

HUM 224: WOMEN AND WORLD RELIGIONS COURSE SYLLABUS

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Green River College, Spring 2015
Section 4877, 5 credits
Daily M-F 12:00-12:50pm
Room SH 257

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores feminine perspectives of religion and spirituality in classical and indigenous religions today and throughout history. We will examine images of the divine, mythological presentations, as well as roles and practices of women in each tradition through the study of traditional writings, feminist themes and feminist theologies. In doing so, we will address questions such as: What do sacred sources in traditional religions say about women and issues of gender; and how both men and women in society have used oral and written sacred narratives.

Prerequisites: Eligible for ENGL 100. ***Please be aware that this course is reading and writing intensive.*** If you do not have the basic skills necessary to complete such a course, or if you feel uncomfortable reading and writing at the college level, either discuss your situation with the instructor or consider taking another class. GE Designation: Satisfies a Humanities/Fine Arts/English and the diversity course requirement for AA degree.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will:

- Become familiar with major themes within various religious traditions, such as those of gender, divinity, as well as the differences between institutional and personal religion;
- Understand problems within individual religious traditions, and the methods of dealing with them;
- Gain a historical as well as thematic understanding of the intellectual and social developments within these traditions;
- Be introduced to important classical and contemporary theological concepts, and develop an understanding of how those concepts shape and affect the female gender;
- Learn how to read and interpret theological and academic texts while acquiring a command of philosophical and religious language; and
- Demonstrate what it means to adopt a "philosophical attitude" towards various world views.

REQUIRED TEXT

- Mary Pat Fisher, *Women in Religion*, (Pearson Publishing, 2006). ISBN: 9780321194817
- Additional readings and course information – reading schedule, lecture notes, homework assignments, exam dates, etc. – will be posted on:
 - [Canvas](#) [grades posted here]
 - [Instructor Site](#) [additional information here]

*****Each student is responsible for the materials/assignments posted on the ONLINE calendar. While dates may change, they will ALWAYS be posted in advance. So there is no reason for missing reading and homework assignments, or exam dates.***

GRADING

Attendance/Participation	50 points
Reading Annotations	50 points
In-class Questions	50 points
Exams (Midterm & Final)	200 points (100 points each)
Homework Assignments (5)	150 points (30 points each)
Total for the Course	500 points

GRADING SCALE

Letter Grade	Percentage Scale	Point Value
A	93-100	4.0
A-	89-92	3.7
B+	85-88	3.5
B	80-84	3.0
C+	75-79	2.5
C	70-74	2.0
D+	65-69	1.5
D	60-64	1.0*
F	0-59	0.0**

*1.0 – Lowest passing grade

**0.0-0.9 – Failure or unofficial withdrawal (no credit given)

Grades in the range of 0.1-0.9 may NOT be assigned

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OVERVIEW

Week 1	What is Religion?	Week 7	Judaism
Week 2	Women's Religious Experiences	Week 8	Christianity
Week 3	Indigenous Religions	Week 9	Islam
Weeks 4-5	Hinduism & Buddhism	Week 10	Newer Religions & Beyond Religious Strictures
Week 6	Taoism & Confucianism	Week 11	Finals

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS IN THE CLASS

Attendance/Participation: Attendance WILL be recorded and NO LATE WORK will be accepted. Attend class regularly as many of the ideas presented in the lectures will require active discussion and involvement. Consequently, class lectures and discussions will be extremely helpful for clarification of the text, so BE PUNCTUAL. Attendance will be taken at the BEGINNING of each class meeting, so show up on time and remain for the entire class meeting. If you need to arrive late or leave early, please inform the instructor beforehand so as not to disrupt the class.

You will be permitted **THREE ABSENCES** with no questions asked (two tardies will count as a single absence). After three absences, **TWENTY-FIVE points** will be deducted for *each additional absence*. The first three absences are designated for any personal emergencies which require you to miss class and, as such, should be saved for any such events. Should anything require you to miss more than ONE WEEK of class, it is

advisable to retake the course at a more convenient time since too much of the material will be missed to adequately grasp course content or meet learning expectations. **If you miss TEN or more class meetings, you cannot pass this course.** After FIVE absences, all classroom attendance points will be deducted. On the TENTH absence, all reading annotations points will be deducted. AFTER ten absences, you will receive a ZERO for the course. Respect the classroom as a learning environment. Do not speak or otherwise distract the class when the instructor or other students are speaking. This includes the disruptive use of cell phones, laptops, iPods, and other electronic devices.

