Challenging Gender

Throughout the ages and around the globe, history has been shaped by those who dared to defy. The 2019 History Lecture Series shines a spotlight on those who challenged gender expectations and changed the cultural landscape.

January 9, 2019, Charity Urbanski: Maids in Men's Clothes: Joan of Arc and the Tradition of Female Saints

Wearing men's clothing protected Joan of Arc on the battlefield and exposed her to charges on heresy in the courts. Professor Urbanski will explore why female saints who dressed as men for practicality and power were celebrated in certain circumstances – and punished in others.
January 16, 2019, Elena Campbell: Catherine the Great: Gendering Sovereignty in 18th-Century Russia
Catherine the Great wrested the crown away from her husband to rule over a deeply patriarchal society. We discuss how Catherine used her gender as part of her political persona to attain and maintain power.

January 23, 2019, Purnima Dhavan: Switching Gender: Love, Desire, and Ethical Debates in Mughal India
Why would a male poet talk in a female voice? Explore how Mughal poets used themes of love and desire to define a spiritually grounded life and explore gendered conduct in ways that still resonate today.
January 30, 2019, William Rorabaugh: Women of the 1960s: Betty Friedan, Janis Joplin and Angela Davis

Three American women helped shape the Sixties, even as the decade shaped them. Discover the story of this tumultuous time through the experiences of feminist author Betty Friedan, counterculture icon Janis Joplin, and radical African American intellectual Angela Davis.