



Women in the Christian Tradition (TESP 79)

Summer A

Email: edrescher@scu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

****Please note: This syllabus may be adapted throughout the quarter to address the learning needs of the class.****

Platform: This is an online course. Weekly course materials will be posted on the Camino course management system (<https://camino.scu.edu>) by noon (Pacific) on Mondays and Wednesdays. Responses to discussion questions and other assignments are due on the Camino site as indicated by due dates posted on the course site.

The course enables students to engage online materials and activities according to their own schedules during the week. There is also structured interaction among students, which allow students and the instructor to share learning experiences together at particular times throughout the course. Online learning tends to be ideal for students for students who are disciplined and highly self-motivated in their studies but who also benefit from the more subtle interpersonal exchanges in a face-to-face classroom.

In an online course, active, regular engagement of students is particularly important. Because our study together takes place online, we are only present to each other when we post and comment on a regular basis. Unlike in most face-to-face classroom experiences, where written work is seen primarily by the instructor, online posts and comments are shared with the whole learning community, so students have the particular challenge of expressing themselves succinctly, clearly, and engagingly for a range of readers. Guidelines on online learning will be shared in the first course session.

Methodology The course will consist of two tracts. First students will undertake an overview of the role of women in Christianity with particular emphasis on methodologies that have obscured that role. Secondly, students will analyze particular women in that history in more depth.

Objectives

- Students will be able to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief). **(complexity; critical thinking)**
- Students will be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena. **(complexity of content as well as of method; critical thinking)**
- Students will be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence. **(reflection; critical thinking)**
- **Readings 1, 2, and 3 will address objective 1. Readings 2 and 3 will address objective 2. All readings will address objective 3.**

Required Reading:

All readings for this course are online and will be provided on the Camino site.

Requirements and Grading:

1. Active participation in all online presentations, discussions, and other activities
2. One research contribution on a particular woman in Christian history
3. Four multiple choice quizzes and a final essay exam.

Assignments 1 and 2 will address objective 1. Assignment 2, and 3 will address objectives 2 and 3.

Assignments

Independent Research and Discussion Contribution: Each week, three students will be assigned one of several women related to the historical period or thematic concern we are discussing. Assignments will be posted at the beginning of each unit so that each student will have the same amount of time to complete the assignment during each unit. Students will conduct additional research to supplement the material in the lectures with information on the women they are assigned. They will include findings from their research on those women to the larger class in response to the discussion questions.

You will be expected to be the experts on these women, so your research must go beyond what you find on Wikipedia and other internet sites to include research on the SCU library religion database, ATLA (accessible through the library website). On ATLA, you should be able to find **one academic article** on the subject of your research that highlights her particular role in the Christian tradition.

Your role will be to supplement and enrich the discussion with additional insights from your independent research and to pose discussion questions that will help us all to reflect upon the role of the women in Christian history and tradition.

You may include images of the woman you've researched, links to short videos, primary texts, or other resources that help to make her a more three-dimensional character. We are making history here, so please provide everything you can to help all of us put these women back in their rightful places in Christian history. All your sources, including your academic article, should be included as a 1-page attachment in the Assignments tab of the Camino course site.

Course Schedule

June 16: Introducing the Course

Please read the entire syllabus with care.

Please complete the "Introducing yourself" discussion by Saturday, June 18.

June 20: Introduction: Seeing Women in the Christian Tradition

Week One: The Early Church: New Roles, Old Restrictions

Monday: Women in the New Testament: Disciples & Prophets

Wednesday: Early Christian Women: Deaconesses, Martyrs, Widows, and Virgins

Friday: QUIZ

June 27: Week Two: Monastic Women: Ammas & Abbesses

Monday: Wise Women of the Desert

Wednesday: Women in Christian Community

Friday: QUIZ

July 5: Week Three: Women Mystics & Pilgrims (Note: No class on July 4)

Monday: From Egeria to Margery

Wednesday: From Hildegard to Julian
Friday: QUIZ

July 11: Week Four: Women & Reform
Monday: Protestant Women Reformers
Wednesday: Women Reforming Medieval Catholicism
Friday: QUIZ

July 18: Week Five: Women in Contemporary Christianity
Monday: The Feminist Challenge
Wednesday: Women in Religious Leadership
Friday: Final Exam

Evaluation

There will be a short quiz each week to assess how well students are keeping up on the reading and their independent research. Likewise, a final essay exam will assess students' overall understanding of the material covered in the course. Grading will be determined as follows:

Response to weekly discussion questions = 20 points (4 each week)
Quiz #1 = 10 points
Quiz #2 = 10 points
Quiz #3 = 10 points
Quiz #4 = 10 points
Independent Research and Discussion = 15 points
Final Exam = 25 points

Grading is based on an assessment of the quality of students' work in each of the areas described above. Grades are not measures of personal worth.

6-100 A 87-89 B+ 77-79 C+ 67-69 D+ 59 or Below F
95-90 A- 83-86 B 73-76 C 63-66 D
80-82 B- 70-72 C- 60-62 D

Disability Accommodation Policy

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in the Benson Center, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445.

The schedule of classes will be distributed the first day of class. The class schedule, syllabus and all assignments will be available on ANGEL.

Instructor Access

One of the complexities in online learning in the context of today's "always on" social media environment is that students sometimes have the expectation that the instructor will be available 24/7 throughout the course. This is not the case for, alas perhaps, the instructor remains merely human without technological enhancement. Because of this, it is important (as it is for students as well) for the instructor to schedule time she is available to students. In this course, I will be posting course materials on Mondays (with the exception of the first session, On June 18), and requiring responses later in the week. I will respond to student emails about the course **only** on Mondays and Thursdays, so it is important that students review the course content each week, make sure that they understand the lecture content, discussion questions, and any other

assignments so that they can pose any questions to me **by 4:00 (Pacific) on Mondays** about the work that lies ahead. Questions on the reading or on discussions that have developed through the week can be posed **by noon (Pacific) on Thursday**.

Should any student feel the need for additional instructor time, such as might happen in the context of an office hours appointment, please email me to set up time for an online chat or phone conversation. Another challenge of the online classroom is that, for the most part, our interaction will be textual. That is, I only know you're paying attention, doing the reading, engaging other students, etc. by the comments you make on the Camino site. Likewise, you only know I'm seeing your work when I comment on what you've said. However, there are more of you than there are of me (again, merely human), so I cannot comment in depth on every comment you post, even though many of these will be very interesting, indeed. In an onsite class, it is usually the case, in fact, that instructors **don't** have much to say about student comments beyond an approving nod or a "good question!" or "great insight" affirmation. This kind of largely nonverbal interaction is hard to approximate in the online classroom, but I try to do this by simply putting my initial (E) in response to your comment, perhaps with a very short comment ("very nice" or, maybe, "worth more exploration." Sometimes I throw in a ☺). Each week I will, however, highlight a couple discussion comments from students to discuss in greater depth. Through the course, I will offer these more extended replies to each student more than once, but students whose discussions are not highlighted in my response in a particular week should not fret. I **am** paying attention.