

Women and Religion

87-265

Dr. Kathleen E. Corley
TTh 1:20-2:50 Clow 26
Spring 2008

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Office Hours: TTh 8:20-9:20am; TTH 11:30-12:30 – all office hours will be held at Mi Taza Café in Reeve Union

Course Description: A course on the role of women, gender and the feminine in the religions of the world. Using sacred textual traditions as a base, we will examine the place of women, gender and the feminine in 1) mythology 2) social and family relations and 3) religious ritual and organization, including monasticism. We will also give attention to the significance of the gendered nature of deity for women's spirituality and experience in the world's religions.

Texts:

Required:

Nancy Auer Falk and Rita M. Gross, Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001).

Huston Smith, The World's Religions (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991).

Serinity Young, ed. An Anthology of Sacred Texts by and About Women (NY: Crossroad, 1993).

Lecture Packet.

Course Requirements:

Attend class. Always bring paper, pen or pencil and textbooks.

Read assigned materials before coming to class. You are responsible for readings from required texts, and any assignments from materials placed on reserve.

Write:

1) Brief in-class writing assignments and handouts. The two lowest scores will be dropped. (10%)

2) Two book reviews (4-5 pages each typed). List of books on reserve will be distributed to the class. Due dates listed on the class schedule. (30%)

3) Three short answer/essay exams. You will need a **blue book** for each exam. Dates of exams are clearly marked in the class schedule. Exams may only be missed due to **severe hardship** reported **PRIOR** to the exam. (60%)

For Extra Credit:

4) Write a third book review of another book on reserve list for this course.

Class Schedule:

- Feb. 5 Course Introduction
Women and Religion: Categories and Terms
Introduction to Mythology
- Feb. 7 Adam, Eve and the Serpent: Elaine Pagels video
In class writing
Young, 1-18
Smith, 271-316
- Feb. 12 When God Was a Woman
Slides from Catul Huyuk

Young, "Introduction," and 126-142
Smith, "Point of Departure"
- Feb. 14 Judaism
Women and the Hebrew Bible
Young, 18-26
- Feb. 19 Women and Jewish Practice
Young, 26-39
M. H. Neudel, "Innovation and Tradition in a Contemporary Jewish Congregation," in Falk and Gross (ch. 18, 221-230)
- Feb. 21 Greece and Rome
Greco-Roman Cultural Constructs of Male and Female Roles
Young, 142-46; 149-50; 155-167; 171-178
On electronic reserve: Ross Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: Women in Ancient Greece and the Cult of Dionysius"
Film: Greco-Roman Gods and Goddesses
- Feb. 26 Christianity
Women Leaders in Early Christianity
Video: Designing Women
Young, 41-46
NT texts in lecture packet

- Smith, 317-364
- Feb. 28 Film: The Hidden Tradition: Women's Ordination
In class writing
- March 4 Christianity
Women Who "Act Like Men:" Virginity and
and its Meaning for Early Christian Women
Young, 53-57; 75-78
Susan Setta, "When Christ Is a Woman," in Falk and
Gross, (ch. 22, 264-275)
- March 5-7 **Exam I**
To be held in the Testing Center in the basement of Polk Library. Come
early. Bring student ID. Do not wait until the last minute due to large
numbers of students taking tests. Testing Center provides blue books.
There will be no class on March 1.
- March 11 Christianity
"Heretics," "Prostitutes" and "Witches:" The Labeling of
Errant Women
Young, 79-93; 151-152; 403-414
K. M. Brown, "Mama Lola and the Ezilis: Themes of
Mothering and Loving in Haitian Vodou," in Falk and
Gross (ch. 23, 279-289)
- March 13 Modern Controversies in Christianity:
Homosexuality and the Bible
- March 18 Modern Women's Roles in Christianity:
Household Codes
- March 23-30 Spring Break**
- April 1 Modern Men's Roles in Christianity:
The Promise Keepers
Review # 1 Due
- April 8 Islam
Women Under the Taliban
Video: "Beneath the Veil"
On electronic reserve: "About Face," "Women in Islam," Time (Dec. 3,
2001)34-49. **Bring to class for use for quiz.**

- April 10 Islam
 Women in Islam
 Guest Speaker: Ms. Nihal Shahbandar
 Bettridge, "The Controversial Vows of Urban Muslim Women in Iran" in
 Falk and Gross (ch. 11, 134-143)Islam
- April 15 Islam
 Women, the Rise of Islam and the Koran
 Young, 95-106
 Smith, 221-270
- April 17 Veiling and Social Change: The Hijab
On electronic reserve:
 A. E. MacLeod, Accommodating Protest, 97-124
- April 22 **Exam 2**
In class exam. Bring blue books.
- April 24 Hinduism
 Gender Segregation and Women's Experience
 Video: Dadi's Family (PBS)
- Young, 106-108; 110-125
 E. Friedl, "Islam and Tribal Women in a Village
 in Iran," in Falk and Gross (ch. 13, 157-167)
- April 29 Hinduism
 Hindu Mythology and the Role of the Feminine
 Video: Sitala festival
 Young, 270-273; 293-305
 J. M. Freeman, "The Ladies of Lord Krishna: Rituals of
 Middle Aged Women in Eastern India," in Falk and Gross
 (ch. 9, 114-124)
- May 1 Women and Hindu Tradition
 Young, 266-269; 277-293
 S. S. Wadley, "Hindu Women's Family and Household
 Rites in a North Indian Village," in Falk and Gross (ch. 8,
 103-113)
 Smith, 12-81
- May 6 Buddhism
 "In the Footprint of the Buddha"
 Video
 Smith, 82-153

- May 8 Buddhism
 Can Women Reach Enlightenment?
 Women in Buddhist Tradition
 Young, 306-338
 R. A. Ray, "Accomplished Women in Tantric Buddhism,"
 in Falk and Gross (ch. 19, 233-242)
 N. A. Falk, "The Case of the Vanishing Nuns: The Fruits of
 Ambivalence in Ancient Indian Buddhism," in Falk and
 Gross (ch. 16, 196-206)
- May 13 Chinese Religions
 Women and the Confucian Cosmic Order
 Young, 340-347; 353-363
 Smith, 154-195
- Taoism and the Harmony of Opposites
 Young, 378-382; 385-390
 Smith, 196-220
 Young, 216-217; 225-235
 Y. K. Harvey, "Possession Sickness and Women Shamans
 in Korea," in Falk and Gross (ch. 5, 59-65)
 Smith, 365-391
- Young, 216-219; 225-235
 Inéz Tlamantez, "The Presence of Isanaklesh: A Native American
 Goddess and the Path of Pollen" in Falk and Gross (ch. 24, 290-300).
- Review # 2 Due**
EXTRA CREDIT REVIEWS DUE
- May 15 **Exam 3**
In class exam. Bring blue books.