Reading Annotations: At the beginning of class, students will submit **ONE page** worth of notes (written or typed) based on the assigned reading for that day. These will be due on **EVERY OTHER DAY** (typically MWF). These are designed to motivate and incentivize student's reading prior to class lecture for optimal class discussion. There will be approximately 30-35 sets of notes total, each worth about 1.5 points.

In-class Questions: Short answer questions and/or group work will be assigned throughout the quarter to gauge how well each student is keeping up with and understanding the assigned readings. These will require students to be present and participate in small groups and class discussion. The total number of questions will not be pre-determined, but as a whole will be worth 50 points.

Exams: The midterm and final are designed to test your knowledge of the content of the readings and lectures. Exams will be given in class in the form of closed book, multiple choice examinations with short answer essay questions. Each exam will include 50 multiple choice/true-false questions worth one point each, as well as 2 short essay questions worth 25 points each. As the dates of these tests will be announced ahead of time, there will be no make-ups without previous arrangements being made with the instructor.

A review of the material you will be tested on will be covered in class prior to the exams to provide additional preparation. Review sheets will also be posted on CANVAS about a week prior to each exam with 6 *possible* essay questions, 2 of which will appear verbatim on the exam. It should be noted that such reviews are no substitute for reading the text, completing and reviewing homework assignments, and studying individually or with a group. **All exams will be completed on canvas, meaning class will NOT meet on those days to provide students sufficient time to complete the exam, either on campus, or from home.**

Homework: Study questions for reading responses will be assigned at the end of each topic section [about every two weeks] which will cover every assigned reading. It is advisable that the homework be done only AFTER you have read the assigned sections and have gone over the concepts with the aid of class lectures. Each assignment **MUST BE TYPED** (Times New Roman font, size 12, 1" margins) and **submitted to CANVAS** by the deadline. **NO LATE WORK** will be accepted. Since assignment due dates are posted well in advance, having computer problems is not an acceptable excuse for not turning in an assignment. Answers to study questions should be about 5-7 sentences in length, enough to show an adequate understanding of the material and sufficient answering of the question. For more information, see the Plagiarism section below.

Inclusive and Charitable Language: Students should strive to use inclusive and charitable language in their writing. What is meant by INCLUSIVE is language that is not gender or first person specific and which attempts to include as many people as possible. Also, being specific avoids stereotypic bias. CHARITY in a paper refers to a reading of the material that does not assume that the author or subjects one may be arguing against are irrational in their thought process or argumentation. Although we may disagree with something or someone, it would be a fallacy to disregard them without adequate consideration of their position. Even a great argument can come undone when one's logic is unsatisfactory. To avoid this it is helpful to use emotionally neutral expressions.

Plagiarism: All work submitted for the course must be your own. Academic dishonesty on any assignment or exam may result in an F for the assignment and a second infraction will result in an F for the course. All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the appropriate authority. Any quotations or citations on course assignments should be kept to a minimum or, preferably, avoided all together unless otherwise specified. The aim of the aforementioned assignments is to be sure that YOU understand the material. When the occasion demands it, citation should be done using MLA formatting. For more information, see <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/74701/>

Learning Assistance: Students who require assistance with reading and/or writing are more than welcome to set up an appointment with the instructor at their earliest convenience. I would be more than happy to help with any and all questions about the reading materials, writing assignments, lectures, homework, and anything else mentioned in class. Further aid may be provided by the College's TUTORING & RESOURCE CENTER located in Holman Library on the 2nd floor and WRITING CENTER located in RLC 173. For more information, visit <http://www.greenriver.edu/student-services/tutoring-and-resources.htm>.

Students with Disabilities: *ADA Statement:* If you believe you qualify for course adaptations or special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is your responsibility to contact the Disability Support Services Coordinator in the LSC and provide the appropriate documentation. If you have already documented a disability or other condition through the GRCC Disability Support Services Office, which would qualify you for special accommodations, or if you have emergency medical information or special needs that I should know about, please notify me during the first week of class. For more details see <http://www.greenriver.edu/student-services/disability-supportservices.htm>

LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Campus-Wide (CWLO): Green River Community College has identified ability areas which the college believes encompass knowledge and are the most important skills, behaviors, attitudes, and values that students will need in order to be successful in and after leaving the college. This course will address the following student learning outcomes and campus-wide ability areas – that of written communication and critical thinking.

