



Women's Studies in Religion

Spring 2022

WOMEN'S STUDIES IN RELIGION GTU (STRS-4242)

Course Description:

This seminar is required for completion of the GTU Women's Studies in Religion certificate and is open to all interested students. It explores and analyzes emerging themes and issues in women's studies in religion, focusing on those that intersect with race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, class, culture, nationality, and religious expression. This course will provide theoretical groundwork and common vocabulary for students interested in pursuing women's studies and womanist, intersectional feminist, mujerista scholarship in theology/religious studies. The course introduces the issues that are raised by the field of women's studies, and explores how these issues relate to the study of religion. Evaluation based on zoom participation, watching asynchronous Voicethread lectures, leadership of class discussion, and final project and presentation. This course is open to all degree programs at the GTU and has an inter-religious orientation.

THE SENSUAL & THE SUBLIME: CONTEMPLATIVE ARTS & AESTHETICS OF YOGA GTU (BSRA-5001)

Course Description:

This course will focus on the Contemplative Arts & Aesthetics of Yoga. We will learn about Rasa Theory, the psychology of emotions used across Hindu yoga. Of particular importance is the **role of women in these contemplative arts**. The course will examine the integration of the ecosystems of the more-than-human world in yogic methods such as contemplative praxis among forests & groves, riverine meditation, the complex semiotics of flowers & foliage in worship, and via the arts of pilgrimage (yātrā), sacramental fine arts that use organic materials. These performative meditations offer embodied hermeneutics for diverse spiritual paths. The course will draw inspiration from diverse Yogic Arts, including the systematic contemplative praxes of sacramental sound, sacred dance, dramaturgy, hymns & chants, melodic recitation, recounting of sacred narratives (kathā), and liturgical call-and-response chants (kīrtana). The course will examine the ongoing development of a yogic ecopsychology that is intrinsic to the yogic tradition from the earliest texts of the Vedas. We will study scholarship and current research on the physical, psychological, and emotional impact of Contemplative Arts of Yoga that immerse the practitioner in the elemental natural world. Foundationally, the course offers a robust inclusion of sacred sound, sacramental music, and fine arts as ancient "meditational"

faces of a yogic Ecospirituality & Ecopsychology. The course is appropriate for MA/MDiv students with *previous background in either Hindu Studies, Buddhist Studies, **or** Yoga Studies.* The course is appropriate for PhD/DMin, and other doctoral students (higher level of research), and will provide them interreligious, interdisciplinary approaches to the fine and performative arts.

THE DIVINE FEMININE: HINDU THEOLOGY GTU (BSST-5400)

Course Description:

The theological vision of the Divine as Mother, once common, has almost disappeared from the world of religion. However, it has continued to flourish through the textual, liturgical, ethical, and theological traditions of God as Mother, as Creator, as Creation, over a span of 2,500 years in the world of Hindu spirituality. The tradition of Shakti/Mahādevī offers a multidimensional theological ethos that integrates transcendence and immanence, the masculine and feminine, life and liberation, dynamic creativity and contemplative tranquility, and the intuitive and empirical dimensions of experience. The course will explore the mystical narratives, sacred texts, theological tradition, contemplative praxis, ritual, and theories of consciousness and subtle energy associated with the theology of the Divine Feminine. We will examine the traditional rituals, and teachings of this rare theological path, which still remains extant as a major branch of Hindu & Yoga philosophies, and **how it continues to attract women spiritual leaders into its fold**. The course is appropriate for MA/MTS & PhD/ThD (additional research), & will require a quiz, reflections papers, & a term paper.

THE BYZANTINE VIRGIN MARY PAOI (STRA-4645)

Course Description:

Throughout history Eastern Christians have honored the Virgin Mary as "Mother of God," "Champion Leader," "Ever-virgin," "Steadfast Shelter and Refuge," "Joy of All Who Sorrow," "The One Who Guides," and continue to address her with many other titles. The figure of the Theotokos (Mother of God) influences all phases of life including theology, politics, culture, social justice, art, literature, feminism, music, and personal devotion. Today many Christians have forgotten her crucial role in the divine plan for restoration of creation. This class will consider the various ways in which the medieval Greeks and the Orthodox peoples in general talk about and represent the life of Virgin Mary. We will approach the topic diachronically and across a wide geographic span—from the Near East to Greece and Italy and from North Africa to Russia. We will study the main patristic and liturgical texts pertaining to Mary's life and will consider also a number of artistic representations and their ability to not only illustrate but also to exegete. The course will revolve around the formation, content and icons of Virgin Mary and the main Marian feasts of the Orthodox Church. Thus, the Annunciation, the Presentation in the Temple, Mary's role in the Incarnation and the Passion, will be thoroughly investigated through reading the writings of church fathers and liturgical poetry, and through looking at and with

images on wood panels, in churches and manuscripts. Designed for advanced MDiv, MA, and PhD students, this course will combine lectures and seminar discussion. Evaluation will be based on class participation, one in-class presentation, one brief research paper, and a final synthesis paper.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE EARTH JST (SPST-2550)

