

GS/LT 335 GENDER, SEXUALITY AND RACE IN NEERLANDOPHONE LITERATURE
IES Abroad Amsterdam**DESCRIPTION:**

This literature course introduces students to Dutch literature from the seventeenth century to the present. It offers a wealth of highlights of Dutch literature in relation to women's writing, gender, race and sexuality, while contextualizing these themes in the society and history of the Low Countries. Women authors have always contributed to Dutch literature, but their position and significance has been systematically occluded. Students will learn to analyze this paradox by reading works of women writers and by studying the mechanisms of (literary) history-writing. They will study, analyze, and discuss gendered readings of Dutch literature, as well as several works in which sexuality is a theme. Primary texts include Raden Adjeng Kartini's *Letters of a Javanese princess* (1912), Astrid Roemer's *On a Woman's Madness* (1982), Anja Meulenbelt's *Shame is Over* (1976), as well as contemporary work of young women authors.

Students will also be introduced to classic theories and concepts for the critical analysis of gender patterns, such as Binary Oppositions, Performativity, Intersectionality, and Ecofeminism. Although these theories have been developed in Literary Studies, they can and will be used accordingly for the analysis of visual art, film, the new media, and culture at large. We promise that this course will offer students a compelling new perspective on their lives in relation to that of other people in the Netherlands, the US, and the world.

Students will have the opportunity of studying in Amsterdam, the literary center of the Low Countries from the seventeenth century to the present, and will thus come to appreciate the environment in which the works examined were composed. Two guest lecturers, a specialist of the 17th century and a children's book author, will share their expertise with the students. In addition to seminar lectures and discussions, students will visit museums and Amsterdam's literary sites, such as the Wereldmuseum and Atria, Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History.

CREDITS: 3 US credits**CONTACT HOURS:** 36**LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION:** English**ADDITIONAL COST:** purchasing of some novels/renting novels (limited availability)**PREREQUISITES:** None**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

Seminar lectures, discussions, field study trips

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course Participation (10%)
- Three [presentations](#) (30%; 10% each)
- Two essays (60%; 30% each)

COURSE PARTICIPATION:

Course participation is based on participation during field trips and group discussions.

Grading criteria: Students are expected to have read the set literature per session before the start of every session, and to be able to pose relevant questions for group discussions.

PRESENTATIONS:

Students are expected to prepare short presentations for three classes: one in part one and two in part two (meaning all but the first class start with a presentation). Students will sign up in [this sheet](#) during the first class. For each class, one student is responsible for a general summary of the readings, and another student (or 2) is responsible for bringing in an interesting discussion subject. Presentation time is 10 min each. You are welcome to use material for your own presentation such as a YouTube video, a poem or a song.

Grading criteria: For the summary presentation students are expected to bring factually correct and complete information. Using ChatGPT or Wikipedia for this presentation is completely fine but take into account that they might be making mistakes, take their work as a starting point, not an endpoint.

For the discussion presentation students are expected to bring original and thought provoking questions into their presentation. Examples are: connections between the reading material and current events, questions that leave space for discussion (no yes/no questions), a method of discussion that invites your fellow students to engage with their reading material, a symbol or character in the reading material you would like to discuss. Your fellow students are responsible for picking up the discussion, but you will be graded on having prepared something for them to discuss.

ESSAYS:

The aim of the essays (1000 words each, +/- 10%) is to evaluate what has been discussed in the previous sessions. The student will be asked to elaborate on one of the literary texts discussed in class, employing the literary theory provided in class and in the literature by using at least one text from at least two different classes. All essays can be submitted on Moodle / Assignments before the start of sessions 6 and 11. For overdue submissions one point will be subtracted. The deadline for essay 1 is on **June 25th (S6)** and that for essay 2 on **July 18th (S12)**.

Grading criteria: can be found on page 13 of the syllabus.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the literary history of the Low Countries, and exhibit detailed acquaintance with some canonical works of Dutch literature.
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts and theories in Gender and Queer Studies.
- Analyze primary literary works with a focus on gender and sexuality.
- Present their findings in presentations and short papers, comparing what they have learned to their own literary history.

