

Eleanor Herman's *Off With Her Head*
IDH 2930 (Un)Common Read, UF Honors
Spring 2026
Jan 12 - May 1, 2026
Mondays, Period 3 (9:35-10:25 AM)
Little Hall, 0017

Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Teresa Cornacchione
Office Location: 234 Pugh Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 1:30 - 3:30 PM
Office Phone: 352-23-1088
Make an Appointment: [Calendly](#)
Email: tcornacchione@ufl.edu

Honors Program Information

Location: Honors Village, Complex #4
Phone: 352-392-1519
Advising Email: advisor@honors.ufl.edu
Schedule an Honors Advising Appointment: [Honors Advising](#)
Honors Events: [Honors Calendar](#)

Course Description

Overview

UF Honors (Un)common reads courses are discussion oriented courses centered around a single book. This course explores how society has perceived women, especially those in prominent political and social roles, throughout history, using Eleanor Herman's nonfiction work, *Off With Her Head: Three Thousand Years of Demonizing Women in Power*. Herman outlines how women in prominent positions of power are often depicted, undermined, and devalued by what she terms, "The Misogynist's Handbook." From rumors of Anne Boleyn's sixth finger, to presidential candidate Nikki Haley termed, "past her prime." this course will dive into the perceptions of women with power, across time and place, connecting the themes of Herman's work to academic studies on women in politics. Key topics include the portrayal of women's ambition as unnatural, how women candidates' appearances are scrutinized, and how violence against women is perpetuated even when they hold the highest levels of political power, and how women of varying identities are perceived when they hold power.

Through classroom discussion, and a proposal project, students will engage with the text and foster a deeper understanding of how tactics to demonize and devalue politically powerful women transcend time and place.

Required Text

Herman, Eleanor. 2022. *Off With Her Head: Three Thousand Years of Demonizing Women in Power*. HarperCollins Publishers. ISBN: 978-0-06-309568-7

The book is available on multiple platforms, including [Amazon](#) and [Thriftbooks](#) for a relatively low cost, especially if you buy used! It is also available through the [Alachua County Library system](#) and [UF Libraries](#).

Print, EBook/Kindle, or Audiobook are all acceptable.

In addition to the required text, the instructor will utilize some required secondary readings/materials. These will be available through Canvas. These materials are designed to enhance and contextualize some of the themes from the main book.

Grading Policy

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards Honors Completion Requirements. Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Requirements module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

Your grade in this class will be based on four (4) components: attendance, participation, supplementary readings, and a final project. All assignments will be submitted via Canvas or in person. Late assignments will be accepted with no penalty to your grade with an appropriate excuse, otherwise late assignments will not be accepted without a university-approved excuse and instructor approval. The weight of each component is listed below:

Attendance:	10%
Participation:	40%
• <i>Class Leadership</i>	20%
• <i>Class Participation</i>	20%
Supplementary Perusall Readings(3):	10%
Semester Project:	40%
• <i>Elevator Pitch</i>	10%
• <i>Bibliography</i>	10%
• <i>Full Proposal</i>	20%

Attendance

Given the nature of this course, your attendance is mandatory. Because this course is based on class discussion, where you will be expected to read material in advance, discuss, and engage with your peers, your regularly attendance is critically important to your success in class. **Each student is**

permitted a maximum of two (2) unexcused absences throughout the semester without penalty to their grade. In certain circumstances, I reserve the right to excuse an absence; but I will only do so if provided documentation of a university-approved excuse (military service, documented illness, jury duty, university-approved activity, etc.). Please do your best to attend class regularly. To read more about UF's attendance policies, visit [this link](#)

Participation

In addition to attending, you are expected to be an active participant in class. Your participation grade will be based on two components: a class leadership activity, and participation in class discussion every week.

Class Leadership Activity

Each week, one or two students will lead the class in a discussion topic of their choice, derived from the main text. Students leading the discussion are also encouraged to use the supplementary readings on Perusall, and their classmates' comments to develop their guiding questions for class discussion.

Students will submit their class discussion questions, no less than two (2), and no more than (4) to Canvas by 11:59 PM on the Friday before their assigned date. More information is available on Canvas.

In Class Discussion

Participation in class discussion is critical to success in this course. The goal of this course is for students to actively and critically engage with the material. I expect students to come to class prepared to discuss the reading, and to have thought deeply about arguments made in the assigned chapter for that week. I will evaluate your class participation using the criteria below.

- **Poor Participation:** The student rarely or never offers comments and questions in class, and/or does not appear to be regularly paying attention to class discussion. The student may only participate if prompted;
- **Fair Participation:** The student occasionally offers comments and questions in class, and/or is mostly engaged in class, paying attention to class discussions. The student may occasionally have to be prompted to participate;
- **Good Participation:** The student regularly offers comments and questions that demonstrate more than surface level understanding of course material, and/or the student regularly pays attention to class discussions. The student rarely requires prompting to participate;
- **Excellent Participation:** The student regularly offers comments and questions that demonstrate more than a surface level understanding of course materials, and the student regularly pays attention to class discussions. The student never requires prompting to participate.

