



## *Women and religion RELS 275 (writing Intensive) Spring 2019*

*Professor Sarah Gagnebin*

*Class Time: MWF 10-11 AM Class room: Butte 219*

*Office: ARTS 373 Phone: 898-5661*

*Office hours: M/W 11-1 PM Email: [sgagnebin@csuchico.edu](mailto:sgagnebin@csuchico.edu)*

### What you need for class:

- \*the ability to listen respectfully
- \*the willingness to engage with ideas you don't agree with personally
- \*kind curiosity about the role of women in religion and society

### What you do not need for class:

- \*previous courses in RELS or WMST
- \*to identify as a woman
- \*to identify as a feminist
- \*to have a particular religious belief

## **Approach to women and religion: Intersections of power and oppression**

In approaching a course on women and religion we will focus on the intersections of power and oppression that women experience in world religions. With this as a key focus we will maintain a thematic view toward cultural and religious contexts that highlight women's involvement or exclusion from activity and power within each religion. This will ultimately shed light on the ways that women have subverted traditional patriarchal roles in religion, and created new ways of "being religious" within established religious and cultural systems.

We will use case studies (based on established world religions) to draw out insight in the many different ways that women contribute to, experience, or are excluded from religious practice and leadership. We will also employ activities, guest speakers, and special interest topics to show the wide variety of forms that religious experience and practice takes for women both historically and currently. While the

readings and topics are quite academic, the class time will lend itself to open-minded discussion and interesting (fun, I swear!) personal exploration of the material presented.

Women in religion is a deep and sometimes contentious topic that we will approach with a focused but expansive look at how gender plays a role in religious experience. Whether we like it or not, gender has often influenced religious activities and experiences, both shaping and being shaped by wider cultural attitudes. My hope is to take this reality and explore the beautiful and sometimes difficult movements that have come from women's involvement in religious spheres of existence.

## Required Texts

*Feminism and Religion* Rita Gross

*Women and World Religion* Lucinda Joy Peach

Essays posted on Blackboard

Also, Internet access is required for this class, as most homework assignments will be turned in online.

## Assignments and Grading (1000 point scale) Assignments and Grading (1000 point scale)

- 1) 3 Quizzes 250 points (80/85/85 points each)
- 2) 2 Short Papers 200 points (100 points each)
- 4) HW journal assignments 100 points (10 points each)
- 5) Final paper (300 total)
  - Shared/edited with peers (50)
  - shared/edited with prof. (50)
  - Final paper (200)
- 6) Participation 150 points (3 points a day plus 12 points, you're welcome)

Grading will be on a 1000 point scale. 935 or more points, A; 895-934 points, A-; 875-894 points, B+; 835-874 points, B; 795-834 points, B-; 775-794 points, C+; 735-774 points, C; 695-734 points, C-; 675-694 points, D+; 595-674 points, D; below 595, F.

I will post grades for each homework assignment throughout the semester.

## Quizzes: 250 points

There will be three small quizzes in this class which will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions. The multiple choice section will cover major concepts, terms, and figures from the religious traditions we're studying; I will give you a study guide with the vocabulary you need to know. Quizzes cannot be made up except in cases of severe illness or other significant emergencies (e.g. death in the family), and you must notify me in advance if you have such an emergency.

## Participation: 150 points

I will take attendance, and I will monitor student participation. If you have an illness or another problem which will affect your ability to attend class regularly, you must let me know as soon as possible. If you miss several classes without a valid excuse, it will hurt your participation grade. If you speak in class, visit my office, and engage in class activities, it will help your participation grade.

The nature of this course lends itself to insightful discussions; come prepared with questions, and focus points from the reading to both contribute to, and gain from class time. This class will adhere to a policy of respect, listen attentively to others in the class and allow room for all opinions. There is a no cell phone and no computer policy in class. I encourage handwriting class notes; if you have a valid reason for needing to type notes in class come see me.

If you regularly come in late or leave early, this will also negatively impact your participation grade. If you have a serious and compelling reason to leave class early, please let me know in advance. It is your responsibility to make sure I know you were in class if you arrive after attendance has been taken.

## Homework: 100 points (10 points each)

In order for our class discussions to be interesting, it is essential that everyone complete the required readings and reflect on them. To ensure this, there will be brief homework assignments almost every week.

For each week's readings, write a journal entry that covers in 2-3 paragraphs:

1. The week's main thesis or focus point (as covered in class and in readings) in your own words.
2. Two to four important ideas that support the thesis; use at least two quotes from the readings (Author, pg.#).
3. One question that comes up for you regarding the information presented during the week.

These questions are due on Blackboard each Friday by midnight, and should be turned in via the Blackboard Discussion tool (not via email!)

Homework questions will be worth 10 points each. If you submit an assignment late, you will receive up to half-credit for it—this will be true even if you are sick or have to miss class for a university-sponsored event. In both cases you should still submit the assignment online.

No late work will be accepted after 5 pm on the last day of regular classes.

## General notes on writing assignments

- **This is a Writing Intensive class**, there will be several writing assignments; I will give you feedback on your writing to help you improve and peers will also offer feedback on your writing. We will spend some time in class working on common writing problems and the craft of writing good essays, and you will be expected to edit rough drafts and turn in polished final papers. The content of this class is interesting; take the time and attention to write interesting papers and reflections.
- Students are required to keep a copy of all written assignments submitted to me, and to resubmit written work if I request them to.
- Most writing assignments will be submitted through Blackboard Learn using the Journal tool. Please don't submit your homework in the comment field!
- The self-reflection paper and research paper should be handed in on hardcopy. For these papers, please double-space and use a 12-point font (Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri or something similar, please). When handing in assignments on paper, be sure to include your name, the day the assignment is due, and the title of your paper. A title page is not necessary. All assignments must be stapled! If you turn in an assignment in which the pages are not stapled together, I accept no responsibility for lost pages. Please do NOT turn in assignments in binders or plastic covers.
- All assignments other than homework assignments and the self-reflection paper should be accompanied by a bibliography or works cited page, in addition to citations you use in the text. For homework assignments it is sufficient to use in-text citations, e.g. (Gross, 47), without a works-cited page.
- Any instance of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty (e.g. copying someone else's homework) will result in an "F" for the course and a report of academic misconduct submitted to Student Judicial Affairs. If you borrow the ideas of others in composing your written work, they must be cited; if you borrow the words of others, they must be enclosed in quotation marks and cited. If you have any doubts as to whether or not something needs to be cited,

play it safe and cite it—or ask me about it. Any standard citation format (Turabian, MLA, APA, etc.) is fine.

- Please note that material from the internet is still someone else's work, and must be cited appropriately! If you are unsure of how to do this properly, consult the following website: [http://www.csuchico.edu/engl/Links/style\\_guide.html](http://www.csuchico.edu/engl/Links/style_guide.html)
- If you are having health or work problems or personal crises which might tempt you to plagiarize, please talk to me. In some cases, I may be able to make accommodations for your situation; in other cases, I may advise you to take the late penalty (see below). Students who plagiarize on more than one occasion will be expelled from the university. In the long run, it is far better to receive a lower grade (or even a failing grade) than to jeopardize your entire academic career.
- Papers will receive a **20% late penalty** if submitted late. Homework journal entries will be accepted late for half credit. I will accept late work until 5 pm on Friday 5/12/17. No late work will be accepted after this time.

## **Students with certified disabilities**

Please notify me of any special need relating to your disability within the first two weeks of the semester. I will make every reasonable effort to facilitate your success in this course. Please note that you may be required to show documentation of your disability.

