

**TESP 79/WGST 48: Women in Christian Tradition
SUMMER SESSION I
2017**

Instructor: Dr. Pearl Maria Barros
Email: pbarros@scu.edu
Office Hours By Appointment on Zoom

Meeting Times: Online
Location: Online

Course Description

Examining the role of women in the Christian tradition through a *feminist* theological lens, this course recognizes that women have always been active (if not always welcome) participants in the development of Christian thought. The course begins by tracing the insights of 20th and 21st century Christian feminist theologians whose work offers an important lens through which to view the construction of “woman” in the Christian tradition. To develop our own “hermeneutic of suspicion,” we will repeatedly ask these questions as we engage theological and historical portrayals of women in Christianity: **Where are the women? Which women are portrayed? How are they portrayed? Who is controlling the narrative?** Because Christian faith centers on the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth who Christians believe to be “the Christ,” we will explicitly engage women’s understandings of Christology. We will pay close attention to how intersections of sexuality, gender, race, class, ability, and so forth contribute to Christological reflection.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Learn to analyze the complexity of the Christian tradition’s understanding of women, including the ways women have historically influenced it.
2. Distinguish between various authors and perspectives in feminist, womanist, *mujerista*, and Latina feminist engagements of the Christian tradition.
3. Engage in practices of feminist and decolonial pedagogy during class by responding carefully to others in discussion threads, 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 2.

The second course in RTC invites students to deeper engagement with the study of religion through the application of multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches to complex religious phenomena, past and present. By providing multiple, integrated perspectives, this course seeks to enrich students' appreciation for the diversity of human religious expression.

RTC 2 Core Goals: Critical Thinking, Reflection, Complexity of Content and Method

Objectives:

2.1 Analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief.)

2.2 Integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena.

2.3 Clarify and express beliefs through critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence.

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. All other readings are available on Camino.

- Elizabeth A. Johnson, *The Strength of Her Witness: Jesus Christ in the Global Voices of Women*
- Rebecca Moore, *Women in Christian Traditions*
- Other Articles and Chapters available in an online course pack available for purchase

Assessment and Grading

Active and Informed Participation: Read ALL assigned materials carefully. Take notes that will help you engage in online class discussions as well as prepare you for the Reflection Papers and Final Exam and Essay. **Worksheets** are provided to guide YOUR studies. They are NOT to turn in.

Week 1 Reflection Paper: Why do YOU want to study women in Christian traditions? What do you already know about women in Christian traditions? What questions do you have about the role of women in Christianity? How do you *feel* about studying women in Christian traditions? It is to be 1 standard page, single-spaced, 12 point font. **Due on Friday, June 23rd by 12 Noon (Pacific Time)!** (Core Objective 2.3 and Course Objective 3)

Online Discussions: Given that this is an exclusively online course, online discussion threads will be the primary way through which you will engage your colleagues. Such discussions are central to our course and thus your participation in them counts as much as your Final Exam and Essay (8 points possible per online discussion; 40 points total). **You will find the links to each discussion thread under the “Modules” section on our course website on Camino. Each discussion thread contains an assignment that is connected to the week’s readings. Please read through each assignment carefully and follow its directions.** Remember that your posts become “public” and are thus visible to your colleagues. Do not post personal information that you would like to keep private. Often, you will be asked to reply to two colleagues’ posts. In your replies, be sure to follow the conventions of academic engagement: you are free to disagree with a colleague, but you must do so respectfully. **(All Core Objectives and All Course Objectives; Specified Under Each Assignment)**

Philomena Reflection Paper: Is Philomena’s reaction to the elderly Mother Superior at the end of the film a feminist reaction? Why or why not? Consider the construction of “woman” in Christianity in your answer. It is to be 1 standard page, single-spaced, 12 point font. **Due Monday, July 17th by 7 PM (Pacific Time)!** (Core Objective 2.1 and Course Objectives 1 and 3)

Final Exam and Essay: The Final Exam has **two** components: a 20 question, fill-in the blank, open-book exam that you turn in online **AND** a 5 page, double-spaced analytical essay.

The **Final Exam** will be posted on Monday of the 5th week of classes. It will be due that Friday.

The prompt for the **Final Essay** is: Write an analytical essay that compares and contrasts **how two of the authors** we have read this semester would answer this question: **How is the Christian tradition liberating, oppressive, or a combination of both for women?** 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 women in Christian tradition. The quality of the essay will show evidence of having engaged class materials closely and

carefully. Remember that this essay 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 essay is to be 5 standard pages, double-spaced, 12-point font. It should follow MLA or Chicago Manual of Style conventions. **The Final Exam and Essay are due Friday, July 28th by 10 PM (Pacific Time)! (All Core Objectives and All Course Objectives)**

Because this is an ONLINE course, all assignments are to be submitted to me through Camino.

