

ENGL3150: Topics in Early Literature Gender, Sex, and Renaissance Bodies

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Archival Project Guidelines

Your Archival Project has several components and constitutes one of the major assignments for this course. It is designed with several pedagogical goals in mind:

- 1) To introduce you to the enormous range of documents that were printed and circulated in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- 2) To help you develop a useful vocabulary and a workable set of paradigms for thinking and talking about early modern sex, gender, and bodies, generally.
- 3) To give you the opportunity to bring your selected document out of obscurity and shine the light of critical analysis upon it, specifically.
- 4) To create a digital anthology of the class's collected works to consider the relationship your documents have to one another and to share the fruit of your research.
- 5) To consider individually and collectively how the conventions and apparatus of archival scholarship help to shape what we know about the past and how we know it.

There will be two different options for the Archival Project.

OPTION ONE: The Early English Books Online (EEBO) option will draw on the documents available through EEBO. You will produce a critical edition of your document, including a scholarly introduction with historical contexts and close analysis, as well as footnotes and a glossary for unfamiliar terms. Because we are producing an anthology of student projects, each student must work on a unique, pre-approved document.

or

OPTION TWO: Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) option. This option will allow interested students to delve into the theory and practice of text encoding with the support and assistance of Dr. Sarah Connell of the Women Writers Project (WWP). This project will have both individual and group components. Meeting as a group with Sarah will be necessary to give you the training you will need to complete the

assignment successfully. For this project, the texts will be selected from a set of options presented to you to ensure texts of comparable and manageable length.

The guidelines below outline the expectations for each of these options

OPTION ONE: Early English Books Online (EEBO) Project

Finding and Claiming an EEBO document:

Your first task is to find an obscure document of interest to you and relating to the themes of the course, written between 1500 and 1699. You are not restricted to literary genres for this project.

The EEBO database is available only through subscription so you need to access it through the SNELL Library website. Click on the “databases A-Z” link and scroll down to find EEBO or click on the following link, which will prompt you for your NU ID:

<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.neu.edu/home>

Select a document that is manageable for inclusion in our anthology (under 20 pages, as a rule of thumb). If you fall in love with a longer document, be prepared to select an excerpt that would be self-contained enough to be compelling on its own (for instance, a book chapter). One-page documents can also make excellent choices, including poems, ballads, advertisements, proclamations, etc. In order to assure that your document is suitably obscure, **find texts that have NOT been reprinted in the last 200 years. The most important thing is that there should not be any editorial material already available on your text.** Googling your text’s title and/or author (if known) offers a good first test, but is not a sufficient indication. Most scholarship is behind a pay wall, so be sure you also submit your search via “ScholarOne” on Snell Library’s homepage.

Tips for searching EEEBO:

- Limit the dates between 1500-1699
- Use the keyword and subject search boxes (which will return different results) and always try the “select from a list” option for more complete search results and a sense of the variant words to try.
- Save texts you want to revisit in the **Marked List** folder. Note that the only way to download the complete PDF is to access the document through the **Marked List** documents folder.
- Be flexible about search terms. Some search terms you might find useful for the themes of the course: monster, sodomy, friendship, scold, witch, anatomy, medicine, disease, health, beauty, cosmetics, etc. Unfortunately, EEBO doesn’t use most search terms we would immediately think of or recognize for identifying issues of sexuality and gender. For example, a “subject” search of the word homosexual gets only two hits and they end up being different editions of the same document. It is not really an early modern period word or concept, but terms

like “sodomy,” “buggery,” “friendship,” “marriage,” “virginity,” and “conduct of life” (an early-modern version of self-help books), etc. might get you closer to some of the treatises on human relations and sexuality. You will also find that “sodomy” is a term which shows up in political documents and in these contexts seems to have less to do with sexuality than a more general kind of deviance. Please come to me for help when you find yourself surprised by either unfamiliar terms or the absence of expected vocabulary. Remember that surprise and befuddlement are your friends when encountering the very different culture(s) of the early modern period. We WANT to find difference, not just the confirmation or anticipation of contemporary views.

