

**HH2002**

## **Gender in History**

**Seminar:** Friday, 12.30pm – 3.20pm

**Venue:** LHS-TR+53

**Course Instructor:** Ms Mageswari Rajah

**Email Address:** [s220194@e.ntu.edu.sg](mailto:s220194@e.ntu.edu.sg)

**Consultations:** Please make an appointment for a zoom consult via email

### **Course Aims**

In *Gender in History*, you will compare diverse ideas about gender and sexuality in global history, focusing on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This course examines the gendered experiences of people in the past and the present. You will analyze the ways that political, social and economic transformations have intersected with historical changes in gender and sexual norms, revealing the historical contingency of gender and sexuality. *Gender in History* will decenter and denaturalize present day gender and sexual norms by showing the historical specificities of the present, through a variety of historical case studies. Through this course, you will appraise and critique the major approaches to gender history and the history of sexuality and analyze important historiographical debates in the field. *Gender in History* aims to give you a toolbox of concepts and analytical frameworks which you can draw upon in all your other courses and research projects, to deepen your analysis of gender and sexuality. You will also develop your skills in primary source analysis, particularly in analyzing gendered and sexual language and images in written and visual primary sources.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Investigate and explain the role of a range of historical processes in the formation of the gender and sexual dynamics of the modern world.
2. Compare and contrast major theoretical frameworks and methodologies in gender history and the history of sexuality.
3. Analyze and interpret gendered and sexual languages and images in primary historical sources.
4. Formulate and articulate novel historical arguments that effectively deploy primary and secondary source evidence.

### **Requirements and Expectations**

- Students must attend the weekly seminars and take part in discussions.
- Seminar slides will be made available on NTUlearn *after* class.

- Students must **read the assigned materials** before each class. Those readings listed under “further reading” are not mandatory; they are for those who wish to explore the topic further. Essential readings will be accessible on NTUlearn.
- Students should check NTUlearn for important information regarding the course and assignments.
- Students should arrive on time; late arrival will result in a deduction of participation marks.
- Note that NTU’s Policy on Student Code of Conduct applies.
- All work must be your own. Plagiarism of any material for written work (including the take-home test) will be penalised and may result in failure of the course. **Plagiarism includes self-plagiarism.** Any written assignments which plagiarise assignments you have written for other courses (in part or whole) will be penalized or failed. Please see the section on plagiarism below.
- If you would like to set up a consultation, please email me to set up a time. Generally, I will be holding **consultations over Zoom**.
- I do not answer student emails on weekends or outside business hours (9 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday, excluding public holidays). You can usually expect a response within two business days to emails sent on weekdays.

## Assessment

---

Component	Weighting	Due date
1. Participation (in-class and online)	15%	Ongoing
2. Research proposal	15%	Friday 20/02/26 11:59pm (week 6)
3. Research essay	45%	Friday 03/04/26 11:59pm (week 11)
4. In-Class Essay Test	25%	Friday 17/04/26 (week 13)

---

### 1. Participation: 15%

There are two components to the participation grade:

#### a) Participation in discussion:

In-class discussion will be an important means by which you will learn from your peers and build important skills, including: constructing convincing arguments; analyzing primary and secondary sources; and verbal communication. As such, your contribution to discussion in class will be assessed. It is not enough to merely turn up to class; rather, you will be assessed on the extent to which you participate in and contribute to the class discussion.

#### b) Weekly Individual Response:

Each week you are required to post a short response/reflection (of about 200 words) on the compulsory readings. Responses should be posted on the **Discussion Board** on NTUlearn by **11.59 pm, Wednesday of**

**every week.** This will give me time to look at your responses on Thursday and incorporate them in my lessons before Fridays' lessons.

---

## 2. Essay proposal: 15%

**600 words** (excluding footnotes and bibliography)

Due **Friday 20/02/26 11:59pm (week 6)**

The research essay will be a major research project, which you will work on across the semester. Developing a research question is a key skill required for historical research. As such, in your major essay you will be required to **develop your own research project and write your own essay question**. A good place to find ideas for essay questions is to look through the further reading list organized under the weekly themes (see below), to see if any of these **themes or case studies interest you**.

The research essay will help you develop other key skills like **finding relevant primary sources**; finding **good secondary sources** and **understanding the differing approaches of historians** to the subject; **critical analysis** and **making a convincing argument**; and **writing skills**. This proposal assignment will prepare you for your major essay assignment by giving you the chance to receive feedback on your project.

