

**HIST 37005/WGSS 39000 (CRN 30370), Spring 2025**

# **Queens and Empresses in Early Modern Europe**

**MWF 10:30-11:20 AM  
WALC 2127**



**Professor**  
**Caroline Fish**  
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**Office hours: BRNG B243 Tuesdays 12:00-1:00 PM, by appointment**

## **Course Description**

By the end of this course, students will develop a sophisticated understanding of the attributes and roles of early modern queens, empresses, and royal and aristocratic women and their contributions to early modern culture, politics, and international dynamics. We will investigate queenship as an element essential to understanding early modern monarchy, exploring current scholarly theories of queenship and women's political power more broadly. As we explore the themes of this course, students will also cultivate a better understanding of the intersection between gender, political power, and the early modern state for royal and aristocratic women as diplomats, mediators, negotiators, and patronesses between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries.

## **Books**

You are not required to purchase physical copies of any books/chapters/articles. PDF readings of all chapters/articles will be provided. If you prefer to use a physical copy of any of our books, you can purchase them, request them from the Purdue Libraries (if a physical

version is available), or order a copy from another library through InterLibrary Loan: <https://purdue.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/illiad.dll?Action=10&Form=10>. InterLibrary Loan copies can take up to a week to arrive.

We will be reading multiple chapters from:

Anderson, Roberta, Laura Oliván Santaliestra, and Suna Suner, eds. *Gender and Diplomacy: Women and Men in European Embassies from the 15th to the 18th Century*. Vienna: Hollitzer Verlag, 2021.

Crawford, Katherine. *Perilous Performances: Gender and Regency in Early Modern France*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

González Cuerva, Rubén. *Maria of Austria, Holy Roman Empress (1528-1603): Dynastic Networker*. London and New York: Routledge, 2022.

Goodman, Dena, ed. *Marie-Antoinette: Writings on the Body of a Queen*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Stollberg-Rilinger, Barbara. *Maria Theresa: The Habsburg Empress in Her Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022.

We will also read excerpts/chapters/articles from other books and publications. If you are curious, a full bibliography is available on Brightspace.

### Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and assess different aspects of queenship and queenly authority across several monarchies in early modern Europe, including their cultural, political, social, and symbolic importance, using relevant vocabulary and conceptual frameworks.
2. Assess the political interventions and endeavors of several individual queens and empresses.
  - a. Using the “Five W’s” (who, what, when, where, why), identify relevant queens and empresses and explain how they were relevant to their respective periods and courts.
  - b. Evaluate how these individual queens and empresses used their positions to promote various interests, relying on their assets as well as networks of allies and collaborators among royal and aristocracy.
3. Examine how queens and empresses impacted the formation of early modern states, the dynastic identities of their lineages, and national histories through their intervention in international politics and culture.
  - a. Understand how patronage systems and patron-client relationships impacted politics and dynastic identity in a variety of means, including through the creation of architecture, literature, portraiture, and royal and religious sites.
4. Evaluate how the relationships between royal and aristocratic women shaped the cultural, diplomatic, and political apparatuses of the early modern state.
  - a. Understand the role that royal households played in establishing and reinforcing economic, political, and social ties between royal women and the aristocracy.
  - b. Evaluate how queens and empresses’ roles in diplomacy fostered opportunities for aristocratic women as diplomatic actors and what their contributions demonstrate about international relations and diplomacy during the early modern period.

