

**RELS/WOMS 131: Gender, Sexuality & Religion
Fall Semester 2012**

Instructor:	Lee Gilmore
Office Location:	Clark 412K
Telephone:	408-924-4713 (email is a <u>*much*</u> better way to reach me)
Email:	lee.gilmore@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tu 12:15-1:00 PM
Class Days/Time:	Tu/Th 10:30AM-11:45AM
Classroom:	Boccardo Business Center 125
Prerequisites:	Upper division standing, or instructor consent.

Catalog Description:

Women's roles and gendered categories within diverse religions. Feminist critiques, reforms, and creations of religious institutions. The political and feminist dimensions of women's religious experience. Understanding the roles of sexuality in religion. Prerequisite: Upper division standing or instructor consent.

Extended Course Description & Learning Goals:

This course will examine the historical and contemporary construction of gender and sexuality in diverse religious cultures. Among others, some questions we will consider are:

- What is religion? What is feminism? How and why do the two concepts intersect?
- How and why do diverse religious narratives, theologies, symbols, and practices reflect differing cultural ideas about women, sexuality, and gender?
- What are some of the traditional roles and experiences of women within diverse religions, and how do these differ from men's traditional roles and experiences?
- How have feminist theories and theologies influenced contemporary religions, and vice versa?
- How are women and men working to challenge traditional gender roles both inside and outside of diverse institutional religions in recent decades?
- How and why is sexuality a central area of religious attention, in both the past and present?
- What is the relevance of these ideas to contemporary women's and men's lived religious and cultural experience?

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- demonstrate their ability to think critically about the intersections of gender, sexuality and religion in diverse historical and cultural contexts
- understand and articulate, both orally and in writing, how and why religious traditions contribute to cultural constructions of gender and sexuality
- understand and articulate, both orally and in writing, the relevance of feminist theories concerning religion to their own lives, as well as to recent political, cultural, and religious events
- describe how contemporary women and men are challenging and changing traditional cultural and religious constructions of gender and sexuality
- understand and apply different academic methodologies (historical, cultural, literary, theological, feminist, etc) to describing and analyzing the intersections of gender, sexuality, and religion

Classroom Protocol & Policies

Participation Policy:

This course is an opportunity for you to learn about *the connections between gender, sexuality, and religion*.

Your grade will be a direct reflection of how much effort you put into this course. In addition to completing the readings and assignments on time, you are expected to participate in our class through attendance and discussion. Therefore, while emergencies and illnesses may at times be unavoidable, I guarantee that you will not do well in this class if you miss multiple sessions or are consistently late. Additionally, once you arrive, I will expect you to remain both physically and mentally present until class time has ended.

Furthermore, you should also approach this subject matter with an open and curious mind. My job is not to dispute your own religious or other commitments, but rather to train you to think analytically about gender, sexuality, and religion (including your own, as well as others' points of view). In turn, *I agree to give you my complete attention during our time together, and to provide every resource I have available to help you do well in this course.*

Homework Policies:

You are expected to complete your work on time and all written assignments must be turned in ON PAPER at the beginning of class. Major written assignments must also be submitted via **turnitin.com** prior to class time on the day it is due. I DO NOT ACCEPT ASSIGNMENTS VIA EMAIL. If you need help registering for turnitin.com, see https://turnitin.com/static/training/student_quickstart_guide.php. The CLASS ID is **5301903** and the ENROLLMENT PASSWORD is "**sophia.**"

Late assignments *may* be accepted, but a full letter grade (10%) for that project will be deducted for each class day that it is late. WARNING: **do not abuse my generosity in this regard.** One late paper in the case of an emergency may be understandable, but if you make a regular habit of submitting late papers it will dramatically reduce your final grade. Once the assignment is worth only half the points initially available (a failing grade), it will no longer be accepted. Also, all assignments should be TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED, USING 12-POINT TYPE, WITH 1-INCH MARGINS.

About Plagiarism:

Plagiarism means COPYING MATERIAL FROM ANY SOURCE WITHOUT GIVING FULL BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION, handing in work in which ANY unacknowledged material appears, and handing in material written by a person other than the student. ANY attempt to pass off someone else's writing as your own is a serious academic offense and may result in a failing grade for the course or even expulsion from SJSU. **ALL** incidents of plagiarism will be reported. **If you need help with any of your written assignments for this class, please come talk to me before resorting to plagiarism.**

Dropping and Adding:

You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. For the fall 2012 semester, the deadlines and be found at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/2124/>.

