

History 292 Fall, 2026
Women in Britain since 1750
TTh 2:40-4 Dalton 212 E

Madhavi Kale
Old Library 136 x6539

office hours M 4:30-5:30, Th 11:30-1 or
by other arrangement

<https://brynmawr-edu.zoom.us/jbook/madhavi-kale/fall-2026-office-hours>



Essington Village Women's Institute 1928

Focusing on contemporary and historical narratives, representations and theories about the ostensibly transparent and stable categories of "women and gender" "Britain and nation" and "modernity," this course explores the ongoing production, circulation and refraction of discourses on not only gender and nation but also on race, empire and modernity since the mid-18th century. Assignments will incorporate visual and material as well as literary evidence and culture, and the course will consider the crystallization in this period of the discipline of history itself (and the practices that constitute and challenge it) as historically engendered.

Learning Outcomes: indicated below in **bold**, in following outline of the course's pedagogical methodology for achieving them:

This is a reading-, writing-, and discussion-intensive course. Students are expected to come to class ***prepared*** to ***discuss texts*** assigned for each meeting (not only readings but also films and other visual and aural cultural productions), and (as noted in the assignments schedule below) to turn in any relevant written work on time. Active and informed participation in the class counts for approximately 30% the final grade, which is based on **attendance, timely and evident completion of assigned reading, and productive, respectful contribution to class discussion.**

A. Attendance: Regular attendance in class and in conference is necessary and required. In accordance with the spirit of the Honor Code, I will not ask you to supply a reason if you miss a class. If, however, illness, family emergency, or religious observation interrupts your attendance, please contact me about it at the earliest opportunity. Missing more than two classes will result in a lower participation grade. You will also meet with

me individually at least three times during the semester to discuss your final project. These meetings are mandatory.

B. Reading Assignments: All reading assignments listed in syllabus and on Moodle are to

be COMPLETED by class on **Tuesdays**. We'll discuss note-taking and other strategies for effectively making your way through and making sense of the assigned reading, and you should feel free to bring your notes and questions to class with you, preferably in printed form. While laptops etc are not banned, I DO ask that you turn off notifications from internet sites (including email and texts) during class and use the laptop only to **review and take notes on readings and discussions.**

C. Discussion: One way that you may (and should!) demonstrate that you've completed the week's assigned texts by ***participating in and contributing to class discussion*** of them.

Learning how to have productive and respectful discussions in a classroom context with people with very different backgrounds and assumptions is among the most important skills to learn and to sharpen in College, and beyond. Very little learning takes place when participants in a discussion feel intimidated, dismissed, belittled or fearful that something they say will be repeated, out of context, outside of class. We will develop a written code of conduct in the course of the semester, updating and revising expectations as we proceed, both collectively and individually. This is a further reason for minimizing external distractions and resources while we are in class: they interfere with the processes associated with ***actively listening to and synthesizing*** others' analyses and further developing your own perspectives.

D. Written Assignments: Word or pdf files uploaded to relevant Moodle submission site by the times indicated in syllabus and on Moodle, files AND documents labeled as follows: your name, week of semester, date of submission. **Both because the purpose of the written assignments is to give you opportunities to hone YOUR skills and capacities as readers and writers, AND because plagiarism (including submitting as your own text generated by a computer**

program) all written work submitted in this course **MUST BE YOUR OWN** and neither copied/paraphrased from someone else's work or computer-generated.

Keep track of these assignments in a portfolio (a folder devoted to them on your computer AND backed up (in a cloud drive like Dropbox or BMC One Drive). *Understanding and following sound citational practice* is essential and assessment of written work will include evaluation of yours! Late submissions **WILL BE PENALIZED**. Better to turn in *something* on time than nothing/something late. These count for the remaining 50% of your grade. NB: These assignments are a crucial way to demonstrate that you have completed and engaged with the week's assignment, and can help you to confidently make productive and evidence-based interventions in class discussions, *citing where authors/creators have used evidence to make their arguments*.