Supplementary Perusall Readings

For this course, I have selected at least one supplementary reading per week. These readings are meant to enhance your understanding and interaction with the main text. These readings are

posted on Perusall, an interactive software that allows you to read and annotate a text along with your peers. You can highlight, ask questions, and respond to your classmates' comments and questions.

Over the course of the semester, you will be required to read and annotate three (3) Perusall readings. You must provide one comment and one question for each reading. *You may select any three readings you wish, but they must be completed by the due date listed on Canvas and on the Perusall platform.* You can earn extra credit for annotating more than three readings. Note that any additional Perusall annotations must be completed by the indicated due dates.

Perusall readings are generally graded on a 0-3 point scale. I am looking for thoughtful, specific comments. These do not need to be paradigm-shifting, or lengthy, but they must be more than, "I find this interesting." For example, explain what you find interesting and why; perhaps provide examples, or connect a concept in the reading to the main text. For your convenience, you can refer to the guidelines below for how I will grade your annotations.

Score	Criteria
3	Highly detailed with specific examples. Effectively connects reading to other readings or class discussion.
2	Detailed, but may be lacking in specific examples. Vaguely connects reading to other concepts.
1	Very little detail, and vague references to class discussion or other readings. Provides irrelevant examples.
0	Didn't complete the assignment. <i>Note: you will only receive a grade of zero if you did not complete the required three readings</i> <i>In that event, you will receive zeros for the number of readings you did not complete.</i>

Going from Observations to the Academic: Final Project

The purpose of this assignment is to take the observations and argument from Herman's book and develop a unique academic research question based on the real-world examples and themes from the core text, *Off With Her Head*. Full instructions and examples will be available on Canvas.

Step 1: Students will develop an academic research question. Student should use the following key phrases to develop the question:

- Under what conditions?
- To what extent?
- How?

- Why?

Students will have the opportunity to “pitch” their research question during class, and receive instructor and peer feedback.

Step 2: Students will then gather five (5) academic sources that can help them answer the research question, and complete a annotated bibliography.

Step 3: Students will then write a two (2) page proposal explaining their question, and how it could contribute to existing research.

The timeline for completion is listed in the table below.

Step	Item	Due Date at 11:59 PM
1	Elevator Pitch of Research Question	March 1
2	Bibliography of Sources	April 1
3	Full Proposal	April 22

Extra Credit

Typically, I am not a fan of extra credit. If you make an effort throughout the semester, you should not need extra credit. HOWEVER, there may be occasions when I will offer extra credit to the ENTIRE class to attend a guest lecture, view a program, etc. I will not offer individual extra credit.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will only be accepted with instructor approval and may be subject to a 1-letter grade deduction per day late, up to a maximum of three days late. After the assignment is 3 days late, I will no longer accept it.

Grading Scale

I adhere to the following letter-to-grade conversion chart for all exams, papers, assignments, quizzes, and final grades. **I reserve the right to round grades up or down a half of a letter grade (for example, A to A-, or vice versa) based on my assessment of your effort and engagement throughout the semester.**

93 or above=A*	90-92=A-	87-89=B+	83-86=B	80-82=B-	77-79=C+
73-76=C	70-72=C-	67-69=D+	63-66=D	60-62=D-	0-59=E

*An A is the highest grade you can earn in this class

Grade Changes

I am certainly open to and actively encourage you to challenge me both in class as well on disputed test questions/essay points. Sometimes, I make mistakes and sometimes, it is possible that more than one answer or perspective is correct. If you present an empirically-defensible case as to why your answer/assumptions are also correct (for which I originally took off points), I will gladly give back partial or full credit, depending on the quality of your argument.

However, at the end of the semester, there are inexorably a handful of students who send me a late-night email requesting (and sometimes incoherently demanding) that I raise their final grade, whether from a D+ to a C-, or a B+ to an A- or anywhere in between. Two remarks on this rather bold and questionable strategy.

I try to be charitable in terms of the grading scheme already, both the attendance & participation grades are designed to give your grade a “cushion.” Secondly, the “But I NEED a/an (insert grade here),” or “can you just raise my grade x-number of points” arguments reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of grades. Implicit in this statement is the assumption that grades are capriciously handed out on the instructor’s whim or fancy and are not based on the student’s demonstrated mastery of the material. Grades reflect your mastery of the course material. There are many things YOU can do to enhance your mastery of the material, and consequently, your grade.