Cell Phones & Computer Use Policy:

I will allow computers to be used in class for note taking, however (again) **do not abuse my generosity.** You are responsible for understanding and thinking critically about the material discussed in each class, and if your attention is elsewhere you will not be able to sufficiently retain or process this information. **If you misuse your laptop during our class time, this will negatively impact your participation grade.** Obvious lack of attention to our class discussions may also result in my asking you to shut your computer off or, in egregious cases, to leave the classroom. I also reserve the right to change this policy if in-class computer use should prove to be problematic. Additionally, cell phones are to remain silent and unused (no texting!) during class.

IT IS UP TO YOU TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR EDUCATION, AND HENCE YOUR TIME IN THIS CLASS.

Readings & Grading Policies

Required Textbooks/Readings

Rita Gross, *Feminism and Religion: An Introduction*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1996. ISBN: 978-0807067857

Leona M. Anderson and Pamela Dickey Young, eds. *Women and Religious Traditions*. (2nd edition)

New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010. ISBN13: 978-0-19-543201-5

(BOTH TEXTBOOKS ARE ON RESERVE IN SJSU LIBRARY, AND OTHER READINGS WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131/>)

Online Readings, Professor's Web Pages, & e-mail List:

In addition to the textbooks, a number of other readings will be posted on the professor's website for this class. Copies of other important course materials such as the green sheet/syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. can also be found at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131/>

Also, in an effort to increase communication outside of the classroom, while taking advantage of networks many of us already utilize, you will need to subscribe to either the [professor's facebook page](#) &/or [twitter account](#) to fulfill one of the assignments for this class (see exercises below): <https://www.facebook.com/pages/ProfGilmore/115968481846995> OR <https://twitter.com/#!/qibitum>

Finally, I will also create [an email list](#) for this class for any important announcements. You are responsible for checking each of these sources frequently during this course.

Assignment Percentages:

- 10% Participation
- 15% Exercises
- 10% Social/Cultural/Gendered Location Essay
- 20% Real World Relevance Essay
- 20% Women in Religious Traditions Group Presentations
- 25% Final Integrative Research Paper

Final Grade Scale (100% = 1000 points)

A	1000-930	B+	899-870	C+	799-770	D+	699-670	F	less than 600
A-	929-900	B	869-830	C	769-730	D	669-630		
		B-	829-800	C-	729-700	D-	629-600		

Assignments

Participation (10%)

Per our participation policy above, active and engaged participation in our class discussions is required. Evidence of engagement includes, but is not limited to: speaking in class, attentiveness, making eye contact, timely completion of assignments, participating on the ProfGilmore facebook page or twitter feed, and visiting me during office hours. In order to participate fully, you will need to attend class regularly, keep up with our reading schedule, and think critically about the material. Although attendance per se may not be used as a criterion for grading, overall participation in class will help to raise borderline grades.

Exercises (15%)

Frequently, a portion of our class time will consist of brief, open-book/open-note writing exercises &/or closed-book quizzes covering the key themes and ideas from the assigned reading that day. Some of these will be completed individually, while others will require you to work collaboratively in small groups. Sometimes short exercises will be assigned ahead of time brought in for discussion the next day. These are designed to assess and guide your comprehension of the assigned reading, as well as to focus our discussions. *(NOTE: as these exercises are specifically intended to facilitate in-class discussions, they cannot be made up at a later date).*

Cultural, Religious, and Gendered Location Essay (10%)

This paper provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your own gendered, cultural, and religious background(s), incorporating insights from the reading thus far. More detailed directions will be distributed and discussed prior to completion. These essays will be DUE ON TUES, SEPT 18.

Real World Relevance Essay (20%)

Midway through our semester, you will demonstrate your ability to accurately understand and apply the concepts from the readings by showing how they can deepen our understanding of contemporary issues. More detailed directions will be distributed and discussed prior to completion. These essays will be DUE ON THURS, OCT 11.

Women in Religious Traditions Group Presentation (20%)

During weeks 9-13 of our class, you will work collectively to present the material from *Women & Religious Traditions*. More detailed directions will be distributed and discussed prior to completion. Short essays summarizing your individual contributions, and thinking critically about the entire chapter, will be DUE ON THE DATE OF YOUR GROUP'S PRESENTATION.

Final Integrative Research Paper (25%)

At the conclusion of our course, you will complete a 7-10 page paper that demonstrates your ability to accurately understand, describe, and apply the theories and other material studied to an issue (either historical or contemporary) concerning the intersections of *women, gender, sexuality, and religion*, putting these issues in historical, cultural, and theoretical context. These papers will be integrative, in that you will be expected to draw on the breadth of material studied in this course, and will also require additional library research. More detailed directions will be distributed and discussed prior to completion. These essays will be DUE ON THURS, DEC 6.

