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### LS 320.01: Women in Antiquity

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Autumn 2003  
MW 3:10-4:30  
Office Hours: MTThF 12:30-1:00,  
TTh 3:30-5:15 & by appointment

**Women in Antiquity**  
FLLG/LS 320

**\*\*This course is applicable to the Major and Minor in Classical Civilization,  
and is a Women's Studies Focus course, applicable to the WS Major/Minor.\*\***

**Required Texts:** Since those marked by an asterisk (\*) are used only for one class assignment,  
you may wish to share or borrow these books.

- *The Essential Homer.* Trnsl. S. Lombardo. Hackett 2000. 0-87220-540-1.
- *Women's Life in Greece & Rome.* (LF) M. Lefkowitz & M. Fant. Johns Hopkins 1992 (2nd edition). 0-8018-4475-4.
- *\*Sappho.* Trnsl. Mary Barnard. Univ. of California 1958. 0-520-01117-1.
- *Aeschylus. The Oresteia.* Trnsl. Peter Meineck. Hackett 1998. 0-87220-390-5.
- *The Reign of the Phallus.* (RP) E.C. Keuls. Univ. of California 1985. 0-520-07929-9.
- *Women on the Edge; Four plays by Euripides.* (WE) Trnsl. Blondell et al. Routledge 1999. 0-415-90774-8.
- *\*Euripides. The Bacchae.* Trnsl. P. Woodruff. Hackett 1998. 0-87220-392-1.
- *Aristophanes: Four Comedies.* Ed. W. Arrowsmith. Ann Arbor 1969. 0-472-06152-6.
- *\*Virgil. The Aeneid of Virgil.* Trnsl. A. Mandelbaum. Bantam. 0-553-21041-6.\*\*
- Packet of primary sources (PP).
- Packet of secondary readings (SP).

**Nota bene:** While different translations of many of these works exist, I have chosen the above renditions with the specific needs of this course in mind. If you choose to use a different translation, be aware that neither page nor line numbers will be the same, that interpretations of Greek and Latin vary (i.e., the English will not be the same), and that you may have difficulty following class discussions. Sometimes comparing different translations in class makes for interesting discussion, but we will have ample material to discuss without comparing translations. Therefore, I request that you purchase as many of these books as possible. To help defray costs, consider sharing books with a classmate. I will also be giving away (by lot) some desk copies. Please be advised that I expect that when you quote from texts for the papers/written assignments, you will use the translations indicated above.

**Course Objectives:** Our primary objective will be to examine carefully the visions, status and treatment of women in the societies of the ancient Greeks and Romans. As a secondary and necessary ancillary objective, we shall concern ourselves with assessing not only the information provided by primary sources but also the theoretical, interpretive and reconstructive work of modern scholars which pertain to women's lives in Greece and Rome.

In the course of our analysis, we shall of necessity consider the nature of gender as a social construct and question to what extent (in any society) the biological differences between the sexes determine gender roles. Conversely, we shall need to bear in mind that, to some extent, gender roles and expectations determine behavior and perceptions by the other sex. In brief, our primary focus shall be determining the cultural categories of "masculine" and "feminine," and analyzing and interpreting how the societies in question delineated and deployed these categories in various social, political, religious, literary and artistic contexts. The materials of our inquiry shall include several genres of Greek and Latin Literature (e.g., epic poetry, lyric poetry, tragedy, comedy, philosophy, history, oratory, elegiac poetry, satire). Our voyage of discovery shall be couched primarily in such literary sources, but we shall also make use of legal documents, medical treatises, vase paintings, sculpture and inscriptions. With respect to the secondary sources, we shall give serious attention to various theories concerning gender in these cultures and discuss the difficulties of reconstructing a history of women and of truly understanding the social developments which affected women when we have *so little* direct evidence. By conducting our inquiry carefully we will attempt to reconstruct Greek and Roman definitions of gender, and observe how these cultures' approaches to such issues have been influential upon the evolution of contemporary Western attitudes toward gender.

