

HIST32052

Love and Power: Family Relationships in the British Isles, c. 1660-1837

Semester 2, 2020/21

Dr Kate Gibson



Course Overview

Family life in the past is often idealised, but in eighteenth-century Britain it was heavily contested. State interference in the lives of families reached unprecedented levels, as society reaffirmed who was included or excluded in concepts of 'family'. This module examines the experience of people of all socio-economic status and how they navigated some of the most central relationships in their lives; siblinghood, marriage, parenthood and kinship. We will challenge assumptions that families in the past were neat, orderly and nuclear, to examine the experience of unmarried couples, single parent families, same-sex relationships, step-families and mixed-race children. The central focus is on the balance between power and emotion in family life, as we use the history of the family to ask broader questions about the operation of inequality – of gender, age, race, birth status and social class – in society and culture in this period. We will delve into the methodology behind the history of emotions, and question the use and misuse of family history as public history in the present.

Assessment

Family history project (2,500 words, 50%)

Essay (2,500 words, 50%)

Teaching

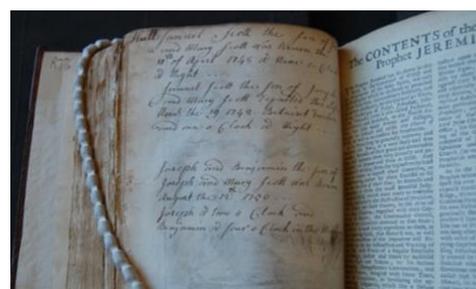
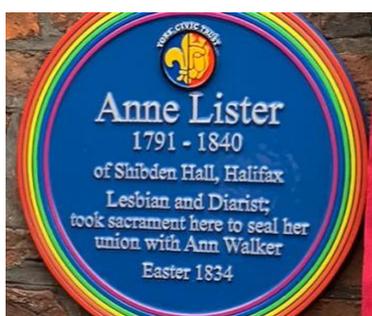
1 x 3 hour Lecture + Seminar per week

Introductory Reading

- Barker, Hannah, *Family and Business during the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 2017)
- Berry, Helen and Elizabeth Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007)
- Broomhall, Susan, (ed.), *Emotions in the Household, 1200-1900* (Basingstoke, 2008)
- Evans, Tanya, 'Secrets and Lies: The Radical Potential of Family History', *History Workshop Journal* 71.1 (2011), pp. 49-73
- Hunt, Margaret, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996)
- Tadmor, Naomi, 'Early Modern English Kinship in the Long Run: Reflections on Continuity and Change', *Continuity and Change* 25.1 (2010), pp. 15-48
- Tadmor, Naomi, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001)
- Tomkins, Alannah and Steven King (eds), *The Poor in England, 1700-1850, An Economy of Makeshifts* (Manchester, 2003), esp. chapter 7
- An episode of *A House Through Time* (BBC) or *Who Do You Think You Are?* (BBC).
Have a look at an episode of your choice, but think about why this particular story is being told, the sources used and the impact of the research on the subject or you as the audience.

Dissertations

This module will be of interest to students who would like to research early modern and eighteenth-century social and cultural history, particularly focusing on Britain, the Atlantic World and the British Empire. We will be looking at a range of sources, including material objects, letters, diaries, artworks, newspapers, novels, and criminal records, many of which are available online and which would make excellent bases for a dissertation. I would also welcome students who would like to research the history of the family as public history. Example topics could include: the place of the servant in the family; the role of anger in family relationships; death and mourning in the 18th C; and representations of fatherhood.



Images top left to bottom right: A plaque commemorating the marriage of diarist Anne Lister, York (2019); portrait of Dido Belle and her cousin Elizabeth Murray by David Martin (1779); a mid-18th C posy ring that reads 'My (heart) you have & yours I crave', British Museum; a page from a copy of *The History of the Old Testament*, listing the births and deaths of the Scott family of Hull, c. 1750, John Rylands Library.