

**REL 320 WOMEN AND RELIGION****SPRING, 2002**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30; Wednesdays 10:30-noon

“Women and Religion” focuses the mission of Cardinal Stritch University through promotion and practice of community building, critical thinking skills, and personal and spiritual growth.

**REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING THIS COURSE**

The course required a high level of engagement and personal responsibility for learning, questioning, and making connections. Because this is a core course option, rather than one for majors, I was not sure whether students would give their fullest effort to the readings and assignments. I was delighted with the high engagement of students, female and male, in each class. I found the one-page papers an excellent way to involve students immediately in large and small group discussion. Sometimes I had two students, who would give a five-minute session to the whole group, use their papers as the starting point, and then open the discussion to the entire class. The interaction of two different types of textbooks, one theoretical and one with stories from women from diverse religious traditions and in different historical periods, exemplified issues, but helped students stay away from false generalizations. Students were surprised at the advances and regressions for women vis a vis religion and were especially appreciative of the primary sources we used. Speakers, who are engaged in local religious groups, gave a living expression of the issues through their commitments.

[The last time this course was taught, classes were held twice a week, one hour and 20 minutes each time, for 15 weeks; I had 24 undergraduate students.]

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An introduction to the contemporary research, writings, and experience of Christian, Jewish, and to a lesser extent, Buddhist and Islamic women. The course will cover critiques of women’s religious thought and practice and women’s creative alternatives to the traditions. The course will examine the historical uses of religion by American women to test out theoretical perspectives.

The course meets the College of Arts and Sciences requirement for the second core course in Religious Studies and as a choice for the Womens’ Studies Minor.

**TEXTS**

Ann Braude, Women and American Religion. Oxford University Press, New York, 2000.  
 ISBN 0.19.51 06768

Majella Franzmann, Women and Religion. Oxford University Press, New York, 2000.  
 ISBN 0.19.510773.X paperback ISBN 0.19.510773.X

The texts will be in dialogue with each other: past and present women in the United States (Braude) and theories about women and religion (Franzmann).

## COURSE OUTLINE

See schedule.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

1. to examine current issues, methodologies, and questions in feminist/ womanist! *mujerista* approaches to religion and theology.  
large and small group discussion of texts, articles, and other material, with annotations, questions, and main points noted in students' notebooks.
2. to identify significant women whose religious convictions have influenced religion and society.  
readings, use of primary sources, final paper.
3. to assess historically and critically women's experience of organized and alternative religion.  
readings, class discussion, reflection papers.
4. to locate groups in the city and region where women are making a difference socially and politically, because of their religious convictions.  
guest speakers, location and evaluation of a website, resources of the Franciscan Center at Cardinal Stritch University
5. to have students identify one goal they especially wish to pursue within the parameters of the course material.  
Student notation to this effect and an in-class essay on the pursuance of their goal.
6. to expand students' ability to read with greater comprehension and sensitivity to vocabulary.
7. to demonstrate coherent writing and speaking skills.  
Writing and speaking assignments with criteria identified for evaluation
8. to critique websites related to the topic of women and religion incorporation of a website into students' final paper.

"Factoid" from the 1992 United Nations statistics: 57% of the world's population are women. 66% of the world's work is done by women who receive 10% of the income and own 1% of the world's land. Have these statistics changed over the past ten years? Are the statistics at all connected with religion? In what ways is religion connected to economic, political, or social factors?

## COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Preparation of readings for informed class discussion. Because this is a highly interactive course, the professor expects that students will engage the readings in an intensive manner, recording in their notebooks the insights, questions, main points, areas for discussion. Attentive, critical reading and note taking for each class will further facilitate a fruitful final paper.
2. Periodic reflection papers to be handed in on dates indicated in the schedule.  
A one-page, typed, double-spaced response to the readings. The response should discuss at least two of the following areas:  
summary of main ideas  
questions which the material raised for you insights you gleaned from the reading,  
connections you are making with other areas of study and life issues you want to explore more fully.

Your name and date should be on the same line in upper right hand corner of paper.

3. Attendance at one event in the symposium, "Medieval Women in the Franciscan Tradition," sponsored by the Franciscan Center at Cardinal Stritch University in March and a one-page reflection paper on the ideas and insights from the session. **YOU MUST REGISTER FOR THE EVENT.**

4. An in-class written essay on the progress students are making on their selected goal for the course.

5. Final Paper (Exam) and Presentation

a. Select one of the women or women's groups we are studying. Write an 8-10 page essay, which illuminates the woman/group in light of the questions, themes, and issues we have been discussing. At least three paragraphs should summarize her life, placing her/the group in her/their context historically. To what extent is she/the group an example of any of the points Franzmann notes? What is the role of religion in the woman's/group's life? What influence does she/the group have in religion? In society, politics, economics, or culture? The cover page will include a photocopy of her/the group's picture, a painting/sculpture of her/them, or some other visual representation. On that page include also, your name, date, course number and name, and title of your paper. An additional page will include a bibliography of the works you have used in your paper, including one website.