A student who successfully complete this course can expect to have acquired the following:

- 1) a familiarity with the conventional periods of Classical Greek and Roman history from Archaic Greece through the early Roman Imperial era;
- 2) a broad exposure to and understanding of the canonical Greek and Roman Classics (in English translation) and the major genres of literature;
- 3) an understanding of the particular problems which pertain to reading such literature from the perspective of the "Other," as well as a heightened sensitivity to such marginalized groups;
- 4) the ability to analyze works written by the dominant social group (elite males) from the perspective of the marginalized "Other";
- 5) an awareness of the various forces (e.g., hierarchies of wealth, education, social class) which contribute to the complicated matter of understanding gender, and the different ways in which "gender" may be defined or constituted;
- 6) a familiarity with the works and ideas several modern Classical scholars and critics who have engaged in interpreting literature and material remains which pertain to women in antiquity.

**Please make note of the following important dates:**

Monday, 22 September	Last day to add/drop by Cyberbear (w/refund)
Monday, 13 October	Last day to add/drop by petition (w/o refund)
Tuesday, 11 November	<b>Veteran's Day Holiday -- no classes</b>
Wednesday-Friday, 26-28 November	<b>Thanksgiving Break -- no classes</b>
Thursday, 18 December	<b>Final in-class Essay, 1:10 - 3:10pm</b>

**Weekly Questions:** Responses to WQ's (at least 2 full pages, typed, double-spaced, in a 10 or 12 point font, and absolutely no more than 3 full pages) are normally due (unless otherwise specified) at the beginning of the Wednesday class hour. If you should wish to compose/refine your WQ response after having had the benefit of Wednesday's class, you may turn in your completed assignment to me personally no later than Thursday, 5pm.

Responses to the WQ's should include: 1) a clearly-stated thesis, which is supported by 2) appropriate quotations from the pertinent texts, 3) analysis of the pertinent text(s), and 4) cogent and well-organized argumentation. Please feel free to discuss your ideas with me and in class. In your composition of responses to WQ's you should consider that your answers are not to be simply *factual* but rather *interpretive*. Therefore, you must consider before writing, "Which are the key aspects and passages of the primary text(s) which pertain to this question?" As you re-read key passages, make note of those aspects of the text which help you to unravel its complexity. Then thoughtfully, precisely and eloquently, compose your response. Remember -- *attention to detail in the text* (and reference to such) *is crucial!*

I must stress that WQ's are neither formal nor research papers. I will grade them by considering 1) how directly you address the question(s) posed; 2) how well you integrate your ideas with the supporting textual (both primary and secondary) evidence; and 3) how well you display a command of the material covered in class. These are short, concise assignments: you have space neither to ramble nor go off on tangents.

WQ's will be graded on a scale of 0 to 10 points. There are a total of 12 WQ assignments; I will drop the three lowest grades at the semester's end; if a student elects not to complete a particular WQ, the grade will be a zero. **ALL STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE THE FIRST THREE WQ's AND AT LEAST TWO OF THE FINAL THREE** (on Roman culture). The cumulative score of the WQ's is the most significant element in determining your final grade, for I consider your performance on the WQ's to be indicative of the consistency of your effort and activity in this course, and consistency in the caliber of your work is the most telling factor.

**Student responsibilities:**

*Students are expected to attend all class sessions.* It is important for you to be present at each class meeting in order to participate in the discussion, and particularly on Wednesdays in order to hand in WQs. I will allow each student only three unexcused absences for the semester. An excused absence constitutes informing the Professor (by phone or e-mail) either *prior* to the absence from class or providing a doctor's note (or some other documentation) after the absence. If the absence is not excused, missing class when an assignment is due constitutes forfeiting the right to complete the assignment. For each unexcused absence after the three permitted, a final course grade will be lowered by 1/3 (i.e., A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, etc.).

*Students are also expected to have read and thought about the pertinent material before attending class so that they are able to participate in class discussions and ask meaningful*

questions. It goes without saying that in order to get the most benefit from class discussions (and in order to participate in them), students will have read and reflected on the assigned material *before* the class meets. As you read, I encourage you to compose notes and questions you may wish to raise in class.

*In essays, discussions and quizzes/tests, students must demonstrate* a) sufficient familiarity with the pertinent texts, b) the ability to engage in an interpretive discussion of the texts, c) the ability to incorporate a discussion of background material (provided in class or in secondary readings) into the interpretation, and d) demonstrate a command of pertinent literary/generic/technical terminology.