## Assignments

- 1. Short writing assignments** (15% of grade, 5% each) These assignments are for you to reflect on topics and individuals we are covering in the course, based on class discussion and readings, in 1 to 2 pages. If you want to reference something in any of our class readings, please do not quote directly from the text. Instead, explain the author's idea(s) in your own words and provide a parenthetical citation (Author's last name, page number). Answers should be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt font, Times New Roman. The prompt will be given in advance. Consult the calendar for due dates.
- 2. Exams** (30% of grade, 10% each) There will be three exams this semester. The first two will be shorter and worth less points. All three exams will follow the same general format: short identification questions that address the essential information about a term or individual (the who, what, when, where, why, and how) and an essay question. Students are allowed to bring one index card with notes (both sides) if so desired. Possible identifications and essay questions will be provided ahead of time.
- 3. Queens and Empresses Presentation "Poster" Session** (25% of grade) Students will produce a short presentation about the cultural and political contributions of a queen (consort, regent, or regnant) or empress of their choosing. The presentation may take various forms: a performance, video game, PowerPoint, short lecture with a physical poster board, etc., intended to educate a "public audience" of classmates about their chosen topic. At the end of the semester, students will present their research to their classmates in conference-like poster sessions. We will have at least one class period to discuss potential topics and for students to consult reference books as needed. More details on expectations and requirements for this assignment will be provided.

Your research will need to be based on scholarly work, such as books published by academic presses or academic articles from professional journals. The Purdue Libraries system owns several valuable books, either in physical form or e-book. Other books of interest can be ordered through InterLibrary Loan or found fully or partially accessible through Google Books. Any articles not accessible through the library search system can sometimes be found online free-to-download or ordered through InterLibrary Loan's PDF request form.

Emailing me your chosen topic and possible bibliography (3 scholarly sources) is due on March 31 before class. This is worth **10% of the assignment grade**. The finished project will be worth **90% of the assignment grade**. The finished projects will be submitted on April 20 by 11:59 PM and presented to the class on April 21 or 23.

- 4. Participation** (30%, 10% each) Students are expected to regularly participate in all class activities, including class discussions, summaries of individual chapters, group work, etc. Completing assigned readings and assignments is also a pivotal aspect of participation – not keeping up with readings inhibits a student's ability to fully and effectively participate in class. Students will receive a grade at three points in the semester, each worth 10%.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Due Date(s)</b>
Short Writing Assignment 1	5%	February 2 @ 11:59 PM
Short Writing Assignment 2	5%	March 2 @ 11:59 PM
Short Writing Assignment 3	5%	April 13 @ 11:59 PM
Exam 1	10%	February 14
Exam 2	10%	March 14
Exam 3	10%	TBD
Queens and Empresses Presentation "Poster Session"	25%	Topic and Bibliography: March 31 before class Completed Presentation: April 20 @ 11:59 PM
Participation 1	10%	Week 6
Participation 2	10%	Week 11
Participation 3	10%	Week 16

### **Grading Scale**

100-99 = A+    98-95 = A    94-91 = A-    90-88 = B+    87-83 = B    82-80 = B-  
79-78 = C+    77-73 = C    72-70 = C-    69-68 = D+    67-63 = D    62-60 = D-  
F: 0-59

### **Expectations**

**Attendance is mandatory.** Class time will be devoted principally to discussion of readings and mastery of the material. All learning activities, including lectures and group activities, require active and substantial student involvement. Students will occasionally lead discussions or be responsible for providing classmates with essential and valuable information concerning key readings in the class. Students must keep up with assignments and readings and come to class prepared. If you are running late, I would prefer if you came to class regardless. Discussions cannot be made up, and missing course time will negatively impact grades. If you need to leave early, please notify me before class starts and sit near the door so you can leave easily without too much disturbance.

Because many of our readings will be copies of articles or individual chapters, you may use electronic devices in class (such as a laptop or iPad) within reason. However, please be courteous. I reserve the right to reverse this policy if I think the use of devices is interfering with the class.

I **strongly suggest** using physical notes instead of taking them on a device or Word document (unless necessary). The physical movement of writing helps our brains remember information better, making discussions and review easier.

Please make sure to check the course website or any emails I send. I will use announcements and emails to communicate with the class should unforeseen circumstances or the need arise.

### **Extensions and Late Work Policy**

Extensions will be granted if you contact me before the assignment is due. I rarely deny an extension for an assignment within reason; life happens, and we cannot plan for everything. Typical extensions grant an extra day or two to complete the assignment.

Late work without an extension authorized by me will be penalized with the loss of a grade letter per day. If you miss an assignment due to illness or an emergency, it is your responsibility to contact me and make alternative plans to complete the work.