CONTENT:

Session	Content	Assignments and Reading
Preparation in advance	The following two texts should be read in advance of the course and are meant to provide students with a framework to interpret women's writing. Knowledge of Bertens and Woolf should be applied in the essays and presentations. Bertens is a Comparative Literature handbook from which we selected passages on gender and queer studies. It will be very helpful for your essay, where you will have to refer to literary theory. Woolf provides a critical analysis of English women's writing before 1900, which will be used as a reference point in class.	Hans Bertens. <i>Literary Theory: The Basics</i>. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2014: 81-89, 195-212. Virginia Woolf. <i>A Room of One's Own</i>. London: Grafton, 1977 [1929], 47-85 (Chapter 3 and 4).
Session 1: Introduction to Dutch Culture and Society Tuesday, June 11, 1:30 - 4:40 pm. Instructor: TO	We will start the first session with an introduction round, and we will go through the course syllabus to establish our mutual expectations about the course. Subsequently, we will offer an introduction to Dutch society and culture, to gain some primary knowledge of the context in which Dutch literature came and continues to come into being. What are typical stereotypes of the Dutch? What are our expectations of Dutch culture and society in terms of gender and sexuality? In answering these questions we will gain some basic knowledge of gender roles in Dutch society and Dutch literary history. We will discuss Woolf's <i>A Room of One's Own</i> to gain insight into the challenges writing women faced in the past, introducing the notion of 'patriarchy'.	Emmeline Besamusca and Jaap Verheul. 'Introduction.' <i>Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands</i>. Eds. Besamusca en Verheul. Amsterdam UP, 2010: 11-16. Jaap Verheul. 'In Foreign Eyes.' <i>Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands</i>. Eds. Emmeline Besamusca en Jaap Verheul. Amsterdam UP, 2010" 267-77. Woolf. <i>A Room of One's Own</i>, 47-85 (Chapter 3 and 4).

Session 2: A Golden Age for women? Guest Lecture by Dr. Marringje Paijmans <i>Walk through 17th-Century Amsterdam</i> Thursday, June 13, 9:30 am -12:40 pm. Instructor: TO.	Although women have always written, it was extremely difficult for women in the 17th century to have their work published. First, we discuss the opportunities and limitations of women in the Dutch Republic more generally, using the notions of 'gender' and 'binary oppositions'. We will then look at some examples of women who could be considered radical thinkers and writers. Asking ourselves the question why scholars had so much difficulty in recognising their ideas as radical, we will try to understand the ways in which early modern women gained 'agency' in literature and scholarship. Some of them will prove highly relevant today. At 11:00, we will leave for the city centre for a tour through the literary hub of 17th-century Amsterdam. Class will end in the city centre.	Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen. 'Women's Writing from the Low Countries 1575 - 1875.' In <i>Women's Writing from the Low Countries 1200-1875: A Bilingual Anthology</i>, edited by Lia van Gemert et al. Amsterdam: AUP, 2010, 39-63. Marringje Paijmans, et al. 'Pathways to Agency: Women Writers and Radical Thought in the Low Countries, 1500-1800.' <i>Intellectual History Review</i> 31:1 (2021), 51-71.
Session 3: The Women's Era Tuesday, June 18, 1:30 - 4:40 pm. Instructor: TO	The eighteenth century has been called, internationally, the 'Women's Era', since the number of women authors increased, and they successfully entered new genres of the novel and children's literature. We will discuss the correspondence between Elisabeth Bekker (1738-1804) and Agatha Deken (1741-1804), a lesbian couple <i>avant la lettre</i>, using the concept of 'Performativity' developed by Judith Butler.	Maaïke Meijer. 'Same-Sex Intimacy in Eighteenth-Century Occasional Poetry – Elisabeth Wolff-Bekker, "To Miss Agatha Deken" (1777).' In <i>Lyrical Address in Dutch Literature, 1250-1800</i>, edited by Kornee van der Haven and Jürgen Pieters. Amsterdam UP, 2018, 151-68. Riet Schenkeveld-van der Dussen. 'Fast Friends: Elisabeth Bekker and Agatha Deken.' <i>Women's Writing from the Low Countries 1200-1875: A Bilingual Anthology</i>, edited by Lia van Gemert et al. Amsterdam UP, 2010, 402-17.

