

GRADUATE SEMINAR: Freedom from Domination

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Course Description

This seminar explores the intersections between race, gender, and theories of liberty in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The course will simultaneously offer an overview of the canonical discourses of the time and highlight slave narratives, female philosophers, and texts previously suppressed from the canon that often challenged and created new paths for conceptualizing terms of liberation within specific material circumstances. The central philosophical question of this seminar is, how can we conceptualize a philosophy of non-domination, and how do these figures contribute to that discussion? This philosophical question will also lead us to discuss the changing relationship between, on the one hand, ontological claims of human agency and the freedom of the will and, on the other hand, notions of ethics (including virtue) within eighteenth-century philosophies. The course will also attend to these theories of liberty within the context of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, pro-slavery discourses, abolition, challenges to marriage practices, women's education, as well as the Anglo-Spanish wars, wars of independence, and colonial expansion.

Course Readings

Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha*

John Locke, *The Two Treatises of Civil Government*

James Tyrrell, *Patriarcha non monarcha*

Judith Drake, *An Essay in Defense of the Female Sex*

Mary Astell, *Political Writings*

Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, Part II

Phillis Wheatley, *Complete Writings*

Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*

Rousseau, *Emile*

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*

Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*

Catherine Macaulay, *Letters on Education*