

## COURSE SYLLABUS— Moorman

### **Women and Religion**

**THEO 178/ WOST 278**

**Section 025**

(Class Number: 4166 for Theology; 5120 for WOST)

**Spring 2006**

**MWF 9:20- 10:10**

**DU 119**

#### **Instructor Information:**

**Professor Mary Moorman**

**Office Location: Crown Center 444**

**Office Hours: MW 10:30- 11:30, Tues. 3:00-4:00 and by appointment**

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In Crown Center during office hours: 773-508-2360

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#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this course, we will engage the experience of women as it finds expression within the context of the three Abrahamic traditions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We will conduct this inquiry with the assistance of feminist perspectives that surface lost traditions, silenced voices and unspoken connections to women's experience. Feminist perspectives also highlight what in these traditions marginalizes women and interrupts respect for women's full humanity. As a basis of this inquiry, we acknowledge that there is no single universal "women's experience" and we will acknowledge difference in women's encounters and embodiments of religion.

This course will focus upon (1) interpretive methods used in reading and using sacred texts, (2) the naming of women's particular experiences and ways in which these experiences are reflected or not reflected by the Abrahamic religious traditions, and (3) possibilities already present for inclusive religious practices or possibilities for new practices that lead to full humanity for both women and men. A primary goal of this course is to empower students in naming their own experience.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

The course objectives as outlined for core curriculum at Loyola University follow. In addition, within this section of women and religion, the learning objectives are:

1. To provide an introductory understanding of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
2. To empower students in naming each student's own religious experience-- for those students who are within a religious tradition.
3. To empower students for effective leadership in their lives.
4. To develop a working theological methodology that provides a framework for reflection upon experience and religion, leading to choice in action.

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

1. A bible, preferably the NRSV Annotated, but other versions are acceptable. An annotated bible is a bible that contains margin notes that assist in interpretation.
2. Denny, Frederick Mathewson. *An Introduction to Islam*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006).
2. Plaskow, Judith. *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1990).
3. Schneiders, Sandra. *With Oil in Their Lamps: Faith, Feminism, and the Future* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2000).
4. Schneiders, Sandra. *Women and the Word* (New York, NY: Paulist Press).
5. Wadud, Amina. *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999).

*Additional readings will be provided through handouts from the instructor and online. There is a possible course pack that will be available at Beck's for \$25-\$30.*

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- (1) Attendance at all classes.
- (2) Class participation including group discussions and general discussions.
- (3) Participation in Blackboard Forum is another option for fulfilling participation requirement.
- (4) Responsible reading for all assigned reading.
- (7) **8 one page** reaction papers – There will be a possibility of approximately 10 throughout the semester. Some will be required, some will be optional. You must turn in 8 total.
- (5) Three exams: two midterm exams and one final exam.
- (6) Two group project integration papers: each no longer than 5 pages. These papers will be written individually and submitted individually.
- (8) Group Project and presentation.

### **COURSE EVALUATION: All requirements must be fulfilled for you to pass the course.**

- (1) Participation 10%
- (2) Midterm Exam #1 15%
- (3) Midterm Exam #2 15%
- (4) Final Exam 15%
- (5) Paper #1 15%

- (6) Paper #2 20%
- (7) Group Presentation 10%

Grades by percentage:

|          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| A 100-93 | A- 92-90 | B+ 89-87 | B 86-83  | B- 82-80 |
| C+ 79-77 | C 76-73  | C- 72-70 | D+ 69-67 | D 66-63  |
| D- 62-60 | F 0-59   |          |          |          |

**Participation Grade:**

Reaction papers count towards your participation grade. The instructor will provide comments on each submitted paper, but there will be no letter grade assigned. Credit is given for completing and turning in the reaction paper on the assigned day in class. Quality points will be assigned to help the professor in assessing the student's participation.

**\*\*Attendance Bonus:** Students who miss less than three classes will be given the option of a take home exam for the final examination.