As soon as you find a document you feel has something interesting to say about the themes of this course and that you wish to claim for your project, email me the durable URL. To find this, look for the link at the top of your document and test it by sending it to yourself before sending it to me. Or download the entire document (not a page) from your “Marked List” as a PDF and send me that. I can’t approve your document until I can review it. While there are thousands of documents, the most obvious searches often return the same results and it is not uncommon for students to find the same documents. Don’t invest a lot of time in a proposal before you get clearance that you are the first and only one to claim your document.

Proposals

- **Filling out the Proposal Form** Please make sure you have preapproval before submitting your proposal. (See above.) Fill out the proposal form available on Blackboard under “Assignments.” The proposal form offers an occasion for me to give you feedback on ways of approaching or shaping your scholarly introduction and to help you with your journey through the unfamiliar territory of early modern print culture. The more you can develop your ideas, the more useful my feedback will be.
- **MLA Bibliography** As is noted on the proposal form, you will need to supply 3-5 scholarly (refereed and published) sources for your preliminary bibliography or I will hand back your proposal without comment until such time as you can supply appropriate and correctly formatted bibliographic choices. I only give additional suggestions for bibliography after I’ve seen a credible scholarly bibliography from you. As is also noted on the form, I am looking for scholarly refereed articles and books. Web pages, dissertations, conference papers, blogs, or online instructional material are not accepted, although such material can often lead you to scholarly sources that would be acceptable. Remember to sign in to use the library search engine. It gets you behind the pay wall to the kind of scholarly material you need for this assignment.

Required Components for EEBO Project

Rather than produce a typical research paper on your archival document, this assignment asks you to produce a scholarly edition of your selected text. To accomplish this you will

be producing the following in order:

- **Introduction.** The introduction will contain both the historical information and the preliminary analysis necessary to help modern readers make sense of your document. In your analysis, please consider the following:
 - the genre or genres of the document (see me for unfamiliar forms)
 - the self-representation of the author
 - the assumptions being made about the desired or likely audience
 - the tone or style of the document and how that shapes readers' expectations.
 - the representation of characters or persons mentioned in the text.
 - the text's argument or claims about sex, gender, or the body and how it supports those claims.
- **PDF of EEBO document.** If you are using a document longer than 20 pages, please reproduce only the section you focused upon.
- **End Notes to your EEBO document.** Because we can't edit the EEBO PDFs, your endnotes will follow in a separate file and should be keyed to your EEBO document by page number on the original document (rather than PDF page). Use endnotes to gloss any unfamiliar words, concepts, or factual information you think will aid a modern reader's comprehension of the document.
- **Works Cited Page in MLA format.** This will offer a complete bibliography of the approved materials you drew upon for your intro or analysis.

OPTION TWO: Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) Option

For the TEI option, you will each encode a (very) short text, selected from a set of options we will provide you; if you find a text on your own that you would like to use instead, just clear it with Sarah first. You will encode your texts individually **but** you'll do so following a set of standards that you'll create as a group. That is, much as we identified descriptors of bodies and developed them into a set of categories that we applied to *Poor Robin's True Character of a Scold*, your group will first meet and establish a shared set of standards—what we will call a Renaissance body paradigm—for encoding your texts and you will then encode your own texts following those standards.

The goal of this assignment is to give you a chance to explore text encoding and archival materials while developing your own understanding of how markup can facilitate different kinds of analysis. It's also an opportunity for you to get some hands-on experience with text encoding and the digital humanities. You'll have the chance to extend the conversations we had in class regarding the analysis and representation of archival materials while contributing your own ideas on questions of gender, sex, and the body as they appear in early modern texts.

This assignment involves both group and individual components so it's important that you are prepared to meet with your group several times over the course of the project. You will have Sarah's assistance in planning your project and working in TEI text encoding, so don't worry that you'll have to master markup on your own.