Writing assignments, making up approximately 60% of final grade assessment are as follows:

1a. **Weeks 2-7:** What did you learn? List of words, sites, people and concepts in week's reading assignment with which you hadn't before been familiar AND brief statement of what you learned (latter 250-500 words)

1b. **Weeks 8-10:** Critiques: critical, analytical discussion of assigned readings (750 words, approximately) that build on earlier weeks' practices. The objective here is *to develop and sharpen your skills in 1) identifying authors' arguments, evidence, and expository devices and 2) succinctly and coherently situate them in the context of class presentations, discussions and other readings to date and 3) correctly citing authors'/creators' interventions (name, title of work, date of production, relevant page/s quoted or invoked*. These critiques are another way to demonstrate that you have completed and engaged with the week's assignment, and can help you to confidently make productive and evidence-based interventions in class discussions, *citing where authors/creators have used evidence to make their arguments*.

EVALUATION

1. Weekly:

- Weeks 2-6:
 - a. list of terms and concepts unfamiliar to you from week's reading, **defined!**
 - b. takeaway from week's reading: about historical practice, about space and time, about what happened/is said to have happened and evidence. Approximately 250-500 words
- Weeks 7-10:
 - Critiques, approximately 500-750 words: Due on Moodle by **TUESDAYS by midnight**, as noted in assignments schedule below and scored/evaluated as follows:

1=minimal: assignment submitted with heretofore **unfamiliar terms** listed and *defined* + descriptive précis of reading

2=adequate: all of above + analysis of author's assumptions and expository strategies

3=solid: all above + also critical engagement with analytical implications of reading
4=superlative: all of above + synthesis, relating readings to earlier readings and discussions of historical practice and/or to sight/site/cite project

Attendance and participation will add a + or – to each week’s assessment (absences that are not accounted for garner a failing grade for the week’s assessment).

2. **Occasionally:** working in **groups** and with these posted critiques and lists of significant terms, concepts, figures, etc., take turns organizing and *leading discussions* in Wednesday class meeting (**week 3** on). This assignment exercises your capacities to synthesize ideas presented by others within a smaller group and in the class as a whole and frame them to generate discussion of concepts and debates presented in reading/viewing assignments. **NB: you do not need to post a list/critique on Moodle in the week for which you lead discussion.**

These efforts will be graded and *together with the weekly critiques and lists*, constitute 50% of grade for course. During the week/s you lead discussion, you do not post a critique or a list, but rather, synthesize others’ insights, questions, analyses for discussion.

3. **Finally:** Each student will undertake an independent research project that will comprise one “chapter” a limited-access electronic anthology on “Period Pieces: Gender, Nation and Modernity in BMC’s British Victorian periodicals archive” (5-7 pages double-spaced 12-point font or approximately 1,250-1,750 words in length). This assignment is divided into three distinct but related (and graded) tasks.

- Having attended the orientation given by a Reference Librarian at Canaday, and based on course reading and viewing assignments and class discussions to date, you will 1) select an image or set of images or texts from the Canaday’s collection of 19th century periodicals that both interests/intrigues you and is relevant to the themes of the course, and 2) submit a proposal (approximately 3 pages or 750 words in length) for further research on and around your chosen image/images/texts/.
- Having had your proposal approved, you will submit an interim report on your research that includes an annotated working bibliography of sources consulted/to be consulted (approximately 5 pages or 1,500 words in length). These will be shared and discussed in a class workshop.
- Having worked through and responded to comments and suggestions made (and questions raised by) your interim report, and building on all the reading, writing, viewing and discussion you’ve done to date for the course, you will complete a critical introduction to your chosen image/images/texts. DUE by 12:30 p.m. **Friday, December 22, 2023.**
- **NB: All assignments are subject to change, with changes made in consultation with class members.**

This course proceeds in accordance with and within the framework of Bryn Mawr College’s commitment to ensuring accessibility to all students as outlined here:

<https://www.brynmawr.edu/inside/offices-services/access-services/information-faculty/sample-syllabus-statement-accessibility>

