



RLG 5388 UHA & REL 4382

*Women and Religion in Latin American History*

&

*Latin American Women's Religious Experience*

**Spring 2023**

Ana María Bidegain [Bidegain@fiu.edu](mailto:Bidegain@fiu.edu)

---

### **Course Description and Purpose**

This course focuses on women's religious experience, about their social and political practices within their historic and geographic contexts: Latin America and the Caribbean.

It analyzes the religious history, considering the marginalizing narratives that render women's contributions invisible, a reflection of colonialism and dominance based on socioeconomic status, race, and gender, inherent in religious discourse and practices.

The course analyzes how, historically, religions have provided rich resources for liberation and resistance to counter oppression, as well as means for the legitimation of power and domination.

It discusses and posits theoretical and methodological tools for an alternative reading: moving away from top-down perspectives to perspectives grounded on lived experiences.

It recasts events and narratives in which women have played significant, central roles fashioning their religions, rather than being passive, subjugated members.

It examines both the production of women's religious discourse and the production of religious discourse on women that justifies and promotes their invisibility, legitimizing women's sociocultural disadvantaged status and political underrepresentation.

### **Justification**

Until the 1970s, women's presence and visibility in history, as well as their political practices, have been resolutely dismissed, particularly in recorded religious history and associated narratives. This course fills this gap; aiding students with tools and concepts to better understand how Latin American and Caribbean women have been instrumental in actively shaping the religious and political contemporary landscape.

### **Course Objectives**

- 1) To have a nuanced and critical understanding of the religious experience of Latin American and Caribbean women, by examining female-centered perspectives of gender, class and ethnicity.
- 2) To understand and articulate the interplay of religion, politics and economics in the gendered societies of Latin America.
- 3) To comprehend, from a critical gender perspective, the important roles played by the Christian churches in the colonization and acculturation processes of the southern regions of the world, and in the development of globalization; and at the same time, how women also found in Religious Institutions or organizations a space to overcome some of these difficulties.

### **Important Information**

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- [Policies](#)
- [Netiquette \(Links to an external site.\)](#)
- [Technical Requirements and Skills](#)
- [Accessibility and Accommodation](#)
- [Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Statement](#)
- [Inclusivity Statement](#)

### **Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### **Proctored Exam Policy**

**Please note that the information contained in this section applies only if your course requires a proctored exam.**

Through a careful examination of this syllabus, it is the student's responsibility to determine whether this online course requires proctored exams. Please visit our [Student Proctored Exam Instructions \(Links to an external site.\)](#) webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

### **Textbook and Course Materials**

There is no textbook in English on Women's religious experience or Women, Religion, and Politics, but there are several journal articles and book chapters that will be used during this course. Such as:

Marysa Navarro, and Virginia S. Sanchez, *Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: Restoring Women to History*, Indiana University Press, 1999

Francesca Miller. - *Latin American Women and the Search for Social Justice*. UPNE, 1991

Aquino, Maria Pilar, et al. A Reader in *Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice*. University of Texas Press, 2002.

Aquino, Maria Pilar, and Maria Jose Rosado Nunes. *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latina Explorations for a Just World*. Orbis Books, 2007.

Drogus, Carol Ann. *Women, Religion, and Social Change in Brazil's Popular Church*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

Lavrin, Asunción. *Latin American Women*. Greenwood Press, 1978.

Socolow, Susan Migden. *The Women of Colonial Latin America*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Schwaller, John Frederick. *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America: From Conquest to Revolution and Beyond*. New York University Press, 2011.

Bidegain, Ana María.

- *Participación y protagonismo de las mujeres en la historia del catolicismo latinoamericano*. Editorial San Benito, Buenos Aires 2009.

