SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

ACADEMIC SESSION 2016-2017

HI4007 – SPECIAL SUBJECT
Women and Men: Courtship, Marriage, and Divorce in the Middle Ages

30 Credits for 11 weeks work

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:
The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen Organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any School regulation or procedure. You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM
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Discipline Administration:
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TIMETABLE
For time and place of classes, please see MyAberdeen

Students can also view their university timetable at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php
COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will address a number of themes, including modern studies of marriage; the western medieval church and marriage law, sexuality and gender in the middle ages; attitudes to love, marriage and the family; and sex roles and gender differences. We will examine the way in which gender and ideology influence the lives of both ordinary and not-so-ordinary people in the middle ages by examining a variety of primary and secondary sources.

NB: The lecture schedule below is subject to change to accommodate student numbers and interests and is for guidance only.

Week 1: Registration; Introduction to the course; Themes; Sources and Assessment; Who, When, Where, What? The chronological and biographical framework of our discussion of courtship, law, sex, marriage and the family.
Primary Readings: Selections from the Bible on sex and marriage.

Week 2: Religion
Primary Readings: St Paul ‘Letter to the Corinthians’, St Augustine “On the marital Good”. St Jerome “Against Jovinian”.

Week 3: State and Law

Week 4: Courtship and Rites

Week 5: GOBBET EXERCISE ONE TO BE HANDED IN
The Ties that Bind (political alliances and social networks)

Week 6: The Family Economy (e.g., property, production, reproduction, etc.). “The European Marriage Pattern” and its implications; Georges Duby and Medieval Marriage.

Week 7: Love, Sex, and Sexuality (within and outside of marriage)
Primary Readings: The Canterbury Tales: General Prologue and Wife of Bath’s prologue.
Week 8: **Breaking Vows**  

Week 9: **Gobbet Exercise Two to be Handed in**  
Representations of Marriage (political, artistic, intellectual, etc.)  

Week 10: **Breaking Vows: How to end a marriage in the middle ages**  

Week 11: Recapitulation and Exam Preparation

INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
The aims and learning outcomes of this course are:

- to introduce students to the concepts of ‘love’, ‘gender’ and ‘family’ as historical constructs with complex, time-specific terminology
- to provide students with a general knowledge of social attitudes to these concepts in the period.
- to allow students to evaluate the interplay of socio-economic levels of society, changing religious mores, and developments in law, literature, theology and philosophy as these relate to views on sexuality in its medieval context
- This course also aims to develop other, more general kinds of transferable skills that will help in to understand that some views and attitudes on sexuality and family structure are specific to certain times and places.

In particular student will be expected:
- to participate in group work
- to speak to a group and lead a general discussion
- to prepare presentations and construct an argument to a deadline with limits on length of presentation
- to analyse the impact of social, cultural, economic, and religious realities on attitudes to love, sexuality, and family and the internal organisation of the family
- to reflect on the complex relations between causes and effects
- to discriminate between characteristics seemingly central to the human condition and those specifically delineated by locale and time

Lectures, seminars, and presentations are aimed at prompting such reflections.

LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME
- Though dr. Pedersen will introduce the topic in the first week of term, teaching will consist of a mixture of informal lectures (during which you are welcome to interrupt and ask questions) and seminars preceded by
individual or group presentations by students. Seminars will be introduced by a presentation by a member of the class based on a reading of a collection of sources and/or a study of central importance to the topic under discussion. This will be followed by a discussion based on the broader reading assigned for the class on a selection of primary sources. Each student will be required to present a seminar.

- **Presentations** Students are responsible for a 20-minute presentation and for leading the discussion of their topic and readings set for the seminar presentation. Students are encouraged to discuss their presentation, in advance with Dr. Pedersen. Students may choose to lecture, assign discussion questions, and/or organise group work – indeed, any method of ‘presenting’ which suits their needs, interests, or abilities.

- **Further reading**. This is an essential part of any course in History and will deepen your understanding and enjoyment of the period and the discipline of history. A select bibliography will be provided to provide points of departure for further reading on the topics covered in the course. The footnotes and bibliographies of these books and articles are two sources of further reading; the search-features of the library catalogue, browsing the open shelves, and consulting the course co-ordinator are other ways forward. A major outcome of a university education should be an ability to find information on any topic within your field. You are encouraged to show initiative in developing this ability.

**ASSESSMENT**
The course is assessed by one 100% exam. Formative evaluation takes the form of two short written exercises of no more than 1000 words which are intended to prepare you for the course exam. They are therefore in the same format as the gobbet questions on the exam. These exercises are due to be handed in by 3.00pm on the Wednesdays of weeks five and week nine.

To view the CGS Descriptors please go to MyAberdeen – Organisations - Divinity, History & Philosophy Student Information for Undergraduates. The link to the CGS Descriptors is on the left hand menu.

**EXAMINATION**
The exam will consist of three questions: QUESTION 1 asks you to comment on three short extracts from primary sources (from a choice of eight) and to answer two questions in essay form. Question 1 represents 40% of the total marks: the other two questions represent 30% each. Past exam papers can be viewed at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/learning-and-teaching/for-students/exam-papers/.