Similarly, this course proceeds in accordance with the College's Title IX commitment 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](#). For more information: [Bryn Mawr Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

Assignments Schedule:

Week 1: September 1 & 3

- Jane Austen's History of England, November, 179, *The History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st By a partial, prejudiced, & ignorant Historian To Miss Austen, eldest daughter of the Revd. George Austen, this Work is inscribed with all due respect by The Author NB. There will be very few Dates in this History* (British Library, virtual books)
- Excerpt from Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929) Conclusion to lectures delivered at Newnham and Girton Colleges, Cambridge University, 1928 entitled, “Women and Fiction.”

Week 2: September 8 & 10

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be want of a wife.” Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*” (1813)

- Nicola Phillips, ch. 2, “Legal fictions vs. legal facts: Common law, coverture and married women in business” (pp. 23-47)
 - Fiona Montgomery, *Women's Rights: Struggles and Feminism in Britain c. 1770-1970* (2006) chapter 1, “Women and the Law,” pp. 1-32
 - Marriage Act 1753 26 Geo.2 c. 33 Lord Hardwicke
 - Mary Wollstonecraft, “Introduction,” *A Vindication of the Rights of Women with Stricture on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792)
- ❖ **Takeaway 1** due by midnight WEDNESDAY September 9 on Moodle

Week 3: September 15 & 17

- Somerset v Steward, 1772 12 Geo. 3 King's Bench, Lord Chief Justice Mansfield
- Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, "Introduction: being at home with the empire," in Hall and Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (2006): 1-31
- Catherine Hall, et al., *Legacies of British Slave Ownership* (2014) excerpts
❖ **TAKEAWAY 2 due by midnight on WEDNESDAY on Moodle**

Week 4: September 22 & 24

- Amma Asante, *Belle* (2013)
- Michel Rolphe Trouillot, "The Power in the Story," in Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995)
❖ **Takeaway 3 due by midnight WEDNESDAY on Moodle**

Week 5: September 29 & October 1

- Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave. Related by Herself. With a Supplement by the Editor.* [Thomas Pringle] (London: 1831) Electronic edition: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
❖ **Takeaway 4 due by midnight WEDNESDAY on Moodle**

Week 6: October 6 & 8

- Iain B. Macdonald, dir., *Mansfield Park* (2007)
- First Sight: Period Pieces proposal: What, when, why, how?
Due by **Friday October 9 by 5 p.m.**

Week of Fall Break

Week 7: 20 & 22

- Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial"
- Bentinck, "Minute on Sati," 1829
❖ **Critique 1 due by midnight Wednesday**

Week 8: October 27 & 29

- Pandita Ramabai, Meera Kosambi, trans., *Pandita Ramabai's American Encounter: The Peoples of the United States* (1889, 2003)
❖ **Critique 2 Due by Midnight Wednesday**

Week 9: November 3 & 5

- TBA Sinha, Burton
❖ **CRITIQUE 3 due on Moodle by midnight on Wednesday**

Week 10: 10 & 12

- Excerpts, Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844) OR *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884, 1891)
- *Anti-Caste*, edited by Catherine Impey 1888

<https://www-slavery-and-digital-co-uk.proxy.brynmawr.edu/documents/detail/2303116>

- Caroline Bressey, selections
- Excerpts, Ida B. Wells Barnett, *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells* (Chicago 2020)
 - ❖ **CRITIQUE 4** due by midnight on Wednesday on Moodle

Week 11: November 17 & 19

- TBA

Week 12: November 24 [Nov 28 Turkey Day]

- TBA: possibly workshop on “Period Pieces” projects

Week 13: 1 & 3

- Cite your sources: annotated bibliography for Period Pieces Due by **Monday November 30 by 5 p.m.**

- TBA: possibly workshop on “Period Pieces” projects

Week 14: December 8 & 10*Last day of classes

Presentations of Period Pieces in class

All assigned work due by 12:30 p.m. December 22 including **final draft of Period Piece** site analysis