

SPRS 2526: Women's Spiritual Quest

Spring 2012

Clare Ronzani

clareronzani@comcast.net

Phone: (510) 352-6765; (510) 848-5232 ext. 26

n.b. Draft: Subject to change

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar will engage women in a process of reflection on their experience from the perspectives of spirituality, psychology, and the arts. We will consider women's religious experience; relationships; personal/societal transformation; the body; the natural world.

Class will include feminist readings, written reflections, discussion, and ritual.

TEXTS:

Required Texts:

Fischer, Kathleen, *Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction*

Harris Maria, *Dance of the Spirit: Seven Steps of Women's Spirituality*

Sewell, Marilyn, ed., *Cries of the Spirit*

Wolff, Margaret, *In Sweet Company: Conversations with Extraordinary Women About Living a Spiritual Life*

Plus an additional book of choice

Additional articles available on Moodle

REQUIREMENTS:

- Assigned readings
- Class attendance and informed participation in women's circle and class discussions/activities
- Ongoing personal journal
- Periodic reflection papers (3-4 pages, typed). Focus for reflection papers will be provided in class. (Due dates: February 13, March 12, April 16)
- 3-4 page paper on book of choice focusing on a woman from a religious tradition or culture other than your own (due April 30)
 - (What did you learn about and from this woman's story/spiritual quest? What is most meaningful to you? What is most challenging? How does this book relate to any of the themes of the course? Does it add any? Be specific.)
- Final 4-5 page paper (due May 14)

GRADING:

- 40% Informed class participation
- 40% Reflection papers including final paper
- 20% Paper on book of choice

SPPS 2526: Women's Spiritual Quest
Spring 2012
Clare Ronzani
clareronzani@comcast.net
Phone: (510) 352-6765; (510) 848-5232 ext. 14

**January 30: GATHERING THE CIRCLE: INTRODUCTION TO COURSE
CONTENT, PROCESS, AND METHODOLOGY**

February 6: WOMEN'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

Reading:

Harris, Maria, *Dance of the Spirit*, Prologue and Chapter 1, "Awakening"
Fischer, Kathleen, *Women at the Well*, Introduction, chapters 1 and 2
Johnson, Elizabeth A., "Harkening to Women's Wisdom" (*Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit*)
Sewell, Marilyn, *Cries of the Spirit*, Preface and "Owning Self"

Recommended:

Schneiders, Sandra, "Feminist Spirituality: Christian Alternative or Alternative to Christianity?" (*Beyond Patching*)
Website: www.calledtoholiness.org

February 13: THE POWER OF STORY

Reading:

Harris, ch. 2, "Dis-Covering"
Christ, Carol, "Women's Stories, Women's Quest" (*Diving Deep and Surfacing*)
Wolff, selections from *In Sweet Company* (Introduction, Sr. Helen Prejean, Zainab Salbi)
Sewell, Introduction and "The Imperative of Intimacy"

Recommended:

King, Theresa, "What is Spirituality?" (*The Spiral Path: Explorations in Women's Spirituality*)

Reflection paper due

February 20: Presidents' Day Holiday (no class)

February 27: BODY AS SACRED

Reading:

Harris, ch. 3, "Creating"
Johnson, "A Taproot of the Crisis: The Two-Tiered Universe" (*Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit*)
Northrup, Christiane, "The Patriarchal Myth and the Addictive System" (*Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*)
Pare, Louise, "Self-Image and Spirituality: Coming Home to our Bodies" (*The Spiral Path*)
Sewell, "The Spirit and the Flesh Are One" & "Death and Lesser Losses"
One of the following:
Fischer, "Body as Sacred" (Autumn Gospel)
Kwok Pui-Lan, "Sexuality and Spirituality" (*Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*)
Phillips, Jan, "I Trust My Body's Divine Connection," (*Your Truest Self*)
Washbourn, Penelope "Becoming Woman: Menstruation as Spiritual Challenge" (*Womanspirit Rising*)

March 5: HONORING WOMEN'S HISTORY & LEGACY OF JUSTICE

Reading:

Harris, ch. 4, "Dwelling"
Wolff: Le Ly Hayslip, Grandmother Twylah Hurd Nitsch
Sewell, "Generations"
TBA

Additional class preparation:

- Individual research on a woman of history from your culture in preparation for presentation in class
- Web research on one of the following:
 - National Women's History Project www.nwhp.org
 - International Women's Day www.internationalwomensday.org
 - International Museum of Women www.imow.org
 - www.Womenshistorymonth.gov

March 12: OUR MOTHERS/OURSELVES

Reading:

Carlson, "Three Perspectives" (*In Her Image*)
Estes, Clarissa Pinkola, "Nosing Out the Facts: The Retrieval of Intuition as Initiation" (*Women Who Run With the Wolves*)
Fischer, chapter 10, "Grandmothers, Mothers, and Daughters"
One of the following:
Isasi-Diaz, "A Hispanic Garden in a Foreign Land" or Chung Hyun Kyung, "Following Naked Dancing and Long Dreaming" (*Inheriting Our Mother's Gardens*)
Sewell, "Mothering"

Reflection paper due

March 19: WOMEN'S HISTORY, ART, AND SPIRITUALITY

Reading:

Harris, ch. 6, "Traditioning"
Chicago, Judy, "Our Heritage is Our Power" (*The Politics of Women's Spirituality*, Spretnak, ed.)
"Making a Professional Life and an Equalized Relationship" (*Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist*)
"Learning from the Past" (*Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist*)
Sewell, "Songs of Brokenness and Alienation"

Guest Presenter

March 26: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

April 2: IMAGING AND EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE

Reading:

Carlson, "LifeSource" (*In Her Image*)
Clifford, Anne M., "Perspectives on God" (*Introducing Feminist Theology*)
Fischer, chapters 3 & 5, "Women Experiencing and Naming God" and "Praying with Scripture"
Froehle, Virginia Ann, "Called into Her Presence"
Sewell, "Images of the Divine"

Recommended:

Chung Hyun Kyung, "To Be Human Is to Be Created in God's Image"
Rupp, Joyce, "I am Free to Live a Spiritual Life of My Own Making" (*Your Truest Self*)

April 9: THE DIVINE FEMININE: SOPHIA

Reading:

Harris, ch. 5, "Nourishing" 7, "Transforming"
Clifford, "Analogies and Metaphors for God" (*Introducing Feminist Theology*)
Cole, Ronan, Taussig, "Spirituality, Feminism, and Sophia" (*Wisdom's Feast*)
Johnson, "Remembering Creator Spirit," (*Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit*)
Wolff: Rev. Lauren Artress, Riane Eisler, Rabbi Laura Geller
Sewell, "Re-Mything"

April 16: WOMEN'S ANGER/WOMEN'S POWER: SOURCES OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Reading:

Harris, ch. 7, "Transforming" & Epilogue
Fischer, ch. 7 & 9, "Women and Power" and "The Problem of Anger"
Chittister, Joan, "Power and Empowerment," (*Heart of Flesh: A Feminist Spirituality for Women and Men*)
Sewell, "Death and Lesser Losses" & "The Will Toward the Good"
Book of Choice

Recommended:

Lorde, Audre, "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" (Sister Outsider)
Johnson, (for Earth Day!) "Discerning Kinship with Earth" (*Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit*)

Reflection paper due

April 23: "A DINNER PARTY"

Reading:

In preparation for the "Dinner Party" (check websites)
Wolff: Katherine Dunham, Olympia Dukakis
Sewell, "The Sacredness of the Ordinary"

April 30: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS: WOMEN'S STORIES/OUR STORIES

Reading:

Book of Choice
Wolff: Gail Williamson, Sri Daya Mata
Sewell, "The Unity of All that Is"

Book Reflection paper due

May 7: IN SWEET COMPANY

Reading:

Wolff: Miriam Polster, Alma Flor Ada, Gail Williamson, Sri Daya Mata
Sewell, "The Word"

May 14: (no class session)

Final reflection due. Please provide self-addressed stamped envelope for return.