

HI31X-30 Feminism, Politics, and Social Change in Modern Britain

20/21

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Laura Schwartz

Credit value

30

Module duration

22 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This final-year Advanced Option module will provide students with an overview of the politics of feminism and its relationship to changing gender roles in modern Britain. It will introduce students to themes key to feminism within a wider historical context, especially class, race and sexuality. The module will look at religion and secularisation; the rise of the birth control movement and debates over freedom of sexual expression; tensions of class and race within feminist movements; transnational feminist connections; and the role of the imperial context in shaping feminist ideas and identities. Its broad chronological reach will aim to overcome artificial distinctions between 'first', 'second' and 'third' waves, and encourage students to identify and historicise common currents within feminist thought, as well as turning points and ruptures.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

Each seminar will approach feminist political thought alongside an assessment of the 'realities' of women's lives in Britain. Attention will be paid to how social movements emerge, operate and are responded to both by individuals and the state. The module will deepen history undergraduates'

experience of historiography. It will examine the impact of feminism on the discipline of history and the methodological challenges of writing histories of social movements which transcend boundaries between intellectual, social, oral and cultural history. The module will therefore combine use of primary sources (including political texts, oral histories, and film and visual sources) with a thorough grounding in the historiography of gender and feminism and an introduction to some of the theoretical models used to understand the formation of identities, subjectivities and political agency.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Term 1

1. What is feminism? Competing definitions of feminism in the West
2. Origins of the Victorian Women's Movement
3. Feminism, Religion and Secularism, 1860-1914
4. Feminism and Imperialism, 1860-1914
5. The Suffrage Movement, 1893-1918
6. Reading Week
7. Sex, sexuality and Sex Work 1870-1930
8. Feminism, the family and the state 1914-1939
9. School Trip to the Feminist Library, London
10. 'There's always been a women's movement in Britain?' Assessing decline, impact and social change 1918-1945

Term 2

1. The birth of the Women's Liberation Movement
2. Cultures of activism
3. Hidden from History? Feminist historians fightback
4. Sexuality and Abortion OR Feminism, the family and motherhood
5. Wages for Housework? The domestic labour debates in the UK, US and Italy
6. Reading Week
7. The Sex Wars: Debates on Pornography and Sexual Violence
8. Feminism, race and racism
9. 'Post-feminism' and the 'Third Wave'
10. 21st Century Feminism and Intersectionality

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a systematic knowledge and understanding of how social movements come into being and the relationship between ideas, social action, and changing attitudes to gender.
- Critically analyse and evaluate a broad range of primary and secondary historical sources

alongside theories of identity, subjectivity and political agency.

- Effectively communicate ideas, and make informed, coherent and persuasive arguments, about the history and politics of feminism and its relationship to changing gender roles in modern Britain.
- Critically review and consolidate theoretical, methodological, and historiographical ideas about the relationship between intellectual, social, oral and cultural history.

Indicative reading list

- Sue Morgan (ed.), *The Feminist History Reader* (2007)
- Special Issue: 'Rethinking the History of Feminism', *Women: A Cultural Review* 21:3 (2010)
- Heidi Safia Mirza, *Black British Feminism: A Reader* (1997)
- *Feminist Review: Free Archive* (Seminal articles from 1979-1999 available online)
- Ray Strachey, *The Cause* (1928)
- Anna McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995)
- Lucy Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in Twentieth Century Britain* (2011)
- Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (1996)
- Caroline Bressey, 'Victorian Anti-Racism and Feminism', *Women: A Cultural Review* 21:3 (2010), 279-291
- Laura Schwartz, *Infidel Feminism: Secularism, Religion and Women's Emancipation in England 1830-1914* (2012)
- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality, 1885-1914* (1995)
- H. Cook, *The Longest Revolution. English Women, Sex, and Contraception, 1800-1975* (2004)
- Eleanor Rathbone, *The Disinherited Family* (1927)
- Carol Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England, 1880-1939* (1989)
- S. Todd, *Young Women, Work and Family in England 1918-1950* (2005)
- Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History* (1974)
- L.L. Downs, 'From Women's History to Gender History', in S. Berger, H. Feldner and K. Passmore, eds., *Writing History: Theory and Practice* (2003)
- Maria Rosa della Costa & Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (1972)
- Lynne Segal, *Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism* (1987)
- Jeska Rees, 'A Look Back in Anger: The Women's Liberation Movement in 1978', *Women's History Review* 19:3 (2010), 337-356
- Debi Withers & Red Chigley, 'A Complicated Inheritance: Sistershow and the Queering of Feminism, 1973-4', *Women: A Cultural Review* 21:3 (2010), 309-322
- Valerie Amos & Pratibha Parmar, 'Challenging Imperial Feminism', *Feminist Review* 17 (July 1984), 3-19
- Joan Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (2009)
- J. Haritaworn, with T. Tauquir, E. Erdem, 'Gay Imperialism: Gender and Sexuality Discourse in the War on Terror', in A. Kuntsman & E. Miyake (eds.), *Out of Place: Interrogating Voices in Queerness/Raciality* (England: Raw Nerve Books Ltd., 2008), 71-95
- Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1996)

- Angela McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change* (2010)

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	18 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Private study	264 hours (88%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A2

Weighting Study time Eligible for self-certification

Assessment component

Seminar contribution 10% No

Reassessment component

1000 word reflection Yes (extension)

Assessment component

1500 word essay 10% Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

3000 word source based essay 40% Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

3000 word essay 40% Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback provided via Tabula; optional oral feedback in office hours.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 4 of UHIA-V101 Undergraduate History (with Year Abroad)
- Year 4 of UITA-R3V2 Undergraduate History and Italian

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 4 of UHIA-V1V6 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL14 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad)