

***Rel 330 Women and Religion (Hum; CT) Prof. Alice Keefe Fall 2020***

Class meets on zoom, 12:30-1:45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Recordings will be posted for those unable to attend live sessions.

Office hours on zoom: 11:00 - 11:30 Monday and Wednesday

2:00 – 2:30 Tuesday and Thursday *and by appointment*

Contact email: [akeefe@uwsp.edu](mailto:akeefe@uwsp.edu) (There is also a messaging system on Canvas, but for best results in contacting me, use the university email system. I check that frequently during weekdays.)

***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

Students will explore key issues in the study of “women and religion,” a.k.a. “feminist studies in religion.” We will investigate the ways that that society’s gender hierarchies have been supported and mirrored in religious teachings and practice. We will examine issues relating to inequality and exclusion which confront contemporary women and the strategies by which progressive women are challenging the patriarchal and androcentric dimensions of their religious traditions. We will closely examine arguments from progressives/feminists and traditionalists on issues relating to gender and religion.

***General Education Program HUMANITIES LEARNING OUTCOMES:***

- Read closely, think critically, and write effectively about texts or cultural artifacts that reflect on perennial questions concerning the human condition (such as the search for truth and meaning, the confrontation with suffering and mortality, or the struggle for justice, equality, and human dignity).
- Investigate and thoughtfully respond to a variety of ideas, beliefs or values held by persons in situations other than one’s own.

***REL 330 COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:***

Knowledge. Students applying themselves to this course will be able to

- Accurately define the terms patriarchy and androcentrism and apply these terms to the analysis of religious traditions.
- Identify and explain specific issues or challenges relating to patriarchal and androcentric elements within Judaism, Christianity and Islam which reformers are addressing
- Identify and explain specific strategies which reformers are using to address the patriarchal and androcentric elements within Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Skills. Throughout this course, students will practice and hone skills in

- close reading and careful interpretation of written texts.
- written communication, especially the short essay and longer research paper
- information literacy necessary for research projects
- critical thinking defined as the intentional process of identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and constructing reasoning.

Dispositions. Successful students in this course will develop and practice

- the ability to look at emotionally charged issues from multiple perspectives, and understand opposing points of view, particularly with regard to issues of justice, equality and gender
- the ability to bracket or suspend one’s own biases and worldview in order to empathetically understand that which appears foreign or objectionable.

## **REQUIRED BOOKS ON TEXT RENTAL:**

Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds., *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*

Rita Gross, *Feminism and Religion*

Additional readings and video material available on Canvas

## **CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT**

Four short essays (@ 8% each)	32%
Group research project presentation (3%) and individual report (10%)	13%
Research paper (17%) and oral presentation (3%)	20%
Midterm exam	10%
Final exam	10%
Best 8 out of 10 Quizzes	15%

## **EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**4 short essays (8% each).** Prompts and due dates will be found on the assignment schedule.

Essays will be graded on the basis of the following criteria:

- Demonstrates careful and close reading of relevant materials
- Demonstrates thoughtful and informed reflection on the prompt
- Includes appropriate details and quotes from reading materials to support points.
- Is well organized, with a clearly defined paragraph structure, effective introduction and relevant conclusion
- Fulfills instructions in the prompt
- Is free of grammar and spelling errors
- Is approximately 400-600 words

*Required format:* Typed and double-spaced. Use MS Word or another word processing program which is compatible with Canvas. At the top of your essay, put your name, the date and the title of the assignment.

*Submission instructions:* Submit your document into the designated drop box on Canvas by the due date.

*Late submission penalty:* Essays received after the due date will lose 2 points per day late (out of a possible 100 points) for each class day late (including weekend days). The drop box will close two weeks after assignment due date.

### **Group Research Project Oral Presentation (3%)**

See document posted on Canvas resources module for more detailed instructions.

Students will join a group of 2-4 students and will pool resources and information as they research a particular topic relating to difficult issues facing women in religious traditions and strategies pursued in response to this issue. Group members will together prepare a presentation for the class. At least one

group member must be present in the designated zoom session to present this presentation. If no group members can be present at a live zoom session, then the group must create a video of their presentation and submit to Prof. Keefe for sharing with the class. All students in the group will receive the same grade on the presentation.

The group presentation

- Should clearly describe the issue your group has researched, and your findings on the strategies women within this tradition are using to respond to this issue.
- should include visual materials (using power point or a similar tool)
- should be approximately 3-5 minutes long. Please ask for permission if you need more time for your presentation.

### ***Group Research Project Individual Report (10%).***

Drawing on the information and resources collected by the group, each student will individually prepare a report on their research which will include an annotated bibliography of sources consulted.

This report will include:

- A clear paragraph that describes the issue under investigation, and explains why it is an issue from a feminist perspective
- A clear paragraph that describes the strategies feminist thinkers/activists are using to address this issue.
- An annotated bibliography of the most important sources you and other group members found for researching this topic. For an average grade, you should have *at least FIVE* sources annotated in this bibliography.

