

WOMEN AND WORSHIP
PW / OT - Spring 2009
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Wednesdays 6:00pm to 8:50 pm
Fellowship Hall

Instructors: Johanna Bos and Cláudio Carvalhaes

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This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

Course Description

In this course we will study the experiences of women as resources for worship, with particular attention given to voices from groups that are marginalized in culture and religion in the U.S. and across the world. We will consider biblical texts with particular relevance to women and how these could interact with worship ritual; we will review the history of women's ritual traditions in the Bible and the church. We will also take into account notions of the sacred and how they fit or do not fit with women's bodies. How does the construction of gender interact with worship and are ideas of purity still influential in current thinking about the presence of women in worship? Through engagement with story, presentations, development of ritual and reflection on liturgical practices we hope to address situations of exclusion and attempt to redraft alternative forms of worship in which male and female are both fully present in worship of the Holy.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course students should be able to:

- 1) Interpret critically stories of women in the Bible and throughout history and make connections with larger issues of domination and violence integral to patriarchy, as [hetero-]sexism, classism, and racial-ethnic discrimination.*
- 2) Relate women's experiences in Bible, Christian traditions and novels to contemporary liturgical expressions.*

3) Develop rituals that integrate a variety of theological and cultural perspectives and resources that honor women as full participants of Christian liturgies.

Method

The course will meet once a week. We will alternate presentations by instructors and guests with discussions of reading material and performances of rituals. We will read and discuss, write and give liturgical expression to our learning.

Requirements

- 1. Attendance and informed participation are required. Absences from class should be kept to a minimum and instructors should be informed ahead of time. Students will be allowed one excused absence.*
- 2. Every week students will participate in liturgical practices either prepared by professors or students.*
- 3. Write a book review of 3-4 pages on one of the suggested books. Due date: April 1.*
- 3. In small groups students will prepare one to three rituals for class based on course readings.*
- 4. The entire class will prepare a ritual to be performed in chapel for the community. Date: April 24*
- 5. A final paper, 12-15 pages, dealing with any experiences, stories, and issues developed in class through the readings. (This paper must be completed for students to pass the course.) Due date: May 15, 2009.*

Requirements for students who take the course on a DMin or ThM level

In addition to requirements 1-4 stated above students who wish to take the course on a DMin or ThM level will be required to:

- 1. Provide a second book review, due April 8.*
- 2. Substitute a 25-page paper for the final paper. [See above]. Due: May 15, 2009.*

Policy on Inclusive Language:

In speech and in written assignments, it is the policy of the school to avoid divisive terms that reinforce stereotypes or are pejorative. Do not use language that leaves out part of the population, perpetuates stereotyping, or diminishes importance. Do not use male pronouns (such as “men”) to refer to a group that

includes females as well. Consult the Academic Support Center for additional guidance if necessary. See:

http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Evaluation

The course will be graded on a non-competitive basis. All students will begin the course with an A grade. Unexcused absences, and failure to prepare for class or hand in written work will cause the grade to go down. Also, the quality of writing will be taken into consideration and students who fail to turn the requirements on time will also have their grades diminished. Note that the final paper is required in order to receive a grade for the course.

Internet and Cell Phones

The use of laptop computers during class is discouraged. Cell phones are to be turned off. Exceptions may be requested from the instructors.

Textbooks: All textbooks, articles, and excerpts are on reserve in the library; articles are also available on Blackboard. Several of the textbooks are available in the LPTS Seminary Bookstore.

Required Readings:

Procter-Smith, Marjorie & Walton, Janet W. eds., *Women at Worship: Interpretations of North American Diversity*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

Walton, Janet R. *Feminist Liturgy: A Matter of Justice*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000.

- Berger, Teresa, ed. *Dissident Daughters. Feminist Liturgies in Global Context*. Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.
- Bogart, Anne. *A Director Prepares, Seven Essays on Art and Theatre*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Morrison, Tony. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Vintage, 1970.
- Castillho-Spped, Lillian. *Women's Voices From the Borderlands*. New York: Touchstone, 1995.
- Akpam, Uwem. *Say You Are One of Them*. New York: Little Brown and Company, 2008.