Session 4: Letters of a Javanese 'Princess' Thursday, June 20, 9:30 am -12:40 pm. Instructor: TO	In this session, we will have a close look at letters by Raden Adjeng Kartini, who was not a princess at all, but a pioneer in the struggle for women's rights in Indonesia. In describing how her people were oppressed by Dutch colonialism, yet inspired by European feminism, Kartini offers an 'intersectional' perspective on indigenous Indonesian women in the Dutch colony. We will use Edward Saïd's theory of 'Orientalism' to interpret the reception of Kartini's work in the Netherlands and Indonesia, up to this day, observing the lasting effects of colonialism.	Raden Adjeng Kartini. <i>Letters of a Javanese princess</i>. Trans. Agnes Louise Symmers. Foreword by Louis Couperus. London: Duckworth, 1921 [1912]. Edward Saïd. 'Introduction.' <i>Orientalism</i>. London: Penguin, 2003 [1978], 1-6 (par. I and II). Gloria Wekker. 'Coda'. <i>White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race</i>, Duke University Press, 2016: 168-174
Session 5: World War II Tuesday, June 25, 1:30-4:40 pm. Instructor: TO	The session will begin with a discussion of the genre of autobiography more generally and an examination, in specific, of Anne Frank's self-reflection in her journal, as it intertwines with a reflection on her immediate surroundings and the historical and political circumstances that confine her and her family to hiding. We will pay specific attention to modern-day engagement with the story of Anne Frank and Jewish identity in the Netherlands post WWII. Students are invited to take a trip to the Anne Frank house in their own time.	Jacqueline Bel. 'War and Literature: Anne Frank (1929-1945).' In <i>Women's writing from the Low Countries 1880-2010: An Anthology</i>, edited by Jacqueline Bel and Thomas Vaessens, Amsterdam UP, 2010, 131-34. Yael van der Wouden. On (Not) Reading Anne Frank.' <i>The Sun Magazine</i>. December 2017. <https://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/504/on-not-reading-anne-frank>

Session 6: De-colonisation and Colonial Nostalgia Field trip to the Wereldmuseum Thursday, June 27, 9:30 am -12:40 pm. Instructor: TO	In this session, we will learn about the Dutch trauma of Indonesia's struggle for independence and its decolonisation and the dismissal of Suriname as a profitable plantation colony. Indonesia and Suriname were looked at, and are remembered, very differently in the Dutch cultural consciousness. We will analyse the 'Tempo Doeloe' (good times) of Indonesia in contrast with Anton de Kom's <i>We Slaves of Suriname</i>, which tells the story of the enslaved and indentured people of Suriname as its main focus. After the lecture, we will visit the permanent exhibit on Dutch colonial history at the Wereldmuseum.	Submit essay 1 (S6). Anton de Kom. <i>We Slaves of Suriname</i>. (1934). Translated by David McKay. Polity Press, 2020. Sarah De Mul. 'Nostalgia for Empire: "Tempo Doeloe" in Contemporary Dutch Literature.' <i>Memory Studies</i>, vol. 3, no. 4, 2010, 413-28.
Session 7: The Sexual Revolution Screening: <i>Turkish Delight</i> Tuesday, July 2 1:30-4:30 pm. Instructor: EM	In the 1960s and 1970s, Amsterdam was the center of counterculture movements like Flower Power, Provo, and Dolle Mina. The Dutch capital became known for free sex, drugs and artistic creativity. We will look at the cultural transitions that took place in Amsterdam and analyze their literary reflection by discussing one of the most popular Dutch novels: <i>Turkish Delight</i> (1969) by Jan Wolkers. By watching the controversial movie adaptation by Paul Verhoeven, a key work in the history of Dutch cinema. <i>CW: (sexual) violence</i>	Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuin. 'Three feminist waves.' <i>Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands</i>, edited by Emmeline Besamusca and Jaap Verheul, Amsterdam UP, 2010: 190-201. In class screening: <i>Turkish Delight</i>, directed by Paul Verhoeven, 1973.