Grade Distribution and Scale

Week 1 Reflection Paper: 10%

Online Discussions: 40%

Philomena Reflection Paper: 10%

Final Exam and Short Essay: 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

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.com/http://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 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: Why "Women" in Christian Tradition? Feminist Theological Insights
June 22nd – June 29th

Online Discussion: Getting to know your classmates! **Due Thursday, June 22nd by 7 PM!**

Week 1 Reflection Paper: Why do YOU want to study women in Christian traditions? What do you already know about women in Christian traditions? What questions do you have about the role of women in Christianity? How do you *feel* about studying women in Christian traditions? It is to be 1

standard page, single-spaced, 12 point font. **Due on Friday, June 23rd by 12 Noon (Pacific Time)!**

Readings:

Rebecca Moore, "Introduction: Why Study Women in Christian Traditions?"

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

Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Feminist Theology and Critical Discourse About God"

Online Discussion 1: Post two questions you have about the readings AND answer one of your colleagues' questions to the best of your ability based on the readings. **Due Wednesday, June 28th by 10 PM (Pacific Time)!** (Core Objective 2.1 and Course Objectives 1 and 3)

Week 2

June 30th – July 6th

Readings:

Moore, "The Women Disciples in the Kingdom of God," in *Women in Christian Traditions*

Sandra Schneiders, "Encountering and Proclaiming the Risen Jesus" in *The Strength of Her Witness*

Moore, "Women and the Conversion of an Empire," in *Women in Christian Traditions*

Teresia M. Hinga, "Jesus Christ and the Liberation of Women in Africa," in *The Strength of Her Witness*

Online Discussion 2: What are two connections that you can make between women in early Christianity and women living in Africa during Christian missionary imperial expansion? (Consider how Christianity works for and against women in each sociocultural context.) Then, read through one of your colleagues' posts and name one thing you learned from their post. **Due Thursday, July 5th by 5 PM (Pacific Time)!** (Core Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 and All Course Objectives)

Week 3**July 7th – July 13th****Readings:**

Moore, "Saints, Seers, and Scholars in the Middle Ages," in *Women in Christian Traditions*

Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, "The Passion of the Womb: Women Re-Living the Eucharist," in *The Strength of Her Witness*

Moore, "Women Reformed, Women Resistant," in *Women in Christian Traditions*

Kwok Pui-lan, "Engendering Christ," in *The Strength of Her Witness*

Online Discussion 3: How does Lobo Gajiwala connect women's everyday experiences to Christ's Passion? How is this similar to the theological writings of medieval Christian women? (Name and briefly discuss TWO medieval women that Moore mentions in your answer.) Write a 6-10 sentence paragraph in response to the questions AND comment on one of your colleagues' posts with 2-4 sentences.

Due Thursday, July 13th by 5 PM (Pacific Time)! (Core Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 and All Course Objectives)

Week 4**July 14th – July 20th****Film:** Watch *Philomena*

Here is the link to the film:

<https://login.libproxy.scu.edu/login?url=http://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/scu314618/watch?token=07cb7eeb764cd37e2228b2306d1709ded8f335c1ebdff808148352ae8e9a4ab8>

(The Worksheet will help guide your watching of the film and help as you write your Reflection Paper)

***Philomena* Reflection Paper Due Monday, July 17th by 7 PM (Pacific Time)!**

Readings:

Delores Williams, "Black Women's Surrogacy Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption" in *The Strength of Her Witness*

M. Shawn Copeland, "Marking the Body of Jesus, the Body of Christ," in *The Strength of Her Witness*

Online Discussion 4: Watch the video, "Journey to Liberation: The Legacy of Womanist Theology."

Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjhtUGqFCWg>

How do Williams' and Copeland's discussions of African American women's experiences of oppression and liberation within Christianity compare and contrast to the insights of the womanist theologians who speak in the video? Write a 6-8 sentence paragraph in response to the question AND comment on one of your colleagues' posts with 2-4 sentences.

Due Thursday, July 20th by 7 PM (Pacific Time)! (Core Objective 2.1 and All Course Objectives)

Week 5: Concluding and Ongoing Conversations
July 21st – July 28th

Readings:

María Pilar Aquino, "Jesus Christ: Life and Liberation in a Discipleship of Equals" in *The Strength of Her Witness*

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*

Online Discussion 5: Imagine that you could have a conversation with Aquino and Althaus-Reid. What is one question that you would ask each of them? Post your TWO questions online AND answer ONE of your colleagues' questions AS IF you were Aquino or Althaus-Reid. Your response to your colleague should be 4-6 sentences. **Due Tuesday, July 25th by 5 PM (Pacific Time)! (Core Objectives 2.1 and 2.3 and All Course Objectives)**

Final Exam and Essay Due on Friday, July 28th by 10 PM (Pacific Time)!