If you have a documented disability that may require reasonable accommodations, please contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC, formerly called Disability Support Services) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The ARC is located in Student Services Center 170; their phone number is 530-898-5959 and their website is <http://www.csuchico.edu/arc>

# UNIT ONE

|                             |           |           |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Date: Monday 1/21/19</b> | Readings: | Activity: |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|

## *Introduction and Orientation*

|                                |                               |   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 1/23/19</b> | Readings:<br>- Class Syllabus | Activity:<br>-Class role, assignment calendar, getting to know each other |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|

## *Discussion Day and Self-reflection*

|                                       |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Date: Friday 1/25/19</b>           | Readings:<br>- Attitudes Towards Women Scale (Spence, Helmrich & Stapp, 1978) (Blackboard)<br>-Women and Religion Questionnaire | Activity:<br>-Lecture: self-reflection<br>- Syllabus Quiz: just for fun, no points just candy! |
| No Online HW Question due by midnight |   |  |

## *Defining our Terms*

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|--|--|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 1/28</b>                                   | Readings:<br>-Intro and Chapter 1 in <i>Feminism and Religion</i> by Rita Gross (Book) | Activity:<br>-Lecture: What exactly are we talking about?<br>-peer review |
| Bring first draft of self-reflection paper for peer review |  |   |

## *Why Study This?*

|                             |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 1/30</b> | Readings:<br>-Chapter 2 <i>Gross</i> (Book) | Activity:<br>- Lecture: Surprising Intersections<br>-Practice HW response |
|-----------------------------|---|---|

Discussion Day

|   |             |                                |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 2/1</b>   | No Readings | Activity:<br>-Class Discussion |
| Due in class: Final draft of self-reflection paper AND Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight |             |                                |

Goddess Religions (Ancient)

|                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 2/4</b> | Readings:<br>- <i>The Language of the Goddess</i> Marija Gimbutas (Blackboard)<br><br>- Lynn Meskell <i>Goddesses, Gimbutas, and 'New Age' Archaeology</i> (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>- Marija Gimbutas and Goddess figurines: Nerd Brawl! |
|-------------------------|---|---|

Goddess Religions (Modern)

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|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 2/6</b> | Readings:<br>- Intro and Chapter 5 in <i>Spiral Dance</i> by Starhawk (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>- How Gimbutas influenced Starhawk<br>- Challenge: Open Circle group |
|----------------------------|--|---|

Discussion Day

|  |             |                                |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 2/8</b>                          | No Readings | Activity:<br>-Class Discussion |
| Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight |             |                                |

Hinduism

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|--|--|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 2/11</b>   | Readings:<br>- Chapter 2 in <i>Women and World Religions</i> by Lucinda Joy Peach (Book) | Activity:<br>- Lecture: Goddesses vs real Hindu Women<br>- Charting the Feminine Divine |
| This week, watch the movie <i>Water</i> in Supporting Materials Blackboard, print out and complete power and oppression film sheet |  |   |

*Hinduism*

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|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 2/13</b> | Readings:<br>-"Sri Lakshmi and Radha: The Obsequious Wife and the Lustful Lover" Carl Olson (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>--Writing love letters to (or from) a Goddess |
|                             |  |  |

*Discussion Day*

|   |             |  |
|---|-------------|--|
| <b>Date: Friday 2/15</b>  | No Readings | Activity:<br>-Discussion Day<br>-Quiz Prep |
| Power and oppression film sheet for Water due in class AND Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight |             |  |

*End of Unit Quiz: Begin First Nations*

|   |                           |  |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Date: Monday 2/18</b>                        | Readings:<br>-No Readings | Activity:<br>-Quiz one<br>-Begin Native American views |
| Quiz on figures, facts, and ideas from Unit One |                           |  |

## UNIT TWO

*First Nations*

|                             |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 2/20</b> | Readings:<br>- <i>The gift of Changing Woman</i> by Tryntje Van Ness Seymour. (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>-Lecture: Creation Stories, womanhood, and giving birth to a people |
|                             |  |  |

*Discussion Day*

|                          |   |                                |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 2/22</b> | Readings:<br>-Mary Brave Bird "Moon Power" from <i>Ohitika Woman</i> (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>-Class Discussion |
| No Online HW             |   |                                |