### AI/Chatbot and Coursework

Do not use AI-generated writing from Language Learning Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT to complete your assignments. Submitting material that you did not write, either in part or in full, is a violation of the academic integrity expectations for this course. Reliance on AI to complete writing assignments undermines your participation in the course and invalidates your work. History is about using the evidence you are given to form an argument; if it is not your argument, you should not receive credit. LLMs also frequently produce fabricated information that is easily detectable or information that was not provided in class.

Violations can include a failing grade on the assignment. All suspected incidents of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Office and Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review. The assignments in this course are designed to be completed in the allowed time. If you require an extension, simply ask me for one.

### Class Calendar

Date	Weekly Themes and Lecture Topics	Readings and Assignments
Week of January 13	Quick syllabus overview, terms, essential geography  Medieval legacies	Read for Jan 13: None  Jan 15: Theresa Earenfight, “Queenship in a Crisis of Monarchy, c. 1350-1500,” everyone reads pg. 183-194 and one additional section (Check reading assignment list)  Read for Jan 17: Theresa Earenfight, “Absent Kings: Queens as Political Partners in the Medieval Crown of Aragon”
Week of January 20	An introduction to the early modern aristocracy  The Habsburgs: the dynasty that shaped Europe	NO CLASS MONDAY JAN 20, MLK DAY  Jan 22: Excerpts from Jonathan Delwald, <i>The European Nobility, 1400-1800</i> , pg. 15-32, 36-44  Jan 24: Primary Source: “King Ferdinand, Marriage Concessions”  Elizabeth A. Lehfeltd, “The Gender of Shared Sovereignty: Texts and the Royal Marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand”
Week of January 27	The Habsburgs: the dynasty that shaped Europe  Maria of Austria: Infanta, Queen, Regent	Jan 27: Rubén González Cuerva, <i>Maria of Austria</i> “Introduction,” pg. 1-11, Chapter 1 “Infanta Maria: A discreet childhood (1528-1539),” pg. 12-20  Jan 29: Rubén González Cuerva, <i>Maria of Austria</i> Chapter 2 “The Orphan Learning at Court (1538-1548)” pg. 21-40, Chapter 3 “The Exercise of Authority: Marriage and the Iberian regency (1547-1551),” pg. 41-66

		<p>Jan 31: Rubén González Cuerva, <i>Maria of Austria</i> Chapter 4 “The Queen of Bohemia Fighting for her own Space (1552-1564),” pg. 67-96</p> <p><b>Short writing assignment 1 due Sunday, Feb 2 @ 11:59 PM</b></p>
Week of February 3	Maria of Austria as Empress and Widowed Empress	<p>Feb 3: None</p> <p>Feb 5: Rubén González Cuerva, <i>Maria of Austria</i> Chapter 5 “Empress Consort, Discreet Mediator (1564-1576),” p. 97-147</p> <p>Feb 7: <b>Only 1 (will be assigned ahead of time)</b> Rubén González Cuerva, <i>Maria of Austria</i> Chapter 6 “The Uncertain Role of the Dowager Empress (1576-1581),” pg. 148-171</p> <p>Chapter 7, “Establishing an Imperial Household in Madrid (1581-1587),” pg. 172-195</p>
Week of February 10	Exam 1 Prep	<p>Feb 10: <b>Only 1 (will be assigned ahead of time)</b> Rubén González Cuerva, <i>Maria of Austria</i> Chapter 8, “The empress without an empire and the dynastic turn (1587-1598),” 196-220</p> <p>Chapter 9 “New opportunities? The reign of Philip III (1598-1603),” 221-246</p> <p>Feb 12: None, exam prep</p> <p>Feb 14: <b>Exam 1</b></p>
Week of February 17	<p>Queens, power, and image-making</p> <p>Aristocratic women: politics and power</p>	<p>Feb 17: Magdalena S. Sánchez, “Fashioning Female Models from Royal Women: Posthumous Accounts” (PDF)</p> <p>Feb 19: Noelia García Pérez, “An Image of Their Own: Creating, Promoting, and Displaying the Portrait of Female Power in Early Modern Europe”</p> <p><b>Send a contemporary portrait a queen/empress from the 16th or 17th century to Professor Fish by Tuesday night, February 18.</b></p> <p>Feb 21: <b>Only 1 (will be assigned ahead of time)</b> Grace E. Coolidge, “‘The Great Love and Affection I have for Her:’ Appointing Female Guardians,” pg. 41-64</p> <p>Helen Payne, “Aristocratic Women, Power, Patronage and Family Networks at the Jacobean Court, 1603-1625,” pg. 164-180</p>
Week of February 24	Queens and aristocratic women: royal households	<p>Feb 24: Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben, “Introduction,” p. 1-27</p> <p>Feb 26: <b>Only 1 (will be assigned ahead of time)</b></p>