If you are a Women's Studies minor, Religious Studies major or minor, you might have a particular topic in mind, which will be helpful to your major/minor. By the beginning of the **THIRD WEEK** of class, let the professor know what type of paper you have in mind and she will consider that as an option for you. The paper must have the same rigor and draw upon similar resources as the paper noted above.

In either case, you will be sharing the fruits of your research and thought with the other students in the course.

b. Oral Presentation

Select one or two points you are developing for your final paper to present to the class. Have at least one visual in your presentation. Students are expected to use the skills they have learned in their Fundamentals of Oral Communication course.

## **STANDARDS**

More than 3 absences (for any reason, including "excused" absences due to athlete tournaments, student government conferences, etc.) will automatically result in a grade drop (from A to A-, B to B-, for example) for the semester. Certain extenuating circumstances, such as hospitalization, might amend this policy in individual cases. This will be determined by the professor in consultation with the student, after which the professor will make the decision. **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO NOTIFY THE PROFESSOR BEFORE CLASS (by e-mail or phone), IF THEY ARE ILL OR WILL NOT BE PRESENT.** Repeated tardiness will lower a grade from A to A-, etc. for the semester.

Class participation, which includes careful preparation of readings will comprise 30% of the final grade; the Final Paper (Exam) will comprise 30%; reflection papers 30%; oral resenation of your paper 10%.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY - SEE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Any person enrolling in this course who may require alternative instruction and/or evaluation procedures due to a handicapping condition should feel free to discuss these needs with this professor, so that specific appropriate, reasonable accommodations can be made within the first week of class.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

1.22 introduction; course overview; raising questions and issues; identify resources; circles of conversation on Women and Religion

1.24 process for uncovering women's religious past; women's methodologies

Readings to Prepare Franzmann, Intro; Chap. 1, pp. 17-25

Written Assignment Reflection Paper #1

1.29 Topic continued

Readings to Prepare Franzmann, Chap. 2

1.31 New Testament Women; Mary Magdalene

Readings to Prepare Franzmann, Chap. 3 pp. 74-83

Written Assignment Reflection paper #2

2.5 The Desert Mothers

Readings to Prepare

Group A: E. Schussler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit, and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities," in Ruether, R., Women of Spirit, pp. 31-57.

Group B: "Early Christian Women," in Mary T. Malone, Women & Christianity, Volume 1, The First Thousand Years, pp. 65-85.

2.7 Women in the Middle Ages: Hildegard of Bingen.

2.12 Women in the Middle Ages: Clare of Assisi ( possible speaker from CSU)

Readings to Prepare Clare of Assisi, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Letters to Agnes of Prague, in Armstrong and Brady, eds., Francis and Clare, The Complete Works, pp.199-206

Or in Armstrong, ed., Clare of Assisi, Early Documents, pp.43-50.

2.14 Women in the Reformation and Post-Reformation: Teresa of Avila; Jane Frances DeChantal; Sor Juana de la Cruz  
Writing Assignment: Reflection Paper #3

2.19 Women in the United States-family/ sexuality  
Readings to prepare Braude, Introduction and Chap. 1

2.21 Topic continued

Readings to Prepare In Our own Voices: Mrs. Slattery, “Catholic Women Use Vote to Defend the Family,” #8, pp. 45-47; Pat Crowley, CFM and Birth Control, #11, pp.51-52.  
Chinnici and Dries, Prayer and Practice in the American Catholic Community, pp. 199-205.

Written Assignment Reflection paper #4

2.26 Women attentive to the Spirit  
Readings to prepare Braude, Chapter 2

2.28 Topic continued

Readings to Prepare Primary Sources: Braude, p. 40-4 1  
Written Assignment Reflection paper #5

3.5 No class, but attendance at one of the events sponsored by the Franciscan Center at Cardinal Stritch University. See separate brochure.

3.7 Women, the Home and the Public Sphere

Readings to Prepare Braude, Chapter 3

Written Assignmen one page response to the Franciscan Center event In Class essay on pursuance of personal course goal

3.14 Topic continued

Readings to Prepare Primary Sources: Braude, pp. 80-8 1

Handouts: “Chiefly Among Women” (1875); N. Walsh, S.J, “Woman” (1904)

Written Assignment Reflection paper #6

3.19 Women Organize for Religion

Readings to Prepare Braude, Chapter 4

Spring Break

4.4 Women Religious; Women and Social Reforms

Readings to Prepare

Group A: Angelyn Dries, “The Americanization of Religious Life: Women Religious, 1872-1922, U.S. Catholic Historian 10.1&2 (1989):13-24.

Group B: Mary Ewens, "The Leadership of Nuns in Immigrant Catholicism," in Ruether and Keller, Women and Religion in America, Vol. 1, pp. 101-107 and Documents 7-8, pp. 137-144.

