

World Religions and Gender

Namsoon Kang

Professor of Theology and Religion

Prerequisite: None

Fall 2019

Wed. 1-3:30pm

One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.

--Simone de Beauvoir

Power might have no gender but gender has power.

--Arvind Sharma

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Religion is an enormously powerful force in human society in terms that it shapes the ideals, hopes, desires and needs of humanity. Furthermore, religion organizes core aspects of human experiences such as birth, death, power, violence, and sexuality and provides a basis for value system of good and evil, right and wrong. Religion is also influencing the nature of human relations with each other, the shaping of family structures, and the organization of communities, economic, cultural and political life. Because religion has played such a significant role in human society, it is very important to examine religion from multiple angles.

Gender is the organizing theme in this course. Any consideration of the historical development of religion and gender as a field of inquiry over the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century must acknowledge the central role of feminism. From the beginning of the feminist movement a strong connection was made between the status of women and the authorizing function of world religions (specifically Christianity) in maintaining gender inequalities. At the same time, however, attention was paid to its emancipatory potential. The aim of the course is to develop familiarity with the issues and methodology of gender analysis with reference to the study of world religions. The approach is theoretical, phenomenological, comparative, and interdisciplinary.

COURSE PROCEDURES

In-class presentations, lectures and in-depth discussion of the issues

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

- Critical Reading Journal: 20 points
- Presentation: 20 points
- Group Project: 20 points
- Take-Home Research Paper: 40 points
 - 4,000 words for M.Div/MTS/MACS;
 - 5,000 words for D.Min/Th.M/ Ph.D.

- *This requirement is subject to change depending on the size and pedagogical need of the class.*

COURSE TEXTS

Clark, Elizabeth and Herbert Richardson, eds. *Women and Religion: The Original Sourcebook of Women in Christian Thought*. Revised and Expanded Edition. New York: HarperOne, 1996. ISBN-10: 0060614099. \$22.00

Connell, Raewyn and Rebecca Pearse. *Gender: In World Perspective*. 3rd Edition. Polity, 2014. ISBN-10: 0745680720. \$19.95

King, Ursula and Tina Beattie, eds. *Gender, Religion and Diversity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. New York: Continuum, 2005. ISBN-10: 0826488455. \$58.95.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford, ed. *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*. Wipf & Stock, 1998. ISBN-10: 157910116X. \$34.00

Sharma, Arvind, ed. *Today's Woman in World Religions*. New York: State University of New York, 1994. ISBN-10: 9780791416884. \$36.95