**You will need to conduct considerable research** prior to submitting the research proposal.

The **entire proposal** should be **fully referenced in footnotes**. Please see the Chicago footnotes/bibliography style guide here: [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html). Throughout the proposal, you need to include a citation for all arguments, ideas and concepts you have drawn from other sources, as well as empirical material, like historical examples and contextual information. This is how you will demonstrate your prior research.

**The proposal should include the following FIVE SECTIONS:** a) essay question; b) scope; c) argument; d) primary source research; e) bibliography. See below for elaboration.

### A. Essay question:

Insert your **essay question** – probably <50 words.

An essay question is *not* the same as an essay topic. Common history essay questions include 'why,' 'how' and 'to what extent' questions. Why questions usually ask about *historical causation* (e.g. what caused X, why did X happen?). How questions often ask about historical patterns or processes (e.g. how did X gender construct circulate in Y period?). To what extent questions usually ask about the weighting of different factors and sometimes a why question is more effective, as it opens up the range of factors you could consider.

## B. Scope:

In 1 sentence state the **time period and geographical focus** – probably <50 words.

Please be **succinct and precise** here. E.g. 'during the colonial period in India' is not an adequate description of the period of the essay. If you are referring to the period of direct *British* rule, you are talking 1760s-1940s (a long period), or if referring to *colonial* rule generally, c. 1505-1940s, from when the Portuguese first established colonies in India.

## C. Argument:

Explain your primary arguments based on your research thus far in **at least 450 words**.

Here, you should elaborate your argument based on the research you have done thus far. Thus, this is section is a **mini-draft of the essay**, explaining the major arguments of the essay and briefly explaining some of the evidence you will use to support those arguments. Note that this section will be 450 words or more, so you really do need to do some **serious research** prior to submitting the proposal.

In explaining your argument, you can note why this question addresses an issue of historical significance. If you are building on or challenging the argument of any authors who have written on the subject of your essay, you could also explain this element of your argument here too.

Your explanation of your argument should be logical and clearly structured.

## D. Primary source research:

In **100 words max** outline your approach to primary source research.

Explain what types of primary sources you have found thus far and **cite examples** in your footnotes. Explain why these primary sources are useful. How will you deal with any limitations you have encountered or anticipate in your primary source research—e.g. if you only primarily have access to one type of source (e.g. newspapers) or cannot access sources in a particular language?

## E. Bibliography:

Include **only sources you have referenced in footnotes**.

Again, please note that the **entire proposal** should be **fully referenced in footnotes**.

## Some tips on research:

For **secondary sources**, I advise you to prioritise **journal articles and books**, as these are usually peer-reviewed (i.e. appraised by other scholars in the field prior to publication). MA or PhD theses are widely

available online and can sometimes be rigorous, but they are not peer-reviewed like journal articles and books are. Websites and media sources vary widely in how 'reliable' they are. But even when they are accurate, websites and media sources are generally not in-depth because they are brief. Thus, **using a lot of websites and media sources does not evidence in-depth research** and will likely result in a quite superficial analysis. That said, the **sites of archives, libraries and museums can be especially useful for primary sources.**

3-5% will be deducted for incorrect referencing style. Plagiarism will be penalized (see plagiarism section below).

**Late penalty: 2% per day** that the assignment is late.

---

#### **4. Major essay: 45%**

**2500 words (excluding footnotes and bibliography)**

**Due Friday 03/04/26 11:59pm (week 11)**

The major essay should be a polished piece of writing that demonstrates your skills in research and critical analysis. The research essay should construct a convincing and logical argument in response to your essay question (see the proposal description for pointers on essay questions). The research essay should include interpretation of several primary sources, ideally drawing on several different types of primary sources. An excellent essay will also position the argument of the essay in relation to the arguments of other historians on the specific topic and/or the different approaches to the study of gender.

Please **include your essay question as a title/heading** at the beginning of the essay.

Please **include word count.**

Please use the **Chicago footnotes/bibliography referencing style:** [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html). 3-5% will be deducted for incorrect referencing style. You need to include a citation for all arguments, ideas and concepts you have drawn from other sources as well as empirical material, like historical examples and contextual information. Plagiarism will be penalized (see plagiarism section below).

**Note:** I may not be able to return your major essay feedback and results until after the take-home is due. However, the take-home test does not specifically build on the major essay, so this will not put you at a disadvantage for the take-home test.

**Late penalty: 2% per day** that the assignment is late.

---

## 5. In-class Essay Test: 25%

### In-Class Essay Test on **Friday 17/04/26 (week 13)**

One essay question will be given for all to answer in 1 hour. You are to bring writing pens. Writing papers will be provided.