Your responsibilities for this assignment break down as follows:

As a group:

- Meet for a training session with Sarah to gain familiarity with TEI text encoding
- Decide how you will be marking your texts up. How do you want to capture the details of how each text appears? What kinds of analysis and interpretation are you interested in? How will you capture the names of persons, places, organizations, &c.? How will you encode gendered or embodied terms and concepts? How will you represent images? And so on. Sarah will be on hand to help you think through these decisions and explain some of the solutions that the TEI already has in place for textual representation.
- Record the decisions you make in a shared Google Document; this is your project's documentation. You will probably need to revise and refine your documentation after you begin encoding, so plan to meet as a group at least once for that purpose. You will hand in your documentation at the end of this assignment and part of your grade will depend on the thoughtfulness of your work here. You will find encoding samples and additional guidance on the questions you will want to consider as you make and document your encoding decisions at the class site: <http://roominhistory.com/encoding-the-archive/>.
- After your texts are encoded, meet with Sarah to decide how you want to publish your work. What aspects of your encoding do you want to highlight for your viewers? How do you want your texts to look when they are viewed online? How can the online versions of your texts highlight those aspects of the encoding you consider to be most significant?
- Prepare a brief presentation to the class, outlining the choices you made in your project, showcasing each individual text, and explaining how your work has influenced your understandings of early modern textuality, particularly in relationship to early modern theories of the body.

On your own

- Following the documentation established by your group, encode a short text. Be particularly attentive to any tensions you note between the framework established by your project's standards and the specifics of your own text.
- Use the "comment" function very liberally to explain the choices you make as you encode your text, to note complexities as described above, and to point out any information or analysis that you are not able to capture through markup alone. The comments are your best opportunity to demonstrate the thought that you put into encoding your text (and to make it clear that any potentially challenging

- aspects of your encoding are the result of deliberation), so please be as detailed as possible in commenting on the work that you do.
- Write a brief introduction to your encoded text (400 to 600 words should be sufficient). In this introduction, you can discuss the decisions you made in encoding your text, reflect on any interesting aspects of the text you noticed as part of the encoding process (especially those that weren't evident just on reading your text), and talk about any challenges you faced or any things you weren't able to represent through encoding. You will likely have addressed many of these issues directly in the comments of your encoded file, but this is your chance to unpack them in some greater detail and to offer more synthesized description of your encoded edition. This brief introduction will be used to preface your contribution to the Anthology.

FOR BOTH OPTIONS: Creating our Anthology

The final incarnation of the Archival Project is to produce an anthology of everyone's projects. As a class you will decide how you want to organize your Anthology. Once the content and organization of chapters have been decided upon and you have crafted titles for them, you will meet with others in your chapter group to collectively produce a headnote for your section. Class time will be devoted to the conversations and drafting necessary to produce these texts. After naming the documents included in the chapter, a successful headnote will discuss both the commonalities and the differences between your documents to make useful observations about the broad cultural attitudes or controversies that produce them. Rather than narrowing ideas to a single argument, a successful headnote offers a snapshot of the complexities and range of interests comprehended by the topic of your chapter.

Other jobs will be available for those who might be interested in extra credit (to produce cover art, for example, or serve as a general editor). My hope is we'll produce an anthology that represents the individual and collaborative labors of the class in a lovely and useful form.

Evaluation Criteria for EEBO project

Your work on this assignment will be evaluated according to the following criteria: (Please note that the percentages indicated below show the portion of your final grade for the course, not this assignment alone.)

- The proposal, bibliography and notes (10%). (See guidelines above for expectations)
- The body of introduction and analysis (25%). (See guidelines above for expectations)
- Anthology contribution (10%). This will include your contributions to class discussion on organization of the anthology; the success of your group's headnote

and/or any other contributions to the success of the Anthology.

Evaluation Criteria for TEI Encoding Project

Your work on this assignment will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
(Please note that the percentages indicated below show the portion of your final grade for the course, not this assignment alone.)

- Careful and insightful documentation of your project's standards; efficacy of those standards in capturing information on renaissance ideas of gender and the body (15%)
- Equally careful and insightful application of those standards to your individual texts, as demonstrated in your markup and your TEI-encoded comments (15%)
- Effective presentation of your individual and group insights to the rest of the class (10%)
- Group contribution to framing and publishing your texts in the class anthology (5%)