



**RLG5937/WST6935: Gender, Women, and Sexuality in Religious Studies**  
Spring 2020

Tuesdays 11:45-1:40 and Thursdays 12:40-1:40, Matherly 113

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This graduate seminar will explore the relations between scholarship on gender, women, and sexuality and work in religious studies. We will read both theoretical pieces and historical and ethnographic case studies, including contemporary and classic works by a range of authors. Some of the course's main themes will include the religious experiences of women and LGBTQ communities; the roles of religion in the construction of gender identity; and the interaction between religion and movements of reform, critique, and social change related to gender and sexuality. Throughout, we will examine both the ways that women's and gender studies have influenced religious studies and also the distinctive contributions that religious studies might make to scholarship on women, gender, and sexuality, including attention to concrete practices and communal life as well as conceptions of the divine, normative judgments, and spiritual experience.

This course has 25% Latin American content and will count towards the credits needed for the Latin American Studies certificate and master's program, in addition to programs in Religion and Women's, Gender, and Sexualities Studies.

## **POLICIES AND RULES**

1. *Academic Honesty:* All work submitted must be completed without unauthorized assistance, collaboration, or deliberate misrepresentations. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else's material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without according him/her/them proper recognition (through a footnote, for instance). Other forms of cheating (particularly downloading material from the Internet and presenting as if it were yours) will also be subject to the same action. **I operate under a zero tolerance policy and any instance of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course**; in such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean. All UF students are expected to abide by the Student Conduct Code, which can be found at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php>. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These can be found at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

2. *Late or Make-Up Assignments:* You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances *and* with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down ½ grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. *Attendance and Participation:* Class attendance is required. Poor attendance will harm your course grade. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day's readings.

4. *Common Courtesy:* Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave. You may take notes on a laptop computer, although the instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class.

5. *Accommodation for Disabilities:* Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

6. *Counseling Resources:* UF is committed to providing social and emotional support that students need to thrive. Please let me know if you would like to discuss issues that affect your

welfare or your ability to succeed in the class. Resources available on-campus for students include the following:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

7. *Software Use:* All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

## **REQUIREMENTS AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Complete all required readings by the date assigned. Be prepared to spend time on these books. Read carefully, so that you are prepared to ask questions about and discuss the assigned reading in each class.
2. Participate actively in class discussions. There will be unannounced reading quizzes during the semester to check participation and engagement. 10% of final grade.
3. Class presentations: Each student will help lead at two class discussions over the semester, writing a short (approx. 2 page) paper with key themes and questions to guide class discussion. 5% each; 10% of final grade total.
5. Two short essays (4-5 pp each), based on readings. Due on Feb. 5 and March 18. 15% of final grade each; 30% of final grade total.
6. In-class writing on Bannerjee and Silverblatt, Tuesday, April 14. 10% of final grade.
7. Final project: This has two parts, both of which should be developed in consultation with the instructor.
  - a) A longer paper (around 10 pp) that involves research beyond the course readings. This can be a review essay, a research paper, a dissertation or grant proposal, or another project chosen in consultation with the instructor. The paper will count for 30% of your final grade. It is due on Sunday, April 19. Please note: Students who wish to receive credit toward a Latin American Studies degree or certificate for this course should write their final paper on a topic related to Latin America or the Caribbean.

b) Presentation of your work at a research symposium on Thursday, April 16. The presentation can be in the form of a talk, a poster, a zine, a video, or another format. The presentation will count for 10% of your final grade.

### **EXPERIENTIAL AND OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

February 4, 3-4:30 pm, Smathers 100: Student Ethics Café on Free Speech on Campus

Feb. 11 or 12, Panel on Sex Trafficking; details TBD

March 11, 7-8:30 pm, Panel Discussion on Immigration Reform, at the Thomas Center in downtown Gainesville

Sat., March 14, Wikipedia Edit-a-thon at the Harn Museum of Art for the International Art+Feminism Campaign

March 17, 3-4:30 pm, Smathers 100, Student Ethics Café on Gender Violence

April 1, 7-8:30 pm, Panel Discussion on Climate Change, at the Thomas Center in downtown Gainesville

April 7, 3-4:30 pm, Smathers 100, Student Ethics Café on Reparations

April 15, 7-8:30 pm, Public Ethics Café on economic justice in Gainesville, at the Thomas Center in downtown Gainesville

April 16, TBD, Student research and poster fair, Reitz Union room XXX

### **REQUIRED READING**

The following required books are available at the UF bookstore and on reserve at Library West.

Banerjee, Sikata. *Make Me a Man! Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationism in Hinduism* (SUNY, 2005).

Mahmood, Saba. *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, 2011)

Pui-Lan, Kwok. *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Westminster John Knox, 2005).

Silverblatt, Irene. *Moon, Sun, Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, 1987).

Articles and Chapters:

Brusco, Elizabeth. "The Reformation of Machismo: Asceticism and Masculinity among Colombian Evangelicals," in *Rethinking Protestantism in Latin America*, ed. David Stoll and Virginia Garrard-Burnett (Temple, 1993).

Bucar, Elizabeth M. "Bodies at the Margins: The Case of Transsexuality in Catholic and Shia Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38, no. 4 (2010): 601-615.

Bynum, Caroline Walker. Selections from *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (California, 1988). Available as an e-book.  
<https://uf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?20UF029038819>

Cady Stanton, Elizabeth, et al. Selections from *The Women's Bible* (1895-98).  
<https://www.sacred-texts.com/wmn/wb/index.htm>

Derris, Karen. "Interpreting Buddhist Representations of Motherhood and Mothering." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 30, No. 2 (Fall 2014): 61-79.

