

Syllabus

REL 5435 Feminist Theology and Religion

Fall 2014

Dr. Christine Gudorf

Thursday, 5-7:45

Office hours: DM 305B, Thurs. 1-2 pm

Contact: Blackboard Messages, Wed/Thur office 305 348 2729/rest of week 859 740-4301

Texts:

Mary McClintock Fulkerson and Sheila Briggs, Eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology* (\$45 paperback at Amazon, \$50 from publisher)

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches.*(\$6-12 at Amazon)

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble and the Subversion of Identity* (\$13-19 at Amazon, rent for \$6.50)

Other required course readings posted online (free)

Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God Talk*, ch 1-2 (on method in feminist theology) ch 5-6 (on Christology and Mariology)

Nicolas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity Worldwide* Intro and pp 1-16 (Global situation of women), 109-122 (Why women die in childbirth), 146-148 (Is Islam misogynistic?), 185-204 (on women and microcredit)

In Jung, Hunt and Balakrishnan, Eds, *Good Sex: Feminist Perspectives from the World's Religions:*

Suwanna Satha-Anand, "Buddhism on Sexuality and Enlightenment"

Patricia Beattie Jung, "Sanctifying women's Pleasure"

Christine E. Gudorf, "To Make A Seamless Garment, Use a Single Piece of Cloth," in *Cross Currents*,

Winter 1985: 473-491 (and republished in three English-language books and 6 languages)

Ziba Mir Hosseini, "The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought.

On the Level of This Course:

I expect that the majority of students will not have much background in either feminist theory or women in world religions. I have tried to include a great deal of the "classic" writings (Ruether, Lorde, Butler, Fiorenza) to ground the newbies, as well as second and third generation feminist writings to interest those who are not beginners. Feminism has become global, which has greatly enriched it, and made it more complex. To include all the new global voices inevitably means to limit the number of classic earlier writings.

Course Policies:

All students must submit the course research paper to Turnitin.com (which checks for plagiarism) within the Blackboard REL 4146 course, and take the midterm and final exam online.

Students are expected to attend both the combined grad/undergrad class session, and the grad hour that follows regularly. Absences after the first free absence will cost 2 pts to be detracted from the final grade.

Students will treat other students, and the instructor, with respect. Disruptive comments or behavior will result in removal from the class. You need not agree with instructor or other students, but disagreements must be reasoned, and should not be repeated in ways that prevent discussion from continuing. Some of the material can be disturbing for some; talk to me about it, but do not attempt to use the class as group therapy.

Students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings and ready to contribute to class discussions.

Incomplete grades, under University policy, are only to be given to students who have completed 51% or more of the course work with a passing grade. If you cannot continue with the course, but do not meet this standard, you must drop the class. Instructors are not required to give IN grades; you must have a good reason, and must ask.

There is no extra credit work in this class.

Assignments:

There will be a midterm and a final exam. Both will have two parts, an objective and an essay part, and both parts will be taken online, in Blackboard. Class will not meet for either the midterm or the final.

There will be one research and writing assignment of 15-18 pages, not including bibliography/notes. Students should submit a topic and preliminary outline with at least five prospective sources by October 15, and the final paper by Nov 30. The topic must be based in an issue that is raised in the course readings, and the paper must make an original argument. You should not simply describe what others have said, but use the various data sources to create an argument of your own. It might help if you begin by asking a real question that exists within the issue chosen, and then set out to answer the question. The last two grad sessions will have grad students presenting 10-15 minutes summaries of their papers.

Grading:

The grading scale is 93-100=A, 90-92 =A-, 87-89= B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-79=C+, 73-76=C, 70-72=C-, 67-69=D+, 63-66=D, 60-62=D-, and -60=F.

Midterm 30% of final grade

Final 35%

Research 25% The outline and sources assignment will account for 10%, and the paper itself for 20%.

