

HIU34517, Gender and Sexuality in Early Modern Europe (Kiernan Knowles)

Assessment: Two essays 40% and 60%.



How did men and women understand the roles, identities, responsibilities and expectations as dictated by their gender? Could one challenge the accepted norms of one's gender identity? To what extent were the ideals of femininity and masculinity constructed during the early modern period? Was there such a thing as homosexuality prior to the modern age? These are some of the questions this course will address as we examine the gender roles and identities assigned to men and women from the Renaissance to the French Revolution. A product of the early feminist histories of women, gender history now encompasses a wide range of studies, including the study of sexuality, queer theory and men's studies. Throughout this course the student will engage with the historiography of these challenging subjects, examine the concepts of femininity, masculinity, patriarchy and gender as they have changed over time, and question how much gender, as a category of historical analysis, has to offer the historian. We will use a wide range of sources, from the works of early 'protofeminists', to the latest historiographical writings on the future of the discipline, thus highlighting the origins and ongoing relevance of debates on gender rights and relations.