

## Women in the History of Economic Thought: A Team Project for Econ 365.01

Kirsten K. Madden, Prof.  
Spring 2005

This semester you will work with two or three other classmates to learn about the contributions of one or more women to the history of economic thought before 1940. Teams will be formed at the beginning of the semester based primarily on student selection and based secondarily on the requirement to create no more than seven teams with three to four members in each. The three primary activities involved in this project are: research, presentation of the material to the class, creation of a one-page class handout summarizing the life and work of the woman/women studied, and creation of a poster. Members of the team are responsible for dividing up the project workload. Each team member need not be involved in all aspects of the project, but all teammates must agree at the end of the semester that the workload was distributed fairly in order for everyone to receive the team grade.

This project will reinforce your understanding of the history of economic thought as you research the ideas of particular thinkers in their historical context. Given the limited press that women's contributions have received thus far in the discipline, this project will expand your knowledge in the history of economic thought beyond traditional coverage, potentially exposing you to novel perspectives, approaches, analyses, and/or conclusions. This project will help you strengthen basic research, writing and/or presentation skills. You will also develop your ability to work in a team setting.

### Research

To begin your research, two research tools are available at the Ganser Library Circulation & Reserve Reading Desk:

Madden, Kirsten K., Janet A. Seiz, and Michele Pujol (2004), *A Bibliography of Female Economic Thought to 1940*. Abingdon, Oxon and New York, New York: Routledge.

Dimand, Robert W., Mary Ann Dimand, and Evelyn L Forget, eds. (2000), *A Biographical Dictionary of Women Economists*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.

The *Bibliography* provides you with a list of approximately 10,000 relevant references written in economics by approximately 1,700 women between 1770-1940. The *Biography* provides you with summary descriptions of the lives and economic thought of a small subset of the 1,700 women that historians of thought have already recognized as making contributions to the discipline. Review these books in the first two weeks of class and choose one or more women to focus upon in your project. Your choice may be based upon time period (you can look for work by women in the 1700s, the 1800s, or the early 1900s), it may be based upon subject matter of interest to your team (determined by reviewing the titles of the writings contributed by specific women in the *Bibliography*), it may be based on intriguing personalities or life histories (as noted in the introduction to the *Bibliography* and through review of the *Biography*), or based upon criteria determined by your team.

Your project may focus upon the contributions of one woman assuming she has at least eight contributions to the discipline. Alternatively, you may review the works of more than one woman in your project. If you choose this route, it may be helpful for you to establish a common theme for the women you include in your study. Possible themes include: (1) common subject matter of the women's writing (e.g., women writing on labor exploitation, economics and race, gender, international trade, literature or educational materials, etc.—see a list of subject matter below); (2) a common time period (women all writing within a few years of one another); (3) common acquaintances (most obviously connected via co-authorship listings in the bibliography, and also through biographical connections); (4) level of educational attainment—e.g., reviewing the works of women who earned Ph.D.'s (Ph.D. theses are noted as such in the *Bibliography*); or (5) common research outlet (e.g., women that all published in a certain magazine or journal, or through specific government organizations.) Alternatively, each teammate may independently choose a woman that resonates with them, the team project being a smorgasbord of women's contributions to the discipline.

By the end of the second week of class, you should have created your own research bibliography listing 8-12 references by a woman or women in the history of economic thought that will constitute the basis for your project. **Email your team's bibliography to the instructor for approval by Monday, January 24, 2005** before you begin to locate the references. Your team is required to **meet with the instructor during the week of January 24, 2005**.

Once you receive approval from the instructor, these 8-12 references must be located by your team, either in the Ganser library stacks (highly unlikely), via electronic databases available through the library homepage, or through the placement of Inter-Library Loan (ILL) orders for the 8-12 references (this is the most likely means of accessing the references.) ILL forms are available in the reference section of Ganser Library. Please note: if Ganser Library requests payment for any of these ILL orders, *notify the instructor immediately*. **ILL requests must be made by Monday, January 31, 2005**.