You are to prepare for this test by revising TWO compulsory readings from any ONE theme covered in this course:

1. Week 4 – Masculinity
2. Week 5 – Gender, Women's Bodies and Capitalism in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Period
3. Week 6 – Gender and Labour
4. Week 8 – Age as a Category of Gender Analysis
5. Week 10 – Gender and Disability

There will be NO make-up test. MC required for absence from test.

### Feedback

You will receive feedback through individual written feedback on the proposal and research essay. The assessment is 'scaffolded' so that the written feedback on the proposal will provide you with feedback for the research essay.

---

## Policies

### Punctuality:

Students are expected to be punctual to class. As such, students who are more than 15 minutes late will receive a 50% penalty on their participation mark for that class. If a student arrives more than 15 minutes late and there are serious extenuating circumstances, we may at our discretion waive the penalty.

### Medical certificates:

Providing a medical certificate does not mean that you will be awarded participation marks for the missed class. A medical certificate gives you the right to make up for your non-attendance in class. If you are ill and unable to attend class, you can email your medical certificate along with a **400 word discussion** of the readings for that week by Sunday evening in order to make up your participation marks.

### Plagiarism and improper citation:

NTU's academic integrity policy applies at all times. If you don't know what plagiarism is or are unclear on the details, review this module: <http://academicintegrity.ntu.edu.sg/for-students/module>.

Plagiarism includes:

1. **Passing off another author's work as your own work.** This includes:
  - a. Entirely copying phrases or sentences from an author without quoting or paraphrasing. (This is plagiarism even if you include a reference to the source.)
  - b. Substantially copying phrases or sentences from an author without quoting or paraphrasing, e.g. copying a phrase, changing a few words to synonyms, swapping around phrases within a sentence, or substantially copying a sentence while only changing a phrase or a part of it. (This is plagiarism even if you include a reference to the source.)
  - c. Not referencing ideas, arguments, information, examples or background context that you have derived from other authors in the footnotes.
2. **Self-plagiarism** includes submitting an essay which you have submitted in a different course, or submitting an essay which includes *parts* of an essay from another course (e.g. sentences, paragraphs, arguments). Of course, you can build upon *reading* you have done for another course, but your essay topic and question should not overlap (wholly or partially) with that of *any* assignments you have submitted in other courses.

Plagiarism is **not assessed based on the Turnitin percentage**.

To check if you have accidentally plagiarized:

1. Check whether Turnitin shows any 'matches' to phrases or sentences and if you have plagiarized, *rephrase in your own words*. Do *not* change a word here or there from the copied source – this is plagiarism.
2. Check to see that you have included references whenever you reference background context, examples, ideas, arguments etc. that you have derived from other sources.

**All forms of plagiarism are serious offences.** Assignments that have significant plagiarism or will receive a fail mark. Assignments that contain minor incidents of plagiarism (e.g. inadequate paraphrasing or improper citation practices) will be significantly marked down or failed.

**Paraphrasing means writing in your own words.**

The following are general principles for proper citation and paraphrasing:

1. Take good notes from sources so that you do not 'accidentally' plagiarise because you have not properly recorded where you read an idea, argument, concept, or empirical detail. Keep detailed notes including the source and page number.
2. **Paraphrase when taking notes**, so that your notes are in your own words
3. Quote sentences or phrases that you feel are particularly important or cannot be matched by paraphrasing. Every direct quote requires a reference in a footnote.
4. Paraphrasing material shows that you understand it and extensive quotes (particularly from secondary sources) are not recommended. Paraphrasing is *not* changing a few words or phrases around. Again, it entails writing *in your own words*.
5. **You need to reference a source in a footnote whenever you borrow an idea, argument or piece of information from another author.** If a paragraph or sentence contains material

paraphrased from several different sources, you can cite multiple sources separated by semi-colons in one footnote at the end of the sentence.

6. Don't choose a topic you have already written on in another course. If you are interested in a similar subject area, take a significantly different angle, ask a substantially different question, or explore a connected but distinct topic. Please email your tutor for advice on self-plagiarism.

### Use of Artificial Intelligence

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) must **not be used** in this course, including but not limited to the discussion board posts, essay proposal, major essay or take-home test. AI must not be used **for any purpose**, including but not limited to:
  - i. You may **not** use AI to assist in generating key ideas.
  - ii. You may **not** use AI to assist in generating a first text (including after detailed prompts)
  - iii. You may **not** use AI to refine syntax and grammar for correct language submission
2. Any student found having used AI for any purpose will be subject to the **penalties** that would be incurred for other forms of **academic dishonesty**.

Research and writing are key skills that are integral to your history education. For this reason, I regard it as very important that you work on improving your own skills in finding sources, brainstorming ideas and refining your written expression.

