

**COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES  
RELIGION PROGRAM: RELI 2535**

**GENDER & RELIGION**

**Instructor:** Shawna Dolansky

**E-mail:** Shawna.Dolansky@carleton.ca

**Office hours:** PA 3A60, Th 11:45-12:45

**Office Phone:** 520-2600 ext. 7042 \*do not leave msgs here\*

**Course Description:**

This course examines the mutual impact of gender and religion on the construction of social identities by offering an historical overview of religious traditions from the perspective of gender analysis. We begin in the ancient world to understand the emergence of the Bible, and its gender constructions, as products of that world. The emergence of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam from differing interpretations of the Bible occur in particular historical, cultural, social, and political contexts. These contexts, and their constructions of gender, mutually interact with the biblical text and later commentaries in ways that maintain and also change aspects of gendered religious ideals. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, different waves of feminism originate within, challenge, and re-define religion and discussions of agency, oppression, and power – as well as concepts of masculinity and femininity – in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and also in the creation and promotion of new religious movements. We conclude with a discussion of the pervasiveness of religion-based gender categories in modern “secular” culture, and the ways in which a modern culture that understands itself as secular negotiates questions of religion and gender.

NOTE: As with any course that pursues the academic study of religion, we examine all texts and contexts from a **secular, scholarly perspective**. The nature of the material is theological, but our task as scholars is to view it academically, to discuss it without being attached to any particular theological interpretation, and yet to respect the fact that the theological interpretations and the beliefs they entail are of great importance to many.

**Course Objectives:**

In this course, students will learn:

- How academics think, present, and research scholarly information on theological and religious topics;
- How gender works as a category of analysis in the study of religion;
- How to engage critically with both primary and secondary texts;
- To perceive threads in the history of ideas about gender that are common among certain religions, as well as the ways in which they differ by religion, culture, society, and time period;
- How social identities are informed by religious ideas and produced in an interplay among biology, sexuality, politics, and culture;
- How religious identities are informed by social identities and time-bound perceptions of political realities;
- An historical overview of the formation of certain religions, from their origins to the present day;
- To think about gender analysis as an academic activity separate from politicized or activist liberation movements such as feminism, even as there is an intrinsic mutual relationship within which each draws on insights from the other.

**Readings:**

- There are no textbooks required for this class. All readings are either available via the urls on this course outline, or are posted on CULearn.
- All readings are required to be completed in advance of the course date on which they are listed. Quizzes (detailed below) will be based on readings up to and including those due on the date the quiz takes place.
-

## **Evaluation:**

1. 11 short weekly quizzes on the readings worth 5% each = 55%
  - Quizzes will be based mostly on reading material with the odd question thrown in from lecture. They will be “open-note” unless indicated otherwise by me, in advance. The purpose of the quizzes is to make sure you’re keeping up with the reading and attending\* class. If you’re doing neither regularly, you will not do well in this course.
  - Quizzes are given at the beginning of the class for which they are scheduled and will last 15 minutes. There will be no make-up quizzes; if you are late or absent, you will lose the 5% for that week. In the case of a medical or family emergency for which you have documentation, we can make alternate arrangements for that 5% if you bring the documentation to my attention asap.
2. 3 film reviews as noted on schedule below, worth 7%, 8%, and 10% respectively = 25%
  - These will be based on films we watch in class. You will take notes while you watch the film, and then subsequently write them up in a 1 page review. Your review should show that you watched the film and thought about the ways in which religion and gender interact and reinforce each other in the particular community being portrayed. The first two film reviews will be written at home after the film is viewed in class, and handed in at the beginning of the next class; late reviews will not be accepted. The third will be written in class after viewing the film and handed in at the end of class that day.
3. Final take-home exam, 8-10 pages, worth 20%
  - The final exam will be a cumulative reflection on the core issues raised by this course. Readings that approach these core issues from several perspectives will be assigned for your critical reflection and discussion.

\*By “attending,” I don’t just mean being physically present. Those of you who text, tweet, facebook, or shopify during class are not *attending*, and may as well stay home – you are not absorbing lecture material by osmosis, and you are distracting your fellow classmates. As I do not take attendance in this class, you have nothing to gain by showing up if you don’t plan on attending.