Both Groups: Primary Sources: Chinnici and Dries, Prayer and Practice in the American Catholic Community, pp. 228-229. For these Sisters' story, see Dries, American Catholic Missionary Movement, pp. 221-230.

4.9 Women and ordination  
Readings to Prepare Braude, Chapter 5

4.11 Topic continued  
Readings to Prepare  
Primary sources: Braude, pp. 130-131; Keller and Ruether, In Our Own Voices, #1, "Rev. L. Lee: Women's Right to Preach the Gospel," pp. 311-314; #4, "The Women's Pulpit: Reflections on Status of Methodist Women Preacher," pp. 320-323. #5, Phoebe Palmer, pp. 323-325.

4.16 Women Theologians  
Readings to Prepare  
Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Mujerista Theology: The Struggle for Liberation, pp. 257-260. In Timothy Matovina and Gerald E. Poyo, eds., Presente! U.S. Latino Catholics from Colonial Origins to the Present. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000.

**Outline Due for paper**

4.18 Women in Judaism today speaker Dr. Sherry Blumberg

Readings to Prepare  
Group A: Ann Braude, "Jewish Women," in Ruether, R., In Our Own Voices, pp. 111-123 and Documents 1, 3, and 8 in that section.

Group B: Ellen Umansky, "Women in Judaism: From the Reform Movement to Contemporary Jewish Religious Feminism," in Ruether, R., Women of Spirit, pp. 333-350.

4.23 Women in Buddhism and Islam  
Readings to Prepare  
Group A: Rita Gross on Buddhism, p. 1-29 in Holm, Jean, ed., Women in Religion. New York: Pinter Publishers, distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Group B: Leila Badawi, "Women in Islam," pp. 84-111, in, Holm, Jean, ed., Women in Religion. New York: Pinter Publishers, distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1994.

4.25 Voices from Center Stage  
Readings to Prepare Franzmann, Chapter 4

4.30 Women's religious influence in Southeast Wisconsin  
Archdiocesan Office for Women – Mrs. Hi-Ja Choi; speaker from Church Women United Office

Readings to Prepare Franzman, Chapter 5

- 5.2 Presentations on your paper
- 5.7 Presentations on your paper
- 5.9 Presentations on your paper: summation; return to initial questions

5.15 EXAM: Written papers are due by 3:00 P.M. in DS 113. You must hand them in at the room and not through interoffice mail. Papers delivered later than this date and time will not be received. The grade for the written paper becomes an “F.”

### **Selected Bibliography**

See also, bibliographies in our texts.

Ammerman, Nancy Tatom and Wade Clark Roof, Work, Family and Religion in Contemporary Society. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Atkinson, Clarissa, Constance H. Buchanan and Margaret R. Miles, eds., Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality. Harvard Women’s Studies in Religion Series. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.

Bednarowski, Mary Farrell, The Religious Imagination of American Women. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Castelli, Elizabeth A., Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader. New York: Palgrave (St. Martin’s Press), 2001.

Christ, Carol, Rebirth of the Goddess: Finding Meaning in Feminist Spirituality. Reading, MA: Addison-Westley, 1997.

Collier-Thomas, Bettye, Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Boss, 1998.

Coon, Lynda L. et al, eds. , That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives on Women in Christianity. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1990.

Daly, Mary, Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation. Boston: Beacon Press, 1985.

Daly, Mary, The Church and the Second Sex. New York: Harper and Row, 1998. First published, 1975.

Douglas, Ann. Feminization of American Culture. New preface after its original publication in 1977. New York: Noonday Press/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998.

- Duby, Georges and Michelle Perrot, gen. eds. A History of Women in the West. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992.
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- Holm, Jean, ed., Women in Religion. New York: Pinter Publishers, distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1994.
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- Keller, Rosemary Skinner and Rosemary Radford Ruether, eds., In Our Own Voices: Four Centuries of American Women's Religious Writing. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995.
- Kienzle, Beverly Mayne and Pamela J. Walker, Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millenia of Christianity. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- King, Ursula, ed., Women and Gender. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995.
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- Porterfield, Amanda, Mary Lyon and the Mount Holyoke Missionaries. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
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## **Journals**

- Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion. Published by the Society of Biblical Literature. Founding editors Judith Plaskow and Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza. (CSU)
- Journal of Women's History. Indiana University Press. Four times a year. (CSU and Internet Access)
- Journal of Women and Religion. Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California. Center for Women and Religion. Annual.

Signs. A Journal of Women in Culture and Society. University of Chicago Press. Four times a year. An occasional article related to religion.

Women's Studies. An Interdisciplinary Journal. New York: Gordon and Breach Publishing. Editor and Associate Editor are from Claremont, California Graduate School. Doesn't contain religion specifically. Three times a year.

Sharma, Arvind and Katherine K. Young, eds., The Annual Review of Women in World Religions. Vol 1 is 1994.

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