Book Review Suggestions:

- Duck, Ruth C. *Finding Words For Worship. A Guide for Leaders*. Louisville: Westminster John Know Press, 1995.
- Heyward, Carter. *Saving Jesus From Those Who Are Right. Rethinking What it Means to be a Christian*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.
- Procter-Smith, Marjorie. *In Her Own Rite: Constructing Feminist Liturgical Tradition*. Akron, OH: OSL Publications, 2000.
- Ramshaw, Gail. *Under the Three of Life*, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia: OSL Publications: Revised Edition, 2004.
- Ramshaw, Gail. *God Beyond Gender*, Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1995.
- Wren, Brian, *What Language Shall I Borrow? God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.
- Radford-Ruether, Rosemary. *Women-Church, Theology & Practice*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985.
- White, Susan J. *A History of Women in Christian Worship*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2003.
- Wilson Costen, Melva. *African American Christian Worship*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

Course schedule

February 11

Readings:

Janet Walton, *Feminist Liturgy, A Matter of Justice*. pp. 11-47

Mary Collins, "Principles of Feminist Liturgy," in *Women at Worship: Interpretations of North American Diversity*, pp. 9-30.

Phyllis A. Bird, "Women in Israelite Religion," chapter 2 in *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities – Women and Gender in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.

February 18

Readings:

Marjorie Procter-Smith, & Janet W. Walton, eds., *Women at Worship: Interpretations of North American Diversity*, pp.109-241.

Karel van der Toorn: *From Her Cradle to Her Grave: The Role of Religion in the Life of the Israelite and the Babylonian Woman*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994, Chapter 1.

February 25

Readings:

Teresa Berger, et. al., *Mapping the Global Struggles for Women's Rites*, pp. 1-27; 45-54; 113-124; 135-146; 175-230

March 4

A positive presence of women in the Bible: Ruth

Readings:

Ruth in Johanna W.H.van Wijk-Bos: *Ruth and Esther – Women in Alien Lands*, Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.

Johanna W.H.van Wijk Bos: *Reformed and Feminist – A Challenge To the Church*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991, ch.5

Eunny P. Lee: "Ruth the Moabite: Identity, Kinship and Otherness" and Jacqueline Lapsley: "Seeing the Older Woman: Naomi in High Definition" in *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World - An Introduction to Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Katharine Doob Sakenfeld*, Linda Day & Carolyn Pressler eds., Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006,

March 11

An absence of women in biblical narrative: Genesis 22

Readings:

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: *“Miriam – Leading the Dance/Charting the Field of Feminist Biblical Interpretation”* Part I, chapter 1, in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: *But She Said-Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon, 1992.

Genesis 22

Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn: *“Keeping the Promise”* Chapter Two in *Gender, Power and Promise –The Subject of the Bible’s First Story*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.

Phyllis Trible: *“Genesis 22: The Sacrifice of Sarah.”* in *“Not in Heaven – Coherence and Complexity in Biblical Narrative*, Jason P. Rosenblatt and Joseph C. Sitterson, Jr. eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991: 170-192

March 18

A Negative Presence of Women: Luke 20: 38-42

Readings:

Judith Plaskow: *“Anti-Judaism in Feminist Christian Interpretation”* in *Searching the Scriptures – A Feminist Introduction*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza ed. New York: Crossroad, 1995, pp.117-129

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: *“Arachne – Weaving the Word: The Practice of Interpretation Luke 10-38-42”* Part I, Chapter 2 in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: *But She Said-Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon, 1992, pp. 52-76.

March 25 – Research and Study Week

April 1 – Due Date Book Review

Readings:

Anne Bogart. *A Director Prepares, Seven Essays on Art and Theatre*.

Guest: Judith Rock

April 8

A Liberating Presence of Women: Judges 4:17-22

Readings:

Ivone Gebara: *“The Face of Transcendence as a Challenge to the Reading of the Bible in Latin America.”* in *Searching the Scriptures – A Feminist Introduction*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza ed. New York: Crossroad, 1995, pp.172-186.

Johanna W.H.van Wijk Bos: *“Explorations in the Text”* chapter 4 in *Reformed and Feminist – a Challenge to the Church*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991, pp.69-76.

Johanna W.H.Bos: *“Out of the Shadows”* in *Reasoning With the Foxes – Female Wit in a World of Male Power*, Johanna W.H.Bos and J.Cheryl Exum eds. Semeia, v.42, pp.49-58.

[Due date second book review]

April 15

Readings:

Tony Morrison. *The Bluest Eye*.

April 22

Readings:

Lillian Castillo-Speed, *Women’s Voices From the Borderlands*.

April 29

Readings:

Uwem Akpam, *Say You Are One of Them*.

May 6

Reading:

Claudio Carvalhaes, *“Gimme the kneebone bent:’ Liturgics, Dance, resistance and a Hermeneutics of the Knees”* in *Studies in World Christianity*, Volume 4 Part 1, The Edinburgh Review of Theology & Religion. pp. 1-18.

Janet Walton, *Feminist Liturgy, A Matter of Justice*, pp. 48-93

Final paper: May 15.