displays <i>no evidence of student engagement</i> with the topic.
F	No Credit. The work is missing or consists of one or two disconnected sentences/links/etc.

This chart of grading characteristics outlines my general rubric for evaluating student work (adapted from Professor Lauren Klein of Georgia Tech and Professor Mark Sample of Davidson College). I will use the +/- grading scale, approved by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to measure intermediate levels of performance between a maximum of A and a minimum of F.

COURSEWORK

Participation/Discussion

The majority of the work for this class happens on a weekly basis in our preparation for our time in the classroom together. There are only two assignments that fall outside of prep for class time—the midterm and final projects. The goal is to free up more time on a weekly basis for your reading and discussion preparation, but this model only works if we all actively prioritize weekly preparation.

Midterm Project

For the midterm project, you'll create a commonplace book, constructed with the materials of your choosing. You will decide on the form and medium (analog or digital) of your commonplace book, and will include a written analysis of your final construction alongside the creative project. Further details will be provided at the start of February.

Final Project

For the final project, you'll work in small groups to develop and curate an exhibit on a topic concerning early modern women writers. The group will collectively decide on audience, format, topic, medium (analog or digital), and then consult with me in the final weeks of the semester to plan and construct the exhibit. As part of the project, I'll ask you to include a written analysis that explains the rationale behind your exhibit, with reference to questions and concepts we've discussed throughout the course. The exhibit portion of the project will be done in small groups, but the analysis must be submitted individually. Further details will be provided after the midterm.

FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Digital/Technology Use

This course relies on digital media for study and discussion, which presents both an advantage and a challenge. The digital policy for our class will thus be more structured than usual. For the first 30 minutes of class, we will be technology-free and reliant on your diligent journaling and our exploration questions for discussion. For the last 45 minutes of class, we will shift into technology mode and laptops and tablets can be used to support our discussion of the various digital resources and the day's primary and secondary texts. If you do not have access to a portable electronic device for class use, please let me know and I will arrange to have a laptop available for your during our class sessions.

Sexual Assault and Harassment

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been assaulted or harassed, and you wish to speak in confidence to a trained counselor, contact the GaDuGi Safecenter at 785-843-8985 or <http://www.gadugisafecenter.org>. You may also wish to contact Lawrence Memorial Hospital Emergency Room at 785-505-6162. If you want to pursue disciplinary action or criminal charges against the perpetrator, you may contact the Office of Institutional Opportunity and Access at 785-864-6414 (instructions on how to file a complaint can be found here: <http://ioa.ku.edu/filecomplaint>); and the KU Police (785-832-7509) or Lawrence Police (785-822-7509). For the protection of students who experience harassment or violence, instructors are mandated reporters; if you report harassment or violence to me, I must report it to both a supervisor and the police.

Inclusivity

The Department of English supports an inclusive learning environment in which diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, and appreciated. We believe that all students benefit from training and experiences that will help them to learn, lead, and serve in an increasingly diverse society. All members of our campus community must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others. Expressions or actions that disparage a

person's or group's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity/expression, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability are contrary to the mission of the university and, it goes without saying, to the work we'll be doing together this semester. I expect that we will all promote an atmosphere of respect for all members of our classroom community.

Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Affairs (785-864-4060).

Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources to which they have access.

Accessibility

The Student Access Center (Academic Achievement and Access Center) coordinates accommodations and services for all KU students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted the AAAC, please do so as soon as possible (22 Strong Hall; 785-864-4064; achieve@ku.edu; <http://access.ku.edu>). Please also contact me directly in regard to your needs for this course.

Academic Misconduct

There will be a zero-tolerance policy for any type of plagiarism in this class. All incidents of plagiarism will be penalized, reported, and kept on file in the English Department, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the University Provost's Office.

COURSE MATERIALS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Orienting I

- T January 16 Joan Kelly-Gadol, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?”
Images (Blackboard)
- TH January 18 Burdick, et al., “Humanities to Digital Humanities”
David Golumbia, “Characteristics of Digital Media”
TimeToast entry

WEEK 2: Orienting II

- T January 23 English Handwriting 1500-1770: [an online course](#) (Lessons 2, 4, 5, and 6)
Margaret Ezell, “The Myth of Judith Shakespeare”
Laura Lunger Knoppers, “Introduction” (*CCEMWW*)
- T January 25 Bethany Nowviskie, “[speculative collections](#)”
Jacqueline Wernimont, “[Whence Feminism?](#) Assessing Feminist
Interventions in Digital Literary Archives”