- *Autonomía y control religioso*, Voces, Sao Paulo, 1994

### **Expectations of this Course**

This is a hybrid course, which means most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in a hybrid course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, hybrid courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- review the getting started page located in the course modules.
- introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion.
- take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas.
- interact online with instructor and peers.
- review and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines.
- log in to the course 3 times per week.
- respond to discussions by the due date specified. No late work will be accepted.
- respond to emails within 2 days.
- submit assignments by the corresponding deadline

The instructor will:

- log in to the course twice a week.

- respond to discussion postings within 7 days of the deadline.
- respond to emails within 48 hours.
- grade assignments within 7 days of the assignment deadline.

### **Course Communication**

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox, email, or by phone. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) or [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. I will respond to all correspondences within two days.

### **Course Structure and Methodology**

- 1) The professor will introduce the material at the zoom meetings at the beginning of each learning unit.
- 2) She will share PPPs to complete the information required for each unit;
- 3) Recommend the specific readings for each unity.
- 4) provide guide and support toward the development of the final research paper throughout the semester.

### **Students requirements are:**

- 1) Participation in the Discussions Forum Weekly.
- 2) Weekly oral reading participation and discussion in the seminar.
- 3) Paper developed in three stages.

### **Participation in the Discussions Forum Weekly**

- a) present a short summary (250-300 words) followed by comments on the required reading assigned the first week to each student. -b) make comments to another of your classmates' readings summary and comments. c) Present your work in the seminar.

A clear and concise summary, as well as the correct use of concepts, is expected.

Each post will be graded. Each discussion is worth 5 points. To receive all possible points, a posting must be on time, be easy to read, free of careless mistakes, and appropriately address the issue(s) or question(s) presented by the instructor.

### **Research Paper (Three stages of the same paper)**

- Graduate students must do a 20 pages final paper in three stages.
- Undergraduates students must do a 15 pages final paper in three stages.

### **FIRST STAGE**

**Research Paper proposal: Due January 27.** This paper must present the topic to be developed into a final paper. It should be the first stage of the work. This paper should explain the reason

and motivations to develop the research paper, the major sources, and bibliography as well as the hypothesis and methodology to accomplish the work.

**SECOND STAGE**

**Literature review analysis of the sources. Due on February 17** (a continuation of the first, with a deeper analysis of the sources, of the bibliography, and further development toward the final paper)

THREE WEEKS OF RESEARCH to focus on your research paper

**THIRD STAGE**

FIRST DRAFT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER WILL BE DISCUSSED

**Final paper: Due on April 24.**

**Zoom Meetings** will be held according to the class decision on the first week of the classes.

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Points for Each</b>	<b>Total Points Available</b>	<b>Weight</b>
<b>Participation in the Discussions Forum and in the seminar Weekly</b>	6	5	30	50%
<b>FIRST STAGE PAPER-PROPOSAL</b>	1	15	20	15%
<b>SECOND STAGE PAPER LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	1	15	20	15%
<b>FINAL PAPER</b>	1	20	30	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grading**

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Range%</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Range%</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Range%</b>
A	95 or above	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 94	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

## **Course Calendar**

Module 1 - January 9- 13 - Introduction **& Main Concepts to Study Women and Religion**

Module 2 – Weeks 2 & 3 January 16-27 - Women at the Center of Popular Religions' Roots and at the Margins of the Imposed New Religion. (First Paper Due)

Module 3- Weeks 4 & 5 - January 30- February 10 - Women and the Crises of the Catholic Church under Liberal States. (Second Paper Due)

Module 4 – Weeks 6- 7 February 13- 24 -The Role of Women and Religions Building Nation-States

SPRING BREAK (Feb.27- March 4)

Research Weeks (March 6-24)

Module 5 – Weeks 12&13 - March 27 - April 7 - Religions, Women's Rights, Politics and Welfare States of the 20th Century. New Immigration and Religious Diversity.

Module 6 – Weeks 14& 15 April 10 -21 - Second Vatican II and social transformations' impact on women and Women's Orders and Congregations. Women Facing Political Turmoil. New participation for women in the Catholic Church?

Final Research Paper Due April 24.