**EXAM DATES:**

**First Midterm: Feb. 16**

**Second Midterm: March 23**

**Final: Saturday, May 5 at 1:00-3:00pm**

**Paper #1, Group Presentation, and Paper #2**

Instructions for paper #1 will be distributed Wednesday, January 31.

**LOYOLA UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:**

The basic commitment of a university is to search for and to communicate the truth as it is honestly perceived. The university could not accomplish its purpose in the absence of this demanding standard. To the extent that this standard is respected, a genuine learning community can exist. Students of this university are called upon to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of this standard. Plagiarism is the appropriation for gain of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the deliberate taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources.

The faculty and administration of Loyola University Chicago wish to make it clear that the following acts are regarded as serious violations of personal honesty and the academic ideal that binds the university into a learning community:

Submitting as one's own:

1. Material copied from a published source: print, internet, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
2. Another person's unpublished work or examination material.
3. Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit.
4. Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The critical issue is to give proper recognition to other sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty.

Plagiarism on the part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department involved. The chairperson may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct.

Academic cheating is another serious act that violates academic integrity. Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to or obtaining information from another student during the examination; attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; and falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences all are violations of the integrity and honesty standards of the examination process.

In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty across departments, the academic dean of the student's college may convene a hearing board. Students retain the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the academic dean of the college in which they are registered. The decision of the dean is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean.

### **COURSE GROUND RULES:**

1. Attendance and participation. Please let me know as soon as possible if there is a necessity for you to miss classes that affect your class performance – such as serious illness or injuries. **A doctor's note is required to make up missed exams.**
2. Stay in communication. Please see me to discuss policies or deadline questions that come up for you during the semester. Part of the experience of higher education is learning effective communication skills.
3. Class "etiquette". I request that students come to class on time and stay until the end of class – unless you have a good reason. This is also in your best interest since quizzes and scribbles will most often be at the beginning of class. Please turn off cell phones and pagers – no reading or sending text messages during class. This is a distraction to me and to your classmates. No baseball hats are allowed – eye contact helps communication in large group settings. Unless there are health reasons, do not eat in class – this is a

request from the university. Drinking coffee, soda or water is fine, but please refrain from chewing ice! Remain awake.

4. Listen attentively to other students. Respect others' space for their own opinions. Refrain from interrupting, rolling your eyes or audible sighing when you disagree with an opinion expressed in class.

**CORE VALUES Assessed and Addressed in this course:**  
**Knowledge Area (Theological and Religious Studies Knowledge):**

By successfully passing this course, students will:

Learn to analyze and interpret religious texts, including scriptural texts, using standard scholarly methods and tools.

Since the three major western religious traditions are all based on sacred texts (the Tanakh, the Bible, the Qur'an), and since these texts provide an authoritative source for religious teachings, students will study both the ways that traditional interpretation has understood texts related to women, as well as feminist interpretations of these texts.

Demonstrate knowledge, with attention to historical development, of the central texts, beliefs, ethical understandings, and practices of at least one religious tradition.

The beliefs and practices of religious traditions present understandings of the divine, the human relation to the divine, the distinctive approach that each religion takes towards human life (e.g., how salvation will be accomplished). Students will learn how gender factors into these beliefs and practices (e.g., images of the divine, whether gender plays a role in salvation) and will also learn how these beliefs and practices with relation to sex and gender have changed over time (e.g., the rationale for or against women's ministerial leadership).

Demonstrate knowledge of the intersections between religion and selected contemporary issues.

The women's movement, as a contemporary social, political, and religious movement, has had a powerful impact on religious traditions, some of which have changed their positions with regard to women's ministerial leadership (ordination), and some of which have not; feminism has challenged particular religious practices (such as women's traditional inability to help constitute a minyan in Judaism). Students will learn how religious traditions have responded positively and negatively to the challenges of contemporary feminism and will consider how their own religious backgrounds (for those raised in a tradition) have responded to the challenges of the women's movement. Students less familiar with religion will learn how religious ideas pervade contemporary culture.

