

## Religious Studies 140/Women's Studies 140

### Women and Religion:

Section 2: TR 5-6:15 p.m. Bute 325

Section 3: MW 4-5:15 p.m. Bute 325

California State University, Chico

Spring 2005

**Instructor:** Michelle de Beixedon, Ph.D.

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**Office Hours:** TR 1-2 and 4-5 p.m. and by appointment.

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**Course Description:** *This is an approved General Education course for Upper Division Theme O: Women's Issues.* This course will examine the position of women in the major religious traditions of the world. Historically and cross-culturally women have largely been relegated to the status of a profane and passive other in the domain of the religious. This religious alienation has profound implications not only for the spiritual lives of women but for the personal, social, political, and economic aspects of their existence as well. The Western world in particular is in the midst of a massive paradigm shift in which the religious subjectivity, indeed, the full humanity of women is beginning to be recognized and affirmed. This course will explore androcentric patterns of domination as they are grounded in and legitimated by religious systems of meaning. We will also explore transformative alternatives that exist within the world's religious traditions themselves in an effort to identify sources of empowerment, mutuality, and justice for women and men.

**Course Objectives:** You will emerge from this course with: a working knowledge of the rudimentary history, beliefs, and practices of the world's major religious traditions; a broader understanding of how religious ideologies affect the construction of gender roles and impact women's lives cross-culturally; the basic tools which will enable you to critically examine the significance of religion and gender in your own life and society.

**Required Texts:** The following are available at the CSUC Bookstore.

1. Lucinda Joy Peach, *Women and World Religions*
2. Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent*
3. Sue Monk Kidd, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*
4. **Course Reader** (available at Mr. Kopy or on reserve in the library)

### Course Requirements:

1. Autobiography	100 pts
2. Family Religious History Paper	100 pts
3. Presentation	200 pts
4. Mid-term	300 pts
5. Final Exam	300 pts
Total	1000 pts

### Grading Policy:

1. **Grading:** 95-100 A; 90-94 A-; 87-89 B+; 84-86 B; 80-83 B-; 77-79 C+; 74-76 C; 70-73 C-; 67-69 D+; 60-66 D; 0-59 F.
2. **Attendance:** I take it daily. **Four absences regardless of the reason and your grade will be reduced by ½ grade level. Six absences and your grade will be reduced by one full grade.**
3. **Participation:** Bring relevant books to each class and be prepared to discuss them.

4. **I do not accept late assignments:** The only exceptions are your hospitalization or a death in your immediate family.
5. **Missed Exams** may be made up only under extraordinary circumstances and with consultation well prior to the date they are given.
6. **Plagiarism** and other forms of cheating will result in a failing grade. (See Policy)
7. Please note: **I do not accept assignments in electronic format or provide grades via e-mail. No exceptions.**
8. **Office Hours:** If you have something you'd like to discuss with me take advantage of my office hours. I will be happy to discuss your progress in the course with you.

**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.

### Explanation of Course Requirements:

1. **Autobiography:**  
Papers are to be typed and double-spaced. Remember I do not accept late assignments. Write a two-page (minimum) **autobiography** telling me about yourself and the trajectory of your life to date. It should be clear, concise, and thoughtful. I will get you started on this. Include one representative Xeroxed photo of yourself on the last page. See course outline for due date.
2. **Family Religious History Paper:**  
Research and write a two-page report on your **family religious history** from as far back through the generations as you can and include whatever religious context or contacts have been significant in your own life. In other words, describe your religious journey to date. Include a thoughtful explanation of why you are taking this particular course, what specific concerns you have regarding women and religion. See course outline for due date.
3. **Extracurricular Events:** Due on the day of the final.  
Each student will be responsible for attending **four** lectures or public events during the semester. These should be relevant to the content of this course. On the day of the final you are to turn in a typed one-paragraph description of each event.
4. **Mid-term:** The midterm will be based on the readings and lectures. It will consist of both objective and essay questions. I will provide you with a study guide.
5. **Oral Report:** You will sign up for report topics and dates. You are to present a 15- 20 minute oral report. It must include a two page (minimum) typed **outline and a Bibliography** on an additional page of **at least five quality sources** (only two of which can be internet sources). Your bibliography must be in correct bibliographic format) Be creative in your use of overheads, audio, visual, or other media to supplement your oral report. You will be graded on the quality, thoroughness, and clarity of your research and presentation.
6. **Final Exam:** The final will be in objective and essay format. It will cover material from the beginning of the course. You will be provided with a study guide.

