

**Wilfrid Laurier University, Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies**  
**Classical Studies 218: Women in Greece and Rome**

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**Office:** DAWB 5-110 **Office hours:** Wednesday / Thursday 12:30- 2:00 (or by appointment)

This course surveys the lives, roles, status, accomplishments and representation of women and girls in the ancient Greco-Roman world. Lectures are arranged in a historical sequence spanning the Bronze Age to the early Christian era, but are also organized topically. We use a variety of approaches to study legal rights and restrictions experienced by women, their roles in cults and religion, representation in art and literature, medical theories and practices relating to the female body, economic and domestic roles, realities of female slavery, attitudes towards sexuality, prostitution, and other topics. At every stage we will be aware of the nature of evidence which includes contracts and other documents, historiography, literature, art. Students will also get a taste of the vast scholarship on the topic. Special consideration is also be given to how modern fiction, poetry, film and art have treated topics relevant to this course. SEE ONLINE SYLLABUS FOR LECTURE SCHEDULE

**Civility in the Classroom: By taking my course, you have entered into a contractual relationship with me. My obligation is to present you with well prepared lectures that accurately represent the current state of knowledge on this topic, to evaluate your assignments fairly and in a timely manner, and to treat you with respect and consideration. Your obligation is to do the readings and assignments, and to behave in a respectful manner to me and the students around you. Students who surf the net, read email, facebook, twitter, watch videos or use their laptops for any purpose other than taking notes will be asked to leave the class. The same applies to cell phones, blackberries, or any other electronic device.**

### **Objectives**

- To study the lives of ancient women from an objective and scholarly perspective
- To understand some of the different methodological approaches to the topic
- To read and analyze selections from ancient sources (in translation)
- To engage critically with scholarship on Greco-Roman women
- To analyze how contemporary fiction and other genres have represented ancient women (i.e. the “Classical Tradition”)

### **Evaluation: there are four components to your final grade**

- 1) An article review (20%): (see below) (750 to 1000 words), due Feb. 4/09 in class.
- 2) Mid Term Test (25%) on lectures and readings, (short answers, essays) Feb. 23/09
- 3) A book review (20%): (750 to 1000 words) due in class March 18/09
- 4) Final examination in registrar’s examination period (35%) (short answers, essays)

N.B. I deduct 10% per day for late assignments. Test must be written on the assigned day unless there are exceptional circumstances. Do not schedule holidays during the exam period.

### **Required Text**

E. Fantham, et alia *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text* (Oxford: 1995)

Please note that there will be articles available from JSTOR and the website Diotima

## Lecture and Reading Schedule

To get maximum value from the Lectures you should do the readings before class.

**Week one** (Jan. 5-7): Approaches to women in the ancient world; defining the terms; myths of matriarchy; Pandora video. Reading: *Women in the Classical World* (WCW), introduction, 1-10 and 128-135; OPTIONAL READING P. Walcot "Greek Attitudes towards Women: The Mythological Evidence" *Greece & Rome*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1984), pp. 37-47 [available on JSTOR] check out the Diotima website <http://www.stoa.org/diotima/>

**Week two** (Jan 12-14): Casting the female in Greek mythology; Women in the Homeric epics; Misogyny, class and literary genre; Women as story-tellers. Read WCW 10-55 **On Jan. 14 I review the specifications for the article review. Please have your topic chosen by this date.**

**Week three** (Jan. 19-21): Sappho and women poets. Religious roles, women and the cult of Demeter; coming of age rituals. Read the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* on Diotima's anthology page <http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/>

**Week four** (Jan. 26-28): Women in Sparta. Solon, citizenship and gender in sixth and fifth century Athens. Women's economic life. Women and the law. Read WCW 56-67

**Week five** (Feb. 2-4 ): representing women on the stage (Classical Athenian tragedy and comedy). Screening of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. **Article review due Feb. 4**

**Week six** (Feb. 9-11): Prostitution; sexuality; abortion and birth control; the female body. Read WCW 183-215, and "Different Desires:A Dialogue Comparing Male and Female Love attributed to Lucian of Samosata" at <http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/lucian.shtml>

### READING WEEK February 15-19

**Week seven** (Feb. 23-25): **MIDTERM TEST in class Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>** Philosophical constructions of femininity. **On Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> I discuss how to approach the book review.**

**Week eight** (March 2-4) Women in Hellenistic Egypt and Etruscan Italy WCW 137-82; 243-59 and (Optional) <http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wardtexts.shtml#V> (documents from Hellenistic Egypt)

**Week nine** (March 9-11) The Roman Republic: legal and economic changes WCW 260-79

**Week ten** ( March 16-18) Representing women in Roman literature. WCW 280-93. March 18<sup>th</sup> **Book review due in class.**

