

TESP 131: Feminist Theologies Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Pearl Maria Barros Meeting Times: MWF 11:45 AM – 12:50 PM
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 10 AM – 11 AM and By Appointment

Course Description

The title of this course, “Feminist Theologies,” speaks to the multiplicity of feminist engagements of theology and religious discourses that have emerged over the last several decades. There is no one “Feminist Theology” just as there is no one “feminism.” In this course, we will focus primarily on feminist engagements of Christian theology. The course is divided into three units of study: **1. Feminist Theological Foremothers (from North American and European Contexts); 2. Womanist, Latina Feminist, and *Mujerista* Voices; 3. Feminist Theologies in Global Contexts: Postcolonial and Decolonial Voices.** Throughout our readings, we will especially engage the following questions: Why the need for feminist theologies? What is the relationship between theology and the constructions of gender and sexuality? How do various sociocultural contexts shape different feminist theologies? What are some ongoing debates within the field of feminist theology?

Course Learning Objectives

1. Learn to interpret theological concepts through feminist critical approaches
2. Distinguish between various authors and perspectives in feminist theologies
3. Engage in practices of feminist democratic pedagogy during class by sharing the responsibility of leading class discussions, listening carefully to others, and paying *critical* attention to one’s own feelings in relation to course materials

Core Curriculum Learning Goals and Objectives

This course fulfills Santa Clara University’s Core Requirement Religion, Theology, and Culture 3.

RTC 3 Core Goals: Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Religious Reflection, Perspective

Objectives:

1. Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions.
2. Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society.

Required Books

Books are expensive. I have tried to ensure that the cost associated with this course will not be prohibitive. Therefore, I only list as “Required Books” those from which we will be reading numerous selections. I list as “Recommended Books” those from which we will read limited selections that will also be available on Camino.

- Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is*
- Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Sheila Briggs, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*
- Articles and Chapters available on Camino

Recommended Books

- Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*
- Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation*
- Catherine Mowry LaCugna, ed., *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*
- Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*
- Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*
- Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*
- M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*
- Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century*
- María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, Jeanette Rodríguez, eds., *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*
- Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Eduardo Mendieta, eds., *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*
- Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-lan, eds., *Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse*
- Namsoon Kang, *Diasporic Feminist Theology: Asia and Theopolitical Imagination*
- Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose*
- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

Assessment and Grading

Active and Informed Participation: Read all assigned materials carefully. Take notes that will help you engage in class discussions. Active, informed participation in class discussions is *indispensable*. I also welcome questions – do not be afraid to ask them! Most classes will begin with a lecture and will then open to a lively, informed, scholarly discussion.

Group Presentation: The class will be divided into 6 groups (3-5 people per group) that will each take responsibility for leading a Friday class discussion of the assigned texts for the week. This presentation should include a brief synopsis of each text's main arguments (20 minutes) and then open the conversation to the entire class by offering three to five questions for discussion. **(Core Objective 1 and Course Objectives 2 and 3)**

Weekly Responses: Each week you will submit a one-page (single-spaced, 12-point font) response to the readings. You will turn in a total of 6 responses (I allow you one "skip" **and** you do not have to write a response during the week you lead class discussion) over the course of the academic quarter. In the response, you will answer two questions: **How do the thinkers we read this week envision feminist theology? What about the readings made you comfortable and/or uncomfortable and why?** Be sure to cite the texts! You will **also note two questions that you have about the readings and list them on the bottom of the page.** These questions can include requests for clarification as well as your own problematizing of course texts and themes in relation to the readings for the week. **The responses will be due each week on Monday by class time, starting in Week 2.** This means that you will need to plan ahead and do the course readings for the week by Monday. Such a practice will help you better understand the topics addressed in course lectures as well as enable you to enter into an informed discussion. It also gives you the opportunity to raise thoughtful questions. You should bring a copy of your weekly response with you to each class to use as a reference for discussion. **(Core Objective 1 and Course Objectives 2 and 3)**

Final Paper: Write an analytical paper that compares and contrasts **how two of the authors** we have read this semester would answer **ONE of these questions:**

- What is "woman"?
- How does language (gendered, raced, classed, abled, colonial, and so on) influence how we imagine God?
- What is "feminist theology"?
- Propose your own question: Must be emailed to professor no later than Week 7 of the quarter for approval

Be sure to address what is at stake in each of their arguments, their theological suppositions, and the possible implications of their work for continued feminist

thinking about theology. The quality of the essay will show evidence of having engaged class materials closely and carefully. Remember that this paper is supposed to be an *analysis*: you must make an argument rather than simply summarize the texts. Do not be afraid of challenging our authors! The paper is to be 10-12 standard pages, double-spaced, 12-point font. It should follow *MLA Style Manual* OR *Chicago Manual of Style* conventions. **The Final Paper is due Tuesday, December 6th. (Core Objectives 1 and 2 and All Course Objectives)**

All Weekly Responses and Final Papers are to be submitted to me through the course website on Camino. You will find the online dropboxes under the "Assignments" tab. BE SURE TO UPLOAD YOUR WORK TO THE APPROPRIATE DROPBOX FOR THE WEEK! Using Camino allows me to type my comments directly on your papers and return them to you faster. It also saves trees.

Grade Distribution and Scale

Participation: 10%
 Group Presentation: 10%
 Weekly Responses: 40%
 Final Paper: 40%

Grading Scale

94.0–100 A	87.0–89.9 B+	77.0–79.9 C+	67.0–69.9 D+
90.0–93.9 A-	83.0–86.9 B	73.0–76.9 C	63.0–66.9 D
	80.0–82.9 B-	70.0–72.9 C-	60.0–62.9 D-

Assessment of the Course

Students will be asked to assess the course via narrative evaluations at the end of the quarter.