Criteria and Guidelines for Written Assignments:

- Organization: follow basic directions and guidelines accurately and always include a clear, succinct introductory paragraph and thesis statement that spells out your argument and provides a roadmap for the content of your essay, as well as a concluding paragraph that summarizes the essay & your key conclusions;
- Demonstrate your accurate understanding of the material, as well as your ability to think independently, analytically, and critically (i.e., explain *what you think and why, make connections, and provide evidence for your assertions*);
- Writing must be clear and grammatically correct, as well as descriptive and thorough;
- Use specific and relevant references to the assigned readings that support your analyses, using citations and quotations correctly and appropriately;
- If citing multiple sources, please include a list of works cited. Citations may be either MLA or APA style;
- Proofread and run spell check: one or two small errors may be acceptable, but sloppy essays riddled with misspellings and other errors will reduce your grade.

Professor's Pet Peeves:

- Use basic punctuation and formatting correctly. When in doubt, quotation marks ALWAYS go on the OUTSIDE of the period or comma (i.e.: "This is a sentence." NOT: "This is sort of a sentence".)
- Article/chapter titles should be "Placed in Quotes," but book titles should be Underlined or *Italicized*, NOT in quotes.
- Use gender-neutral terms unless referring specifically to just men, or just women. (i.e., do not use "man" or "mankind," when you really mean "humans" or "humanity.")
- Avoid sweeping generalizations. In practice, this means you should recognize diversity within cultural and/or religious traditions (i.e., instead of writing "Christians do this" or "Muslims do that" it is usually preferable to state "Some Christians" or "Many Muslims" etc.) Also, statements like "Since the beginning of time..." or "Throughout history..." are generally poor form, overly used, and overly general.
- Use terms for religions correctly (i.e., know the difference between Jew/Judaism/Jewish, Muslim/Islam/Islamic, etc.) & note that religious tradition names should be consistently capitalized (i.e., Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, etc.)
- Know the difference between altar/alter, a part/apart, there/their, your/you're, its/it's, to/too/two, (etc.), and check for agreement between plural nouns & verb forms (i.e., know the difference between belief/beliefs/believe/believes, etc.)

RELS 131: Gender, Religion & Sexuality / Fall 2012: Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice
Any changes will be announced in class and posted to the website.

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES
1	THURS Aug 23	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • go over syllabus & explain assignments • introduce course goals and basic concepts
2	TUE Aug 28	READ: Myhre, “What is Religion” (<i>Introduction to Religious Studies</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (available as pdf from: http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131)
	THURS Aug 30	READ: Shaw & Lee, “Women’s Studies: Perspectives and Practices” (<i>Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (available as pdf from: http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131)
3	TUE Sept 4	READ: Gross, “Introduction” & Ch1: “Defining Feminism, Religion, and the Study of Religion” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 1-16)
	THURS Sept 6	READ: Gross, Ch1: “Defining Feminism, Religion, and the Study of Religion” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 16-28)
4	TUE Sept 11	READ: Gross, Ch2: “Feminism’s Impact on Religion and Religious Studies: A Brief History” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 29-49)
	THURS Sept 13	READ: Gross, Ch2: “Feminism’s Impact on Religion and Religious Studies: A Brief History” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 49-64)
5	TUE Sept 18	READ: Gross, Ch3: “Where Have All the Women Been? The Challenge of Feminist Study of Religion” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 65-88) DUE: <u>Cultural, Religious, and Gendered Location Essay</u>
	THURS Sept 20	READ: Gross, Ch3: “Where Have All the Women Been? The Challenge of Feminist Study of Religion” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 88-104)
6	TUE Sept 25	READ: Gross, Ch4: “No Girls Allowed? Are the World’s Religions Inevitably Sexist?” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 105-132)
	THURS Sept 27	READ: Gross, Ch4: “Where Have All the Women Been? The Challenge of Feminist Study of Religion” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 133-148)
7	TUE Oct 2	READ: Gross, Ch5: “Has It Always Been That Way? Rereading the Past” (<i>Feminism & Religion</i> , 149-180)