**Week One**

Jan 24-28: Lecture: **Introduction to Feminism and the Academic Study of Religion**

Read: Peach pp. 1-14 "Introduction"

Reader: Gudorf, "Sexism Enshrined"

**Week Two**

Jan 31-Feb 4: Lecture: **Prehistory: The Pre-Patriarchal Hypothesis?**

Read: Reader: Allen "The Scholars and the Goddess"

Diamant, *The Red Tent* Part I pp. 1-71

**Week Three (Autobiography due: Section 3 Feb 7 and Section 2 Feb 8)**

Feb 7-11: Lecture: **Theories of the Origins of Patriarchy**

Read: Reader: Lerner "Introduction" from *The Creation of Patriarchy*

Reader: Gimbutas "Women and Culture in Goddess-Oriented Old Europe"

Diamant, *The Red Tent* Part II pp. 75-210

**Week Four**

Feb 14-18: Lecture: **The Effects of Patriarchy**

Read: Reader: Kramer and Sprenger, Selections from *The Malleus Maleficarum*

Reader: Daly, Selections from *Gyn/Ecology; The Meta-Ethics of Radical Feminism*

Reader: McCarthy-Brown, "Fundamentalism and the Control of Women"

Diamant, *The Red Tent* Part III pp. 213-321

**Week Five (Family Religious History Paper due: Sec 3 Feb 21 and Sec 2 Feb 22)**

Feb 21-25: Lecture: **Women and Hinduism**

Read: Peach pp. 15-24 "Women and Hinduism"

Leslie pp. 25-38 "Women and Religion in Ancient Indian Texts"

Jordan, pp. 39-49 "Driving the Priestesses or the Prostitutes Out of Hindu Temples?"

Dhruvarajan pp. 49-56 "Religious Ideology, Hindu women, and Development in India"

**Week Six**

Feb 28-Mar 4: Lecture: **Women and Buddhism**

Read: Peach pp. 61-72 "Women and Buddhism"

Murcott pp. 73-77 "First Buddhist Women: Translations and Commentaries..."

Lekshe Tsomo pp. 77-86 "The Buddhist Women's Movement"

Khuankaew pp. 87-99 "Thai Buddhism: Women's Ordination or More Prostitution?"

**Week Seven**

Mar 7-11: Lecture: **Women and Confucianism, Taoism, and Asian Religious Traditions**

Read: Peach pp. 101-117 "Women and Other Asian Religious Traditions"

Smyers pp. 117-125 "Women and Shinto: The Relation Between Purity & Pollution"

Sered pp.126-134 "Women of the Sacred Grove: Divine Priestesses of Okinawa"

Kelleher, pp. 135-152 "Confucianism"

**March 14-18: Spring Break**

**Week Eight**

March 21-25: Lecture: **Women and African Religions**

Read: Peach pp. 299-308 "Women and African Religions"

Hackett pp. 309-327 "Women in African Religions"

Oduyoye pp. 328-333 "Religion's Chief Clients"

McCarthy Brown pp. 333-345 "A Case Study of Moral Leadership in Haitian Vodou"  
Sojourner pp. 380-385 "House of Yemanja: The Goddess Heritage of Black Women"

**March 28 and 29: MIDTERM; March 31: Cesar Chavez Day Holiday**

### **Week Nine**

April 4-8: Lecture: **Women and Islam**

Read: Peach pp. 249-258 "Women and Islam"

Marmaduke Pickthall, trans. pp. 258-270 "The Meaning of the Glorious Koran..."

Smith pp. 271-278 "Rabi'a the Mystic and Her Fellow-Saints in Islam"

Shaaban pp. 279-293 "The Muted Voices of Women Interpreters"

"Dance of the Dissident Daughter" Chapter One: Awakening

### **Week Ten**

April 11-15: Lecture: **Women and Judaism**

Read: Peach pp. 157-165 "Women and Judaism"

Niditch pp. 165-176 "Portrayals of Women in the Hebrew Bible"

Grossman & Haut pp. "Personal Vignettes"

"Dance of the Dissident Daughter" Chapter Two: Initiation

### **Week Eleven**

April 18-22: Lecture: **Women and Christianity**

Read: Peach pp. 201-214 "Women and Christianity"

Sawyer pp. 215-225 "Sisters in Christ or Daughters of Eve?"

