

Syllabus

Title of the Course:	Gender, Religion, and Power	Course Breakdown:	28 online teaching hours in 14 weeks
Name of the Instructor:	Viktoria Lavriniuk	Weekly class time:	Mondays 18:00-20:00 (CEST)
Language:	English	Credit:	5 ECTS
Hosted by:	Humboldt-University Berlin, Institute of Social Sciences	Certificate issued by:	Humboldt-University Berlin
min. number of participants:	15	max. number of participants	30

Description of the course

Using feminist and interdisciplinary approaches, the course examines the gendered and power dimensions of religion, religiosity, and secularism. It offers students to engage in current debates about gender and religion and to explore women's religious lives in Abrahamic religions. Because of the complex nature of gendered experiences, intersectionality is used as the primary analytical framework. The course discusses the ways in which religious women locate their religiosity, shape their lives, negotiate their agency. The course introduces students to current feminist scholarship in gender and religion through various case studies focusing on the engagement with power and religious women's agency.

Learning Aims

- Introduce various theoretical and methodological approaches to the intersecting studies of religion, gender, feminism, and power dimensions.
- Critically engage and analyse the ways in which intersecting relations and activities of gender and religion operate in women's lives at the individual, community, and institutional level.
- Discuss the ways in which power dynamics influence the gendered religious experience in the private and public domain.

Upon the successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- Identify various feminist and interdisciplinary approaches to discuss gender within the religious context.
- Compare liberal feminists', feminist theologians', religious feminists' approaches to women's religiosity and agency.
- Apply the theory of intersectionality for the analysis of power dynamics embedded in the religious context.

Course requirements

- Class discussions 10%
- Reflections 20%
- Presentation 15 %
- Research essay proposal 15%
- Research essay 40%

Organization of the course and course schedule

You do not need to be a feminist, a woman, a religious person or to be of certain faith and religion to participate in this course, even though this is a feminist course based on feminist theory, feminist pedagogy, and feminist ethics. The most crucial is to be open for critical engagement with your own ideas about gender, religion, feminism, race; to be willing to respectfully listen to others' ideas you might disagree with; to be ready to deal with sensitive and sometimes frustrating topics of racism, classism, colonialism, and other similar subject matters. It is a mutually learning and exploratory process for the instructor and for the students. You can always talk to the instructor when you feel overwhelmed with the course material. You can approach the instructor to discuss assignments and find alternatives if you don't feel comfortable due to the sensitive nature of the topics. Please let your instructor know, if you have some learning style requirements.

The course is a combination of class participation and online participation in the discussion forums outside of the class hours. The lectures will be conducted both synchronously and asynchronously. Doing reading prior to the class is important in order to be able to participate in class discussions.

Reflections

Students will write reflections throughout the course. The general objective of the reflection is to critically engage with the sources. The length of the reflections is around 250-350 words long. Reflection doesn't summarize the main ideas of the provided material, but rather discuss the central thesis statement and elaborate why you agree or

disagree with the author or the narrative provided.

Outline of the reflections

<p>Reflection Paper</p> <p>Week 4</p>	<p>Reflection on the reading of the week</p> <p>Gross, R. (2009). Chapter 13. Feminist Theology as Theology of Religions In <i>A Garland of Feminist Reflections: Forty Years of Religious Exploration</i>, pp. 211 – 230. University of California Press.</p>
<p>Reflection Paper</p> <p>Week 6</p>	<p>Watch two short videos and discuss them</p> <p>Islam: the most feminist religion?</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=FdfpafrOwc&feature=emb_logo</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=142&v=0o9F_ZRzsSE&feature=emb_logo</p>
<p>Reflection Paper</p> <p>Week 7</p>	<p>Choose a podcast/blog entry/video/article and write reflection drawing on at least one reading of the course</p>
<p>Reflection Paper</p> <p>Week 10</p>	<p>Reflection on the reading of the week</p> <p>Christine L.M. Gervais. (2018). Practising inclusive spirituality. In <i>Beyond the Altar: Women Religious, Patriarchal Power, and the Church</i>. Wilfrid Laurier University Press (pp. 97-118).</p>
<p>Reflection Paper</p> <p>Week 11</p>	<p>TEDx Talk</p> <p>The Bible: A queer positive book Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KK1evMNRVzA&t=8s</p>
<p>Reflection Paper</p> <p>Week 12</p>	<p>Reflection on the reading of the week</p> <p>Sylvia Marcos. (2009). Mesoamerican Women’s Indigenous Spirituality: Decolonizing Religious Beliefs. <i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>, 25(2), 25-45</p>

Presentation

Starting from Week 3, every class two students will make presentations on the topic of the week they choose. On Week 13, there will be 4-5 presentations (depending on the number of students enrolled), and during this week you can choose any subject matter of the course. Presentation is not a summary of the readings, and you do not need to use readings of the course. On contrast, presentation is a student's perspective of the chosen topic based on the academic sources students find themselves. The topic of the presentation can be the same as for the course project. It is also necessary to come up with two questions to initiate and facilitate discussion in the class. Duration of the presentation is 10 minutes. Sign up list will be provided on Week 2.

Research essay proposal and Research essay

Research essay proposal outlines the main statement of the research essay, arguments to support your statement, theoretical concept, bibliography. You need to use at least 5 scholar articles, including 2 course readings. The outline should be no more than 500 words.

Your research essay is an analytical essay presenting your critical analysis and critical engagement with the topic and sources. See the links on the difference between analytical and descriptive writing:

<https://gradcoach.com/analysis-vs-description/>

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/documents/description-vs-analysis---learnhigher.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwFCyrCssaw>

The final paper will be based on your outline and feedback you receive from the instructor. Number of words will depend on student's department requirements. Detailed instructions will be posted later during the term and discussed in the class.