	THURS Oct 4	READ: Gross, Ch5: “Has It Always Been That Way? Rereading the Past” <i>(Feminism & Religion, 180-197)</i>
8	TUE Oct 9	READ: Gross, Ch6: “What Next? Postpatriarchal Religion” <i>(Feminism & Religion, 198-227)</i>
	THURS Oct 11	READ: Gross, Ch6: “What Next? Postpatriarchal Religion” <i>(Feminism & Religion, 228-247)</i> DUE: <u>Real World Relevance Essay</u>
9	TUE Oct 16	READ: Anderson, Ch1: “Women in Hindu Traditions” <i>(Women & Religious Traditions, 2-37)</i> PRESENTATION: <u>Group One</u>
	THURS Oct 19	READ: Kuikamn, Ch2: “Women in Judaism” <i>(Women & Religious Traditions, 44-71)</i> PRESENTATION: <u>Group Two</u>
10	TUE Oct 23	READ: Neumaier, Ch3: “Women in the Buddhist Traditions” <i>(Women & Religious Traditions, 76-103)</i> PRESENTATION: <u>Group Three</u>
	THURS Oct 25	READ: Rainey, Ch4: “Women in the Chinese Traditions” <i>(Women & Religious Traditions, 123-154)</i> PRESENTATION: <u>Group Four</u>
11	TUE Oct 30	READ: Martin-Hill, Ch5: “Women in Indigenous Traditions” <i>(Women & Religious Traditions, 138-160)</i> PRESENTATION: <u>Group Five</u>
	THURS Nov 1	READ: Young, Ch6: “Women in Christianity” <i>(Women & Religious Traditions, 164-189)</i> PRESENTATION: <u>Group Six</u>
12	TUE Nov 6	READ: Clarke, Ch7: “Women in Islam” <i>(Women & Religious Traditions, 194-221)</i> PRESENTATION: <u>Group Seven</u>
	THURS Nov 8	READ: Jakobsh, Ch 8: “Women in Sikhism” <i>(Women & Religious Traditions, 226-255)</i> PRESENTATION: <u>Group Eight</u>

13	TUE Nov 13	READ: Jakobsh, Ch 9: “Women in New Age Traditions” (<i>Women & Religious Traditions</i> , 260-284) PRESENTATION: <u>Group Nine</u>
	THURS Nov 15	READ: Plaskow, “The Academy as Real Life: New Participants and Paradigms in the Study of Religion” (<i>Women, Gender & Religion</i>) • (available as pdf from: http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131)
14	TUE Nov 20	NO CLASS: (Instructor at American Academy of Religion meeting in Chicago) • ACTIVITY/EXERCISE, TBD
	THURS Nov 22	NO CLASS: (Thanksgiving)
15	TUE Nov 27	READ: Gloria Anzaldúa, “now let us shift ... the path of concimiento ... inner work, public acts.” (<i>this bridge we call home</i>) • (available as pdf from: http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131)
	THURS Nov 29	READ: Christ, “Why Women Need the Goddess” (<i>WomanSpirit Rising</i>) • (available as pdf from: http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131)
16	TUE Dec 4	READ: Peskowitz & Christ exchange (<i>Women, Gender & Religion</i>) • (available as pdf from: http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131)
	THURS Dec 6	LAST DAY: NO NEW READING (MOP UP)
	MON Dec 17 9:45 am - 12:00 pm	<u>NO FINAL EXAM</u> DUE: FINAL PAPER

SOME DEFINITIONS OF & STATEMENTS ABOUT RELIGION

“(Religion is) belief in Spiritual Beings.” — Edward B. Tylor (1871)

“The belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto.” — William James (1905)

“Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in [people] by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.”
— Clifford Geertz (1966)

“If God is male, then male is God.” — Mary Daly (1973)

“Religious traditions are far more like rivers than stones.” — Diana Eck (1993)

“The meaning of the term religion is determined by usage. ... *something is doing religious work if it is engaged in what it means to be human.* ... Not merely a given, the sacred is produced through the religious labor of interpretation and ritualization.” — David Chidester (2005)

University Policies

Academic integrity:

Students are expected to be familiar with the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Please review this at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct>. "Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical development."

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. "If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors."

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

Special accommodations for exams require ample notice to the testing office and must be submitted to the instructor well in advance of the exam date.

Student Technology Resources:

Computer labs for student use are available in the new Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional labs that may be available to students in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, screens and monitors.

Learning Assistance Resource Center:

The Learning Assistance Resource Center is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The Learning Assistance Resource Center is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center.

SJSU Writing Center:

The SJSU Writing Center is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers.

PER NEWLY CLARIFIED SJSU POLICY CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF THE CREDIT HOUR:

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.