

San José State University, Humanities Department, Religious Studies Program

RELS/WOMS 131: Gender, Sexuality & Religion (Fall Semester 2012)
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DUE: between October 23 - November 15, 2012

Women in Religious Traditions Group Presentation (20%)

For this project, you will work in small groups to present the material from *Women & Religious Traditions*.

Each group will have ~20-25 minutes to present collectively. (I will stop the presentations at 11:00 am in order to allow time for discussion.) The group will then serve as a panel for the remainder of the class, responding to questions (with input and help from your professor).

Short essays (2-3 page) summarizing your individual contributions and topic areas (and that also demonstrate your ability to think critically about the topic within the context of the entire chapter & the other material studied thus far, will be DUE on the date of your group's presentation. (See Schedule Update 1 on course website.)

Specific questions that I want the group to collectively address:

- BIG PICTURE
- Briefly describe and summarize the basic worldview/cosmology of this religious tradition, paying particular attention to the ways in which gender and sexuality are constructed.
- (i.e., what is the “unseen order” and what is the relationship between humanity & the divine? is gender part of this equation, if so how?)

- LIVED EXPERIENCE: HISTORY
- What is the lived experience of women in this religious tradition? How are women both represented & treated?
- Is there evidence both of women being oppressed or otherwise relegated to a secondary/lower status? And is there evidence of resistance to oppressions based on gender and sexuality? Present a couple specific examples.

- DIVINE SYMBOL & NARRATIVE
- How are women symbolically represented, in both image and narrative?
- Are there goddesses or other images of women as divine? How do these images contribute to the construction of gender and sexuality in that religious tradition?
- Describe some of the female figures that appear in the sacred texts and other sacred stories, and also think about these in relation to cultural constructions of gender and sexuality.

- DIVERSITY & CHANGE
- Note internal diversity: no religion is monolithic. Give examples of both more conservative and progressive views with regards to gender and sexuality within the spectrum of this tradition.
- Also note changes to women's status over time, and where possible note the causes of that change (and how the religious tradition itself has changed in response to changing views on gender and sexuality.)

- LIVED EXPERIENCE: CONTEMPORARY
- Finally, how have the options for women (and perspectives on gender and sexuality in general) changed in this religious tradition in recent decades (both theologically and in practice)? Where and how do women still not share equal power and status with men?
- Also note views on LGBT issues within the religious tradition.

GROUP DISCUSSION/EXERCISE COMPONENT

Every class meeting during these four weeks, one half of the class will be responsible for identifying a question about the reading to bring to the panel/discussion portion of the presentation. These should be typed up & double spaced, and refer to specific page number(s) from the chapter to be discussed that day. These will count toward your overall “exercise” grade.

- If your last name starts with A-K, you will be responsible for turning in questions on Tuesdays.
- If your last name starts with L-W, you will be responsible for turning in questions on Thursdays.

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.
- For your individual summary papers, you DO NOT NEED formal citations or a works cited list. Simply cite the author's last name and page number in the paper itself. i.e.: (Anderson, 13) or (Kuikman 52).
- 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.
- You don't need to upload your individual summary papers to turnitin.com, just turn in a hard copy.
- Half of your grade will be based on the oral presentation, the other half will be based on your written summary.