Session 9: When the Personal Becomes Political Field Trip to Atria Thursday, July 4, 9:30 am -12:40 pm. Instructor: EM	Anja Meulenbelt's <i>Shame is Over</i> (1976) constitutes a classic, yet today little discussed work of Dutch feminist writing, offering insight into prevalent ideas on marriage, liberal sexuality, and emerging labor and feminist movements in the Netherlands, from the 1960s to the 1980s. Meulenbelt showcases the intertwining of the personal and the political as the efforts for her own sexual emancipation are woven with her public engagement with the often fractured second wave of feminist activism. After a discussion of Meulenbelt's book we will be shown around the library of Atria, Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History. Meulenbelt's personal archive is part of Atria's collection and we will have occasion to see a selection of materials from the archive.	Anja Meulenbelt. <i>Shame is Over: A Political Life Story</i>. London: The Women's Press, 1980.
Session 8: The Queer Caribbean Tuesday, July 9 1:30-4:30 pm. Instructor: EM	Astrid Roemer was born in the former Dutch plantation colony Suriname, but spent most of her life in the Netherlands. As a woman between two worlds, she is a leading critic of Dutch postcolonial debate. In this session we read and discuss her classic work <i>On a Woman's Madness</i> originally published in Dutch in 1984 and translated for the American market in 2023 as the first English translation from her oeuvre. We discuss themes of queerness and Caribbean landscapes in this novel, as well as its nonlinear postmodern form.	Astrid Roemer. <i>On a Woman's Madness</i> (2023) Trans. Lucy Scott.

Session 10: Ecofeminism Thursday, July 11, 9:30 am -12:40 pm. Instructor: EM	Since the acknowledgement of the Anthropocene and climate crisis, 'ecocriticism' has become a prominent discipline in literary criticism. Within ecocriticism, ecofeminism is the intersectional approach of women and natural environments in literature, which we will be following in this session. First, we will discuss the meaning of water in Dutch culture, from the earliest polders to the present coping with sea level rise. We will then focus on Marsman's representation of water as a 'hyperobject', an entity of such vast temporal and spatial dimensions that it defeats traditional ideas about what a 'thing' is in the first place. To what extent are the characters in the novel capable of engaging in relations with other humans, objects, and the natural environment? We will explore this question from an ecofeminist perspective.	Lieke Marsman. <i>The Opposite of a Person</i>, translated by Sophie Collins. London: Daunt Books, 2022 [2017]. Greg Garrard. 'Positions.' In <i>Ecocriticism</i>. London: Routledge, 2012, 18-32.
Session 11: Sexual Diversity in 21st- Century Children's Literature Author Interview with Pim Lammers Tuesday, July 16, 1:30-4:40 pm. Instructor: EM	In the first part of the session, you will be asked to bring an image or fragment of your favorite children's book to class and discuss it from a gender or sexuality perspective. In the second part, children's book author Pim Lammers is visiting. Lammers is the youngest winner ever of the 'Silver Stylus', the Netherlands' prize for the best children's book. Many of his works deal with gender and sexual diversity, as he believes these themes deserve more attention in children's literature. Discussing two of his own books, he will unfold his vision on the importance of role models in the queer community. After his talk, you will be invited to ask Lammers your prepared interview questions.	Prepare an interview question for Pim Lammers about the representation of gender issues in contemporary Dutch children's literature, or anything you would like to know from him. Pim Lammers. <i>The Little Lamb That Is a Piglet</i>. Wielsbeke, 2017. Pim Lammers. <i>The Farmer and the Vet</i>. Wielsbeke, 2018.