## **Schedule:**

### **Th Sept 8 – Introduction to the Course**

### **Tu Sept 13 – “Religion” and “Gender”**

“Gender” in *Religion: The Basics*, Malory Nye, Taylor & Francis 2008, pp. 79-88

### **Th Sept 15 – In the Beginning... Religion and Gender in the Ancient World**

Ilona Zsolnay “Analyzing Constructs” (pp. 1-15, and 21-23); AND

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/epic/hd\\_epic.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/epic/hd_epic.htm)

Quiz 1

### **Tu Sept 20 – Ancient Israel & The Hebrew Bible**

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cana/hd\\_cana.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cana/hd_cana.htm) AND

Genesis 1; AND

“Women’s Status” in Friedman & Dolansky, *The Bible Now*, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 77-98

### **Th Sept 22 – Gender, Status, & Law in Ancient Israel**

Friedman & Dolansky, *The Bible Now* pp. 98-125

Quiz 2

### **Tu Sept 27 – Biblical Masculinities**

Hilary Lipka, “Shaved Beards and Bared Buttocks: Shame and the Undermining of Masculine Performance in Biblical Texts,” pp. 176-197 in *Being a Man: Negotiating Ancient Constructs of Masculinity*.

**Th Sept 29 – Gender in Ancient Mediterranean Religions**

Kraemer “Gender” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, pp. 281-303  
Quiz 3

**Tu Oct 4 – NO CLASS**

**Th Oct 6 – Rabbinic Judaism**

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ancient-judaism-101/#>

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/talmud-101/#>

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/women-in-rabbinic-literature/#>

Quiz 4

**Tu Oct 11 – Judaism & Gender**

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-denominations-emergence-and-growth/#>

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/gender-feminism-101/#>

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/lilith-lady-flying-in-darkness/#>

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/engendering-judaism/#>

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/halakha-and-feminism/#>

**Th Oct 13 – Agency & Choice**

**In class film:** The Return of Sarah’s Daughters (55 min)

Quiz 5

**Tu Oct 18 – The Origins of Christianity**

Matthew 1-7; 10; 19; 22-23; AND

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/roles.html>

**Due** – film review – The Return of Sarah’s Daughters

**Th Oct 20 – Gender in Early Christian Thought**

Gal 1-3; Rom 1-3; 1 Cor 7; AND

E. Castelli “Paul on Women and Gender” in *Women and Christian Origins*, eds. Kraemer & D’Angelo, Oxford University Press 1999; \*read pp. 227-235 only; AND

<http://witcombe.sbc.edu/davincicode/original-sin.html>

Quiz 6

**Tu Oct 25 – FALL BREAK**

**Th Oct 27 - FALL BREAK**

**Tu Nov 1 – Mariology & Medieval Christian Constructions of Gender**

R. R. Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine: A Western Religious History*, pp. 164-172

**Th Nov 3 – Gender in the Catholic/Protestant Divide**

Kvam, Scheuring, & Ziegler, *Eve & Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender*, pp. 249-260

Quiz 7

**Tu Nov 8 – Christian Constructions of Gender**

Nye, *Religion: The Basics* pp. 88-92; AND

“Introduction” in Amy DeRogatis, *Saving Sex: Sexuality and Salvation in American Evangelicalism*, Oxford University Press, 2014

**Th Nov 10 – film – Hell House**

Quiz 8

**Tu Nov 15- Muhammad and the Qur'an**

L. Clarke "Women in Islam" pp. 187-204 in *Women and Religious Traditions* eds. Anderson and Dickey Young, Oxford University Press 2004

**Due:** Film review – constructions of gender in Hell House community

**Th Nov 17 – Gender & Islam**

Clarke continued, pp. 204-215

*Quiz 9*

**Tu Nov 22- Film: Under One Sky (43 min)**

Nye 92-103

In class film review/reflection write-up

**Th Nov 24 - Gender in Ancient India**

Anderson in *Women and Religious Traditions*, pp. 1-16.

*Quiz 10*

**Tu Nov 29 - Gender in Hindu Traditions**

Anderson, pp. 16-40

**Th Dec 1 – New Age Traditions**

Leona Anderson & Pamela Dickey Young, "Women in New Age Traditions" in *Women and Religious Traditions*, pp. 218-243.

*Quiz 11*

**Tu Dec 6 – Gender, Religion, and Human Rights: Discussion in preparation for final exam**

Ayelet Shachar, "Squaring the Circle of Multiculturalism? Religious Freedom and Gender Equality in Canada," *Law and Ethics of Human Rights* 2016: 10(1): 31-69. - (read pp. 54-69 only, sections "troubles in paradise" and "educational interludes"); AND

<http://www.universityaffairs.ca/opinion/in-my-opinion/religion-is-a-human-right/>

## REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL HUMANITIES COURSES

### COPIES OF WRITTEN WORK SUBMITTED

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

### PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

### GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

### WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 9, 2016**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 7, 2017**.

### REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 11, 2016** for the Fall term and **March 10, 2017** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

### PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery. If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept. Deferrals of a final assignment or take home, in courses without a final examination, must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

### ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic & Career Development Services 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-6632	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library