

EMILY BALCH SEMINAR SECTION 008

INSTRUCTOR: Peter Kasius

OFFICE: Park Science Building #363

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS: 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

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GRADING: The grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Conference Attendance and Participation:	15%
Class Attendance and Participation:	20%
First Draft of Assignments:	30%
Final Draft of Assignments:	35%

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Lives of Mathematicians: The Creative Individuals Behind The Mathematics

When we study mathematics in high school and beyond, we are taught about the mathematical concepts and methods but rarely about the mathematicians who discovered or created these ideas. Except for a few very famous mathematicians such as Euclid or Isaac Newton, most of these people remain obscure and invisible to students while their creative accomplishments are given great prominence. Yet many of these mathematicians have led lives that are as fascinating and important as are their own intellectual contributions to the subject. We will explore this hidden background to the mathematics that is so familiar to students, by reading biographies, memoirs and academic studies about the lives of some of the mathematicians who have helped to develop the mathematics that we learn and practice today. Each has had their own journey to becoming a mathematician, and we will learn about how their personal lives influenced and contributed to the mathematics for which they are now remembered. In particular, we will have a strong focus on notable women mathematicians of the past two hundred years, some of whom spent a portion of their time as faculty here at Bryn Mawr College.

In addition to studying their personal lives we will also read about the social and historical contexts that helped to shape the directions that their mathematical careers took. We will also consider how they in turn influenced the lives of their students and the academic and professional institutions in which they worked. We will certainly read about Emmy Noether, a very important mathematician who spent several years right here at Bryn Mawr.

The writing for this course will start with brief essays critiquing and discussing the biographical presentations. The writing assignments will get somewhat longer as the course progresses, culminating in a longer final paper chosen from several possible topics.

LEARNING GOALS:

This Emily Balch Seminar should help to accomplish several goals that will benefit you in your college courses and beyond. A most important goal is to get practice reading texts closely and critically without mere passive acceptance. At the same time, it should help you learn to judge when such close reading is essential and when less engaged skimming or overviewing of readings may be appropriate instead. It should provide you with practice writing with clarity and precision, another essential skill that you will be using as you go forward. Hopefully your self-confidence in your writing ability will grow and you will recognize the strengths of your writing as well as learn to avoid any weaknesses that may detract from it. You will also learn about some of the methods needed in proper citation of sources, such as footnotes and bibliographies, as well as possibly incorrect uses of readings in your own that may potentially cause serious problems, such as plagiarism. Finally, you will get to participate productively in group discussions and one-on-one conferences.

TEXTS:

There will be various texts used for the readings of the course. One text that is used in all the sections of the Emily Balch Seminar is the following:

Harvey, Gordon. *Writing With Sources, A Guide for Students*. Third Edition. Hackett. 2017.

This textbook can be obtained as an ebook from the college library. Here is the link that you can use to obtain it from our library system:

https://tripod.brynmawr.edu/permalink/01TRI_INST/1jld0uu/alma991019075994304921

Some of the course readings that we will do later may also be assigned to you as ebooks which you can obtain from our library system. Excerpts of other texts and articles that will be read will be posted on Moodle as the course progresses. You will be able to read these online or print them out instead if you prefer.

THE ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments in this course will consist of assigned readings and assigned writings. The assigned writings will be primarily about these readings.

You will find reading assignments posted on the Moodle page for the course as the course progresses. These reading assignments will also be stated for you in class. The reading assignments for a given class will usually be posted for you and stated in class one week before the class for which you should have that reading assignment completed. For example, on a given Tuesday you will usually be told in class what to have read for the following Tuesday, and you find this information on Moodle as well. Most reading assignments will consist of one to three chapters out of the book (or sometimes article) that is currently being read. It is very important that you come to each class having completed the reading assignment for that particular class. These reading will usually be a basis for the in-class discussions as well as for the writing assignments, so it very important that they always be completed. You should also come to each class with either a printout of the particular reading to be discussed in that class or with a laptop on which you can access the reading.

You will find each writing assignment posted on Moodle as the course progresses. As with the reading assignments, the writing assignments will also be stated in class and will be discussed there as well. The first draft of each such writing assignment will usually be due either in the next class or one week later. Most such assignments will be corrected, critiqued, and discussed in class and/or in conferences (see below). After the first draft is returned to you, then there will usually be a second, final version submitted. This will be graded and returned to you.

The writing assignments must always be typed and should usually be submitted by email in pdf format, unless instructed otherwise. If you have some sort of computer difficulty in submitting a writing assignment by email, such as your email connection is not working properly, then instead submit the assignment on paper. A writing assignment should be submitted by 5 PM on its due date. The writing assignment should always be double spaced and justified (so margins on left and right are uniform) and the size of the type should be about 9 points. Here is an example (on the next page):

Hello. This writing sample is typed in Geneva font. It is typed in size 9 points. The margins of this sample are justified, so that the left and right margins are uniform vertically. The paragraph is also double spaced. That provides some space in between the lines in which comments and corrections can be inserted. Please use a similar formatting when doing your own writing.