### Late submission of assignments and extensions

Proposals and essays that are submitted past the due date will be subject to a 2% penalty per day that the assignment is late. The take-home test will be penalised at 5% per day the assignment is late, due to the time sensitive nature of the assignment.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that your assignment is properly uploaded on NTUlearn.** If you have any technical issues, *immediately* email me with your assignment and an explanation of the technical difficulty you are having so that no late penalties are deducted. Extensions will not be given to students who claim that their upload to NTUlearn failed.

**Extensions:** If you require an extension please email me **prior to day the assignment is due**. Extensions will only be given in cases of illness (in which a student presents a medical certificate) or in serious extenuating circumstances.



## Weekly themes and readings

---

### Week 1: Introduction

No readings. However, it is highly recommended that you begin your readings for the upcoming weeks.

### Week 2: Gender as a Category of Historical Analysis

#### Compulsory reading:

Scott, Joan W. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5. (1986): 1053-1075. (Perhaps the most influential theorization of gender history.)

#### Suggested Further Readings:

Scott, Joan W. "Gender: Still a Useful Category of Analysis?" *Diogenes* 57, no. 1 (2010): 7-14.

Thomas, Lynn M. "Historicising Agency." *Gender & History* 28, no. 2 (2016): 324-39. (A critical discussion of how gender historians have used the concept of 'agency'.)

### Week 3: Women and Gender in History Writing

#### Compulsory reading:

Rose, Sonya O. *What is Gender History?* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, 1-16.

Andaya, Barbara Watson. "Studying Women and Gender in Southeast Asia." *International Journal of Asian Studies* 4, no. 1 (2007): 113–128.

#### Suggested Further Readings:

Rose, Sonya O. *What is Gender History?* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010. (For a readable introduction to other themes in gender history.)

Shoocongdej, Rasmi. "Gender Roles Depicted in Rock Art: A Case from Western Thailand." In *Pursuit of Gender*, edited by Sarah Milledge Nelson and Myriam Rosen-Ayalon. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2001.

### Week 4: Masculinity

#### Compulsory reading:

Tosh, John. "The History of Masculinity: An Outdated Concept?" In *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World*, ed. John H. Arnold and Sean Brady, 17-33. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. (A good overview of masculinity studies, as well as a critique of Scott.)

Mrinalini Sinha, "Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India," *Gender and History* 11, no.3 (1999): 445-460.

### Week 5: Gender, Women's Bodies and Capitalism in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Period

#### Compulsory reading:

Cherian, Divya. "Stolen Skin and Children Thrown: Governing Sex and Abortion in Early Modern South Asia." *Modern Asian Studies* 55, no. 5 (2021): 1461–1509.

Paton, Diana. "Gender History, Global History, and Atlantic Slavery: On Racial Capitalism and Social Reproduction." *The American Historical Review* 127, no. 2 (2022): 726–754.

Suggested Further Reading:

Gates, Hill. "The Commoditization of Chinese Women." *Signs* 14, no. 4 (1989): 799–832.

Blake, C. Fred. "Foot-Binding in Neo-Confucian China and the Appropriation of Female Labor." *Signs* 19, no. 3 (1994): 676–712.

**Week 6: Gender and Labour**

Compulsory reading:

Andaya, Barbara. *The Flaming Womb: Repositioning Women in Early Modern Southeast Asia*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2006. Chapter 4.

Datta, Arunima. *Fleeting Agencies: A Social History of Indian Coolie Women in British Malaya*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2021, Chapter 2.

Suggested Further Reading:

Jackson, Cecile. 1999. "Men's Work, Masculinities and Gender Divisions of Labour." *The Journal of Development Studies* 36, no. 1 (1999): 89–108.

Barragàn, R., & Papastefanaki, L. "Women and Gender in the Mines: Challenging Masculinity through History. An Introduction." *International Review of Social History* 65, no. 2 (2020): 191-230.

*Colonialism and Male Domestic Service across the Asia Pacific*. Edited by Julia Martinez, Claire Lowrie, Frances Steel, and Victoria Haskins. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

**Week 7: Gender and Archive**

Compulsory reading:

Farmer, Ashley D. "In Search of the Black Women's History Archive." *Modern American History* 1, no. 2 (2018): 289–93.

Joseph, Betty. *Reading the East India Company, 1720-1840: Colonial Currencies of Gender*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004. Introduction, 1-30.

