

**Family, Sex, and Gender in the Middle Ages**  
**History 4485-03**

Tuesday/Thursday 12:30- 1:45

Pafford 206



Instructor: Dr. Teresa Leslie      Office: TLC 3214

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11 – 12:30, Wednesday 9:30 – 12:30, and by appointment.

See me before or after class or contact me by email to arrange a meeting.

Email Address: [tleslie@westga.edu](mailto:tleslie@westga.edu) (This is the most reliable and easiest way to contact me.)

**Course Description and Learning Outcomes:**

In this course, we will explore issues related to family, sexuality, and gender in western Europe during the medieval era, focusing on England in the period known as the Late Middle Ages (1300-1500). We will examine the history of the family, gender roles within the family, and the relationship between the family, society, and government. Readings and lectures will cover such subjects as the stages of life (such as adolescence and old age), rites of passage, and the make-up of the medieval household. In the second half of the semester, we will turn our attention to the construction and representation of sexuality and gender in medieval society. We will seek to widen our understanding of medieval sexual beliefs and attitudes as well as the ways in which medieval religious and secular institutions sought to regulate and control sexual behavior. We will survey a broad range of primary and secondary sources and use analytical tools from related disciplines such as anthropology and art history.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete this course will develop:

-- a basic knowledge and understanding of various aspects of family life in medieval Europe including the differences in life experiences between people of various social classes, between people in urban and rural settings, and between people of different eras and regions.

- a basic knowledge of the images related to family, sex, and gender presented in medieval art and literature.
- an understanding of historiographical issues related to the study of family, sex, and gender in the medieval period
- an understanding of how related disciplines, such as anthropology and literary criticism, enhance our understanding of history
- an ability to analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources related to medieval social and cultural history
- improved reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

**Texts:**

Judith Bennett. *A Medieval Life: Cecilia Penifader of Brigstock* ISBN: 978-0072903317

Gene Bruckner. *Giovanni and Lusanna: Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence.*  
ISBN: 0520063287

Barbara Hanawalt. *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History*  
ISBN: 978-0195093841

Peter Fleming. *Family and Household in Medieval England (Social History in Perspective)*  
ISBN: 978-0333610794

Jacqueline Murray, ed. *Love, Marriage, and Family in the Middle Ages: A Reader.*  
ISBN: 1551111047

**Grades/Course Requirements:**

Your final grade in the course will be based on the following:

Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%
Reading Journal	20%
Homework and In-class Quizzes	10%
Class Participation	5%
Reaction Papers	15%

**Exams:** There will be two exams, a midterm and a final, which may include both in-class and take-home elements. The in-class portion of the final exam, which will not be comprehensive, will be given during finals week in our regular classroom at the time listed in the course bulletin—Thursday, May 5, from 11 to 1. See instructor in case of schedule conflicts. .

**Reading Journal:** You will be required to keep a reading journal this semester, in which you will summarize and analyze selected assigned readings. These readings will include both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources will include literary works, and you will also be assigned at least one visual image of a medieval art work. More information on this project will be available on Courseden soon.

**Homework Assignments and In-Class Quizzes:** From time to time, you will be given homework assignments such as online quizzes, map exercises, or the construction of a timeline. The due dates for these assignments, usually a week from the date the assignment is announced

in class, will be posted on Courseden. In addition, we may have a few brief in-class quizzes. Your best ten scores on such assignments will be averaged to determine this portion of your class grade (that is, some homework/quiz grades will be dropped and only your ten highest scores will be averaged).

**Class Participation:** You will be expected to read assigned material and be prepared to discuss it in class. Your participation grade will be largely based on contributions to class discussions and respectful attention to the contributions of others. Evident lack of preparation will lower your participation grade. Regular attendance and asking thoughtful questions during lecture sessions will raise it.

**Reaction Papers:** You will be asked to write a reaction paper to three reading assignments. These 3- to 5-page papers will be based on questions posted for that reading assignment on the class Courseden site. More information on the reaction papers will be made available in a separate handout prior to the first such assignment.

### **Make-up Work and Late Assignments:**

Make-up exams will be scheduled ONLY in rare cases, for medical or other emergency. The instructor reserves the right to require written confirmation of this emergency (such as physicians note for illness or police report for accident). If you have a conflict with a scheduled exam that does not fall into this category, please see me as soon as possible PRIOR to the exam to discuss the possibility of arranging to take an early alternative exam.

Due dates for homework assignments will usually be two class periods after the assignment is made. Late work will not be given full credit, and will be accepted only by prior arrangement with the instructor.

### **Class Policies:**

Extra credit is not available for this course.

Every effort should be made to attend class regularly. You will be responsible for the material covered in your absence. If you miss a class at which I announce a homework assignment, you are still responsible for completing the assignment on time and the due date for that work will NOT be adjusted. Deductions ARE made for work completed late.

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. This includes talking in class, habitually entering class late or leaving early, using your laptop for activities, and any other behavior that is distracting to the instructor and/or other students. Repeat offenders will be asked to leave the class and dropped from the roll.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive a 0 for the assignment and possibly face further disciplinary action. If you are not sure if something you are doing would be considered plagiarism, ASK. More information on plagiarism and academic honesty will be posted on the CourseDen class site.

You should visit the class site on CourseDen frequently. Information about topics to be covered and assigned readings will be posted there, as will grades. In addition, some homework assignments will be done online at this site.