Presentation 10%
Of Research

Lorde, pp. 8-109

Lorde pp. 110-175

Butler pp vi-46

Butler pp. 47-106

Butler pp. 107-203

Schedule

Week 1
August 28 Nicolas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity Worldwide* Introduction and pp. 1-16 (Global situation of women), pp.109-122(Why women die in childbirth), 146-148 (Is Islam misogynistic?), pp. 185-204 (On women and microcredit). **Grad Session:** Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, pp. 8-59. (Lorde's essay, "Uses of the Erotic" will be discussed by the combined class in Week 5, so we will not spend much time on it here.

Week 2
September 4 Feminist Theology at the Crossroads: *Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theology* (OHFT) Chapters 1, 2, 3. **Grad Session:** Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, pp 60-109. Students will choose which of the grad readings in the coming weeks they wish to be discussion leader for.

Week 3
September 11 Methodological Critiques. OHFT Chs. 18, 20, 26. Grad Session: Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, pp. 110-175.

Week 4
September 18 Feminism on Christianity: Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God Talk*, Chs. 1-2 (on method in feminist theology) Chs. 5-6 (on Christology and Mariology) in Blackboard. **Grad Session:** Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza,

Week 5
September 25 Sexuality in Feminism. Patricia Beattie Jung, "Sanctifying Women's Pleasure"(from *Good Sex: Feminist Perspectives From World Religions*, eds. P. Jung, M. Hunt and R. Balakrishnan, Rutgers University Press, 2001); Christine E. Gudorf, "To Make A Seamless Garment, Use a Single Piece of Cloth" (from *Cross Currents* Winter 1985: 473-491); and Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,"(from Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, Crossing Press, 2007). All three in Blackboard. **Grad Session:** Christine E. Gudorf, "Violence Against Women in World Religions: Roots and Cures," in *Violence Against Women in Contemporary World Religion*, Eds. Daniel Maguire and Sa'diyya Shaikh, Pilgrim Press, 2007.

Week 6 African Feminist Perspectives. OHFT Chs. 9, 10, 11. **Grad Session:** Judith Butler, *Gender*

- October 2 *Trouble*, pp. vii- 21.
- Week 7 Indigenous Feminist Issues and Perspectives. OHFT Chs 13, 14. **Grad Session:** Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. 22-51. Paper Proposals (Outline and tentative bibliography) due in Assignment Dropbox by October 2, 5 pm.
- Week 8 Online Midterm. Two parts: essay and objective. Available 12:01 am Sunday Oct 12-
October 9 11:59 pm Saturday Oct. 18. **Grad Session:** Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. 52-88.
- Week 9 Latin American Feminist Perspectives, Part 1. OHFT Chs. 6,7. **Grad Session:** Judith Butler,
October 23 *Gender Trouble*, pp. 89-126.
- Week 10 Latin American Feminist Perspectives, Part 2. OHFT Chs. 21, 22, 24. **Grad Session:** Judith
October 30 Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. 127-150.
- Week 11 Muslim Feminism. OHFT Chs. 8, 19 and Ziba Mir Hosseini, "The Construction of Gender
November 6 in Islamic Legal Thought" In Blackboard. **Grad Session:** Saba Mahmoud, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 1-39.
- Week 12 Feminism in Hinduism and Buddhism. OHFT 4, 5 and Suwanna Satha-Anand, "Buddhism
November 13 on Sexuality and Enlightenment." **Grad Session:** Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. 151-202.
- Week 13 Feminist Currents in the Developed World and Impact on Interreligious Dialogue. OHFT
November 20 Chs. 12, 15, 16. Research Papers due in Blackboard under Assignment Dropbox, by 5 pm November 20. **Grad Session:** Fifteen minute Paper Presentations.
- Week 14 Religious Subjectivity and De-Traditioning. OGFT Chs. 17, 23. **Grad Session:** Fifteen
December 4 Minute Paper Presentations.
- Week 15 Final Exam in two parts: essay and objective. Available in Blackboard 12:01 am Sat.
Dec. 6-10 December 6 through 11:59 pm Wed. December 10.