Gilkes, Cheryl Townsend. "The 'Loves' and 'Troubles' of African-American Women's Bodies: The Womanist Challenge to Cultural Humiliation and Community Ambivalence." In Katie Cannon and Emilie Townes, eds., *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader* (Westminster John Knox, 2011).

Hidayatullah, Aysha. "Feminist Interpretation of the Qur'an in a Comparative Feminist Setting." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 30, No. 2 (Fall 2014): 115-129.

Maxwell, Carol J. C. and Ted G. Jelen, "Commandos for Christ: Narratives of Male Pro-Life Activists." *Review of Religious Research* 37, No. 2 (Dec., 1995): 117-131.

Mian, Ali Altaf. "An Androcentric Discipline? The Gender Troubles of Qur'anic Exegesis." *Marginalia: Los Angeles Times Review of Books* (Sept. 10, 2016).  
<https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/androcentric-discipline-gender-troubles-quranic-exegesis-a-li-altaf-mian/>

Muers, Rachel. "The Ethics of Breast-Feeding: A Feminist Theological Exploration." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 7-24.

Noddings, Nel. "The Care Tradition: Beyond 'Add Women and Stir.'" *Theory Into Practice* 40, No. 1 Studies (Winter, 2001): 29-34

Oh, Irene. "Motherhood in Christianity and Islam: Critiques, Realities, and Possibilities," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38, no. 4 (2010): 638-653.

Peterson, Anna. "The Only Way I Can Walk: Women, Christianity, and Everyday Life in El Salvador," in *Christianity, Social Change, and Globalization*, eds. Anna Peterson et al. (Rutgers, 2001).

Roded, Ruth. "Jewish and Islamic Religious Feminist Exegesis of the Sacred Books: Adam, Woman and Gender." *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues* 29 (Fall 2015): 56-80.

Ruddick, Sara. "Maternal Thinking." *Feminist Studies* 6, No. 2 (Summer, 1980): 342-367.

Thornton, Brendan Jamal. "Residual Masculinity and Gendered Charisma," from *Negotiating Respect: Pentecostalism, Masculinity, and the Politics of Spiritual Authority in the Dominican Republic* (University Press of Florida, 2016).

Underwood, Meredith. "Strategies of Survival: Women, Abortion, and Popular Religion in Contemporary Japan." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 67, No. 4 (Dec., 1999): 739-768.

Weems, Renita. "Re-Reading for Liberation: African-American Women and the Bible." In Katie Cannon and Emilie Townes, eds., *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader* (Westminster John Knox, 2011).

### **Schedule of readings and topics**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/reading</u>
Tues, Jan. 7	Introduction to class. Code of Conduct.
Thurs., Jan. 9	<i>Scriptural exegesis:</i> Stanton, <i>The Woman's Bible</i>
Tues, Jan. 14	Mian, "An Androcentric Discipline?" and Hidayatullah, "Feminist Interpretation of the Qur'an"
Thurs., Jan 16	Derris, "Interpreting Buddhist Representations of Motherhood and Mothering"
Tues, Jan. 21	Roded, "Jewish and Islamic Religious Feminist Exegesis of the Sacred Books"

Weems, "Re-Reading for Liberation"

- Thurs, Jan 23      *Feminist theology:*  
Kwok Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*
- Tues Jan. 28      Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination*
- Thurs Jan 30      Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination*
- Tues Feb 4      Pui-Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination*
- Thurs Feb 6      *Ethics, bodies, and embodiment:*  
Selections from Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*
- Tues Feb. 11      Oh, "Motherhood in Christianity and Islam"  
Bucar, "Bodies at the Margins"
- Thurs Feb 13      Underwood, "Strategies of Survival"  
Muers, "The Ethics of Breast-Feeding"
- Tues Feb 18      Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking"  
Noddings, "The Care Tradition"
- Thurs Feb 20      Gilkes, "The 'Loves' and 'Troubles' of African-American Women's Bodies"
- \* First short essay due by midnight on Sunday, Feb. 23 \*
- Tues Feb 25      *Masculinity:*  
Thornton, "Residual Masculinity and Gendered Charisma"  
Maxwell and Jelen, "Commandos for Christ"
- Thurs Feb 27      *Women in religious communities:*  
Peterson, "The Only Way I Can Walk"  
Brusco, "The Reformation of Machismo"

Week of March 2 – Spring Break

- Tues March 10      *Women in Religious Communities:*  
Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety*,

Thurs March 12      Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety*,

Tues March 17      Mahmood, *The Politics of Piety*,

\*Second short paper due by midnight on Wednesday, March 18

Thurs March 19      *Gender, Class, and Colonialism:*  
Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches*

Tues March 24      Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun and Witches*

Thurs March 26      Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches*

Tues March 31      Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches*

Thurs April 2      Bannerjee, *Make me a Man!*

Tues April 7      Bannerjee, *Make me a Man!*

Thurs April 9      Bannerjee, *Make me a Man!*

Tues April 14      In-class writing on Bannerjee and Silverblatt

Thurs April 16      Poster/research fair, 11-3 in the Reitz Union, Room TBD  
Our class will meet during the usual time (12:40-1:40) at the poster fair  
In addition, each group or individual presenter must bring and set up the  
poster and/or other materials a half hour before the starting time and take it  
down at the end. Bring posters to class on Tuesday 4/21.

Tues April 21      Poster presentations in class. Reflection on symposium/wrap up

\*\* Final papers/projects due Sunday, April 19 \*