

# EN 4/6713: Seventeenth-Century English Literature: Women's Writing and the Passions

Dr. Lara Dodds

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-4:45



This course will provide an overview of British women's writing from the seventeenth century. Political and religious developments as well as changes in the circumstances of literary authorship led increasing numbers of women to write in many different genres and forms during the seventeenth century; however, cultural prejudices still attempted to limit women's creative achievements. For instance, when Lady Mary Wroth, an accomplished poet, dramatist, and prose writer published her monumental romance *Urania*, she received an insulting poem that instructed her to

Work, Lady, Work. Let writing books alone.  
For Surely wiser woman ne'er wrote one.

This class will examine women writers' responses to this context by focusing on their use of the passions as a means to engage with literary discourse. We will address questions such as: what is the role of the passions—love, envy, hatred, pride, anger—in literary creativity? What are the specific constraints and conditions of authorship for women in the seventeenth century? Is there a tradition of early modern women's writing and what are the advantages—and disadvantages—of defining such a tradition?

Requirements for this course include occasional quizzes and writing assignments, two exams, one short essay, an annotated bibliography, and a long research paper.

Behn, Aphra. *Oroonoko, and Other Writings* ed. Paul Salzman. Oxford: Oxford UP (Oxford World Classics), 2009. ISBN: 9780199538768

Cary, Elizabeth. *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Ed. Ramona Wray. Arden, 2012. 9781904271598  
ISBN: 978-1904271598

Chaplin and Rumrich, eds. *Seventeenth-Century British Poetry: 1603-1660*. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN: 9780393979985

Salzman, Paul, ed. *Early Modern Women's Writing: An Anthology*. Oxford: Oxford UP (Oxford World Classics), 2008. ISBN: 978-0199549672

Wroth, Mary. *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (Abridged) ed. Mary Ellen Lamb. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (403), 2011. ISBN 978-0866984515