Once you have chosen the woman/women for your project and have ordered your research materials, begin the biographical research. Biographical research sources include: (1) *A Biographical Dictionary of Women Economists* located at the Ganser Library Reserve Desk; (2) EconLit, a searchable database available through the Ganser Library homepage. EconLit has the capability to search all of the major economics research publications (e.g., journals, books, and dissertations) by

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subject or author—I would recommend doing a search for the name(s) of the women you are researching to see if there are any publications on her work already available; (3) biographical reference books: *Notable American Women*, *American National Biography*, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, *The Biographical Dictionary of British Feminists*, and the *Encyclopedia of the American Left*. Some of these reference books are available at Ganser Library and at the main library of Franklin and Marshall College; (4) review your instructor's collection of the secondary literature in the history of women's economic thought; (5) and finally, Internet searches via the Google search engine.

As you receive copies of your 8-12 references for this project, review and take detailed notes on the economic thought of each piece. Some points for consideration may include the following. What is/are the main theme(s) of the writing? Why did she write the piece? What is her thesis or main objective in the writing? What are her primary arguments or points in support of her thesis? How does she undertake her analysis—theoretically, historically, empirically, intuitively, etc.? What assumptions does she make in her analysis? What kind of support does she provide—theoretical arguments, data-based analysis, ad hoc reasoning, appeal to the reader's sensibilities, etc.? How does the piece relate to the time period in which it was written? Does the reference center around a current event or issue at the time of her writing? If so, what is that current event or issue, how does she describe it and relate to the event/issue through the writing? Does she refer to other literature concerning her topic? If so, provide a brief summary of that literature according to your source. Does her work relate to a school of economic thought covered in our textbook? If so, which one(s) and how? If not, what is distinct about her work relative to existing schools of thought? What final conclusion(s) does she draw? Based on the analysis she presents and your knowledge of the subject matter, do her conclusions seem justified from your perspective? Why or why not?

As you pull together your notes across your references, think through the main themes of the references you analyze. As the historian of thought evaluating this woman's work, what do you consider to be her main contributions to economics? What stands out of value in her work? Clearly and succinctly summarize her main contribution(s), any assumptions she makes, the method(s) she uses in her work and her primary conclusions. In which school(s) of thought would you place her work and why? What are the strengths of her work? What are its weaknesses? If you were to summarize her work in one paragraph, how and why should her ideas be remembered?

If you chose a group of women who are linked through some relevant theme, review your notes for each woman's contributions and then pull together a summary of the main contributions each woman makes to the theme of the group. Finally, it may be necessary to do historical research on the time period in which the woman is writing, particularly if her work is contextualized within particular historical events.

**Your summary notes for each reference are due to the instructor by Friday March 4, 2005.**

### Some Subject Categories for Women's Research in the History of Economic Thought

- \**Economic Systems*: Capitalism; Socialism and Cooperation
- \**Economic Theory*: Microeconomic/Neoclassical Theory; Institutionalism
- \**Economic History and History of Economic Thought and Methodology*
- \**Economics of the Domestic Sector*: Housing; Household Production; Reproduction and the Economics of the Family; Consumer Economics; Cost of Living, Living Standards; Health and Education; Public Welfare (Insurance, Social Security, Pensions)
- \**Social Problems (Income, Basic Needs, and Relief Measures)*: Income Distribution Studies, Pauperism and Poverty; Private Relief and Charity; Public Responses to Poverty (Relief; Poor Laws; etc.)
- \**Economics and Emancipation*: Women's Suffrage; Gender Studies; Racial Studies; Children Studies; Religion Studies
- \**Labor Economics, Labor Policy, and Population*: Labor Markets, Productivity and Wages; Organized Labor; Public Labor Policy and Wage Policy; Labor Skills and Labor Education; Labor Hazards; Population Studies and Migration
- \**Land*: Agriculture; Natural Resources; Real Estate
- \**Infrastructure*: Transportation; Utilities; Communication
- \**Business*: Industry-Specific Studies (Manufacturing; Products, etc.); Business Organization and Combination; Accounting; Entrepreneurs; Management
- \**Commerce*: Merchants; Domestic Trade; Marketing; International Trade
- \**Economic Development*
- \**Macroeconomic and Money Issues*: National Income, Business Crises, and Business Fluctuations; Macrolevel Unemployment; Money, Prices, and Inflation; Banking and Finance; Saving and Investment; Capital and Technological Change; Public Stabilization Policy
- \**Area Studies*: Country Studies; Regional Studies
- \**Public Sector*: Taxes, Public Finance, and Public Debt; Legislation, Regulation and Econ. Justice; War & Defense Econ.
- \**Analytical Tools*: Data, Statistics, and Mathematics
- \**Economic Education and Economic Literature*

