SPAN 135. Topics in Early Modern Studies: Interrogating Gender in 17th-Century Spain

FALL 2018

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A study of gender as depicted in 17th-century novels, autobiographies and plays from both shores of Spain’s Atlantic Empire. That of 17th-century Spain was a patriarchal society made up of contradictions. The king’s closest pen friend was a nun who influenced policy-making in a world that did not allow women to hold office. Females authored bestselling books against the outcry of confessors and preachers. They were not allowed to act unless in their husband’s troupe, but then became real celebrities, earning higher salaries than men. Women starred in plays that constantly showed female characters falling in love with cross-dressed members of their own sex, despite legal bans against homosexuality. The literature of the time shows individuals eager to cross gender boundaries and test prejudice in ways that allow us to reflect upon today’s society. Readings include Ana Caro, Lope de Vega, Erauso, Tirso de Molina, María de Zayas, Sor Juana.

Class: Tuesday & Thursday, 2-3:50pm at Rolfe Hall 3134.

Office hours: Thursday 1-2pm and by appointment at Rolfe Hall 5337.

Artemisia Gentileschi, Self-portrait as the allegory of painting (c. 1638).

United Kingdom, Royal Collection.
Learning outcomes. By the end of the quarter, you will be familiar with …

- how in seventeenth-century Spain, much like in the world we live in, the category of gender served to define individuals as being this and that, ascribing to them specific physical, mental, and social characteristics.

- how seventeenth-century Spaniards described and imagined the difference between being a woman and being man; how this influenced the perception of the individual’s rights, duties, and skills;

- how they imagined the possibility of someone not conforming to either female or male gender, and what could have been the reaction to it.

- how, at a time in which the term “feminism” did not exist, women (and some men) fought against the discrimination and oppression experienced by females, sometimes articulating notions on gender equality and promoting social and political agendas.

- how novels, plays and other works could serve as tools both to perpetuate and to question gender-based assumptions.

- what were the conditions in which women lived in a patriarchal society such as that of seventeenth-century Spain; how, in the world of literature and spectacle, they managed to become authors, actresses and company directors.

- how the categories of race and class used to overlap or collide with that of gender, and how this is portrayed in novels and plays.

- a set of literary works belonging to different genres (from narrative to theater to lyric poetry), authored by some of the most well-known female and male authors in Spain’s seventeenth-century Atlantic Empire from Madrid to Mexico City, who strongly influenced ideas and taste in Europe and New World territories and who therefore are representative of a crucial moment in the shaping of today’s society and world.

Course requirements and final grade breakdown

Class attendance is mandatory. In addition to this, the following will be part of your grade:

A. Reading Responses and class participation [40% of the grade]:

A.1 For each class meeting, you will find a list of questions on CCLE (Reading Response). Please, pay careful attention to the questions before you start reading, since these are meant to help you focus on particular aspects of the text. Once you have finished reading, answer them and submit the assignment through CCLE at least two hours before the class meets –that is, by noon. This will allow the professor to understand which parts of the reading have been problematic for a majority of students and focus on these accordingly. Failing to submit more than four reading responses might result in a failing grade. Late submissions defeat the purpose of the activity and repeatedly doing so will count as failing to submit at all.
A.2 You should engage in class discussions, showing that you have done your homework. You are not evaluated according to how much do you speak in class. What matters is what you say is relevant and shows that you have carefully read the assignments and thought about them. Valid ways of engaging in class are participation in group exercises as well as in class discussions, or just asking questions about the materials we study.

A.3 You are expected to take part in the performance of a scene of one of the plays read in class on 12.06. This will be done in small groups and before the class, according to the rules that you may find in the corresponding section on CCLE. Groups will be formed in week 6, after the midterm exam. You should not feel any pressure about the performance, which is only a class exercise meant as moment of sharing experiences and learning with one another in a relaxed setting. However, if you prefer not to participate in the performance because you do not feel comfortable doing that, there are alternative ways in which you may collaborate with the group of which you are part: you can help them rewrite the dialogue (adding, cutting or adapting lines of text, as well as incorporating or removing characters); you can take part in the design of a background for the stage, the choice of clothing or music; you can direct them as you rehearse, and so on.

Note: On Thursday, 11.08, the class meeting will take place at YRL Special Collections (YRL is UCLA’s research library, situated in North Campus). This will offer you a chance to learn and see close at hand what 17th-century books looked like. You will see how novels, plays and other works of fiction and nonfiction appeared on the page to women and men who sought to travel with their imaginations right from their private apartments. The visit to YRL Special Collections is a chance to see, smell, and (carefully) touch three-hundred-year-old editions of some of the works you have read for the course. The professor will provide you with a worksheet that you are expected to complete during and after the visit, to be handed in in the next class meeting.

B. Midterm Exam [25% of the grade]: It will take place during the class meeting on 11.06, covering contents from weeks 1-5. A list with every possible question you might be asked will be posted on CCLE one week in advance. This will considerably narrow the contents you need to study and will help you prepare. You cannot have any notes with you during the exam, for which you will have the entire duration (1h 50 minutes) of the class meeting of 11.06.

C. Final Paper [35% of the grade]: In the corresponding section on CCLE you will find instructions and tips for writing a research paper of 3,500-4,000 words. On 11.27 you will be required to submit a brief summary of three articles or book chapters related to the topic you are going to write about (Annotated Bibliography). The deadline for the paper is on 12.13 by 5pm.