Reader: Murphy, "Women and the Bible"

Reader: Hollander, "Magdalene: A Woman of Extremes"

"Dance of the Dissident Daughter" Chapter Three: Grounding

### **Week Twelve**

April 25-29: Lecture: **Multicultural Voices: Womanist, Mujerista, Asian, Native American**

Read: Peach pp. Isasi-Diaz pp. Mujerista Theology: A Challenge to Traditional Theology"

Reader: hooks, "The Politics of Radical Black Subjectivity"

Reader: Nakashima Brock "Toward an Asian American Theology"

"Dance of the Dissident Daughter" Chapter Four: Empowerment

### **Week Thirteen**

May 2-6: Lecture: **Women and Goddess Centered Religions**

Read: Peach pp. 349-353 "Women and Goddess Centered Religions"

Eller pp. 354-363 "The Birth of a New Religion"

Starhawk and Connor pp. 374-379 "Reclaiming the Sacred"

Reader: Neitz "In Goddess We Trust"

### **Week Fourteen**

May 9-13: Lecture: **Eco-Feminism and the Sacred**

Read: Reader: Merchant, Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory

Reader: Kheel, "Ecofeminism and Deep Ecology"

Reader: McFague "An Earthly Theological Agenda"

### **Week Fifteen**

May 16-20: **FINALS**

**Week Three: Feb 9 or 10: Origins of Patriarchy**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The United Nations Report on the Status of Women
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Midwifery as the Practice of Women's Medicine (The Midwives Tale)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Role of Motherhood in the World's Religions (Of Women Born)

**Week Four: Feb 16 or 17: The Effects of Patriarchy**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Domestic Violence and Abuse of Women and Children
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Effect of the Beauty Myth on Women's Self Esteem (The Beauty Myth)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Eating Disorders & Women (The Obsession: On the Tyranny . . .)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Pornography, Prostitution and Women (Dworkin /Barry)

**Week Five: Feb 23 or 24: Women and Hinduism**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The Practice of Suttee or Wife Burning in India
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Women and Poverty in India
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Goddesses and their Roles in Hinduism (David Kinsley)

**Week Six: March 2 or 3: Women and Buddhism**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The Role of Women in Tantric Buddhism (Passionate Enlightenment)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Women as Buddhist Teachers in America (Meetings With Remarkable)

**Week Seven: March 9 or 10: Women and Asian Religions**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Footbinding in Pre Revolutionary China
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Asian Goddess Quan Yin (Sandy Boucher)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Historical Evolution of the Role of Women in Japan

**March 14-18 Spring Break**

**Week Eight: March 23 or 24: Women in African Religions**

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Female Genital Mutilation (Do They Hear You When You Cry?)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Women in Hatian Vodou (Mama Loa)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Women's Puberty Rituals in Primal Religions(Bettleheim)

**March 28 midterm and March 29 Cesar Chavez Holiday: NO REPORTS THIS WEEK**

**Week Nine: April 6 or 7: Women and Islam**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Muslim Women & the Practices of Chador & Purdah
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Position of Women under Fundamentalist Muslim Regimes
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Women's Movement in Muslim Countries

**Week Ten: April 13 or 14: Women and Judaism**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Women Rabbis
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Women in the Hebrew Scriptures (Trible)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Role of Women in Orthodox Judaism
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The Myth of Lilith (Hebrew Goddess by Patai)

**Week Eleven: April 20 or 21: Women and Christianity**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Witch Persecutions and the Christian Church (The Witchcraze)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Women's Struggle for Ordination in the Churches (A Priest Forever)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Women's Reproductive Rights and the Christian Churches (CFFC)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The Role of Mary in Christianity (Hail Mary/Hamington)

**Week Twelve: April 27 or 28: Multiculturalism and Diversity**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The Role of Women in the Black Churches (Collins/Cannon)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Mujerista or Hispanic Women's Theology (Ada Maria Isazi Diaz)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Homosexuality and the Christian Churches (Boswell and Brooten)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Asian Women's Theology (Struggle to Be the Sun Again)

**Week Thirteen: May 4 or 5: Women and Goddess Religions**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The Wicca Movement in America (Starhawk)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Men's Movement (Politics of Masculinities by Messner)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Role of Women in Native American Traditions (Talamentez)

**Week Fourteen: May 11 or 12: Eco-Feminism and the Sacred**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Ecofeminism and The Animal Rights Movement (Marti Kheel)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Activism of Julia "Butterfly" Hill (Luna)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Women in the Global Peace Movement (Peace as a Woman's Issue)

**Week Fifteen: May 16-20 FINALS**