WEEK 3: Domestic Spaces (Household I)

English Broadside Ballad Archive (<https://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/>)
Perdita Project (<https://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/html/>)
LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection (<https://luna.folger.edu/>)

- T January 30 EBBA IDs: 20683, 20050, 34678
Gervase Markham, *Country Contentments, or the English Huswife* (Title, pp. 1-5)
Katherine Philips, “[On the Death](#) of my First and Dearest Child, Hector
Philips”
Elizabeth Richardson, *Instructions for my children* (LUNA)
- TH February 1 Perdita Project: Elizabeth Clarke (Folger Library: MS X.d.177) and Katherine
Thomas (National Library of Wales MS 4340A)
Victoria E. Burke, “Manuscript Miscellanies” (*CCEMWW*)
Lady Anne Southwell, *Miscellany* (LUNA, excerpts)

WEEK 4: Domestic Spaces (Household II)

WEMLO: Women’s Early Modern Letters Online (WEMLO.net)
Bess of Hardwick’s Letters (<https://www.bessofhardwick.org>)
Six Degrees of Francis Bacon (<http://www.sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/>)

- T February 6 WEMLO

Elizabeth Astley to Herbert Astley (February 9, 1672)
 Elizabeth Felton to John Hobart (March 26, 1640)
 Jane Lister to Martin Lister (~March 25, 1666)
 Hester Pakington to Elizabeth Thomas (May 30, 1701)
 Elizabeth Poyets to William Lenthall (July 9, 1647)
 Bess of Hardwick's Letters
 Letter IDs: 001, 024, 049, 106, 128, 141, 148, 179, 207, 227
 James Daybell, "Letters" (*CCEMWW*)
["Six Degrees of Francis Bacon"](#) (video introduction)

TH February 8 **NB: we will meet at the SPENCER Research Library**
["Commonplace Book"](#) (Wikipedia)
 Alan Jacobs, "["Commonplace Books': The Tumblers of an Earlier Era"](#)
 "Commonplace Book" (search on [Pinterest](#))

WEEK 5: Domestic Spaces (Healing I)

EMROC: Early Modern Recipes Online Collective (<https://emroc.hypotheses.org/>)
 The Recipes Project (<http://recipes.hypotheses.org/>)

T February 13 ["The Bulkeley Project"](#) (EMROC)
 Elizabeth Bulkeley, *A Book of Hearbes and Receipts* (Wellcome Library, MS 169)
 Images: 53 and 55
["The Fanshawe Project"](#) (EMROC)
 Ann Fanshawe, *Mrs Fanshaves Booke of Receipts* (Wellcome Library, MS 7113)
 Images: 9, 23, 125-26, and 179
 Sarah Connell, "Intertextual Networks: Theorizing and Encoding Textual
 Connections in Early Women's Writing"
 TH February 15 ["What is a Recipe? Day 1"](#) (The Recipes Project)
 Wendy Wall, "'Women in the household'" (*CCEMWW*)
 Eve Houghton, "[Recipes in Manuscript Miscellanies](#)" (The Recipes Project)
 Elizabeth Losh, et al., "Putting the Human Back into the Digital Humanities"

WEEK 6: Domestic Spaces (Healing II)

Women Writers Project / Women Writers Online (<http://wwo.wwp.northeastern.edu/>)
 Witches in Early Modern England (witching.org)
 Elizabeth Blackwell's *A Curious Herbal* (<http://www.bl.uk/turning-the-pages/>)

T February 20 Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book* (excerpts)
 Sharon L. Jansen, "[Jane Sharp: Midwife](#)"
["The Mistaken Mid-wife"](#)
 Mary E. Fissell, "Women in Healing Spaces" (*CCEMWW*)

- TH February 22 “The Wonderfull Discoverie of the Witch-Crafts of Margaret and Philip Flower” (WVO)
EBBA IDs: 20058, 31034
Anonymous, “A Full and True Account of the Discovery, Apprehending and Taking of a Notorious Witch” (witching.org)
“Interrogatories to be ministered to Elizabeth Saunders” (witching.org)

WEEK 7: Domestic Spaces (Devotional)

The Examinations of Anne Askew: An Electronic Edition (<http://anne-askew.humanities.uva.nl/>)

- T February 27 Anne Askew, *The Examinations* (excerpts)
Perdita Project: Anna Cromwell Williams (British Library MS Harleian 2311) and Elizabeth Hastings (Huntington Library: Hastings Religious, Box 1, Folder 13)
- TH March 1 ****Midterm Project Due****
Lanyer, *Salve Deus*: dedication excerpts ([Luminarium](#)) and “Eve’s Apologie in Defense of Women” ([British Library](#), images 4-6)