**Week eleven** (March 23-25) Regulating sexual conduct in the imperial age. Female adornment. Slavery. WCW 294-344

**Week twelve** (March 30-April 1) Women and wealth; empresses; Christianity. WCW 345-391

## ARTICLE PRECIS

Each student must choose ONE of the following articles and write a 750-1000 word précis in which you identify the main hypothesis of the article and discuss how the author proves their argument. Further details will be online, and I will discuss the assignment in class on Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>. No more than seven students can write on each topic. This assignment is due in class as hardcopy on Feb. 4<sup>th</sup>. It is worth 20% of your final grade. Any form of plagiarism (including copying the abstracts of the articles) will result in a mark of 0 for the project. All plagiarism is reported to the Dean of Arts. I deduct 10% for each day late including weekends.

1. Laurel Bowman, "The 'Women's Tradition' in Greek Poetry," *Phoenix*, 58, (2004)1-27.
2. Lynn LiDonnici, "Burning for It: Erotic Spells for Fever and Compulsion in the Ancient Mediterranean World," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 39 (1998) 63-98
3. Mary Beard and John Henderson, "With this Body I Thee Worship: Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity," *Gender and History* 9 (1997) 480-503
4. J. Gould, "Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980) 38-59
5. Elizabeth Bartman "Hair and the Artifice of Roman Female Adornment," *American Journal of Archaeology* 105 (2001) 1-25
6. Nancy Serwint "The Female Athletic Costume at the Heraia and Prenuptial Initiation Rites," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 97 (1993) 403-422
7. Joan Burton "Women's Commensality in the Ancient Greek World," *Greece & Rome*, 45 (1998) 143-165
8. Mark Golden "Demography and the exposure of girls at Athens," *Phoenix* 35 (1981) 316-31.
9. Adele Scafuro, "Discourses of Sexual Violation in Mythic Accounts and Dramatic Versions of 'The Girl's Tragedy'," *differences: a journal of feminist cultural studies* 2, (1990) 126-59.
10. Angeliki Kosmopoulou "Working Women" : Female Professionals on Classical Attic Gravestones," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 96 (2001) 281- 319
11. Marjorie S. Venit "Women in their cups" *The Classical World* 92 (1998) 117-30
12. Holt N. Parker "Why Were the Vestals Virgins? Or the Chastity of Women and the Safety of the Roman State," *The American Journal of Philology*, 125, (2004) 563-601

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS ASSIGNMENT

- To learn how to read, assess and discuss scholarship on women in the ancient world
- To understand how scholars use information to construct an argument
- To expand your understanding of the topic of women in the ancient world by focusing on one aspect that interests you.

## Classical Tradition Project

For this project you need to read **ONE of the six novels** listed below. Each work of fiction tells a story that is related to the material covered in this course. You must write a short essay between **750 and 1000** words in length that discusses how the novel relates to the material studied in this course, and what stereotypes about ancient women are maintained or challenged in the novel. The project is worth 20% of your final grade, and is due on **March 18<sup>th</sup>** in class. You lose 10 marks per day for late reviews, and I will not accept any reviews after March 29<sup>th</sup> because we will be discussing the novels in our second last class. I have not ordered these books through the University Bookstore, but through Wordsworth Books in Uptown Waterloo.

1 Amy Bloom, *Away*. (Random House, 2008)

This book is a version of the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and other myths set in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America. How does the author use the story of Demeter and Persephone to structure the novel? How does she change the story and why? What other elements of Greek myth are used?

2. Annabel Lyon, *The Golden Mean*. (Random House, 2009)

This story is about the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander the Great but also about Aristotle's relationship with women. How does Lyon capture some of Aristotle's views about women? Give examples of how she represents some of the restrictions that women would have experienced at that time.

3. Michelle Lovric, *The Floating Book* (Harper Collins, 2003)

Set in Venice during the Renaissance, this novel introduces us to a woman who seems to be the reincarnation of Catullus' mistress, Clodia/Lesbia.

4. Ursula K. Le Guin, *Lavinia* (Harcourt, 2008) gives a voice to the second wife of Aeneas, Lavinia, who is speechless throughout Vergil's *Aeneid*.

5. Mary Renault, *Funeral Games* (Vintage, 2002) is set in the year after the death of Alexander the Great and features some of the strong Macedonian women in his court including Eurydike who makes a play for the vacant throne.

6. Jane Alison *The Love Artist* (Picador, 2002) imagines the influence of Ovid's lost work on Medea to be a barbarian woman named Xenia whom he brings back to Rome as his concubine.

### OBJECTIVES OF THIS ASSIGNMENT

- To get a sense of the "Classical Tradition" in literature
- To help you bring to life some of the material studied in this course
- To analyze how an author's ideas about antiquity might influence her construction of ancient women