### **Brief outline of Course schedule:**

During each class meeting, we shall focus on the materials assigned for that day. I will usually spend the first part of the class supplying some commentary or background material helpful for understanding the reading, after which we shall engage in a discussion of the assigned material. With respect to the primary sources, I will aim to provide important background information regarding literary genre, historical context, authorial background, material remains, et cetera. With respect to the critical essays, I will guide discussions with an eye to eliciting an understanding and analysis (and perhaps a critique) of the scholars' interpretations.

While I intend to follow the syllabus as closely as possible, *I reserve the right to change assignments, either with respect to content or due dates, and to give quizzes at any time* (particularly if class reticence indicates that the material is not being read thoroughly or thoughtfully); any such quizzes will be incorporated into the discussion grade, as I will consider them part of your class participation. If a student has an unexcused absence on a quiz day (announced or not), there will be no make up allowed. Quizzes may include questions on aspects of texts discussed in class, identification of key personages, passages, features, and background material. Quiz scores will be factored into your participation grade.

<b><u>Evaluative Components:</u></b>	Weekly Questions	60%	(90 points)
	Class Participation	20%	(30 points)
	Final essays	20%	(30 points)
	TOTAL		150 points

### **Schedule of classes and Assignments**

#### **•• WOMEN IN GREEK HISTORICAL WRITING (5th Cent.) ••**

W	3 Sept	Introduction: sources, problems, definitions, categories. Herodotus' <i>Histories</i> , pp. 3-7 (class handout, <b>PP</b> ). Discussion: what are some of the
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attitudes toward women discernible in the first few pages of Herodotus' history? What gender definitions / suppositions / roles do you understand to be underlying this text? Be as specific as possible!

- M 8 Sept Lerner essays: *The Creation of Patriarchy* chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 15-53, **SP**) [38]; Herodotus' *Histories*, "Artemesia" (8.87-88, **LF** 164) [1]; pp. 619-621, "Masistes' wife"; Thucydides 1.9, "funeral oration" (**PP**)

**WQ#1:** Since Herodotus and Thucydides wrote about women within a historical framework, let us consider them as "case studies." What specific realms do they assign to women? How do the women they describe fall into categories of "respectable," "disrespectable," (i.e., what kinds of behaviors are praiseworthy or blameworthy?) or "complicitous in their own subordination"? How do they fall outside such categories?

**Due Wednesday, Sept 10.**

### ... WOMEN IN THE GREEK WORLD ...

#### I. Early models of Masculinity and Femininity: the Archaic Period (c.800-500 BCE).

- W 10 Sept *Odyssey*, books 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 [52]
- M 15 Sept *Odyssey*, books 10.226-596, 11, 13, 19, 22.430-526, & 23. [69]. Foley essay: "Reverse Similes and Sex Roles..." [14] (**SP**)
- W 17 Sept *Iliad*, books 1, 3, 5, 6, 14, 18.17-157, 24.745-860. [77].

**WQ#2:** How are "masculine" and "feminine" realms delineated in the works of Homer? Identify at least 3 realms for each gender and provide quotes from the texts to help support your conclusions. As always, be specific!

- M 22 Sept Male Archaic poets: Hesiod, Semonides, Hipponax (**LF** 54-54) [4]; Archilochus (**LF** 234); Alcman (**LF** 401); Sussman essay: "Workers and Drones..." [10] (**SP**); Female Archaic poets: *Sappho* (Barnard); Corinna, Praxilla, Erinna, Anyte, Nossis (**LF** 1-21) [7]; Inscriptions: (**LF** 226-227); DuBois essay: "Sappho & Helen" [8] (**SP**)
- W 24 Sept *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (**SP**) [13]; Demeter & Persephone (**LF** 393-396) [4].

**WQ#3:** Most of the primary sources from this week's readings address the institution of marriage in some respect. What conclusions can you derive

from these selections about the nature of marriage in the Archaic Greek world? What kind of experiences was it for a young woman?

## **II. The Phallus & Male Dominance: Views of women Fifth Century Athens.**

### **A. Women in Tragic literature**

M 29 Sept Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* & *Libation Bearers* [110]

W 1 Oct Aeschylus' *Furies* [43] and Zeitlin essay: "The Dynamics of Misogyny..." [25] (**SP**)

**WQ#4:** The *Oresteia* begins with portrayals of strong, influential women (Clytemnestra and Cassandra) but also with a view of women as expendable and helpless (Iphigeneia). How does Aeschylus alter such images of women in the remainder of the trilogy? In other words, how do his portrayals of the prominent female characters (e.g., Electra, Cilissa, Clytemnestra, Athena, the Furies) compare with the earlier portraits of Clytemnestra, Iphigeneia and Cassandra? Be specific in your observations and use the texts to support them.