Policies

Attendance

If you are sick or something comes up, please notify the professor in advance or within a few days of the missed class. Coming to class while sick will not only worsen your illness but also possibly infect others: not cool! Take care of yourself and know that the work can be made-up. Absences count against you if you do not communicate with the professor about them. After the first excused absence, and for all unexcused absences, your attendance and class participation grades will be affected. At two or more *unexcused* absences your entire grade for the course begins to drop. Daily roll will be taken.

Cell Phone, Laptop, Tablet Use in the Classroom

Please keep your cell phones on silent (not vibrate) during class. Cell phones should be kept away from view; place them in your bag, pocket, etc. If you have a situation that demands that you keep your phone within view, please discuss this situation with the professor at the beginning of class. Laptops and tablets are only to be used in the classroom for taking notes. They are not to be used for checking social media, shopping, and/or surfing the web. Recording lectures and/or discussions is not allowed unless you have approved accommodations through the Disabilities Resources Office.

Academic Integrity

According to the Oxford Dictionary, plagiarism is: “the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own” (www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/plagiarism). Your work should be YOUR work! Take pride in it. Of course, you will engage other thinkers and sources throughout your studies, but you need to properly cite them in your work by either using the *MLA* or *Chicago Manual of Style* formats. For some helpful tips about how to properly use sources see: “Harvard Guide to Using Sources” <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page342054>. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form (as described in the Student Conduct Code) will result in a failed grade for the project, and possibly for the course. All allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department chair and Office of Student Life. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see: <http://scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-brochure-2014.pdf>. In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

Disability Accommodations

I am committed to meeting the learning needs of all students. If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours within the first two weeks of classes. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy or parenting may be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office

will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Title IX Syllabus Statement

Santa Clara University upholds a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife and click on the link for the University's [Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043) or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.comhttp://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/.

Reporting Practices

While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University.

For example, if you inform me of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the campus Student Care Team (SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at www.scu.edu/osl/report. If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043) or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves a

disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.

Schedule

Week 1: Introductions: What are “feminist theologies”?

9/19: Introductions and Course Logistics

9/21: Anne E. Carr, “The New Vision of Feminist Theology” in *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*

9/23: Serene Jones, “Feminist Theology and the Global Imagination,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*

Unit 1: Feminist Theological Foremothers (from North American and European Contexts)

Week 2

9/26: Weekly Response Due

Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, Chapters 1 and 7

Mary Daly, “After the Death of God the Father,” in *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation*

9/28: CLASS CANCELLED. Mass of the Holy Spirit at 12 Noon in Mission Church

9/30: Mary E. Hunt, “In Memoriam: Mary Daly”

See: <http://www.womenpriests.org/classic4/daly.asp>

****Group 1 Presentation****

Week 3

10/03: Weekly Response Due

Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and Godtalk*, Chapter 1

10/05: Radford Ruether, *Sexism and Godtalk*, Chapter 2

10/07: Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation.” See: <http://cdn.theologicalstudies.net/36/36.4/36.4.2.pdf>

****Group 2 Presentation****

Week 4

10/10: Weekly Response Due

Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, Chapters 1 and 2

10/12: Johnson, *She Who Is*, Chapters 3 and 4

10/14: Johnson, *She Who Is*, Chapter 12

****Group 3 Presentation****

Week 5: Interlude ... Applying a Hermeneutic of Suspicion

10/17: No Weekly Response

In-class Film: *Philomena* (Part 1)

10/19: In-class Film: *Philomena* (Part 2) and Discussion

10/21: Discussion Continued

Unit 2: Womanist, Latina Feminist, and *Mujerista* Voices

Week 6

10/24: Weekly Response Due

Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*, Chapter 7

10/26: Kelly Brown Douglas, "God-Talk and Black Sexuality," in *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*

10/28: M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*, Chapters 1 and 2

****Group 4 Presentation****

Week 7

10/31: Weekly Response Due

Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "Mujerista Theology: A Challenge to Traditional Theology," in *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century*

11/02: María Pilar Aquino, "Latina Feminist Theology: Central Features," in *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*

11/04: Mayra Rivera, "Thinking Bodies: The Spirit of a Latina Incarnational Imagination," in *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*

****Group 5 Presentation****

Unit 3: Feminist Theologies in Global Contexts: Postcolonial and Decolonial Voices

Week 8

11/07: Weekly Response Due

Kwok Pui-lan, "Unbinding Our Feet: Saving Brown Women and Feminist Religious Discourse," in *Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse*

11/09: Namsoon Kang, "Radical Border-Traversing: Postcolonial Feminist Theology," in *Diasporic Feminist Theology: Asia and Theopolitical Imagination*

11/11: Musa W. Dube, "Feminist Theologies of a World Scripture(s) in the Globalization Era," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*

****Group 6 Presentation****

Week 9

11/14: Weekly Response Due

Marcella Althaus-Reid, "Doing a Theology from Disappeared Bodies: Theology, Sexuality, and the Excluded Bodies of the Discourses of Latin American Liberation Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology*

11/16: Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "Mujerista Discourse: A Platform for Latinas' Subjugated Knowledge," in *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*

11/18: Final Paper Workshop: Be prepared to discuss your final paper topic with a partner in class and bring any questions you might have for the professor.

November 21st - 25th: Academic Break!

Week 10: Concluding and Ongoing Conversations

11/28: Weekly Response Due

Alice Walker, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens," in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*

11/30: Gloria Anzaldúa, "Holy Relics," in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

12/02: Concluding Conversations

Final Paper is due Tuesday, December 6th!