

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
SPRING SEMESTER - 2005

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 337 L20
WORLD RELIGIONS
FEMALE IMAGES AND FIGURES IN WESTERN RELIGIONS

INSTRUCTOR:	Anne White, Ph.D.
COURSE TIME AND DAYS:	TR 11:00-1:45
OFFICE:	SS 1322
OFFICE HOURS:	By appointment
TELEPHONE:	220-3285 or 220-5886 (main office)
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	awhite@ucalgary.ca
WEBSITE:	Blackboard

REQUIRED TEXT:

Serinity Young, ed., *An Anthology of Sacred Texts By and About Women*, New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1993.

Plus Webnotes.

RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED READING:

Lucinda Joy Peach, *Women and World Religions*, Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2002.

Nancy Auer Falk, and Rita M. Gross, *Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives*, Toronto: Wadsworth, 2001.

Ellen M. Umansky and Dianne Ashton eds., *Four centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality: A Sourcebook*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker eds., *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millennia of Christianity*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998

Asma Barlas, *"Believing Women" in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In his work, *Anatomy of the Sacred*, J. C. Livingston states that "religion is a universal and abiding dimension of human expression." The human species has further been defined as *homo religiousus* – a religious animal. Our species routinely forms and reforms religion to find meaning, purpose and solace for life. As full members of our species, women have played an indispensable role in this construction of religious identity and religious worlds of meaning (cosmologies). This course is designed to

introduce the student to the voice and presence of some of the strong, passionate women of faith in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As major contributors to the construction and enduring relevance of the three Abrahamic religions, women's role and influence has been sporadically acknowledged, but often only with broad qualifiers such as "different spheres" or "different temperamental interpretations due to gender," or even as the "weaker vessel." Due to many social prejudices, and subsequent misunderstandings, the true impact, influence and validity of these women's worlds of meaning have been consistently diluted. Using examples of heroines, victims, and reformers, this course will discuss how women constructed their religious identities, managed to retain their strong belief systems, endure repressive circumstances, and often construct worlds of meaning, freedom and leadership that changed society in general. Among the many mythological and historical figures to be discussed will be Lilith and Eve, Rachel and Akiba, Sara Copia Sullam, Glukel of Hameln; Mary of Magdala, Perpetua, Thecla, Brigid, Catherine Booth; Khadija, Aisha, Eve (Hawwa), Khansa, Rabi'ah and Zeyneb. In addition to this material, there will be an overview of myths and stories of gender conflict based on religious laws and other writings.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

To enable students to organize and evaluate various historical events and religious concepts as perceived and interpreted by each of these religions and some of the women within them.

SELF DIRECTED STUDY:

Students are encouraged to read web notes and the assigned pages of text before each lecture, and come prepared to ask questions.

COURSE OUTLINE:

(i) Analysis of socio-historical contexts; (ii) examination of author, text and topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) Section Test (Judaism) - May 26 = **25%**
- 2) Section Test (Christianity) - June 14 = **25%**
- 3) Registrar Final Exam (Islam) = **25%**
- 4) Eight page essay – Chicago style format, plus bibliography. NOTE: only two websites allowed for referencing. All other sources must be from texts or journals.

SUBJECT: one figure taken from relevant textbook material

TO BE HANDED IN BEFORE OR ON JUNE 28TH = 25%

Each test will consist of five short essay type answers – each worth five points – total 25 points. Each test will be 60 minutes in duration.

Grading:

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. Following the final examination, a letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme:

Percentage grades are calculated as follows:

A+	100 - 96	A	95 - 90	A-	89 - 85
B+	84 - 80	B	79 - 75	B-	74 - 70
C+	69 - 65	C	64 - 60	C-	59 - 55
D+	54 - 53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

Academic Honesty:

Students should be familiar with the University regulations regarding academic honesty.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious offense, the penalty for which is an **F** on the assignment and possibly also an **F** on the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. The University Calendar states that *"plagiarism exists when:*

- a) *the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),*
- b) *parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,*
- c) *the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or*
- d) *a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.*

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted."

Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

COURSE SCHEDULE:**READINGS:**

- May 12 – 24 Judaism – General introduction.
- pp 1-39, plus overview of Introduction (ix-xxvii), augmented by webnotes.
 - the image of the feminine – ancient ideas.
 - essential Judaism.
 - modern ideas. Video on female ordination.
 - examples of the faith and culture.

Unit test: May 26

Plus video on Christian ordination.

- May 31 – June 9 Christianity – General introduction.
- pp 41-93, augmented by webnotes.
 - Judeo-Christian matrix.
 - the Roman perspective.
 - essential Christianity.
 - modern ideas.
 - examples of faith and culture.
 -

Unit test: June 14

Plus video on believing women in Islam.

- June 16-23 Islam – General introduction.
- pp 95-125. augmented by webnotes.
 - Qur'anic teachings.
 - the problem of the Hadiths.
 - essential Islam.
 - modern ideas versus traditional beliefs.
 - Examples of faith and culture.

Registrar-Scheduled Final Exam