**RELS 0080 Gender, Power, God(s)**

Spring 2014

Prof. Ross Kraemer/Laura Dingeldein TA

T Th 10.30-11.50

Wilson 101

**Description**

Religion and gender (ideas about masculine and feminine) are deeply intertwined in many cultures. Concepts of gender and gender norms are both regularly authorized, and contested, by appeals to divine will and action. Religious practices and ideas regularly encode, inscribe, and contest gender, in diverse cultures: they show and tell masculinity and femininity, teach how to perform it, and sometimes how to overcome it.

In this course, we will examine instances of the ways various religions participate in diverse constructions of gender, and how these relate to gendered religious practices, and to the construction and exercise of power and authority.  To do this, we’ll devote some consideration to broader issues of definitions and theorizing, and a lot of time to various case studies. For this year, we will draw on examples from diverse American Protestant churches (African-American churches in early 20th century Chicago, contemporary evangelical Christianity, mainstream Protestant Christianity in the late nineteenth and early 20th century America, celibate American utopian movements), various Asian religions (early Indian Buddhism, contemporary Buddhist women's monasticism, village kamis in contemporary Okinawa [Japan]), together with instances from late antique Christianity, contemporary ultra-Orthodox Judaism, and contemporary Islam.

**Class format and assignments**

Class meets twice week for 80 minutes, combining lectures and discussion. Assignments will include weekly readings, a weekly journal, and a choice of one longer research project (which may be ethnographic), or a take-home final assignment. There are no sit-down exams, either mid-term or final.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Regular attendance.** If you are ill, or unable to attend class due to serious personal emergencies, please try to let us know in advance of the class, preferably by email.

2. **Timely completion of the weekly reading assignments.** On average, you should expect to devote 6-8 hours per week in class preparation and related work.

3.  **Informed participation in class discussion, including active listening.** Everyone should come to class each time prepared to contribute to class discussion, based on thoughtful reflection on the assigned readings.

4. **Weekly journal.** The major written work for this course is a journal of responses, primarily to class readings. Your journal may also include responses to lectures, discussions and videos. We prefer word-processed journals, but hand-written journals are acceptable. Journal entries should be written **at least once a week** and submitted in sets, on the class Canvas site.

5. **A** **final paper or take-home assignment.** For the final assignment for the course, you may choose between a take-home assignment and a research paper on a topic of your own choosing. Topics and bibliography for research papers must be submitted in advance. Further instructions for research projects are on the class website.

**Course Policies**

To receive a passing grade, students are expected to satisfy **all** course requirements, as described above. Failure to meet **any individual requirement** **may** be grounds for receiving a failing grade for the course.

For purposes of determining your final grade, course work will be weighted as follows: Weekly journals 50%; Final Paper 30%; Attendance and participation 20%. Total: 100%.

Students who are having any difficulties with course responsibilities should come talk to us as soon as possible, so that we can address these problems together constructively. Students who submit work after the announced deadlines, without having made prior arrangements, should expect to receive some reduction in grade. Students who violate the Brown Academic Honor code should expect to be subject to the appropriate disciplinary procedures.

**Books Available for Purchase**

For your convenience, many books have been ordered at the University Book Store. All are also on reserve at the Rock. Please note that although you may wish to have your own copy of Bourdieu, it is also available on-line through the library website.

A number of shorter readings, mostly for the beginning of class, are on-line through OCRA (On-line Course Reserves), which you can access either directly through the library website, or through the class Canvas site.

1. Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*. Stanford University Press, 2001.

2. Geraldine Brooks, *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*. Anchor Books, 1995.

3. Lynn Davidman, *Tradition in A Rootless World: Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism*. University of California Press, 1991.

4. R. Marie Griffith, *God’s Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission*.Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

5. Kim Gutschow, *Being A Buddhist Nun: The Struggle for Enlightenment in the Himalayas*. Harvard University Press, 2004.

6. Matthew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity*. University of Chicago Press, 2001.

7. Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press, 2005.

8. John Powers, *A Bull of a Man: Images of Masculinity, Sex, and the Body in Indian Buddhism*. Harvard, 2009.

9. Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920*.Harvard University Press, 2001.

10. Susan Sered, *Women of the Sacred Groves: Divine Priestesses of Okinawa*. Oxford University Press, 1999.

11. Nurit Stadler, *Yeshiva Fundamentalism: Piety, Gender and Resistance in the Ultra-Orthodox World.* New York University Press, 2009.