### **Poster**

Results of this research project will be summarized in a poster. **The poster is due Thursday, March 31, 2005.**

Exceptional posters may be presented at the MU Economics Department Regional Economy Symposium in April and/or at the Pennsylvania Economic Association Conference taking place June 2-4, 2005 at Millersville University.

Poster Guidelines (stolen and adapted from: <http://aux.edinboro.edu/pea/conf/poster.htm>)

1. Use a poster board with dimensions 36" by 48".
2. Prepare a label with the title of your paper and names of the poster creators for the top of the poster. A poster abstract must be included. The abstract should be a maximum of 200 words.
3. Include these basic elements or their equivalents on the poster:
  - (a) introduction, objective, & approach (these three can likely be summarized on one sheet);
  - (b) women's names, birth and death dates, basic biographical information (and motivation for the work if you can uncover it);
  - (c) historical context for the period in which the women wrote their work;
  - (d) economic context of the writing—does the work fit into any of the existing 'schools' of economic thought? If so, explain which school(s) it fits and how it fits. Is it related to the economic thought of any of the historically recognized leading contributors in the discipline—if so, who and how? If the work does not clearly fit into any of the existing thought, explain its unique distinguishing characteristics in comparison to the dominant school(s) of economic thought/leading economic contributors' thought of the writer's time period;
  - (e) general summary of the women's main contributions to economic thought (including the main subject matter of her work.) If you are reviewing a group of women linked by a theme, then describe links between the women's contributions, comparing/contrasting works as appropriate;
  - (f) discussion of each woman's primary theme(s) or theses, approach/method of her analysis, and her main conclusions;
  - (g) your own evaluation of the work of each woman covered in your project—explain the value of the work reviewed as well as its limitations; and
  - (h) bibliography.
4. You are not required to fill up the entire available space on the display board. However, posters should be oriented to maximize usage of space. Be sure to provide clear labels for each section of your presentation. The sequence of information should be clear.
5. Everything on your poster should be readable from a distance of two feet or more. All lettering should be at least 3/8 inch high, preferably in bold font. The use of PowerPoint to prepare the poster often yields very good results. Avoid putting too much information on a single page. Bulleting may help you accomplish this outcome. Expect to include roughly 9-15 pages in your poster. Consider color printing the pages of your presentation. Consider making borders for the pages in your poster (either by adding border lines around the text on the page itself or by making construction paper borders and gluing them behind the pages of text.)
6. Add relevant pictures, diagrams, graphs, charts, etc. where possible. Remember, "a picture is worth 1,000 words." For example, if you find pictures of the women you research, use them in the poster. As another example, if the woman describes an economic issue using a chain of cause-and-effect thinking, her analysis will make a more direct impression from the poster if it is presented in a cause-and-effect diagram rather than as a paragraph of text. Make sure all pictures, diagrams, etc. are clearly labeled.
7. A well-constructed poster will be self-explanatory and will free you from answering obvious questions, allowing you to discuss particular points of interest to observers. A successful poster will be thorough and clear. From your poster, observers should be able to comprehend your major findings.
8. Coverage: Have you provided all the obvious information? Will a casual observer walk away understanding your major findings after a quick perusal of your material? Will a more careful reader learn enough to ask informed questions? Ask yourself, "What would I need to know if I were viewing this material for the first time?" and then state that information clearly.
9. Clarity: Is the sequence of information evident? Indicate the ordering of your material with numbers, letters, or arrows, when necessary. Is the content being communicated clearly? Keep it simple. Place your major points in the poster and save the non-essential, but interesting sidelights for informal discussion. Be selective. Your final conclusions or summary should leave observers focused on a concise statement of your most important findings.