M 6 Oct **RP** intro, chapters 1-3 [97]; Legal status: Crete (**LF** 76) [3]; Athens (**LF** 77-78) [1]; Contrast with Spartan notions (**LF** 95-99) [5]; Aspasia (**LF** 235) [1]; Feminine virtues (**LF** 160-163, 273-275) [2]; Religious participation: (**LF** 391-392, 397-400, 402-406) [5]

W 8 Oct Euripides' *Medea* [46]; **RP** chapters 13 & 14 "Sex among the Barbarians" [9] & "Classical Tragedy" [19]

**WQ#5:** How does Medea, as a character, embody the traits which an Athenian male would find threatening? How, in contrast, does Euripides present her in a sympathetic light? Make specific references to the texts. Include at least a single paragraph assessing Keuls' (**RP**) contribution to your thoughts on this issue.

M 13 Oct Euripides' *Alcestis* [41]; **RP** chapters 4 & 5: "Bearing Children, Watching the House" [29] & "Brides of Death, in More Ways than One." [34].

W 15 Oct Euripides' *Helen* [63]; **RP** chapter 8 "Two Kinds of Women: the Splitting of the Female Psyche." [23].

**WQ#6:** Compare the experiences of Helen and Alcestis: what does it mean to either woman to be a wife? How are both, as females, motivated by praise or blame? What are the important considerations of each as a

wife?

- M 20 Oct Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* [61]; **RP** chapter 12 "Learning to Be a Man, Learning to Be a Woman." [20].
- W 22 Oct Euripides' *Bacchae* [64]; **RP** chapter 15 "Sex Antagonism and Women's Rituals." [31]. Segal essay: "The Menace of Dionysus" [17] (**SP**)

**WQ#7:** In these two plays, how, specifically, does Euripides represent women as finding ways to escape subordination/oppression? How do Segal's and Keuls' interpretations influence your understandings of these escapes? Again, be as specific as possible and be sure to quote the texts in support of your response.

### **B. Women in Comic literature**

- M 27 Oct Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* [79]; Dover essay, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behavior" [12] (**SP**)
- W 29 Oct Aristophanes' *Congresswomen* [77]; **RP** chapter 16: "Love, Not War.." [21]

**WQ#8:** Given what you have learned about Athenian male attitudes toward women, WHY do you think an Athenian audience would find these plays comical? (You are free to assert that they did not find them comical, if you think they would not.) Support your ideas, being as specific as possible and quoting the texts to demonstrate the validity of your response.

### **III. Views of Women in the philosophical and legal writings of Fourth Century Athens.**

- M 3 Nov Plato: selections from the *Laws* (**LF** 74) [3] and *Republic V* (**LF** 73) [6]; *Symposium* source packet); Aristotle (**LF** 72 & 79) [5], Xenophon on Aspasia (**LF** 225), on education (**LF** 236), on training a wife (**LF** 267) [7]; Female pupils/philosophers (**LF** 216-218) [2]; **RP** chapter 11: "The Beautiful Boy: Replacing a Woman or Replacing a Son?" [25]; Wender essay: "Plato: Misogynist, Paedophile, Feminist" (**SP**) [15].
- W 5 Nov Female occupations & activities (mostly prostitution): Demosthenes, Lysias, Isaeus et al (**LF** 80-90, 286-288, 303-306, 317-318, 322-325, 329-333, 376, 379, 383-387) [23]; **RP** chapters 6 & 7: "The Athenian Prostitute: A Good Buy in the Agora" and "The Whore with the Golden Heart, the Happy Hooker and other Fictions." [59]; Medical treatises: Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates (**LF** 338-50 [17].



**WQ#9:** What tensions can you discern between the ideal images and treatments of women in theoretical (philosophical), legal, and practical (i.e., medical) literature? How does the evidence presented in art form (i.e., vase paintings) support or conflict with these tensions?