Evaluate one's own religious perspective and the religious perspectives of others.

Students will consider how their own religious backgrounds have influenced their understanding of gender roles and how other religious traditions may understand these roles in similar and different ways. Through classroom discussion of lecture material, videos, and reading material, students will be able to evaluate these understandings in dialogue with others.

### **Skills (Critical Thinking Skills and Dispositions):**

Comprehend, paraphrase, summarize, and contextualize the meaning of varying forms of communication, including, but not limited to: written work (fiction and nonfiction), speech, film, visual art, multimedia, and music.

Students will learn to comprehend and summarize the views of various scholars on religious ideas of women and learn how these can be understood in relation to their context (e.g., how Thomas Aquinas's view that women are misbegotten males needs to be seen in light of medieval biology).

Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of varying points of view.

Students will compare the views of contemporary scholars who defend their religious traditions teachings with women who challenge these traditions and evaluate the arguments for the different positions.

Generate new ideas, hypotheses, opinions, theories, questions, and proposals; and develop strategies for seeking and synthesizing information to support and argument, make a decision, or resolve a problem.

In their class discussions, small groups, and in written work, students will be encouraged to develop various hypotheses and proposals for understanding the differences among religious teachings about sex and gender, and to articulate these positions with reasoned arguments.

Monitor individual thinking or behavior in order to question, confirm, validate, or correct it.

By reading the ideas of various authors, by listening to the instructor, guest lecturers and other students, the student in this class will be required to reflect on their own ideas about women and religion and to articulate their ideas in clear and reasoned ways.

### **Values Area (Understanding Diversity in the United States or the World):**

This course satisfies the value of Understanding Diversity in the United States or the World by focusing on the diverse ways in which women's roles are understood in religion. Through studying the diverse ways in which women's roles are understood in religion, students come to see how complex and variegated views about gender are (a); they learn to distinguish the various factors that inform and impact individual identity formation, especially that of gender (b) in relation to religious views. The content of the course covers diverse religions and diverse views of religion (e.g., both African-American Muslim and Christian women), and the students in the course learn to identify distinctive patterns of thought and behavior that contribute to the formation of a culture different from their own by reading and discussing the views of these scholars.

## Values Area (Understanding Spirituality or Faith in Action in the World):

This course also satisfies the value of Understanding Spirituality or Faith in Action in the World. Students learn to articulate the foundations of the religious traditions they study, since these foundations are most often seen as the basis for distinctive treatment of men and women. They develop the ability to reflect on how these faith and belief systems relate to intellectual and cultural life by examining the relationship between social and political ideas of equality and how these relate to religion. Finally, they encourage both men and women students to reflect on the applications of these traditions to their own personal decisions by raising questions about the roles of women in religion, how these roles may differ from the roles of men, and how these roles relate not only to the religious traditions of their own foundational beliefs but to their own goals in life.

### COURSE and READING SCHEDULE:

The following schedule may be adjusted by the instructor and readings may be changed subject to the needs of the class.

#### Week 1

- W 1/17 Introduction; In-class exercise
- F 1/19 Religion and Feminism **Schneider:** *With Oil In Their Lamps* p. 1-51

#### Week 2 **PART 1: JUDAISM**

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- M 1/22 Introduction to Judaism **Denny:** *Intro. to Islam* p.11-26
- W 1/24 Women and Judaism **Plaskow:** *Standing Again at Sinai* Intro. and p.1-24
- F 1/26 In-class Video: "Half the Kingdom"

#### Week 3

- M 1/29 "Half the Kingdom" cont. **Plaskow:** *SAS* chapt. 2 p.25-52
- W 1/31 Guest Speaker
- F 2/2 Torah **Plaskow:** *SAS* chapt. 2 p. 52- 74

#### Week 4

- M 2/5 The Law and Women in Judaism **Hauptman:** "Images of Women in the Talmud" *Religion and Sexism*, RRR editor p. 184-212 and **Kraemer:** "Jewish Women's Religious Lives in Rabbinic Sources" *Her Share of the Blessings*

W 2/7 Theology of Sexuality **Plaskow: SAS** p.170-210 **Greenberg:** “In Defense of the ‘Daughters of Israel’” *Women and Theology* p. 229- 244

F 2/9 Theology of Sexuality cont.