*"Brothers of the Book"*

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|--------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 2/25</b> | Readings:<br>- <i>Modern Women, Traditional Abrahamic Religions and Interpreting Sacred Texts</i> By Victoria Harrison (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>- Lecture: Just a big game of (Sacred) Telephone |
|--------------------------|---|---|

*Intro to Judaism*

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 2/27</b> | Readings:<br>- Chapter 5 Peach (Book) | Activity:<br>- Lecture: Intro to Judaism |
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*Discussion Day*

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|--|--------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 3/1</b>                          | -No Readings | Activity:<br>-Discussion Day |
| Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight |              |                              |

*Judaism and Midrash*

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|-------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 3/4</b> | Readings:<br>-Lilith Midrash<br><a href="https://archiveofourown.org/works/143907">https://archiveofourown.org/works/143907</a> | Activity:<br>- Writing Midrash Stories<br>IRL |
|-------------------------|---|---|

*Guest Lecturer*

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|--|--|--|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 3/6</b>                                   | Readings:<br>- Possible readings from guest lecturer TBA | Activity:<br>-Guest Lecturer Sara Abrams<br>OR –Apocrypha game |
| Sara Abrams: Rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel here in Chico |  |  |

*Discussion Day*

|  |             |                              |
|--|-------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 3/8</b>  | No Readings | Activity:<br>-Discussion Day |
| Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight<br>Reminder that I will go on the Bidwell Field Trip on Saturday 3/9 2-3 PM |             |                              |

*No Medieval Christianity*

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 3/11</b>  | Readings:<br>- <i>Holy Feast, Holy Fast</i><br>Carolyn Walker Bynum<br>(Blackboard) | Activity:<br>- Lecture: Medieval<br>Catholicism: Giving away all<br>your stuff! |
| <b>Watch Movie <i>Sister Act</i> this week (Blackboard) print out power and oppression film sheet</b> |   |   |

*Christianity*

|                             |                                      |   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 3/13</b> | Readings:<br>-Chapter 6 Peach (Book) | Activity:<br>- Lecture: Modern women of<br>Christianity |
|                             |                                      |   |

*Discussion Day*

|  |             |                              |
|--|-------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 3/15</b>   | No Readings | Activity:<br>-Discussion Day |
| <b>Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight AND power and oppression film sheet for <i>Sister Act</i> due in class</b> |             |                              |

## *Spring Break 3/18-3/22*

*Islam*

|                                      |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 3/25</b>             | Readings:<br>- <i>The Complicated History of<br/>Headscarves</i> by Liana<br>Aghajanian | Activity:<br>-Lecture: Intro to Islam<br>-Group debate on veiling:<br>Power, oppression, or both? |
| <b>Reminder about research paper</b> |   |   |

*Islam and Malala*

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|-----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 3/27</b> | Readings:<br>-Chapter from <i>I Am Malala</i> | Activity:<br>-spotlight on Malala Yousafzai |
|                             |   |   |

*Discussion Day*

|   |             |                              |
|---|-------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 3/29</b>                                | No Readings | Activity:<br>-Discussion Day |
| <b>Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight</b> |             |                              |

No Class End of Unit

|                         |           |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Date: Monday 4/1</b> | Readings: | Activity:<br>No Class |
|                         |           |                       |

## UNIT THREE

Quiz Day

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|---|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 4/3</b>                      | Readings:<br>- No Readings | Activity:<br>-Quiz two |
| Quiz on facts, figures, and ideas from Unit Two |                            |                        |

Discussion day and paper prep

|                                       |             |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 4/5</b>               | No Readings | Activity:<br>-Research paper prep |
| NO Online HW question due by midnight |             |                                   |

Mary Daly and her Critics

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|-------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 4/8</b> | Readings:<br>- <i>The church and the second sex</i> Mary Daly<br>- Audre Lorde's Letter to Mary Daly | Activity:<br>-Lecture: Waves of Feminism<br>- Class Debate: Demand Better or Dip? |
|                         |  |   |