Suggested Further Reading:

Burton, Antoinette. "Archive Stories: Gender in the Making of Imperial and Colonial Histories," In *Gender and Empire: Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series*, edited by Philippa Levine, 281-293. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

**Recess Week**

**Week 8: Age as a Category of Gender Analysis**

Compulsory reading:

Tanika Sarkar, "Is She a Child?' Emergence of Chronological Age in Early Colonial Bengal," in *Querying Childhood: Feminist Reframings*, ed. Mary E. John, Barbara Lotz and Elisabeth Schömbucher, 34 – 51. Oxon: Routledge, 2025.

Leow, Rachel. "Age as a Category of Gender Analysis: Servant Girls, Modern Girls, and Gender in Southeast Asia." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 4 (2012): 975-990.

Suggested further reading:

Pande, Ishita. "Coming of Age: Law, Sex and Childhood in Late Colonial India." *Gender & History* 24, no. 1 (2012): 205–230.

Leow, Rachel. "Do you Own Non-Chinese Mui Tsai?' Re-examining Race and Female Servitude in Malaya and Hong Kong, 1919-1939.' *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 6 (2012): 1736-63.

**Week 9: No Lecture. Public Holiday.**

**Week 10: Gender and Disability**

Compulsory readings:

Jessica Hinchy, Gender, Disability, Aging, and Labor: Indian Convicts in Singapore, Penang, and Melaka, *Journal of Social History*, 2025,, shaf051, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jsh/shaf051>.

Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8, no.3 (1983): 400-421. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/493983>

Suggested Further Readings:

Burch, Susan, and Lindsey Patterson. "Not Just Any Body: Disability, Gender, and History." *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 4 (2013): 122-137. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2013.0060>.

BARCLAY, JENIFER L. *The Mark of Slavery: Disability, Race, and Gender in Antebellum America*. University of Illinois Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.5406/j.ctv1k03s94>.

Gagen, Wendy Jane. 2007. "Remastering the Body, Renegotiating Gender: Physical Disability and Masculinity during the First World War, the Case of J. B. Middlebrook." *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 14 (4): 525–41. doi:10.1080/13507480701752169.

**WEEK 11 ESSAY WRITING WEEK – NO CLASS**

**Week 12: Rethinking Gender Binary**

Compulsory Readings:

Najmabadi, Afsaneh. "Mapping Transformations of Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Modern Iran." *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology* 49, no. 2 (2005): 54-77.

Boydston, Jeanne. "Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis." *Gender & History* 20, no. 8 (2008): 558-583.

### Suggested Further Readings:

Furth, Charlotte. "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century China." *Late Imperial China* 9, no. 2 (1988): 1-31.

Andaya, Leonard Y. "The Bissu: Study of a Third Gender in Indonesia." In *Gender in Focus: Identities, Codes, Stereotypes and Politics*, edited by Andreea Zamfira, Christian de Montlibert, and Daniela Radu, 1st ed., 64-87. Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2018.

Clark, Anna. "Anne Lister's Construction of Lesbian Identity." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7, no. 1 (1996): 23-50.

Chiang, Howard. "Epistemic Modernity and the Emergence of Homosexuality in China." *Gender & History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 629-657.

Hinchy, Jessica, "Hijras and South Asian historiography." *History Compass* 20, no. 1 (2022): 1-13.

### **Week 13: In-Class Essay Test and Conceptualizing Sexuality**

#### Compulsory readings:

Oswin, Natalie. "Sexual Tensions in Modernizing Singapore: The Postcolonial and the Intimate." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2010): 128-141.

#### Suggested Further Readings:

Cocks, H.G., and Matt Houlbrook. "Introduction." In *Palgrave Advances in the Modern History of Sexuality*, edited by H.G. Cocks and Matt Houlbrook, 1-18. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Chatterjee, Indrani. "When 'Sexuality' Floated Free of Histories in South Asia." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 4 (2012): 945-962.

Chua, J.Y. "The Strange Career of Gross Indecency: Race, Sex, and Law in Colonial Singapore." *Law and History Review* (2019): 1-37.

Oswin, Natalie. "Sexual Tensions in Modernizing Singapore: The Postcolonial and the Intimate." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28 (2010): 128-141.

Gao, Yunxiang. "Nationalist and Feminist Discourses on *Jianmei* (Robust Beauty) during China's 'National Crisis' in the 1930s." *Gender & History* 18, no. 3 (2006): 546-73.

Dave, Naisargi N. "To Render Real the Imagined: An Ethnographic History of Lesbian Community in India." *Signs* 35, no. 3 (2010): 595-619.

**Original Version of Syllabus Document Created by Assoc. Prof Jessica Hinchy**

**Weekly themes, readings and final assessment modified from the original version for AY24/25 (Semester 2) and AY25/26 (Semester 2) by Mageswari Rajah.**