

TESP 79: Women in Christian Tradition Winter 2017

Instructor: Dr. Pearl Maria Barros Meeting Times: MWF 11:45 AM – 12:50 PM
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1 PM – 2 PM and By Appointment

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. Employing feminist and decolonial pedagogical models of collaborative learning and shared responsibility for the production of knowledge, student groups will offer presentations each Friday that focus on a specific woman from the Christian tradition.

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 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 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*
- Articles and Chapters available on Camino

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 7 groups (3-5 people per group) that will each take responsibility for leading a Friday class. The group will research the assigned “Christian woman” for the week and present their findings to the class. They will then lead the class in a discussion of this woman’s influence on the Christian tradition. **(Core Objective 1 and Course Objectives 1 and 3)**

Weekly Discussion Questions: Every student will bring a set of three discussion questions to class on the **Wednesday of each week**. These questions are to be in response to the week’s assigned readings, ALL of which are to be read by class time on Wednesday. The discussion questions are to be typed and the professor will periodically collect them. **(Core Objectives 1 and 2 and All Course Objectives)**

Midterm Exam: There will be one take-home midterm exam in the course during the sixth week of classes. It will consist of multiple short answer questions that will constitute 5-6 double-spaced pages of writing. Students will submit it online through Camino. The **Midterm Exam is due February 17th by 7 PM**. **(All Core Objectives and All Course Objectives)**

Final Paper: Write an analytical paper 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 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 or Chicago Manual of Style conventions. The **Final Paper is due March 22nd by Midnight**. **(All Core Objectives and All Course Objectives)**

All Midterms and Final Papers are to be submitted to me through Camino. This allows me to type my comments directly on your papers and return them to you faster.

Grade Distribution and Scale

Weekly Questions: 10%
 Group Presentation: 20%
 Midterm Exam: 30%

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 day 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: Why "Women" in Christian Tradition?

01/09: Introductions and Course Logistics

01/11: Rebecca Moore, "Introduction: Why Study Women in Christian Traditions?"

01/13: Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist Theology as a Critical Theology of Liberation" See: <http://cdn.theologicalstudies.net/36/36.4/36.4.2.pdf>

Week 2

01/16: NO CLASSES! Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

01/18: Weekly Questions Due

Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Christology: Can a Male Savior Save Women?"
 AND Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Feminist Theology and Critical Discourse About God"

01/20: **Group 1 Presentation on Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB**

Week 3

01/23: Moore, "The Women Disciples in the Kingdom of God," in *Women in Christian Traditions*

01/25: Weekly Questions Due

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

01/27: **Group 2 Presentation on Mary of Magdala**

Week 4

01/30: Moore, "Women and the Conversion of an Empire," in *Women in Christian Traditions*

02/01: Weekly Questions Due

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

02/03: **Group 3 Presentation on Perpetua and Felicitas**

Week 5

02/06: Moore, "Saints, Seers, and Scholars in the Middle Ages," in *Women in Christian Traditions*

02/08: Weekly Questions Due

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

02/10: **Group 4 Presentation on Clare of Assisi**

Week 6: Interlude: Examining Women's Ordination

02/13: No Weekly Questions Due

Midterm Exam Distributed

In-class Film: "Pink Smoke Over the Vatican" and Discussion

02/15: Continued Film Discussion

02/17: NO CLASS! Midterm Exam Due by 7 PM!

Week 7

02/20: NO CLASSES! Presidents' Day

02/22: Weekly Questions Due

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

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

02/24: **Group 5 Presentation on Teresa of Ávila**

Week 8

02/27: Moore, "Spirit-Filled Women in the Nineteenth Century," in *Women in Christian Traditions*

03/01: Weekly Questions Due

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

03/03: **Group 6 Presentation on Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz**

Week 9

03/06: Delores Williams, "Black Women's Surrogacy Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption" in *The Strength of Her Witness*

03/08: Weekly Questions Due

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

03/10: **Group 7 Presentation on Henriette Delille**

Week 10: Concluding and Ongoing Conversations

03/13: Alice Walker, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens"

03/15: Weekly Questions Due

Gloria Anzaldúa, "Holy Relics"

03/17: Concluding Conversations

Final Paper Due on March 22nd by Midnight!