Womanist philosophies

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|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 4/10</b> | Readings:<br>-Chapter 1 in <i>Toward a womanist homiletic: Katie Cannon, Alice Walker, and emancipatory proclamation</i> by Donna E. Allen. (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>-Guest Speaker Dionne Love |
|                             |  |   |

*Discussion Day*

|  |             |  |
|--|-------------|--|
| <b>Date: Friday 4/12</b>   | No Readings | Activity:<br>-Review guest speaker<br>-HW practice |
| 3 pg. Research paper due in class AND Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight |             |  |

*Trans women's voices*

|                          |                   |  |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Date: Monday 4/15</b> | Readings:<br>-TBA | Activity:<br>- Guest Speaker Elena Rose Vera |
|                          |                   |  |

*End of Unit and writing your final paper*

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|-----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 4/17</b> | Readings:<br>- Making of Our Lives a Study:<br>Feminist Theology and<br>Women's Creative Writing by<br>Roxanne Harde (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>-Lecture: Writing your final<br>paper (and liking it!) |
|                             |   |   |

*Discussion Day*

|  |              |  |
|--|--------------|--|
| <b>Date: Friday 4/19</b>                         | -No Readings | Activity:<br>-Quiz practice<br>-Final paper discussion |
| Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight |              |  |

## UNIT FOUR

*Quiz Day*

|   |                           |   |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Date: Monday 4/22</b>                          | Readings:<br>-No Readings | Activity:<br>-Quiz 3<br>-Lecture: How to write an<br>abstract |
| Quiz on facts, figures, and ideas from Unit three |                           |   |

*Built on patriarchy*

|                             |                                      |   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 4/24</b> | Readings:<br>-Chapter 4 Gross (Book) | Activity:<br>-Race To the Top or Race Together?<br>-Lecture: Changing goals of feminism |
|                             |                                      |   |

*Discussion and peer review Day*

|  |             |                           |
|--|-------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 4/26</b>   | No Readings | Activity:<br>-peer review |
| 2pg rough draft of final paper topic due in class for peer review AND Online HW Question due on Blackboard by midnight |             |                           |

*It's even in our language*

|                          |  |  |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Date: Monday 4/29</b> | Readings:<br>-Excerpt from <i>Sexism and God language</i> by Rosemary Radford Reuther (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>-"Like...Whatever"<br>-Lecture: What does our language do?<br>-Researching your final paper |
|                          |  |  |

*The divinity of mom*

|                            |  |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 5/1</b> | Readings:<br>-Excerpt from <i>God as Mother</i> by Sally MacFague (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>-- Lecture: the divinity of "Mom" |
|                            |  |  |

*Discussion Day*

|   |             |                           |
|---|-------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 5/3</b>                           | No Readings | Activity:<br>-HW Practice |
| 4 pg. second draft of final paper for prof. edits |             |                           |

*Re-reading the past and Looking into the future*

|                         |                                      |  |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Date: Monday 5/6</b> | Readings:<br>-Chapter 5 Gross (Book) | Activity:<br>- Lecture: Does prehistory matter for us today? |
|                         |                                      |  |

*Making waves*

|                            |  |   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Date: Wednesday 5/8</b> | Optional Readings:<br>-Chapter 6 Gross | Activity:<br>-Lecture: What did the author get right? |
|                            |  |   |

*Last day*

|                          |   |                                     |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Date: Friday 5/10</b> | Readings:<br>-Christian Science Monitor<br>-BBC News (Blackboard) | Activity:<br>-Lecture: Good news!!! |
|                          |   |                                     |

Finals week 5/13/19-5/17/19: Final paper due 5/17/19 by 5pm

\*All late work must be turned in by 5PM on Fri 5/3/19 \*Final paper due by 5pm on Friday 5/17/19.  
Email your final paper **as a Word Document** to [sgagnebin@csuchico.edu](mailto:sgagnebin@csuchico.edu)

This syllabus is subject to revision if necessary