		<p>Oliver Mallick, <i>The Politics of Female Households</i> “Clients and Friends: The Ladies-in-Waiting at the Court of Anne of Austria (1615-66),” p. 231-264</p> <p>Sara J. Wolfson, <i>The Politics of Female Households</i> “The Female Bedchamber of Queen Henrietta Maria: Politics, Familial Networks and Policy, 1626-40,” p. 311-341</p> <p>Fabian Persson, <i>The Politics of Female Households</i> “Living in the Household of Power: Women at the Early Modern Swedish Court,” p. 345-363</p> <p>Feb 28: María Concepción Gutiérrez Redondo, <i>Gender and Diplomacy</i> “Splendid Women in the Diplomacy of Juan Antonio de Vera (1583-1658), Ambassador of the Catholic King Philip IV,” pg. 3-20</p> <p><b>Short writing assignment 2 Sunday March 2 @ 11:59</b></p>
Week of March 3	Royals, aristocrats, and diplomacy	<p>March 3: None</p> <p>March 5: Laura Oliván Santaliestra, <i>Gender and Diplomacy</i> “Who was the Embajadora? Concept, Treatises and Examples (1580-1674)”</p> <p>March 7: Gemma Allen, “The Rise of the Ambassadors: English Ambassadorial Wives and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture”</p>
Week of March 10	Exam 2 prep	<p>March 10: Laura Oliván Santaliestra, “‘Mein lieber lúib’: Aloys von Harrach and the Diplomacies of Motherhood during the Last Years of Carlos II’s Reign (1698–1701)”</p> <p>March 12: None, exam prep</p> <p>March 14: <b>Exam 2</b>, None</p>
Week of March 17		<b>NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK</b>
Week of March 24	Queen regents in the 17th century: motherhood, power, and reconciliation	<p>March 24: None</p> <p>March 26: Katherine Crawford, <i>Perilous Performances</i> Chapter 3 “Contesting the Politics of the State: Marie de Médicis, Royal Familiality, and Gender Performance, 1610-1643,” pg. 59-97</p> <p>March 28: Katherine Crawford, <i>Perilous Performances</i> Chapter 4 “Evacuating the Center: Anne d’Autriche and the Minority of Louis XIV,” pg. 98-136</p>
Week of March 31	Queen regents in the 17th century:	<p>March 31: Toby Osborne, “A Queen Mother in Exile: Marie de Médicis in the Spanish Netherland and England, 1631-41”</p>

