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REL. 359--Issues in Christianity Today: Feminist Theology

Aim of the Course

To use a favorite phrase of Elizabeth Johnson's, feminist theology (and feminism more generally) has as its central concern "women's full flourishing." The aim of this course is to ask, and attempt to answer, the following questions. Is Christianity, as traditionally practiced, conducive to the full flourishing of women? If not, can Christianity be reconceived so as to more fully contribute to women's flourishing? We will address these questions in the context of reading texts that focus on such issues as feminist reconstruction of Christian origins, more inclusive ways of naming and imaging the Divine, and women's personal spiritual/faith journeys.

Educational Priorities and Outcomes

1. Students will acquire, integrate, and apply knowledge relating to the Christian religious tradition and feminist philosophy and theology.
2. Students will respond to the complexities of the enduring problem of sexism in religion by using the resources of feminist critical analysis.
3. Students will read and analyze challenging texts, speak clearly and listen actively as we discuss those texts, and write essays explaining their understanding and interpretation of those texts.
4. Students will respect the ways spiritual well-being may contribute to a balanced life by learning how some Christians have reinterpreted their faith in the light of feminist insights.

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, communication, and well-being.

Prerequisite

Sophomore standing is prerequisite for this course.

Class Meeting Times

After the first day of class (on which the class meets at 12:00 noon), class meetings will be held on weekdays from 12:15 to 3:00 PM.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation (20% of final grade). Regular attendance at class meetings and regular participation in class discussions are expected. Additionally, each student will take a turn at initiating class discussion by identifying, and raising a question about, a passage in the assigned reading that they find particularly interesting. *More than one absence from class will progressively lower this portion of your grade.*
2. Midterm Exam (25%), which will take place on the second Thursday of the term. The exam will contain short answer and short essay questions.
3. A 4-5 Page Essay (25%), due on the third Thursday of the term. *Late essays will not be accepted without prior consent of the professor.*

4. A Final Essay of 5-7 pages (30%), due by **1:00 PM** on the fourth Wednesday of the term.

Required Texts

1. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*.
2. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*.
3. Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is*.
4. Dorothee Soelle, *Against the Wind*.

*On Reserve in Cole Library: Anne Clifford, *Introducing Feminist Theology* and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible*.

Students with Special Needs

Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see cornellcollege.edu/disabilities/documentation/index.shtml. Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the [disabilities services coordinator](#) as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. Ideally, this meeting would take place well before the start of classes. At the beginning of each course, the student must notify the instructor within the first three days of the term of any accommodations needed for the duration of the course.

Academic Honesty

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgment of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

Course Calendar

Note: The reading assignments listed in this course calendar are to be completed PRIOR to that day's meeting of the class.

WEEK 1

Monday: Getting oriented.

Tuesday: Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, Introduction ("The Problem, the Purpose, and the Method"), chaps. 1-2.

Wednesday: Daly, chaps. 3-4.

Thursday: Daly, chaps. 5-7.

Friday: Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, Introduction ("In Search of Women's Heritage"), Chapter 1 (only the section on "The Woman's Bible,") and Chapter 2. Also Anne Clifford, *Introducing Feminist Theology*, p. 62 (Cole Reserve).

WEEK 2

Monday: Fiorenza, Chapter 4, including the section at the beginning of Part II.

Tuesday: Fiorenza, Chapter 5 (suggestion: read ahead, if you are able).

Wednesday: Fiorenza, Chapter 8 and Epilogue.

Thursday: MID-TERM EXAM.

Friday: Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is*, Part I (including pictures/poems at end). Also Clifford, p. 195 (Cole Reserve).

WEEK 3

Monday: Johnson, Part II.

Tuesday: Johnson, Part III (suggestion: read ahead, if you are able).

Wednesday: Johnson, Part IV, Epilogue.

Thursday: ESSAY DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.
In-class viewing of the film, *Women Serving Religion*.

Friday: Dorothee Soelle, *Against the Wind*, pp. xi-79.

WEEK 4

Monday: Soelle, pp. 80-168.

Tuesday: No class--work on final essay.

Wednesday: FINAL ESSAY DUE BY 1:00 P.M.

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