Week 5

M 2/12 Images of God **Plaskow SAS** p. 121-169

W 2/14 Review, Catch up

F 2/16 **Midterm Exam #1**

Week 6 **PART 2: CHRISTIANITY**

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M 2/19 Introduction to Christianity/ God and gender /Women’s nature?  
**Denny:** p. 20-25 **Schneiders:** Women and the Word p. 1-70

W 2/21 New Testament and Women: Mary Magdalene **Okure:** “Jesus and Mary Magdalene” *Feminism and Theology* p. 312-32; **Schussler Fiorenza:** “Women in the Pauline Churches” *Feminism and Theology* p. 203-226.

F 2/23 Augustine and Aquinas: Theological Anthropology and Philosophy  
**FRIDAY: March 23:Paper #1 Due 9:20am**

Week 7

M 2/26 Feminist Methodologies

**Beverly Hadad:** “Faith Resources and Sites as Critical to Participatory Learning with Rural South African Women” Women’s Experience: Womanist Theology **Grant:** “The Challenge of the Darker Sister” *Women and Theology* p. 302-311 and Women’s Experience: Mujerista Theology **Isasi-Diaz:** “Mujerista Theology” *Feminism and Theology* p. 91-97

W 2/28 Christologies and Christa **Hampson:** “Feminism and Christology” *Feminism and Theology* p. 287-301 **Harrison:** “The Breast of the Father” *Feminism and Theology* p. 327-332 **Soskice:** “Blood and Defilement” *Feminism and Theology* p.333-343

F 3/2 Augustine and Aquinas **Genevieve Lloyd:** “Augustine and Aquinas” p. 90-98

**March 5-9 SPRING BREAK**

Week 8

M 3/12 Speaker: Women's Roles within the Church **Schneiders:** *With Oil in Their Lamps* p. 52-125

W 3/14 Group Presentations

F 3/16 Group Presentations

Week 9

M 3/19 Presentation Review

W 3/21 Review and Catch Up

F 3/23 **Midterm Exam #2**

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**PART 3: ISLAM**

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Week 10

M 3/26 Introduction to Islam **Denny:** p. 47-71

W 3/28 Video: "Paradise Lies at the Feet of the Mother"

F 3/30 Qur'an and Interpretation **Denny:** p. 128-148; **Wadud:** *Qur'an and Woman* p. 1-15

Week 11

M 4/2 Basic Beliefs and Worship **Denny:** p. 97-127; p. 149-158

W 4/4 Human Creation in the Qur'an **Wadud:** *Qur'an and Woman* p.15-29

**Paper #2 Due at 9:20am**

F 4/6 NO CLASS – Easter break

Week 12

M 4/9 NO CLASS – Easter break

W 4/11 Qur'anic View of Women **Wadud:** *Qur'an and Woman* p. 29-44  
The Hereafter in the Qur'an **Wadud:** *Qur'an and Woman* p. 44-61

F 4/13 Rights and Roles of Women **Wadud:** *Qur'an and Woman* p. 62-78  
**Denny:** p. 263-288

Week 13

M 4/16 Roles of Women cont. **Wadud:** *Qur'an and Woman* p.78-104

W 4/18 Women and Prayer in Islam Video: "Me and the Mosque"

F 4/20 "Me and the Mosque" discussion **Denny:** p. 340-361

Week 14

M 4/23 Hadith and the Role of Law

W 4/25 Speaker: Women and Islam

F 4/27 Review and Catch Up

**FINAL EXAM: Saturday, May 5 at 1:00pm**