Session 12: Sexuality, Migration and Religion Thursday, July 18, 9:30 am -12:40 pm. Instructor: EM	In this session we face some of the gaps in the scholarship and literature of the Netherlands when it comes to the intersection of sexuality, gender, migration and religion. We will read sample translations of the untranslated 2018 collection of stories 'Zwart' (Black) and an article that gathers information about Muslim Women's self organization in the Low Countries. This session is intended to consider gaps in the intersections of difference within groups of women in the Netherlands.	Submit essay 2 (S12) Vamba Sherif & Ebissé Rouw. 'Introduction' in <i>Zwart</i>. Atlas Contact, 2018. Olave Nduwanje. 'Imana Ikurinde' in <i>Zwart</i>. Atlast Contact, 2018. Margaretha A. van Es & Nella van den Brandt. 'Muslim Women's Activism and Organizations in the Netherlands and Belgium' in <i>Trajecta</i>, Volume 29, Issue 2, Dec 2020, p. 191 - 220.
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A few notes on preparation

- Students are expected to read Bertens and Woolf before they start the course.
- To get the most out of the course, students are encouraged to read all listed texts. However, in case of severe time limitations, the minimum requirement is to prepare the selected passages offered by the instructors on Moodle, which will be discussed and analyzed in class.
- The students are strongly advised to start the reading of the longer texts in advance of the course. The longer texts are: Kartini (S4), De Kom (S6), Roemer (S8), Meulenbelt (S9) and Marsman (S10).

Session	Topic	Required reading	Pages	Total
		Bertens	26	
		Woolf	59	85
1	Introduction	Besamusca and Verheul	5	
		Verheul	10	15
2	17 th century	Pajmans et al.	21	
		Schenkeveld-van der Dussen	25	46
3	18 th century	Meijer	11	
		Schenkeveld-van der Dussen	16	27
4	The Dutch East-Indies	Kartini	100	
		Saïd	7	113
		Wekker	6	
5	World War II	Bel	4	
		Van der Wouden	10	15
6	Decolonisation	De Kom	200	
		De Mul	15	215
7				
	The Sexual Revolution	Buikema en Van der Tuin	11	11
8	The Queer Caribbean	Roemer	265	265
9	Personal is Political	Meulenbelt	275	275
10	Ecofeminism	Marsman	204	
		Garrard	25	229
11	Children's literature	Lammers	32	64
		Lammers	32	
12	Sexuality and Migration	Sherif & Rouw		
		Nduwanje	5	45
		van Es & van den Brandt	11	
			29	
Total				1405

FIELD STUDIES:

- Walk through 17th-century Amsterdam, Amsterdam (session 2)
- Wereldmuseum, Amsterdam (session 6)
- Atria, Amsterdam (session 9)

GUEST LECTURES

- Dr. Marringje Paijmans (session 2)
- Pim Lammers (session 11)

REQUIRED READING:

Primary sources

- Kartini, Raden Adjeng. *Letters of a Javanese princess*. 1912. Translated by Agnes Louise Symmers. Foreword by Louis Couperus, Duckworth, 1921.
- Kom, Anton de. *We Slaves of Suriname*. (1934). Translated by David McKay. Polity Press, 2020.
- Lammers, Pim. *The Little Lamb That Is a Piglet*. Wielsbeke, 2017.
- Lammers, Pim. *The Farmer and the Vet*. Wielsbeke, 2018.
- Marsman, Lieke. *The Opposite of a Person*, translated by Sophie Collins. London: Daunt Books, 2022 [2017].
- Meulenbelt, Anja. *Shame is Over: A Political Life Story*. 1976. The Women's Press, 1980.
- Nduwanje, Olave. 'Imana Ikurinde' Zwart. Atlas Contact, 2018.
- Roemer, Astrid. *On a Woman's Madness*. Two Lines Press, 2023. [1982]
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. 1929. Grafton, 1977.
- Wouden, Yael van der. 'On (Not) Reading Anne Frank.' *The Sun Magazine*. December 2017.
<<https://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/504/on-not-reading-anne-frank>>