The final essay is an additional requirement for those who want to earn extra credits.

Outline of the Course Schedule and Readings

<p>Week 1</p>	<p>Introduction to the course. Theoretical Framework</p> <p>Collins, P. H., & Bilge, S. (2018). <i>What is Intersectionality?</i> In <i>Intersectionality</i>, pp. 1-22. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press.</p> <p>Additional reading: Kandiyoti, D. (2005). Bargaining with patriarchy. In M. Zinn, M. Messner, & P. Hodagneu-Sotelo. <i>Gender through the prism of difference</i>, pp. 26-36. Oxford University Press Incorporated.</p>	
<p>Week 2</p>	<p>Religion, Power, Ideology</p> <p>Schilbrack, K. (2013). What Isn't Religion? <i>The Journal of Religion</i>, 93(3), 291–318</p>	<p>Sign up for presentation</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	<p>Decolonization, Religion, Secularism</p> <p>Malory Nye. (2019). Decolonizing the Study of Religion. <i>Open Library of Humanities</i>, 5(1) (Open access https://olh.openlibhums.org/articles/10.16995/olh.421/)</p> <p>Scott, J. W. (2019). Introduction. <i>In Sex and Secularism</i>, pp. 1-29. Princeton University Press.</p>	<p>Presentation</p>
<p>Week 4</p>	<p>Feminist Theology. Feminist Perspective on Religion</p> <p>Llewellyn, D. (2015). Chapter 1. <i>In Reading, Feminism, and Spirituality: Troubling the Waves</i>, pp. 9-29. Springer.</p> <p>Gross, R. (2009). Chapter 13. Feminist Theology as Theology of Religions In <i>A Garland of Feminist Reflections: Forty Years of Religious Exploration</i>, pp. 211 – 230. University of California Press.</p>	<p>Reflection Paper Presentation</p>

<p>Week 5</p>	<p>Women’s Agency and Religion</p> <p>Burke, K. C. (2012). Women’s agency in gender-traditional religions: A review of four approaches. <i>Sociology Compass</i>, 6(2), 122-133.</p> <p>Beaman, L. (2013). Overdressed and Underexposed or Underdressed and Overexposed? <i>Oñati Socio-Legal Series</i>, 3(7), 1136–1157</p>	<p>Presentation</p>
<p>Week 6</p>	<p>Women in Islam. Islamic Feminism</p> <p>Rinaldo, R. (2014). Pious and Critical: Muslim Women Activists and the Question of Agency.” <i>Gender & Society</i>, vol. 28, no. 6, Sage Publications, pp. 824–846</p> <p>Mahmood, S. (2006). Feminist theory, agency, and the liberatory subject: Some reflections on the Islamic revival in Egypt. <i>Temenos-Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion</i>, 42(1), pp. 31-63</p> <p>Additional reading. Writing skills for your essay Belcher, W. (2009). Writing your journal article in 12 weeks: a guide to academic publishing success. SAGE Publications.</p>	<p>Reflection Paper Presentation</p>
<p>Week 7</p>	<p>Screening and Discussion of the Movie</p> <p>Ben Mahmoud, F. (2019). <i>Feminism Inshallah: a history of Arab feminism. Women Make Movies.</i></p>	<p>Reflection Paper Presentation</p>

<p>Week 8</p>	<p>To veil or not to veil</p> <p>Shirazi, F., & Mishra, S. (2010). Young Muslim women on the face veil (niqab): A tool of resistance in Europe but rejected in the United States. <i>International Journal of Cultural Studies</i>, 13(1), 43–62.</p> <p>Ghazal Read J., & Bartkowski J.P. (2000). To Veil or Not to Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation among Muslim Women in Austin, Texas. <i>Gender & Society</i>, 14(3), 395–417</p> <p>Additional reading Ahmed, L. (2011). <i>Chapter 9. Backlash</i>. In <i>Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence</i>, pp. 199-232. Yale University Press.</p>	<p>Presentation</p>
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>Women in Judaism</p> <p>Zion-Waldoks, T. (2015). Politics of Devoted Resistance: Agency, Feminism, and Religion Among Orthodox Agunah Activists in Israel. <i>Gender & Society</i>, 29(1), 73-97.</p> <p>Additional reading Avishai, O. (2008). “Doing Religion” In a Secular World: Women in Conservative Religions and the Question of Agency. <i>Gender & Society</i>, 22(4), 409–433</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Research Proposal due</p>
<p>Week 10</p>	<p>Special Cases: Women in Christianity</p> <p>Leamaster, R. J., & Einwohner, R. L. (2018). “I’m Not Your Stereotypical Mormon Girl”: Mormon Women’s Gendered Resistance. <i>Review of Religious Research</i>, 60(2), 161-181.</p> <p>Christine L.M. Gervais. (2018). Practising inclusive spirituality. In <i>Beyond the Altar: Women Religious, Patriarchal Power, and the Church</i>. Wilfrid Laurier University Press (pp. 97-118).</p>	<p>Reflection paper</p> <p>Presentation</p>
<p>Week 11</p>	<p>Queering Discussion</p> <p>Schneider, L. C., & Roncolato, C. (2012). Queer theologies. <i>Religion compass</i>, 6(1), 1-13.</p> <p>Greenough, C. (2017). <i>Queering Fieldwork in Religion:</i></p>	<p>Reflection paper</p> <p>Presentation</p>