Course Description:

This course explores a spirituality that asks: What can we learn from the Earth? How can we pray with the Earth? And how can we take co-responsibility with the earth for all her inhabitants? The course assumes that the Earth is a source of spiritual and theological reflection; that the natural world, her biodiversity and ecosystemic interdependence, are sources of learning how to live a holistic spirituality in light of the world and the Gospel. The course will explore issues of water, food, and climate, and will integrate eco-feminist and eco-womanist perspectives. Through critical readings, class discussion, film and first-hand exploration and experimentation, students will be able to articulate and practice an Earth-honoring faith that is ecologically truthful, sacramentally expansive, and ethically responsible. A foundational course in theology is a prerequisite. Course intended for MTS, M.Div., and MA students, open to others, auditors with permission of the professor. [Faculty Consent required; 15 max enrollment]

THEOLOGY AS LIVING CONVERSATION BST(ST-1095)

Course Description:

Theology as Living Conversation: An Introduction to Christian Theology. In this introductory theology course, students will engage the complex and diverse discipline of Christian theology, conceived as a living conversation that takes place across time and cultures. The course will encourage students to claim their own places in this living conversation, and to grow into their identities as valued, theological conversation contributors, self-aware of their own social and cultural locations. Students will encounter various Christian theological methods including ordinary theology, practical theology, liturgical theology, systematic/constructive theology, science & theology, and public theology. Learning is facilitated through regular written assignments, small group and paired conversation, and some asynchronous online interaction. Offered in remote format, we will meet weekly for 1½-hour Zoom discussions and breakout groups. The course will be taught from a commitment to liberative pedagogy in which students' voices and experiences are encouraged and valued. This course is appropriate for masters-level students and satisfies part of the core requirements at Berkeley School of Theology. Students from across the Graduate Theological Union are most welcome and encouraged to take the course.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS: RADICAL LOVE EMBODIED PLTS (CE-8125)

Course Description:

This course introduces the practice and theory of moral formation, discernment, and conduct through the lens of Christian Ethics. Ethics is viewed as the art-science bringing Christian traditions and critical theory to the tasks of: 1) discerning what is right for any given situation, 2) finding moral-spiritual power to act on that discernment, and 3) discovering what forms individuals and society toward the good and what mal-forms away from it. The course includes some emphasis on Anglican and Lutheran perspectives, and holds social transformation toward justice and ecological well-being as an inherent aim of Christian ethics. This course is jointly offered by CDSP & PLTS. [30 max enrollment]

CLIMATE JUSTICE: THEOLOGY AND ACTION IN RELATION PLTS (CERS-4450)

Course Description:

This course will use methodologies of Christian ethics and interaction with local climate justice activists to examine: 1) the climate crisis as a moral matter in relationship to various forms of structural injustice including injustice grounded in race/ethnicity, class, and colonialism, and 2) pathways for addressing the climate crisis with hope. Special attention will be given to global-local connections and perspectives from marginalized communities. Methodological resources include liberation ethics, Earth ethics, post-colonial perspectives, eco-feminist perspectives, and eco-hermeneutics. The course involves reading, writing, engagement with community groups, collaborative knowledge building, and discussion. The informing undercurrent of the course is the quest for hope and moral-spiritual agency in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Fulfills Climate Justice and Faith Concentration requirements. This course is jointly offered by CDSP & PLTS. CDSP and PLTS students will have registration priority. [30 max enrollment]

WSR CERTIFICATE STUDENT COURSE REQUIREMENT REMINDER:

In addition to completing the WSR Seminar that is offered once an academic year, students are required to successfully complete three additional 3.0 unit courses (total of 9.0 units) at the GTU or UC Berkeley in which the experiences of women, women-centered theologies, or feminist theories form a significant component. Two of these courses must also emphasize religious studies or theology. Special reading courses that cover these topics may also be counted toward the certificate. Course requirements should be tailored to the student's degree level. A course may also be acceptable if the student's final paper/project is on a gender topic. If a student decides to take advantage of this option, they have to submit the paper with their requirements checklist.