Each annotation should offer a short description (75-150 words) of the source which does the following:

- Specifies what kind of source this is (scholarly article, popular website, etc.) and why you regard it as a reliable source
- Explains what this source offers for research on this topic

Important clarification:

- *The individual report must be the work of the individual.* While you are welcome to draw upon the research findings of the group, the explanatory paragraphs and annotations must be your own individual composition.

Submission instructions:

- This report must be submitted to the Professor using a Canvas drop box *AND posted on the designated discussion forum on Canvas* so your fellow students can access it.

Due date: Individual reports must be submitted *no later than two weeks after group presentation* is delivered. After that date, individual reports lose 1 point (out of possible 100) for each day late.

*Late submission policy:* After the two week window elapses, individual reports will lose 1 point (out of a possible 100) for each day late.

**Short research paper (17 %):** Your topic should focus on a person, a movement, a text, or a question involving religion and sexuality/women/gender issues. You must focus on a topic involving western religions unless you receive permission to do otherwise. Your topic should be narrow enough for successful treatment in a short research paper of 5-7 pages and should make a clear argument about the topic.

Research papers will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Based on a clearly defined research topic/question/issue which is relevant to the course
- Makes an argument about that topic, and supports that argument effectively
- Shows evidence of sound research methodology (at least six sources drawn from a variety of research media)
- Is clearly organized, with well-articulated paragraph structure, including introduction and concluding paragraphs
- Includes appropriate use of relevant supporting evidence including illustrative quotes and/or specific details from primary sources and/or secondary sources
- Uses correct and consistent format in citations and reference list; any standard citation style is acceptable.
- Uses correct grammar and spelling
- Is typed and double-spaced, 5-7 pages in length. (Longer is acceptable, but will not necessarily mean a higher grade.)

Research papers will be due on Friday of the last week of class.

*Late submission policy:* Papers received after last day of classes (during finals week) will lose 2 points per day late (including weekend days). Nothing will be accepted after the end of finals week.

**Oral presentation on short research paper (3 %).** Oral presentations will be assessed on the following criteria:

- clarity of structure of report
- evidence of careful preparation
- appropriate body language and clear speech
- use of appropriate supporting visual aids
- engagement with discussion questions to and from peers
- timing -- reports should be between 3 and 5 minutes in length

Oral presentations of research will be in the last week of class. Any student unable to give their oral presentation live on zoom at the scheduled class times must make a video of their presentation and submit to Professor Keefe via email.

**Midterm and Final Exams (10 % each).** These exams will test comprehension of assigned materials, study questions, and questions/issues discussed in class. These will be timed essays; please alert the professor if you are registered with Disability Services and are requesting additional time. Tests are open book, which means you can look at your readings, answers to study questions, and power points, time permitting.

**Quizzes (15%).** Scheduled quizzes on Canvas must be taken by 12:30 p.m. on dates stipulated (that is, before the start of class. The questions on the quizzes will cover all material since the previous quiz or test and will be drawn from the study questions which accompany each assignment and the content of zoom class sessions. There will be 10 quizzes given, **and I will count your best 8 out of 10 scores.**

Quizzes taken after the due date lose one point per day late; quiz availability closes one week after due date.

**Class attendance** is not required. I will however take attendance in each class period as a way of getting to know the names of everyone and to keep track of your progress in the course.

To succeed in this class, **you will need to attend the zoom lectures at the scheduled times or watch the recordings** of the lectures soon after they are posted. Weekly quizzes will be based on assigned readings and material from the lectures from the last test or quiz up through assigned material for that day's class period.

**Participation:** Deep learning depends upon active participation in the learning process. Please come to class prepared (having completed the assignments for the day) and ready to ask questions or offer comments. Have any reading materials and your study question notes available (either in printed format, or have the document(s) open on your computer.

### ***Zoom Classroom Etiquette:***

- Please keep your microphone muted when it isn't needed to reduce noise distractions
- Please keep your camera on if your bandwidth allows. Our goal is to build a strong learning community in this class, so it is important that we all can see each other's faces, get to know each other, and embrace the challenges of communicating in a virtual format.
- If you cannot have your camera on, consider having a nice picture of yourself appear instead of a black screen with your name. Your picture should be professionally appropriate (avoid cocktail scenes, obscene gestures, swimsuit shots, etc.)
- Keep in mind the religious diversity among your classmates when speaking about matters concerning religion; our goal is not agreement about all issues (never possible), but to practice civil discourse where we learn to listen respectfully and engage with a wide variety of views.

***Policy on academic integrity:***

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of the codes of honesty and mutual respect that binds us together as a community. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university. For more information regarding the university policy on academic misconduct (plagiarism) and disciplinary procedures, please see chapter 14 of the University Handbook, located at this web page link:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>

***Intellectual property rights:*** Lecture materials and recordings for Rel 101-01 are protected intellectual property at UW-Stevens Point. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. Class sessions will be recorded and posted on Zoom. You are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or share lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

***Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*** is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyinfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way I can. For more information, please visit the Disability Services Office, located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here:

<http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>.