

MA THESIS DEFENCE

Student: Megan Gamble

Date: Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Time: 10:00am-12:00pm

Place: Hybrid (please email
histacademic@uoguelph.ca to request the
virtual link or the in-person examination
location)

“‘Let us be not only hearers but doers of the Word’: Affective Plasticity, Emotionology, and Embodied Responses of Scottish Covenanting Women*, 1638–1688.”

Abstract

This thesis argues that the Scottish Covenanting movement must be reinterpreted as an emotionally saturated regime in which women* negotiated, subverted, and reconstituted gendered norms through affective, emotional, and embodied practices of religion and resistance. Focusing on the period surrounding the National Covenant of 1638, the thesis examines how ministers and authoritative authors scripted emotional expression and confined women to passive, domestic piety (“traditional” notions of femininity placed onto gendered and sexed bodies in the early modern period). However, after 1638, new expectations of defiance and steadfastness enabled women to move from “hearers” to “doers,” appropriating emotional styles coded as masculine and engaging in practices of self-degendering that unsettled patriarchal hierarchies of authority. Bridging poststructuralism, affect theory, and queer critique into conversation with early modern Scottish sources, this thesis sheds light on new agents in the annals of resistance and proposes a transferable methodology for reading mediated or fragmented archives. In doing so, we challenge institutional and static narratives and are better able to foreground the lived experiences and emotional labour through which marginalized agents reconfigured their identities in terms of faith, power, and gendered subjectivities.

Advisor:

Dr. Cathryn Spence

Chair:

Dr. Alan McDougall

Examination Committee:

Dr. Adam Davies

Dr. Kevin James