### ... WOMEN IN THE ROMAN WORLD ...

#### **I. Women in Early & Republican Rome (Fifth to First Centuries BCE).**

M 10 Nov Excerpts from early Roman Law (**LF** 107-111, 173) [3]; Cornelia (**LF** 51-53, 223, 259-260) [3]; excerpts from Livy on Cloelia, Lucretia, Sabines, et al. (**LF** 165-166, 173, 233) [7]; Sallust, on Sempronia (**LF** 174) [1]; Plutarch on Cleopatra (**LF** 175) [2]; Appian & Quintilian on Hortensia (**LF** 176, 214) [1]; The Cult of the Vestal Virgins & Bona Dea (**LF** 408-413) [5]; Inscriptions (**LF** 39-41, 43) [2]; Feminine Virtues (**LF** 167-168) [6], (**LF** 208-209) [2]; Etruscan Women (**LF** 100)

W 12 Nov Clodia: selections from Catullus (**PP**) [20] and Cicero (**LF** 71) [4].

**WQ#10:** Given these literary works, indication of legal status and, in the case of Clodia, the public notoriety of at least one Roman woman, what conclusions can you draw about the standards of acceptable/unacceptable behavior for Roman women?

#### **II. Literary Views of Women in Early Imperial Rome (First Centuries BCE to CE).**

M 17 Nov Epic: excerpts from Vergil's *Aeneid*: I, II (selections), IV, V (selections), 7 (selections), 11, 12 (selections).\*\*\*

W 19 Nov James essay: "Future Perfect Feminine" [8] (**SP**) and Quartarone essay: "*Pietas, Furor* and Ecofeminism in the *Aeneid*" [11] (**SP**)

**WQ#11:** How are the female figures (and please consider mortal women and goddesses separately) in Vergil's Roman Epic similar to or different from the female figures of Homer's Greek Epics? What are their virtues, strengths, weaknesses? How do they function in political concerns and spheres? As always, use the text (focus on Vergil's) to support your conclusions.

M 24 Nov Elegy: selections from Propertius (**PP**) [60], and Sulpicia via Tibullus (**LF** 22-23) [1], Martial on Sulpicia (**LF** 224). Hallett essay: "The Role of Women in Roman Elegy" [17] (**SP**). Augustan Marriage Laws (the Roman Jurists), etc. (**LF** 112-147, 210-211) [20]

- M 1 Dec Ovid (elegy): excerpts from the *Heroides* (III, Briseis to Achilles, VII, Dido to Aeneas, XV, Sappho to Phaon) (**PP**)  
Curran essay: “Rape and Rape Victims...” [19] (**SP**)
- W 3 Dec Prominent Imperial Women: Livia, Julia (**LF** 265-266 [1], Agrippina (**LF** 220), Messalina: Tacitus (**PP**); excerpts & portraits from *I, Claudia*: 28-41, 53-66 (**SP**); Dio Cassius on Caenis (**LF** 177) [1]; Females in public life (**LF** 178-179) [2]
- WQ#12** : The women on whom Ovid and Tacitus focus in this week’s readings are prominent female figures of myth and history. Do the portrayals of these women indicate that they are subject to the same standards of behavior as other women (e.g., the women of Propertius’ and Tibullus’ elegies), or do their stations take them outside of the norm? If so, what are the standards of behavior which apply to them? In brief, are they praiseworthy/blameworthy in the same ways as other females, or somehow differently?
- M 8 Dec On the various activities & importance of women (Cicero, Dio Cassius, Pliny, Seneca, Suetonius, Tacitus, inscriptions) (**LF** 169-172, 243-247, 261-64, 284-5, 289-290, 292-293, 295-301, 307-316, 319-321, 326, 328, 334-335, 369-375, 377-378, 380-382, 388-390) [24] ; Cicero on Tullia (**PP**) [5] Satire: Martial & Juvenal (**LF** 68-69) [4] ; excerpts from Plutarch (**LF** 242, 270) [3]; Fragments from female poets (**LF** 24-27) [1]; Musonius Rufus, on education of women (**LF** 75) [4]; Medical treatises: Galen, Celsus, Aretaeus, Soranus, Plutarch, Pliny, inscriptions (**LF** 351-367) [22]
- W 10 Dec Overview: “Professions of Women in Classical Antiquity” (slide presentation).  
Distribution of final essay questions. Course evaluation.