WEEK 8: Public Spaces (City)

MoEML: Map of Early Modern London (<https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/>)

- T March 6 Isabella Whitney, “Wyll and Testament” (MoEML)
EBBA IDs: 22340, 22338
[Hester Pulter](#), “The Complaint of the Thames” (pp. 12-15)
- TH March 8 The Queen Majesty’s Passage (MoEML)
Margaret Cavendish, *Sociable Letters* (Letters LXXXII and CCX)

WEEK 9: Public Spaces (English Courts)

British Library Timelines Project (<https://www.bl.uk/timeline>)

- T March 13 Katherine Philips, “[Arion on a Dolphin](#), To his Majesty at his passage into England”
Karen Britland, “Women in the royal courts” (*CCEMWW*)
[Bolsolver Castle Masque Project](#)
Ben Jonson, *Masque of Blackness*
- TH March 15 ****NB: we will meet at the SPENCER Research Library****
Elizabeth I, [Spanish Armada Speech](#) and [Speech to Parliament 1559](#)
Heather Wolfe, “[A letter from Queen Anne to Buckingham](#)”

WEEK 10: Spring Break**WEEK 11: Public Spaces (Print Market I: Politics)**

EEBO: Early English Books Online

- T March 27 Joseph Swetnam, *The Araignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women* (excerpts)
 Rachel Speght, *A Mouzell for Melastomus* (excerpts)
 Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (excerpts)
- TH March 29 ****NB: we will not meet in class****
 Margaret Cavendish, *Sociable Letters* (Letter IX, XVI, XL, LXV, CXX)
 Diana Kichuk, "Metamorphosis: Remediation in *Early English Books Online*"

WEEK 12: Public Spaces (Print Market II: Poetry)

Mary Wroth's Poetry: An Electronic Edition (<http://wroth.latrobe.edu.au/>)

Digital Cavendish Project: (www.digitalcavendish.org)

- T April 3 Lady Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*
 Paul Salzman, "Textual Introduction"
 "When night's black mantle could most darkness prove" (F1 and P1)
 "Am I thus conquered?" (F16 and P16)
 "My pain, still smothered in my grieved breast" (F18 and P68)
 "If ever love had force in human breast" (F48 and P48)
 "My Muse, now happy, lay thyself to rest" (F110 and P103)
 Cameron Kroetsch, "[Texts, Printers, and Booksellers](#)" (Digital Cavendish)
 Margaret Cavendish, *Poems and Fancies*, "To the Reader" (Digital Cavendish)
 Margaret Cavendish, *The World's Olio*, "The Preface to the Reader" (Digital Cavendish)
- TH April 5 ****NB: we will meet in the LETTER PRESS LAB, 324 Chalmers Hall****
 Marcy L. North, "Women, the material book and early printing"
 (CCEMWW)
 Sarah Werner, "[Finding Women in the Printing Shop](#)"

WEEK 13: Public Spaces (Theater)

- T April 10 Elizabeth Carey, *The Tragedy of Miriam* (PDF)
[The Tragedy of Miriam](#) (staged production, Royal Holloway Drama, YouTube)
 Marta Straznicky, "Private Drama" (CCEMWW)

TH April 12 Final Project Group Meetings (**NO CLASS**)

WEEK 14: Public Spaces (Science and Discovery)

Observations Upon a Blazing World: Cavendish and Mediated Form (blazingworld.org AND <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/observations-on-a-blazing-world/index>)

T April 17 Margaret Cavendish, *Observations Upon a Blazing World*

TH April 19 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, [*The Turkish Embassy Letters*](#) (excerpts)
Baroness Elizabeth Craven, *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople*
(excerpts)

WEEK 15: Speculations/Closings

T April 24 Laura Rosenthal, “Introduction: Recovering from Recovery”
Early Modern Women, Forum: “Revisiting Joan Kelly’s ‘Did Women Have a Renaissance?’” (selections)

TH April 26 Katherine Binhammer, “Feminist Literary History: How Do We Know We’ve Won?”
Elisa Beshero-Bondar and Elizabeth Raisanen, “Recovering from Collective Memory Loss: the Digital Mitford's feminist project”

WEEK 16: Final Project Presentations

T May 1 Final Project: Group Presentations

TH May 3 Final Project: Group Presentations