

ENGL 349C 001: Race and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Literature

Credits: 3

Instructor: Margaret Reeves

Course Description:

This course investigates the history of concepts such as “race” and “gender” by examining portrayals of early modern people of diverse identities, cultures, and geographical locations in early modern English and early American literature. We explore English and colonial literatures and cultures during this period (from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century) in relation to such aspects as the politics of literary and theoretical canons; debates about sexism, racism, and anti-semitism in early modern literary studies; the gendering and racialization of bodies in early modern poetry; patriarchal cultures in early modern England and its colonies; public and private spheres in the seventeenth century; social constructions of race, female subjectivity, and sexuality; postcolonial perspectives on early modern exploration of the new world; representations of African and North American Indigenous people in early modern English literature; and relationships between slavery, commerce, and colonization.

Tentative Reading List:

Behn, Aphra. *Oroonoko, or the Noble Slave. A True History.*
Cary, Elizabeth, *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry.*
Cavendish, Margaret. Selected short stories.
Rowlandson, Mary. Captivity narrative entitled *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God.*
Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice.*
Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice.*
Selected North American Indigenous oral and visual narratives.
Selected poems, polemical works, and scholarly essays.