**Syllabus**

**An asterisk (\*) denotes a reading on OCRA: (\*\*) denotes a reading only on the class website.**

**Note also that in most cases, we will read substantial portions of the assigned books, but rarely all!**

**Th Jan 23: welcome, introduction, overview,**

**T Jan 28: definitions: religion, gender**

\*Susan Sered, *Priestess*, *Mother, Sacred Sister: Religions Dominated By Women.* Oxford University Press, 1994,pp. 3-9, 195-213 (on "gender ideology").

\*Russell T. McCutcheon, "General Introduction," and "Introduction," to Russell T. McCutcheon, ed., *The Insider/outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader,* New York: Cassell, 1999, 1-14; 15-22.

\*J. Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in Mark Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, 269-84.

\*Donald S. Lopez, "Belief," in Taylor, *Critical Terms,* 21-35.

Highly Recommended:

\*Tomoko Masuzawa, "Culture," in Taylor, *Critical Terms*, 70-93.

\*Robert H. Sharf, "Experience," in Taylor, *Critical Terms*, 94-116.

\*June O'Connor,"The Epistemological Significance of Feminist Research in Religion," from Ursula King, ed., *Religion and Gender* Routledge, 1995, 45-64**.**

**Th Jan 30: two brief case studies**

\*Wallace Best, "'The Spirit of the Holy Ghost is a Male Spirit': African American Preaching Women and the Paradoxes of Gender," in R. Marie Griffith and Barbara Savage, eds., *Women and Religion in the African Diaspora: Knowledge, Power and Performance*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, 101-27.

"Old Custom Fades in Albania: Woman as Man of the Family," *NY Times*, June 25, 2008. Handout; also available on the *New York Times* archive.

**T Feb 4; Th Feb 6: Some preliminary theorizing about religion and gender**

\*Michelle Rosaldo, “Woman, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview,” from *Woman, Culture and Society*, eds. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, Stanford University Press, 1974, 17-42.

\*Sherry Ortner, “Is Female is to Male as Nature to Culture?” from *Woman, Culture and Society*, eds. Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, Stanford University Press, 1974, 67-88.

\*Sherry Ortner, "So, *Is* Female is to Male as Nature to Culture?" from *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*, Beacon Press, 1996, 173-80.

\*R. W. Connell, “The Social Organization of Masculinity,” in his *Masculinities*. University of California Press 2005, 67-86.

\*Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," American Historical Review 91 (1986) 1053-75.

\* Riley, Denise, *Am I That Name: Feminism and the Category of “Women” in History.* University of Minnesota Press, 1988; pp. 1-17.

Highly Recommended:

\*Riley, above, pp. 96-114.

**T Feb 11; Th Feb 13: Gender and American Protestant Christianity (1)**

Putney, *Muscular Christianity*.

first journal set due fri, feb 14

**T Feb 18: no class – winter break**

**Th Feb 20: Gender and American Protestant Christianity (2)**

Griffith, *God's Daughters*.

**T Feb 25; Th Feb 27: Gender and Buddhism (1)**

Powers, *A Bull of a Man.*

**T Mar 4; Th Mar 6: Gender and Buddhism (2)**

Gutschow, *Being a Buddhist Nun.*

**T Mar 11; Th Mar 13: Gender and Islam (1)**

Bourdieu, “A Magnified Image,” in Masculine Domination, 5-53.

\*\*Lila Abu-Lughod, “Part one: The Ideology of Bedouin Social Life,” in her V*eiled Sentiments*: *Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. University of California, 1986 (1999), 39-167.

second journal set due fri mar 14

**T Mar 18; Th Mar 20: Gender and Islam (2)**

Brooks, *Nine Parts of Desire,* 1-32; 77-89; 143-66; 225-39.

Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, preface; chaps 2, 3, 4.

spring break

**T Apr 1; Th Apr 3: Gender and Late Antique Christianity**

Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*.

**T Apr 8; Th Apr 10: Gender and Contemporary Judaism (1)**

Stadler, *Yeshiva Fundamentalism.*

**T Apr 15; Th Apr 17: Gender and Contemporary Judaism (2)**

Davidman, *Tradition in a Rootless World*.

**T Apr 22; Th Ap 24: Gender and Religion in 2oth century Okinawa**

Sered, *Women of the Sacred Groves*.

third journal set due fri apr 25

**T Apr 29 Final reflections, with treats…**