

Rel 330 Women and Religion Spring '23

9:30-10:45 Tuesday/Thursday in Room 233 CCC (class meets in person)

Instructor: ***Prof. Alice Keefe***

Office location: 488C Collins Classroom Center (CCC)

Office hours: Mondays 1-2; Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 to 2:00

and by appointment. You can also request to meet with me via zoom.

Contact email: 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 women resist or challenge the patriarchal and androcentric dimensions of their religious traditions.

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

Three short essays (@ 10% each)	30%
Midterm exam	10%
Final exam	10%
Research topic exploration	3%
Research project proposal and annotated bibliography	7%
Research paper (17%)	17%
Oral presentation on research project	3%
Best five out of six quizzes	8%
Best six out of eight discussion forum posts	7%
Attendance and participation	5%

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

3 short essays (10% 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.

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 1 point per day late (out of a possible 100 points) for each day late (including weekend days). The drop box will close two weeks after assignment due date.

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.

Best 5 out of 6 Quizzes (8%). Scheduled quizzes on Canvas must be taken by 9:30 a.m. (that is, before class begins) on dates stipulated on the assignment schedule. 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 class sessions. There will be 10 quizzes given, **and I will count your best 8 out of 10 scores.**

Late policy: Quizzes taken after the due date lose one point (out of a possible 10 points) per day late; quiz availability closes one week after due date.

Best 6 out of 8 Discussion Forum Posts (7%). Discussion forums will facilitate the exchange of ideas among students and allow for conversations that go beyond the class session. I will count your **best 6 out of 8** discussion forum posts.

Discussion posts should consist of meaningful and substantive content, *conforming to the following criteria:*

- Posts should be approximately 50 to 100 words in length.
- Posts should reflect accurate knowledge of material under discussion.
- Posts should consist of complete and grammatically accurate sentences.
- Posts that initiate threads should raise an issue or idea to which others can respond.
- Posts that respond to existing threads should reflect thoughtful engagement with other posts on the thread, and should advance the conversation.
- Posts should avoid profanity, rants, personal attacks, or disrespect towards any group or person on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.

The criteria for scoring discussion posts is as follows:

10 pts = Thoughtful and clearly expressed post which reflects accurate knowledge of material under discussion and advances a conversation. Meets all criteria (see above) AND includes at least one additional and substantive response to another student's post

9 pts = Thoughtful and clearly expressed post, or response to another student's post, which reflects accurate knowledge of material under discussion and advances a conversation. Meets all criteria (see above)

8 pts = Post is lacking in one of the required criteria (see above)

7 pts = Post is lacking in two or more of the required criteria (see above)

6 pts = Post is lacking in three or more of the required criteria (see above)

Late policy: Discussion forms will remain open for three days after the due date; late posts will lose *1/2 point per day late* (including weekends and holidays).

Research project in four steps

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 and should make a clear argument about the topic.

Research project step 1: topic exploration (3%)

Set forth an *idea or a question* that could guide a viable research project. Explain this idea or question, and why you think it is important or interesting (expected length 75-100 words). Then provide citations (using correct citation format) for *three* sources that would contribute to this research project.

Research project step 2: Research paper proposal and annotated bibliography (7%)

Prepare a research paper proposal and annotated bibliography. The proposal should contain the following elements: 1) the question which is your starting point (one sentence), 2) the reasons why this question is interesting to you and what you hope to explore or argue (approximately 100 words), 3) full citations for five or more sources relevant to this research project (using correct citation format), one of which must be an academic, peer reviewed article, 4) annotations for five or more of your sources. Your annotations should clarify the **KIND OF SOURCE** this is (peer reviewed article, encyclopedia article, webpage for an organization, book, etc.), provide a brief **SUMMARY** of the contents of the source and a statement of **HOW THIS SOURCE HELPS** to address your question. (Expected length of each annotation: 50 to 100 words).

If your grade on the research paper proposal and annotated bibliography is lower than desired, you can resubmit for a potentially higher grade. Resubmissions are due one week after the first attempt was graded.

Research project step 3: Research paper (5-8 pp. in length) (17%)

Your research paper will build on the research paper proposal and annotated bibliography. A strong research paper is much more than a simple report. *A report is just a summary description* of what you've learned about a topic. *A research paper makes an argument* about this topic and *supports this argument* with evidence drawn from your research.

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, 5-8 pages in length. (Longer is acceptable, but will not necessarily mean a higher grade.)

Research papers will be due on Tuesday, May 9th.

Late submission policy: Papers received after due date will lose 2 points per day late (including weekend days) out of a possible 100 points.

Research project step 4: Oral presentation on your research project

Oral presentations will be given in last two weeks of class and 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

Attendance and Participation (5%)

Class attendance is required. I will take attendance in each class period and expect you to be present.

Excessive **unexcused absences** will adversely affect your grade. Your attendance grade will be based on the number of classes you attended or for which you were excused divided by the number of class sessions held times 100. Canvas will provide you with that percentage score.

Excused absence: An absence may be excused for reasons of illness, Covid quarantine, family emergency, military service call ups, or a school or team related event. (This rule follows university policy). Since there is no pick for “excused absences” in the Canvas attendance program, I will use the “late” pick to designated excused absences.

If you wish for an absence to be excused, you must send an email to Prof. Keefe stating the reason for your absence in advance of the absence. If you are forced to take an extended absence due to illness or other reasons, please talk to me about developing a plan for you to successfully complete the semester.

Active Participation means that you come to class prepared, having completed assignments for the day, and that you ***regularly contribute to class discussion***. Excellent active participation will raise your score in the attendance/participation category.

Classroom Etiquette:

- Cell phones must be muted and put away, unless you are using your cell phone to access the reading under discussion in class.
- Laptop use in class is acceptable, though not recommended. (Studies show most students learn more effectively by taking handwritten notes.) If you are using a laptop for taking notes, you must close all social media sites and other sources of distraction.
- Please do not eat during class. It is distracting, especially if the people sitting near you are hungry.
- Do your best to get to class on time. However, sometimes circumstances intervene, and it is OK to enter the classroom late. Please come up after class to get credit for attendance.
- When speaking in class about matters involving religion, be aware of the religious diversity within the class, and strive to ensure that your comments are respectful of difference and contribute to an atmosphere of civil discourse.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Introduction to the study of women and religion. Focus on Judaism.

1 Quiz, 2 discussion forums
Short essay #1

Unit 2: Gendered God Language and Critical Thinking

2 Quizzes, 2 discussion forums
Short essay #2
Midterm test

Unit 3: All About Eve: Scripture and Interpretation

1 quiz, 2 discussion forums
Research topics explorations due
Short essay #3

Unit 4: Herstory

2 quizzes, 2 discussion forums
Research paper proposals due

Unit 5: The challenges of making change

1 quiz, 2 discussion forums
Oral reports; Research papers due

Grading Criteria

A	94-100%	C+	77-79%
A-	90-93%	C	74-76%
B+	87-89%	C-	70-73%
B	83-86%	D+	67-69%
B-	80-82%	D	60-66%
		F	0-59%

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.

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments must be prepared by the student. Therefore, **AI generated submissions are prohibited and will be treated as plagiarism. If the professor has reason to suspect you used an AI generated submission, you will be asked to orally discuss your essay with the professor to ascertain the ideas and words are your own.**

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 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here:

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