- Attend class regularly
- Be present: pay attention in class and participate
- Read materials
- Ask questions: either in class or during office hours or over email
- Do not procrastinate on assignments.

I will not respond to emails asking for extra points, or for grades to be bumped up. If a student wishes to dispute a grade on an assignment or test, the student must request an appointment or come during office hours and present a compelling case as to why extra points should be awarded. **This course complies to all UF academic policies. For more information on those policies and for resources for students, please [visit this link](#).**

Final (and perhaps reiterative) Notes on Course Protocol

Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive to all of us who made it a priority to get to class time and be here. Please enter and exit the classroom quietly within minimal interruptions and take a seat close to the door. Please keep private conversations private. Discussions with your neighbor are distracting for me as well as other students. If you have a thought on course material or a question, speak up! Please feel free to share your thoughts on the lecture topic with all of us. I reserve the right to dismiss individual students from the classroom for disruptive behavior, and report them to the Dean of Students. I do not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form, and will pursue the full penalties for violations thereof. For your reference, the University of Florida Academic Honor Policy is listed above.

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect the parameters of evaluation, including grading and the scheduling of the final exam, this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. I will provide you with advance notice in class and via your university registered email contact.

If You Enjoyed *Off With Her Head...* check out:

Fiction:

- *When Women Were Dragons* by Kelly Barnhill
- *Once and Future Witches* by Alix Harrow
- *Ten Thousand Doors of January* by Alix Harrow
- *The Lost Apothecary* by Sarah Penner
- *Weyward* by Emilia Hart
- *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus

Non-Fiction:

- *Lady Justice* by Dahlia Lithwick
- *The Witch of New York: The Trials of Polly Bodine and the Cursed Birth of Tabloid Justice* by C. Alexander Hortis
- *Witchcraft: A History in Thirteen Trials* by Marion Gibson
- *Killers of the Flower Moon* by David Grann
- *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town* by Jon Krakauer
- *Sister Style: The Politics of Appearance for Black Women* by Nadia Brown
- *Anne Boleyn: 500 Years of Lies* by Hayley Nolan
- *Why We Lost the ERA* by Jane Mansbridge
- *The Witches are Coming* by Lindy West
- *Women, Politics, and Power* by Pamela Paxton, Melanie M. Hughes, and Tiffany D. Barnes
- *Undue Burden: Life and Death Decisions in Post-Roe America* by Shefali Luthra
- *Walking the Gendered Tightrope: Theresa May and Nancy Pelosi as Legislative Leaders* by Melissa Haussman and Karen M. Kedrowski
- *Gender and Elections: Shaping the Future of American Politics* edited by Susan J. Carroll, Richard L. Fox and Kelly Dittmar
- *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology* by Deirdre Cooper Owens

- *Cleopatra: A Life* by Stacy Schiff
- *The Witches: Salem 1962* by Stacy Schiff

Course Schedule

Meeting Day	Primary Reading <i>to be completed before class</i>	Optional Secondary Source/ Assignment
January 12	Course Introduction, Syllabus OWHH, Introduction	None
January 19	*NO CLASS - MLK HOLIDAY*	
January 26	OWHH, Chp. 1: The Root of Misogyny	Fontanella et al (2024)
Feb. 2	OWHH, Chp. 2: Her Overweening Ambition	Saha & Weeks (2022)
Feb. 9	OWHH, Chp. 3: Why Doesn't She Do	Lemi & Brown (2019)
Feb. 16	OWHH: Chps. 4: The Dangers of Female Hormones	Becker, <i>Get it Out, Chp. 1</i> Orlov (2025)
Feb. 23	OWHH: Chp. 5: The Alarming Shrillness of Her Voice Chp. 6: The Mysterious Unlikability of Female Candidates	Bauer et al (2024) Bibliography due
March 2	OWHH: Chp. 7: Who is Taking Care of Her Husband and Children?	Teele 2018
March 9	OWHH: Chps. 8: She's a Witch & Other Monsters Chp. 9: She's a Bitch & Other Animals	Watch: <i>Julia Gilliard, Misogyny Speech</i> Elevator Pitch DUE
Spring Break: March 16-20		
March 23	OWHH, Chp. 10: Her Sexual Depravity Chp. 11: She's a Murderer	Jones (2022)
March 30	OWHH, Chp. 12: Additional Tools to Diminish Her	Watch: "Did Liberal Feminism Ruin the Workplace?" <i>Interesting Times</i> with Ross Douthat
April 6	OWHH, Chp. 13: Misogynoir: When Powerful People are Female and Black	Slaughter (2025)
April 13	OWHH, Chp. 14: Off With Her Head! Chp. 15: Ripping up the Misogynist's Handbook	None
April 20	Final Reflections	Discussion of Projects
Final Project Due April 30, 2026 by 11:59PM		