Critical Thinking finds expression in all disciplines and everyday life. It is characterized by an ability to reflect upon thinking patterns, including the role of emotions on thoughts, and to rigorously assess the quality of thought through its work products. Critical thinkers routinely evaluate thinking processes and alter them, as necessary, to facilitate an improvement in their thinking and potentially foster certain dispositions or intellectual traits over time. This outcome includes abilities designed to help students:

- Apply relevant criteria and standards when evaluating information, claims, and arguments.
- Use appropriate reasoning to evaluate problems, make decisions, and formulate solutions.
- Give reasons for conclusions, assumptions, beliefs, and hypotheses.
- Seek out new information to (re)evaluate conclusions, assumptions, beliefs, and hypotheses.
- Exhibit traits evidencing the disposition to reflect, assess, and improve thinking.

Course Content (CCLO): Students will learn...

- About a range of gender issues involved in world religions throughout history;
- To critically examine these issues; and
- To articulate and write clearly on these issues, and respond to them in creative expression.

****Students will be assessed on the basis of a variety of assignments, such as exams, written work, online participation, and class activities.** For more information see <http://www.greenriver.edu/about-us/learning-outcomes-committee/campus-wide-learning-outcomes.htm>

TENTATIVE READING SCHEDULE OVERVIEW**

<p>Week 1: Mon: Classes Begin Tues: Syllabus Quiz <i>Readings:</i> Course Syllabus; Fisher Chapter 1 – What is Religion? (pp. 12-13); 1.1 Smart – The Nature of Religion (pp. 1-11) [ONLINE]</p>	<p>Week 6: Mon: MIDTERM EXAM [ONLINE] <i>Readings:</i> Possible introductory reading TBA [ONLINE] Fisher Chapter 5 – Confucianism & Taoism (pp. 128-151); The Perfect Confucian Woman/Confucian Women: 8.9 Kelleher – Confucianism (pp. 281-289) [ONLINE]; Taoist Ways of Being Religious: 9.6 Reed – Women in Taoism (pp. 329-336) [ONLINE]</p>
<p>Week 2: <i>Readings:</i> Fisher Chapter 1 – Women's Religious Experiences (pp. 13-33); Additional Reading TBA [ONLINE]</p>	<p>Week 7: Mon: HW #3 DUE <i>Readings:</i> Fisher Chapter 6 – Women in Judaism (pp. 156-179); Dilemmas of a Jewish Feminist: 10.7 Plaskow – The Wife/Sister Stories (pp. 397-401) [ONLINE]</p>
<p>Week 3: Mon: HW #1 DUE <i>Readings:</i> Fisher Chapter 2 – Women in Indigenous Religions (pp. 35-44, 53-57); [ONLINE] Women's Health Organization – FGM FAQs & BBC Video – FGM</p>	<p>Week 8: <i>Readings:</i> Fisher Chapter 7 – Women in Christianity (pp. 188-198, 210-232); Selections from the Bible – Genesis & Deuteronomy [ONLINE]; African American Women and Christian Redemption: 11.7 Williams – Black Women's Surrogacy Experience (pp. 464-471) [ONLINE]</p>
<p>Week 4: <i>Readings:</i> Fisher Chapter 3 – Women in Hinduism (pp. 64-74); [ONLINE] Puranic Accounts of Creation: 6.6 Pintchman – Gender Complementarity and Hierarchy (pp. 153-156); Vanita – The Self Is Not Gendered: Sulabha's Debate with King Janaka (pp. 2-19)</p>	<p>Week 9: Mon: HW #4 DUE <i>Readings:</i> Fisher Chapter 8 – Women in Islam (pp. 234-262); [ONLINE] Islamic Ways of Being Religious: Mernissi – Femininity as Subversion (pp. 524-530); Qur'an (<i>Shari'a</i>): Laws on Marriage (pp. 489-490); Al-Marghinani – Marriage and Divorce (pp. 499-500)</p>
<p>Week 5: Mon: HW #2 DUE <i>Readings:</i> Legend of Buddha's Life [ONLINE]; Fisher Chapter 4 – Women in Buddhism (pp. 97-119); Paul – Buddhist Attitudes Towards Women's Bodies (pp. 2-10) [ONLINE]; Gender and Emptiness: 7.8 Gross – Feminist Comments on the Mahayana (pp. 220-223) [ONLINE]; Fri: Review for Midterm</p>	<p>Week 10: <i>Readings:</i> Fisher Chapter 9 – Women in Newer Religions (pp. 271-295); Fisher Chapter 10 – Women Beyond Religious Strictures (pp. 297-309)</p>
<p>Week 11: Mon: HW #5 DUE Review for Final Tues: NO CLASSES – Study Day Fri: FINAL EXAM [ONLINE]</p>	

****For specific dates and assignments, see the course calendar on ONLINE
Readings subject to change, but students will always be notified well in advance**