OFFICE HOURS:

I will have regularly scheduled office hours at the times that are given above. You can come to these office hours to get help on assignments and on readings and discussions. You may also contact me by email to set up a meeting on ZOOM at other mutually convenient times, such as in evenings or on weekends. The link for ZOOM is posted here:

Link: <https://brynmawr-edu.zoom.us/j/95061717801?pwd=Z1BpU2VJNDk5V1M5cXoxR0dxMTFYdz09>

Meeting ID: 950 6171 7801

Passcode: 563622

CONFERENCES:

During the semester each student will have five one-on-one conferences with me in my office (or possibly on ZOOM in some cases), and each conference will be about 20 minutes long.

At the beginning of the course, you be given a sheet with a schedule of possible times (in thirty-minute increments) during which your conferences could be held, based on my own times at which I would be potentially available. Most of these times will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the same days as our class meets. What you should then do is indicate on the sheet all those times at which you believe that you would be potentially available for your conference. For example, if 4:00 – 4:30 on Tuesdays would be available to you, then indicate that as a potential time for the conference. After I get this information returned, then I will use it to schedule the times for your individual conferences. Remember that whatever times are chosen, they will probably be used only five times during the semester. If you find yourself unable to attend a scheduled conference (for example because of illness), then please let me know as soon as possible so that it may be rescheduled.

Each student must come to the conferences ready to discuss the student's written work and to ask questions about it. As the course proceeds the conferences will also be used to help to evaluate the student's progress in writing. If we need more than the thirty minutes of the conference to complete discussions, then I may ask to continue the discussion at another time.

PLAGIARISM:

This course will help you understand how to use sources fairly; and cite and document properly. Failing to credit a source (written, visual, electronic, etc.) that you quote or paraphrase – even course texts -- constitutes plagiarism, a serious academic offense and an honor code violation. If ever in doubt about whether you are using a source fairly, please ask me. All Bryn Mawr instructors will be happy to discuss this.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:

There has been a dramatic increase recently in the use of artificial intelligence (A.I.), such as ChatGPT, as an aid to writing. All work submitted in this course must be your own work. Therefore, just as it would not be acceptable to have another person compose your writing in this course and then submit it as your own work, it would also be unacceptable to have written work composed by a version of A.I. and then submit it as your own. In fact, doing so could be viewed as a form of plagiarism as described above, because the person submitting the work is not giving proper credit to the true author (A.I.) of that work. Therefore, the use of any text-generating software (such as ChatGPT, iA Writer, Marmot or Botowski) in composing your written work to be submitted is not permitted, and the use of this type of software on graded assignments will be treated as plagiarism.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

Bryn Mawr College is committed to providing equal access to students with a documented disability. Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Access Services. Students can call 610-526-7516 to make an appointment with the Access Services to begin this confidential process. Once registered, students should schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible to share the verification form and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement. More information can be obtained at the Access Services website which is <http://www.brynmawr.edu/access-services/>. Any student who has a disability-related need to tape record this class first must speak with the Access Services Director and to me, the instructor. Class members need to be aware that this class may be recorded.

If you obtain special accommodations, then you should **email** me a copy of your special accommodations letter (in pdf format) as soon as you have it available. In particular if you already have it available when the course begins, then please email it to me during the first week of classes.

TITLE IX:

Bryn Mawr/Haverford College is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive living and learning environment where all can feel secure and free from harassment. All forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and dating violence are violations of Bryn Mawr/Haverford's policies, whether they occur on or off campus. Bryn Mawr/Haverford faculty are committed to helping to create a safe learning environment for all students and for the College community as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination, harassment, or violence, know that help and support are available. Staff members are trained to support students in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more.

The College strongly encourages all students to report any incidents of sexual misconduct. Please be aware that all Bryn Mawr/Haverford employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors, clergy, and healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the [Bi-College Title IX Coordinator](#).

Information about the College's Sexual Misconduct policy, reporting options, and a list of campus and local resources can be found on the College's website:

[Bryn Mawr Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)
[Haverford Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

MICROAGGRESSIONS:

Microaggression Reporting: The Department of Mathematics is committed to making its classrooms and all departmental forums equitable and inclusive. To this end, we have established a pilot program of a Microaggression Report Form and Microaggression Response Team. A microaggression is a statement, action or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority. Through this program, we aim to raise awareness and decrease the incidence of microaggressions. There is an option to include your name if you want the Response Team to contact you. (https://brynmawr.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7QjZWbJv0JG7nXo)

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE:

Religious Observance: In support of the College's policy to respect students' religious identities and commitments, any student who is unable to attend classes, exams or work due to a religious observance will be excused and given an opportunity to make up missed work without penalty. [Here are some \(but not all\) of the observances](#) fellow classmates might be observing.