### **Poster Evaluation Criteria**

Posters will be graded by the class and by the instructor. The evaluation criteria will be based upon the poster guidelines 1-9 described above.

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**Presentation and Handout**

Your team is responsible for creating an 18-20 minute presentation concerning your research project. **Presentations will begin on Tuesday, April 19, 2005.** All teams must be ready to present on this date; a random drawing will determine the order of presentations. Presentations will be cut off at the 20 minute mark, so make sure you fall within the 18-20 minute time frame. Along with an in-class presentation, the student teams are required to provide the class with a handout summarizing relevant information. This handout should be one page (front and back). Both the presentation and the handout should provide historical context and biographical background for the women covered (and motivation for her work if this is known), relationship to the schools of economic thought/leading thinkers we've covered in this course, a general summary of the women's main contributions to economic thought, discussion of each woman's primary theme(s) or theses, approach/method of her analysis, and her main conclusions, and your own evaluation of the work of each woman covered in your project (both valuable insights as well as limitations.) Finally, If you are reviewing a group of women linked by a theme, then clearly describe links between the women's contributions, comparing/contrasting works as appropriate in your presentation.

The presentation will be graded by your instructor and classmates. The summary handouts will be graded by the instructor. Copies of the handouts will be made available for the class, and the handouts constitute fair game for the final exam.

**Presentation Evaluation Criteria**

- (1) *content/insight* of the material presented: how much content and insight is gleaned from the presentation concerning the women's economic work and its historical, biographical and economic context? Where appropriate, are relevant links made across the women covered?
- (2) *relevance* of the material presented: does the presentation stay focused on the women, their economic thought and the economic and historical context in which they wrote?
- (3) *evaluation quality*—the depth with which the team presents and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the work covered; quality of coverage of the linkage (or lack thereof) between the woman's writing and the schools/thinkers in the history of economic thought
- (4) *clarity* in the presentation and handouts: how clearly is the material summarized and explained?
- (5) *engageability*—ability to capture & hold the attention of the audience and generate interest in your research (but before members of the audience evaluate presentation engageability, it is vital to ask: "Am I engageable?" If not, engage—fast!)

**Overall Project Evaluation**

	<u>Project Grade</u>
Meet the intermediate requirements & on time (bibliography of 8-12 sources (1/24); ILL requests (1/31); meeting with instructor (week of 1/24); summary notes (3/4);sources turned in to instructor* (4/26))	10%
Poster	35%
Handout	20%
Presentation	35%

Team Evaluation. Team members will receive the same grade for the project, assuming everyone puts in equal effort. After your presentation, I will ask each teammate to describe the percentage of the work load carried by each member. If the team identifies major slackers, the slacker's project grade will reflect their personal lack of effort. For example, teammates who take on only 0-5% of the work load may receive a zero for the project.

\*All non-book sources are to be turned in to the instructor by the end of the semester for creation of an archive of readings for this project. Please send electronic copies to the instructor's email address. If you made copies of any electronic sources for your own use, please hand those in as well, but do not make extra paper copies—electronic versions are what the library will store. Also hand in any non-electronic paper copies of articles or pamphlets that you received from ILL.

**Bibliographic Formats**

Newspaper:

Author name, "Title of Article" Newspaper Name, date, pages.

Magazine:

Author name. "Title of Article." Magazine Title, date, pages.

Book:

Author name, (year). *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Journal:

Author name, (date). "Title." Journal Name vol. #: pp.

Internet

Author name. "Title." Information as available on source, (e.g., volume, date), Website name. Internet address, date material was accessed on the Internet.