You need to obtain a passing grade (60 or more) in each of the categories of reading responses and participation, midterm exam, and final paper.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory in SPAN 135. You are expected to attend every class meeting and also to have read all materials assigned for each day and be prepared to engage in the discussion.

More than two absences might result in a failing grade in the course. However, note that justified absences do not count as absences. Therefore, if you are absent from class due to a family or work emergency, please notify the professor and provide the necessary documentation. Please do not arrive late or leave early. Doing so might count as half-absence.
Should you have **any problem or difficulty**, do not hesitate to **contact the professor**.

**Student’s responsibilities**

☀ You should **check your e-mail and CCLE announcements** at least every other day.

☀ You need to have **with you the materials** that are discussed in each class meeting.

☀ It is your responsibility to know **what is the homework** for the next class meeting. If there is something you do not understand you must **contact your instructor at least 24 hours before the due date** of the assignment. This includes the midterm exam.

☀ For critical doubts regarding the **final paper** you must contact the professor **at least ten days before the deadline**. You can contact the professor at any time for minor doubts that arise when working in your project.

☀ It is your responsibility to **behave appropriately** in class. Do not leave the class unless there is an emergency.

☀ The use of electronic devices is allowed in class. You can use your laptop, tablet or e-reader to read the materials discussed in class. You can use Internet when prompted by the instructor. However, it is **strictly forbidden to use your devices for matters unrelated to class activities**, such as checking text messages, e-mail, or browsing contents that are not connected with the class. Please be advised that doing so constitutes a **serious fault**.

☀ You cannot eat in class. Water, tea, coffee, fruits and cookies are fine.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The Office of the Dean of students at UCLA defines it as follows:

“Plagiarism is a serious offense. It is the presentation of another author’s words or ideas as if they were your own. University regulations require that any case of plagiarism be sent to the Dean of Students for review.”

Any use of printed or online sources should be acknowledged through citation.

For further guidance on what constitutes plagiarism, please refer to: [http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Video](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Video)

If you have any doubt about whether particular actions might be considered plagiarism, please seek advice with your professor.

**Readings**

In the section “**Weekly outline of readings**” you may find the readings that have been assigned for each class meeting.

**All the readings are posted since the first day of class on CCLE.** You will find each of them in the section corresponding to the week for which it is due.

You **do not need to purchase any book** for SPAN 135.
Notice concerning the readings and trigger warning

All the primary readings of SPAN 135 date from the seventeenth century, in a variant of Spanish that is slightly different from the way the language is spoken today either in Spain or in Latin America. The language of the texts remains fully understandable for anyone able to read Spanish, yet you may need to look up for words that are new to you. A good resource to use for that is the online version of the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (http://dle.rae.es/?w=diccionario).

If you want to use a dictionary specialized in the language of the period, you can also access the online version of the Diccionario de Autoridades, published in the eighteenth century (http://web.frl.es/DA.html).

All the primary readings of SPAN 135 are several centuries old, and as such they may occasionally contain language and references that by today’s standards are constitutive of race, gender or class discrimination, as well as include elements of violence, either sexual or of another kind. They will be treated as objects of study and analyzed from a critical and historical viewpoint. Our goal in reading them is to gain a better and more complex understanding of the problems that have shaped the world in which we live, and to be better informed to face present and future ills.

Weekly outline of readings:

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 0</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thu, 09.27</td>
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<td>Introduction to the course.</td>
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<th>WEEK 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tue, 10.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>María de Zayas, “La burlada Aminta”.</td>
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<td>Thu, 10.04</td>
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<td>María de Zayas, “El prevenido engañado”.</td>
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<th>WEEK 2</th>
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<td>Tue, 10.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juan de Zabaleta, “La comedia”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lope de Vega, El perro del bortelano (in film).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu, 10.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz, “Respuesta a Sor Filotea de La Cruz”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz, Selection of poems.</td>
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WEEK 3

Tue, 10.16
Tirso de Molina, *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, Act I.

Thu, 10.18
Tirso de Molina, *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, Act II.

WEEK 4

Tue, 10.23
Tirso de Molina, *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, Act III.

Thu, 10.25
Ana Caro, *Valor agravio y mujer*, Act I.

WEEK 5

Tue, 10.30
Ana Caro, *Valor agravio y mujer*, Acts II-III.

Thu, 11.01. There is no class this day!

WEEK 6

Tue, 11.06
*Midterm Exam.*

Thu, 11.08
*Visit to YRL Special Collections.*

WEEK 7

Tue, 11.13
*Relación de la monja alférez* I.

Thu, 11.15
*Relación de la monja alférez* II.

WEEK 8

Tue, 11.20
“Sexuality and the Marriage Sacrament: Elena/Eleno de Céspedes”.

Thu, 11.22 [There is no class this day. *Thanksgiving Recess.*]
### WEEK 9

**Tue, 11.27**  
Students submit Annotated Bibliography (see instructions for Final Paper).

**Thu, 11.29**  
Guillén de Castro, *La fuerza de la costumbre*, Act II.  
Notify the professor who are the members of each group for the performance of 12.06.

### WEEK 10

**Tue, 12.04**  
Guillén de Castro, *La fuerza de la costumbre*, Act III.

**Thu, 12.06**  
*Performance of a theatrical scene in class* (see instructions for alternative tasks if you feel uncomfortable performing before the class. No reason to worry!).

### WEEK 11

**Thu, 12.13**  
Submit Final Paper via CCLE.