	<p>motherhood, power, and reconciliation</p> <p>The early 18th Century: Redrawing Europe</p>	<p>April 2: Silvia Z. Mitchell, “Habsburg Motherhood: The Power of Mariana of Austria, Mother and Regent for Carlos II of Spain”</p> <p>Apr 4: Silvia Z. Mitchell, <i>Queen, Mother, Stateswoman</i> Chapter 7 “Reconciliation, Vindication, and Triumph, 1678-1679,” p. 199-226</p>
Week of April 7	Maria Theresa: Queen and Empress	<p>Apr 7: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, <i>Maria Theresa</i> Chapter 2 “The Heiress Presumptive,” pg. 50-78</p> <p>Apr 9: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, <i>Maria Theresa</i> Chapter 4 “Empress, Emperor, Empire,” 156-186</p> <p>Apr 11: <b>Only 1 (will be assigned ahead of time)</b> Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, <i>Maria Theresa</i> Chapter 7 “Distinctions and Refinement,” p. 320-351</p> <p>Chapter 7 “Distinctions and Refinement,” p. 351-376</p> <p>Chapter 7 “Distinctions and Refinement,” p. 376-398</p> <p><b>Short writing assignment 3 due Sunday, April 13 @ 11:59 PM</b></p>
Week of April 14	Maria Theresa: Dynasty-Maker?	<p>Apr 14: None</p> <p>Apr 16: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, <i>Maria Theresa</i> Chapter 9 “Dynastic Capital,” pg. 463-495</p> <p>Apr 18: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, <i>Maria Theresa</i> Chapter 10 “Mother and Son,” p. 530-555</p> <p><b>Queens and Empresses Presentations “Poster Sessions” Monday April 21 and Wednesday April 23</b></p>
Week of April 21	Marie Antoinette and the French Revolution: The End of Powerful Queens?	<p>April 21: None, Queens and Empresses Presentations “Poster Sessions”</p> <p>April 23: None, Queens and Empresses Presentations “Poster Sessions.”</p> <p>Apr 25: <b>Only 1 (will be assigned ahead of time)</b> Chantal Thomas, <i>Marie-Antoinette</i> Chapter 4 “The Heroine of the Crime: Marie-Antoinette in Pamphlets,” pg. 99-116</p> <p>Lynn Hunt, <i>Marie-Antoinette</i> Chapter 5 “The Many Bodies of Marie-Antoinette: Political Pornography and the Problem of the Feminine in the French Revolution,” pg. 117-138</p>
Week of April 28	Exam prep	Ask the professor Q&A Exam prep two days this week (TBD)



Week of May 5		<b>Exam 3 (TBD)</b>
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### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing [integrity@purdue.edu](mailto:integrity@purdue.edu) or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information is submitted the greater the opportunity for the university to investigate the concern. More details are available on our course Brightspace under University Policies and Statements.

### **Copyright**

See the University Policies and Statements section of Brightspace for guidance on Use of Copyrighted Materials. Effective learning environments provide opportunities for students to reflect, explore new ideas, post opinions openly, and have the freedom to change those opinions over time. Students and instructors are the authors of the works they create in the learning environment. As authors, they own the copyright in their works subject only to the university's right to use those works for educational purposes. Students may not copy, reproduce, or post to any other outlet (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, or other open media sources or websites) any work in which they are not the sole or joint author or have not obtained the permission of the author(s).

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. A hyperlink to Purdue's full Nondiscrimination Policy Statement is included in our course Brightspace under University Policies and Statements.

### **Mental Health/Wellness Statement**

**If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try [Therapy Assistance Online \(TAO\)](#)**, a web and app-based mental health resource available courtesy of Purdue Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). TAO is available to all students at any time by creating an account on the [TAO Connect website](#), or downloading the app from the App Store or Google Play. It offers free, confidential well-being resources through a self-guided program informed by psychotherapy research and strategies that may aid in overcoming anxiety, depression and other concerns. It provides accessible and effective resources including short videos, brief exercises, and self-reflection tools.

**If you need support and information about options and resources**, please contact or see the [Office of the Dean of Students](#). Call 765-494-1747. Hours of operation are M-F, 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.

**If you find yourself struggling to find a healthy balance between academics, social life, stress, etc.**, sign up for free one-on-one virtual or in-person sessions in West Lafayette with a [Purdue Wellness Coach at RecWell](#). Student coaches can help you navigate through barriers

and challenges toward your goals throughout the semester. Sign up is free and can be done on BoilerConnect.

**If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students.** If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS offices in [West Lafayette](#) or [Indianapolis](#).

### **Emergency Preparation**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructors or TAs via email or phone. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis.

A link to Purdue's Information on [Emergency Preparation and Planning](#) is located on our Brightspace under "University Policies and Statements." This website covers topics such as Severe Weather Guidance, Emergency Plans, and a place to sign up for the Emergency Warning Notification System. I encourage you to download and review the [Emergency Preparedness for Classrooms document](#).