

Women in the Baroque Age

**October/November/December 2018 (18 hours)**

**Date (2018): October:** Tuesday 16, 23, 30; **November:**6, 13, 20, 27; **December:** 4, 11

**Time:** 18h-20h

**Venue:** Le Roi Soleil Resource Centre, Room 307, Faculty for the Built Environment Building

**Aim and contents of course:**

* This course deals with the role and condition of women from the late sixteenth century to the late seventeenth century. It rethinks a number of elements in the traditional typology of the female Baroque figure by examining the role of symbolic figures such as the nun, the witch, the prostitute, the rebel and the philanthropist. Women in the Baroque age seem to have inherited many things from the preceding centuries but one can now identify important differences from the traditional image of women. Marked by innumerable social, religious and political conflicts, the seventeenth century and its eighteenth-century sequel covered a period of time full of blatant contradictions yet it was also a creative age teeming with novelties in which the seeds of female rationality and prudence, of revised family and social relationships, of legal rights and of the capacity to enjoy life in a freer atmosphere, were sown. In this respect this course explores the wide range of female experiences, self-consciousness, and expression in the Baroque universe. You’ll leave with a fresh perspective on key historical issues surrounding the role of women in the past that will enable you to contribute to gender-themed research and debates with more confidence.

The program’s intended audience includes under-graduate students, academics, advanced graduate students, genealogists, documentary filmmakers, set and costume designers, artists, actors, novelists, photo researchers, general readers, and all those working for women’s rights. This course will launch an innovative digital initiative aimed towards recovering or highlighting seventeenth-century women who have been, or risk being, largely forgotten.

**Course Content:**

1. Historical perspectives: Medieval and Renaissance Scenarios.

2. The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century.

3. Women in Baroque literature and the Performing Arts.

4. Baroque Female Clothing and Accessories.

5. Nuns and the Female Monastic Institution.

6. The Witch, the Prostitute, the Rebel and cries for reform.

7. Iconic European Feminists.

8. Women in Baroque Malta.

9. Female lives in Baroque Valletta: Site Visit

**Learning outcomes:**

* View the seventeenth century tensions as necessary stages for reaching a higher social and political equilibrium and deeper and broader creative female capacities.
* Understand the core principles of the female figure of the Baroque age and identify important differences from the traditional image of the women.
* Delineate Baroque female literary and artistic sensibility, particular or general.
* Attribute female unique characteristics and a particular way of thinking, acting and feeling to the Baroque period.
* Integrate a vision of the state, the church, science, and culture with a vision of female social life and of the tendencies and currents that ran through it.
* Examine what is new in the condition of women in Malta in the seventeenth century.

**Delivery style:**

The course will be delivered through a series of lectures and group discussions. Lectures will be supplemented with a site visit which will enrich the participants’ experience of the topic. Throughout the class sessions the past will be used to reflect upon the pressing concerns of the present and there will be plenty of opportunities for discussion.

**Course Tutor:** Dr Christine Muscat PhD

Christine Muscat graduated B.A. (Hons.) in Anthropology from the University of Malta in 2002. In 2011 she read for an M.A. in Hospitaller Studies and in 2017 she was awarded a Ph.D. in History from the University of Malta. Her research explores female enterprise in early modern Valletta, with a special focus on nuns and prostitutes. She has authored various papers on female entrepreneurship in early modern Malta. Her first book is entitled Magdalene Nuns and Penitent Prostitutes (Malta: BDL Publishers, 2013). Dr. Christine Muscat is a Fellow of the IASH (Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities) at the University of Edinburgh.

**Certification:**

Participants who attend at least 80% of the sessions will be awarded a Certificate of Attendance issued by Malta University Consulting Ltd.

**Course Registraton Fee and contact information: €45**

**Cheques are to be made payable to Malta University Consulting Ltd**

For further information kindly contact: Malta University Consulting Ltd, Robert Mifsud Bonnici Street, Lija.

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###### **Course Programme**

**Session 1: Tuesday 16 October 2018** Historical perspectives: Medieval and Renaissance Scenarios.

* the notions and exercise of secular and spiritual authority
* the operation of power in medieval and renaissance societies
* the development of conceptions of and attitudes to gender
* the construction of identities

**Session 2: Tuesday 23 October 2018** The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century.

* The Domestic Industry
* The Family Industry
* Capitalistic Industry or Industrialism

**Session 3: Tuesday 30 October 2018** Women in Baroque Literature and the Performing Arts.

* Troubadours and Women
* The exemplary lives of Saints
* Knowledge as Transgression: Female Artists
* Opera

**Session 4: Tuesday 6 November 2018** Baroque Female Clothing and Accessories.

* The Thirty Years War
* The Absolutistic Ideal
* Style and Characteristics of Baroque Female Fashion
* Gender in the Making: Trading and Uses of Accessories

**Session 5: Tuesday 13 November 2018** Nuns and the Female Monastic Institution.

* Pope Boniface VIII: *Periculoso*
* The Council of Trent: Session XXV
* Mysticism
* Attitudes, Action and Negotiation

**Session 6: Tuesday 20 November 2018** The Witch, the Prostitute, the Rebel and cries for Reform.

* The Age of Witch Hunts
* Prostitution: Victimhood vs Agency
* Resistance to Oppression and Patriarchy
* Reform

**Session 7: Tuesday 27 November 2018** Iconic Feminists

* Arcangela Tarabotti
* Gliki bas Judah Leib
* Marie de l’Incarnation
* Maria Sibylla Merian

**Session 8: Tuesday 4 December 2018** Women in Baroque Malta.

* The Condition of Women in Seventeenth-Century Malta
* Courtesans
* Philanthropists
* Entrepreneurs

**Session 9: Tuesday 11 December 2018** Women in Baroque Malta.

* Baroque Silent Female Voices of Valletta Tour