Secondary sources

- Bel, Jacqueline. 'War and Literature: Anne Frank (1929-1945).' *Women's Writing from the Low Countries 1880-2010: An Anthology*, edited by Jacqueline Bel and Thomas Vaessens, Amsterdam UP, 2010: 131-34.
- Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2014.
- Besamusca, Emmeline, and Jaap Verheul. 'Introduction.' *Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands*, edited by Besamusca and Verheul, Amsterdam UP, 2010: 11-16.
- Buikema, Rosemarie, and Iris van der Tuin. 'Three Feminist Waves.' *Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands*, edited by Emmeline Besamusca and Jaap Verheul, Amsterdam UP, 2010: 190-201.
- Es, M.A. van & N. van den Brandt. 'Muslim Women's Activism and Organizations in the Netherlands and Belgium.' *Trajecta* Vol 29.2, 2022: 191-220.
- Garrard, Greg. 'Positions.' In *Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge, 2012, 18-32.
- Meijer, Maaïke. 'Ah! My worthy DEKEN! Thee.' *Lyrical Address in Dutch Literature, 1250-1800*, edited by Kornee van der Haven en Jürgen Pieters, Amsterdam UP, 2018: 151-68.
- Mul, Sarah De. 'Nostalgia for Empire: "Tempo Doeloe" in Contemporary Dutch Literature.' *Memory Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2010: 413-28. Sage Journals: mss.sagepub.com.
- Paijmans, Marringje, Feike Dietz, Nina Geerdink, Inger Leemans, Cécile de Morrée, and Martine Veldhuizen. 'Pathways to Agency: Women Writers and Radical Thought in the Low Countries, 1500-1800.' *Intellectual History Review* 31:1 (2021), 51-71.
- Saïd, Edward. 'Introduction.' *Orientalism*. 1978. Penguin, 2003: 1-4.

Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, Riet. 'Fast Friends: Elisabeth Bekker and Agatha Deken.' *Women's Writing from the Low Countries, 1200-1875: A Bilingual Anthology*, edited by Lia van Gemert et al., Amsterdam UP, 2010: 402-17.

Verheul, Jaap. 'In Foreign Eyes.' *Discovering the Dutch: On Culture and Society of the Netherlands*, edited by Emmeline Besamusca and Jaap Verheul, Amsterdam UP, 2010: 267-77.

Filmography

- *Turkish Delight*, directed by Paul Verhoeven, 1973.
- *Going Home*, directed by Hans Hylkema, 1993.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Since IES Abroad Amsterdam courses are designed for students to take advantage of the instructor's unique contribution, and because the lecture/discussion format is regarded as the primary mode of instruction, regular class attendance is mandatory. In addition, students are expected to be on time for classes and related field/study trips.

Excused absences apply in cases of illness (students must present a doctor's note), and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control. Please note that missing a flight on the day of class does not fit in this category. Each unexcused absence will lead to a 0.5 point deduction of your final grade (on a 1-10 scale).

If a student shows a pattern in (excused and unexcused) absences, students may be subject to an Academic Review, including—but not limited to—a letter sent to their home school, a probationary period, or exclusion from the program entirely.

INSTRUCTORS' BIO'S:

Dr. Thalia Ostendorf (1990) is a postdoctoral researcher in the Dutch department at the University of Amsterdam. She obtained her PhD in Modern Languages and Social Anthropology from the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Her current project, *Plantation Kinships*, investigates the nature of kin relations between people of the African diaspora in Suriname and the Netherlands through fieldwork in Suriname and the analysis of a literary corpus by Surinamese author Edgar Cairo (1984-2000). She is also a co-founder of publishing house Chaos Publishers (Uitgeverij Chaos).

Emma van Meyeren (1992) is a PhD candidate of Dutch language and Culture at Leiden University. Her research focuses on experimental language in the prose of the Dutch-Surinamese author Astrid Roemer. Her research has been published by Routledge (*Women and Water in Global Fiction*, 2023) and the *Yearbook of Women's History* (2020). Next to her academic work, van Meyeren is an editor at the international festival of literature Read My World and publishes essays and fiction.

Essay Assessment Criteria

Gender, Sexuality and Race in Neerlandophone Literature

Teacher:

Student:

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Adequate	Fail
Understanding of the Literature / Theory (2.5/10)					
Critical Reflection (2.5/10)					
Structure & Argumentation (2.5/10)					
Language & Style (2.5/10)					

Total Mark:

Comments: