

TESP131R: Feminist Theologies  
Fall 2009  
Tuesdays/ Thursdays: 7-8:45PM  
Kenna 304  
Instructor: Prof. T.M Hinga

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Office hours: Wednesday: 2-3M or by appointment  
Adjusted October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 to Align with Class Demographics etc

### Course Description:

The point of departure of *feminist theology* as a theology of liberation is the **near universal women's experience** of oppression largely on account of their gender. Although women's experiences of such oppression are almost universal, the specific *impact and responses* to these experiences are colored by *the social, political and historical locations of the women*. Consequently, given the variety of specific historical contexts, women's articulation of their concern for justice and liberation *is necessarily diverse*. It is therefore inaccurate to speak of a **generic** feminist theology since what seems to have emerged is a variety of feminist theologies as women around the globe voice their critique of society and culture in view of the interlocking and multiple oppressions that face them. Against this background, this course seeks to introduce students to the *phenomenon* of **feminist theologies** in their emerging **unity and diversity**. Through an analysis of a **selected sample of feminist theological voices and themes**, the course will critically explore the **variety of concerns** implicit in feminist theologies and the *commonalties of goals that seem also to be emerging*. In particular, the course will explore the themes of **inclusion, exclusion and representation**, which have also been a major catalyst in the emergence of diverse feminist theologies. Since the *experience of women* is considered by feminists to be a primary resource and norm for doing theology, the course will also explore the significance of the rather bewildering variety of **women's experiences** and the implication of this for women's search for **sisterhood** as they seek to work in **solidarity** with each other to **achieve the common goal of women's liberation in an increasingly globalized context**.

### Specific Objectives: (learning outcomes)

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. **Demonstrate their analytical understanding of the phenomenon of feminist theology** and its emergence in **history as a form of liberation theology**.
2. **Show mastery of an adequate and relevant content** in feminist theology in order to be able to respond **critically to it**.
3. **Critically explore the social-historical roots of the variety of voices** in feminist Theology.
4. **Analyze the implications** of the challenge of feminist theology *to culture, religion and society*.
5. **Explore the social political implications** of feminist theologies for the relationship between *men and women* and between *women and women*.
6. **Explore the issue of inclusion, exclusion and representation** and the question it raises for the impact of feminist theology as a theology of liberation.
7. **Explore the contribution of feminist theologies to the quest for a just and humane global society**.
8. xxx... (Accomplish Students self-designed learning goals pertinent to this course).

### Course Requirements

1. **Regular attendance of class and Active participation in class discussions** both in *structured group work* and voluntary suggestion of ideas or raising and answering pertinent questions: Students may also be called upon either individually or in groups to lead discussion on specific subthemes or to act as discussants. Be prepared **at all times to do so. (10%)**

2. **Active preparation for class by reading** the required readings **prior to class**. Evidence of preparation should be manifest in the student's ability to respond to questions both **oral and written**, based on the readings. It should also be manifest in the student's active participation in class discussions. In order to **monitor this preparedness**, students will at *random intervals* during the session be asked to *submit synthetic* and analytical written responses to **specific questions** based on the readings. **Informal in class writing and pop quizzes** could be assigned during class as a way of documenting your preparedness for class through careful and analytical reading of texts (10%)
3. **2 Response papers** minimum 3, maximum 5 double-spaced typewritten pages. These should reveal your **critical engagement** with an issue or issues arising out of the readings or class discussions. This should be the opportunity to explore an issue or issues raised in or through the readings or class discussion that intrigues you by analytically commenting on or questioning the issue/s (see class schedule below for due dates) 10% each  
Total 20%
4. **Midterm:** In the form of a book or film review: Suggested Materials/books for review to be announced by *Tuesday week 2* 20%
5. **Group project:** Students will work in designated groups on a **pertinent project** designed to help them connect what is studied and discussed in the classroom with the issues of feminist theological significance as a **lived reality**. (Suggested Projects TBA by end of week 1). Guidance as to what is expected here will be provided in class along with suggested resources for the project. (15%)
6. **Final Exam:** in the form of a **Final paper** (Format and suggested topics TBA by end of week 6) 25%

**Total: 100%**

### Grading Policy

Your final grade is cumulative and will be computed from the total you gain in fulfilling the above requirements. A final grade will be allocated as follows:

- 90-100% - A: Will be assigned for **outstanding work** which is relevant, clear, coherent, and systematic and shows evidence of critical mind at work
- 80-89% - B will be assigned for work that is **of high quality** and which adequately addresses itself to the issues and is relatively critical and well articulated.
- 70-79% - C Will be assigned to work that is **average, barely meets the requirements** of the course and not very critical.
- 60-69% - D poorly presented work that is **barely coherent relevant** or critical
- Below 60 % F **Irrelevant, incoherent work** that does not meet the requirements of the course at all.

**NB: the top 2 and bottom 2 numbers in each grade category will be used indicate plus (+) or Minus (-) grades. E.g. 90-92% = A-, 88-89% = B+, 80-82% = B- etc.**

### Policy on Plagiarism

Students in this class are reminded that **Plagiarism** (i.e.-the use of other peoples ideas, words or work without properly acknowledging them) is a serious offence and stands to be penalized. Students should be aware of the strong sanction against plagiarism as stated in the current student's code of conduct. If proven, charges of plagiarism could result in an **automotive F**. Consequently, students are encouraged to develop a **strong sense of academic integrity and rigor at all times**, a fact that is self-rewarding both in the short and long run. While pairing up for reading assigned texts may be a **practical and creative way** to ensure mastery of course content, make sure that when you submit any work **for evaluation of your fulfillment of course requirements**, that the work you submit is recognizably your own and **not an echo or copy of some one else's work**. Echoing someone else's work invites charges of plagiarism. So avoid it and submit work that has **your own imprint on it**.

### **Disability and other Accommodation:**

To request Academic accommodations for disability and other **pertinent matters**, students must contact Undergraduate Academic advising and Learning Resources Center located in Benson 216 Drahmman Center 408 554 4109 or enquiries can be emailed to **Robin Cole, Administrative Associate, and rcole@scu.edu**. Students must provide documentation supporting their request for accommodation to Disability/Academic Advising Resource Center before receiving accommodation. Please do this in good time, at any rate by end of **week 1** to ensure that you receive the accommodations you need in a **timely and meaningful manner**.

### **Policy on attendance:**

Class attendance is **mandatory** except for **emergencies** which should be explained to me in writing, preferably and if possible, before hand. Only students with excused absences will be allowed to make up assignments. Please note that frequent (**ie more than 2**) will invite the lowering of your grade **by at least a letter**. Beyond that, you will be inviting *an F for the class*. Please note that missing this class to attend to the requirements of another class does not constitute an *excusable absence*.

### **Collegiality: ie (Respect for self and others in the Learning Community that is TESP 131 and beyond)**

Students in this class are reminded of the imperative all the times to be respectful to the learning community that **includes you, your fellow students**, the instructor, guests who may visit our class and any others who we encounter as *we all journey together in the next 10 weeks*.

**Such collegiality** and respect demands that we avoid disruptive and disrespectful behavior that interrupts or **subverts** class at all times. In the spirit of collegiality, **disconnect your cell-phones before** coming to class. Laptops are not allowed in the class (unless you are using it for class work, **particularly group** in class presentation). Since this class meets late in the evening, it may be advisable for you to find some time before (rather than during class) for your evening meal or snack.

**Please note that abrupt** premature departures or late arrivals to class are also disruptive and not allowed. If in the rare occasion you find yourself *late for class or having to leave prematurely, do so in a discrete manner that does not unduly interrupt class*. *Collegiality and respect is expected in class and beyond the class as you continue to work individually or in groups*. *Such collegiality and respect is as much a marker of a scholar as the scoring of high grades in other aspects of the academic enterprise*.

### **Class Procedures:**

A combination of lecture/discussion as well as reflective and analytical writing will be used to achieve the goals of this course. For this reason, *class attendance and participation will play a vital role in the achievements of the goals of the class* and will be highly rated as indicated in the course requirements. **Both group and individual participation** is expected and is of equal value. For the purposes of group work, each student will be assigned a **working group**. The groups are encouraged to work out the best ways of researching and presenting their assignments. It is advisable that each group assigns individuals in the group specific responsibilities. Each group will have at least three sets of individual playing the following roles.

**Coordinator/facilitator:** - who will organize the group, coordinate its activities, introduce the presentation and facilitate discussion.

**Debaters/ discussants:** - at least two people from each group will present both sides of the debate or the various perspectives of the issue at hand.

**A recorder:** - responsible for preparing a one-page memo highlighting the issue raised and discussed and wrapping up the conclusion of the debate in a summary form. This synthesis along with the pertinent supportive documentation of your collective efforts should be submitted for **grading after the presentation**.

### **Total for Group project: 20%**

#### **Written Assignments:**

**This being a level 3 class** the course features a substantive reading and writing component which will complement the reading, lectures and discussion as we pursue the goals of the class. The writing component is

broken-down into **three complementary types of writing** .

- 1. Response papers:** These are designed to be a forum through which you identify and analytically though necessarily in a preliminary manner *respond to issues arising from readings* and or in class discussion . Though you are expected in these essays **to go beyond description** and summary to analysis and critical response, it is expected that these essays will largely be **exploratory** and do not require you to do **readings/research** beyond what is available in and through the texts and their discussion in class. However , **the 2-3page** papers will **synthesize key ideas** in the readings and offer preliminary **critical** responses to the issues raised in the readings and discussion thereof. These will be *collected 2 times in the quarter* (see course outline for due dates)and will constitute **20% of you final grade** (see **course requirements above**) . Insights gained and or expressed in the writing of these papers should constitute **building blocks towards your final paper**. Its is expected that though preliminary , the papers will manifest your own personal engagement with the issues you identify for analytical response and personal **critical engagement** with the topic you chose. These papers will be evaluated on a scale of 1-10 on how well they show **command of the subject matter** as well as your ability critically to analyze and respond to it in a scholarly manner. Details on key aspects of **critical thinking are summarized in one** of our key assigned text this quarter: **Asking the Right questions...** We will read on various aspects of critical thinking from this book and apply these as we read and respond to our assignments and texts (Written, audio or visual). **Practice and show off the skills** of critical thinking in your verbal and written work in this class for best results. Questions to guide reading on the text asking the Right Questions will be provided as we go along.... (20%)
- 2. Midterm book/ film review:** Building on the **readings and discussions of assigned** texts as well as the **preliminary insights gained** from the response papers, group work etc, and the midterm book review will test your ability to **identify and critically respond** to issues of feminist theological significance/ concern in **the recommended books/texts**. The books for review are chosen for how well they exemplify some of the concerns/ issues and themes that we will be discussing in class (see course outline for themes and topics)... Your task in the review will be **to show your understanding of feminist theological** issues as discussed in the class through your ability to identify these themes and analytically respond to them in your essay. Your review will earn you a total of **20%** and it should also be part of the **building blocks towards your final paper**. **List of recommended books and guidelines for the review will be distributed by end of week 2 so that you begin to read with TESP 131 lenses...** (20%)
- 3. Final paper :** Building on insights gained from a critical analytical readings of **assigned texts, participation** in class discussion of **matters arising from the readings**, insights gained from your **reflection essays** as well as the midterm book review you will submit a **final paper during exam week** on a topic of your choice that is pertinent to **TESP 131** and which will integrate what you have learnt as well as give you an opportunity analytically to engage the topic you chose beyond what has been discussed so far. More detailed guidelines regarding **Format**, structure as well as suggested topics for possible final paper will be distributed by end of week 4. By end of **week 6** you will have **identified a topic** which you would like to **explore analytically** in and through this paper. Submit your proposed topics to me in writing by end of week 6. (Details of how to construct your **proposal and construct a thesis statement** will be given along with the topics). **Total for the Final Paper: (25%)**

**Total for the written assignments will be 65%**

**Extra-Curricular work and extra credit:** - the above are **required activities for this class**. However, some may wish to explore dimensions of the themes/issues that are pertinent but which may not be covered in class because of time limitations. There will also be many pertinent events on campus which would touch on some of the themes that we will be tackling. Attending such pertinent events and submitting a **2 page maximum** synthetic/analytical response linking the events with our course its goals and or themes is encourage. , could be done for **extra credit** (**not as a substitute** for required work). The amount of credit (to go to the lowest grade in the requirements,) will be at my discretion and will be determined by the **quality of work and** will not **exceed 5% of the final grade**.

**Course Outline: NB This Outline May Change to Reflect Class Demographics and Other Contingencies and Unpredictables.**

**Week 1: Background and Preliminaries**

**September 22nd.**

- a. Introduction to the course and its scope.
- b. Aspects of **Critical thinking**; an overview:  
Assign: Keeley: Chapters (1-2)  
Video Excerpts: **All that I Am/or If these walls could talk**

**September 24th**

- a) Defining Feminist theology: Its Key terms of Reference and Key Concerns  
Readings: Clifford: Feminist Theology: Introduction: Pages  
Fiorenza: The Power of Naming: Introduction xiii-xxxv.  
**Video Excerpts: All That I Am**

**Groups and Topics assigned. Conversation starter topics will be distributed via angel Spend time of Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup> for o initial consultation**

**Week 2. Women Spirit Rising : Historical Roots of Feminist Theologies**

**September 29th**

- a) Feminist Theology in the "West":, History , Sources and Methods:  
Readings: Clifford: Chapter 1: pages 9-24; Fiorenza Chapter 1  
Carol P. Christ: Preface and Introduction  
Elizabeth Candy Stanton: Excerpts: The Women's Bible (Introduction) (On Angel)  
**Video Excerpts: The Life of Susan B Anthony and Elisabeth Candy Stanton**

**Part 2: (Guest Speaker/s on Resources for Feminist Theologies in or around campus)**

**October 1st:**

Feminist Theologies in the West: continued  
*Adjusted to accommodate the fact that Guest Speakers took most of September 29<sup>th</sup>)*

**Week 3: The Rise of Third World Feminist Theologies**

**October 6<sup>th</sup> : Inessential Woman, The Challenge of Sisterhood :The Rise of "Third World Feminist Theologies":**

Reading : Excerpts from Vicky Spelman *Inessential Woman* : Introduction , chapters 5&7 (On Angel)

Fiorenza: chapters 7, 2, 4 & 5. (In that order); Oduyoye: **Daughters of Anowa**:

Introduction:

*(Some of you have already done the above readings, complete them if you have not yet done so. We will discuss them Tuesday October 6<sup>th</sup>*

**October 8<sup>th</sup> :**

**Feminist Theologies Challenging, Reconstructing and Reclaiming Sacred Traditions:**

I) the Bible and Other Scriptures in Feminist Theologies

Readings:: Clifford Chapter 2 ; Carol P Christ: pp. 63-92 ; Paula Cooley Chapter 3  
**(essay by Riffat)**

More Excerpts from the Life of Susan B Anthony

**Questions for October 8<sup>th</sup>** will be placed on Angel before Class Tuesday and hard copies Brought to class; if you can, **locate a copy of the bible and bring it to class for quick**

**Reference:**

**Suggested books/films for review distributed**

**Week 4: Feminist Theologies Challenging, Reconstructing, and Reclaiming Sacred Scriptures**

**13<sup>th</sup> October: Feminist Theology Challenging, Reconstructing and Reclaiming Sacred Oral Traditions:**

Case Study: **African Oratures.**

Readings: Oduyoye Chapters 2&3

Part one: Group 1: Presenting on Feminist critique and reclamation of Sacred Traditions: Oratures and Scriptures

**Part 2: Feminist Transformation of God talk: The Search for God beyond Gender**

Readings: Clifford: Chapter 3, Fiorenza Chapter 32, Carol P Christ: pages 210- 217 & pages 53-67 in that order r

Video Excerpts: **Hinduism: 330 million Gods (subject to Availability)**

1<sup>st</sup> Response paper due

**15<sup>th</sup> October**

**Theology or Theology?** The search for women affirming symbols in theological

Discourse:

Readings: Carol P. Christ pp. 273 –287

Paula Coe: Chapter 2 (**Essay by Gupta**)

Clifford: Chapter 5; Fiorenza chapter 34

**Group 2: Feminist God talk: The Role of the God/desks in Women's lives**

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**Week 5: Breaking the Silence: Naming the Structures of Women's Oppression**

**October 20th:** Feminist Theology and Women's Work: Seeking Bread and Roses:

Readings: Fiorenza 6, 8, & 9

Possible Guest lecture: Hotel workers advocates

Video Excerpts (Behind the label or alternative)

**October 22nd: Making Bricks without Straw: Feminist Theology and the Scandal of poverty:**

Fiorenza Chapter 13, Oduyoye chapter 7

Video: To be a woman (subject to availability) Or Alternative:

(List of suggested topics for final paper distributed)

**Group 3: Feminist Theology on women, work and the scandal of poverty**

**Week 6: Breaking the Silence: Feminist Theology seeking health an wholeness**

**October 27<sup>th</sup>:** Case Study: The HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Readings: Hinga: Women, Religion and HIV AIDS in Africa: Selected: Chapters Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5&6

Excerpts from Paul Farmer: **Pathologies of Power:** (On Angel)

Excerpts from Emilie Townes: **Breaking the Fine Rain of Death** (on Angel: recommended

Kidder: **Mountains Beyond Mountains:** Recommended (Excerpts to be placed on Angel)

**October 29<sup>th</sup>:** Feminist theologies and Quest for Women's Health: Attend Discussion of Book of the Quarter

Discussion Book of the Quarter; Mountains Beyond Mountains.

(We shall attend this event as our class that day: submit a 2-3 page analytical response to the events

**Week 7: Feminist theology Breaking the Silence Continued: Violence Against Women**

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Religion and violence Against Women: Feminist Perspectives'

Fiorenza: Chapter 10, 11, 12,

Possible video Excerpts: **Darfur Diaries or alternative**

**November 5<sup>th</sup>:** Feminist Theology and Violence against women: **Is religion Friend or foe:**

Fiorenza Chapters 22 &23

Hinga: Women and HIV Aids: **Essay by Kubai:**

**Group 4; On Violence Against women**

(Midterm report due)

**Week 8 Feminist Theology Transforming Community: :**

Proposals for Final paper Due

**November 10<sup>th</sup>:** *Feminist Quest for Inclusive Religious Communities:* Case Study: The ordination debate:

Readings: Clifford Chapter 4, Fiorenza Chapter 21; Oduyoye Chapter 8, Popes Letter on the Eve of Beijing, , Coeey: Chapters 4&5

Video: Resource: When Women Were Priests: (Or alternative).  
Group 5) Possible group presentation: On transformation of society

November 12th:

**Feminist Theologies, Challenging, Reconstructing Transforming and reclaiming Ritual:**

a) **The significance of ritual in Women's Lives:**

Carol P Christ: pp167-184 Coeey Chapter 7, Oduyoye Chapter 5 Fiorenza Chapter 27.

**Possible group Presentation: Ritual and the Dilemma of women's celebration:**

Video Resource: (Half Gods Kingdom or Alternative)

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**Week 9: Feminist Theology : Women Healing Themselves and Healing the Earth:**

November 17<sup>th</sup> **The Promise and Challenge of Ecofeminism**

**Readings: Clifford Chapter 5&6**

**Excerpts: Ruether: Women Healing the Earth (on Angel)**

**Video Excerpts: The Vision of Wangari Maathai**

**Second Response paper Due**

November 19<sup>th</sup> **Feminist Visions and Dreams for the Future**

i) Any unfinished Business from 17<sup>th</sup>

ii) **Feminist Vision for the Future: A synthesis**

**Readings: Fiorenza Coeey Chapter 8; Oduyoye Chapter 10 Fiorenza Chapter 36**

**Students presentations on examples of women of vision of courage and conscience**

**Week 10: November 23<sup>rd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> : Thanks Giving Recess**

**Week 11: Conclusion and Synthesis**

**December 1<sup>st</sup>**

i) Any unfinished Business from Week 9

ii) **Preparing the Final paper :Students Questions and Concerns**

**December 3<sup>rd</sup> : Last Day of Class: Course Wrap Up.**

**Reading list**

Christ Carol P: *Woman Spirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*: Harper San Francisco 1992

Coeey P. M: *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of World Religions*: Orbis Books 1991

Fiorenza, E. S.: *The Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology*: Orbis books 1996

Oduyoye M. A: *Daughters of Anowa*: Orbis Books 1996

**Clifford: Anne Feminist Theology: Orbis books, 2002**

**Hinga; T.M. et al Women, Religion and HIV AIDS: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges**

**Keeley: Asking the Right Questions: Prentice Hall (2004) (Required reference book)**

**Supplementary readings** in the form of excerpts from other pertinent books will be available on Angel or distributed in class:

**Books /films for midterm review will be distributed separately by end of week 3**

**The following 2 Books** are useful References /Resources and will be requested for reserve. *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*: 1996

Stanton Cady Elizabeth: *The Women's Bible*: North Eastern University Press 1995 (First Published in 1895) Excerpts of introduction to **Women's Bible are on Angel**