| Professor: | Ivy Helman, Ph.D. |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Email: | drivyhelman@gmail.com |
| Office & hours: | YT240, Mondays, by appt. |

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, students explore the combination of feminism and religion. Students will be introduced to feminist engagement within religion, religious studies and th(e/a)ology, focusing on six major religious traditions (Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, the Goddess Movement (sometimes called feminist spirituality), and Hinduism). This course pays special attention to three main areas of feminist engagement with religion: the feminist critique of religion; feminist methodology; and feminist reconstructive the(a/o)logy. Key concepts considered time and again throughout the duration of the course are patriarchy, sex, gender, images of the divine, leadership roles, rituals, sacred texts, power and authority, feminism, and religion.

READING MATERIAL:

Available online through Moodle and the course's website in SIS.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

It is expected by the university, by the professor and by the larger academic community that the student will always create, write and sit for exams under their own volition; when using ideas, quotes and creations from other sources than themselves, the student must properly give credit whenever credit is due. Failing to accord by this standard has serious repercussions on the student's future and their current academic career. Punishments will correspond to the weight of the given assignment for the class and will be discussed with university administration when necessary.

STATEMENT REGARDING COVID:

Unless stated otherwise, the class sessions for the winter semester 2020 will be conducted online through the MSTeams platform. The classes will follow the official schedule. For more information about MSTeams and how to register, see here: <u>https://dl.cuni.cz/ms-teams/</u>.

If the epidemiological situation permits us to return to in-person classes, the student will be informed ahead of time. Regardless of what happens, all course work will take place according to the syllabus.

This course will use Moodle, a course management system for course material, interactive feedback, submission of papers, etc. The student is also required to submit all course work at the dates, specified in the syllabus. If the student has an emergency or other serious situation which prevents the student from missing a deadline, the professor must be informed in advance of the situation if at all possible. If that is not possible, then at the earliest possible moment after the missed assignment/deadline.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (PERCENTAGE OF GRADE): Participation (25%)

Response Papers (25% each, 75% total)

Participation (25%):

The student is expected to participate in class. However, while attendance is not required at the online sessions, and the student who misses an online class will not be penalized, students are still required to participate in the class. Therefore, if you miss an online class session, it is your responsibility to email the professor and ask for a make-up assignment. Each missed online class

session will require a separate make-up assignment. Failure to complete any or all make-up assignments will affect your grade.

Participation in the class (whether online or in-person) includes having read the assigned material and have access to copies of it for class. The student must stay engaged (and awake) in discussion, during occasional lectures, and videos. Contributing to discussion as well as note-taking is expected.

Class is not only an opportunity to learn new things, but also: an opportunity to learn more about yourself and your classmates, an occasion for the professor to provide some clarification and insight, an experience in which you can improve your ability to express your views and the knowledge you have and the chance to learn from your peers, who may have thought about the same information in a slightly different manner than yourself.

Response Papers (25% each / 75% total):

Students will write three 800 word responses to answer a professor-proposed prompt. The main purpose of these papers is to show that the student has done the assigned reading. Think of them as reading checks. The papers will show both engagement with course material as well as the student's ability to think critically and analyze a given topic. Instructions and prompts will be given two weeks before each assignment is due. Any paper less than 750 or more than 800 words will not be accepted. Two weeks before the assignment is due, the student will receive the complete instructions and prompts for that assignment. All assignments will only be accepted via the course website on Moodle. **No outside research is allowed; only class readings and in-class materials can be referenced.**

For each day the paper is late, the student's grade decreases by one number. Papers more than one week late will not be accepted. The student will only be allowed to make-up a missed paper for valid medical emergencies. A doctor's note is required.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

5 October 2020

Introduction to Gender and Religion: Distribute syllabus & intro to material.

In-Class Reading:

Judith Plaskow, "The Coming of Lillith," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Spring, 2007), pp. 34-41.

Zuzana Budapest, "Self-Blessing Ritual," in *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, (Oakland: Susan B. Anthony Coven No. 1, 1986).

12 October 2020

Introduction to Theory: Week 1

In-Class Reading:

joanne stato, "Cultural Appropriation," Off Our Backs, Vol. 21, No. 9 (october 1991), pp. 20-21.

Reading:

Rita M. Gross, *Feminism and Religion: An Introduction*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). Ch. 2 and 4.

Recommended Reading:

Rita M. Gross, Feminism and Religion: An Introduction, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). Ch. 1.

<u>19 October 2020</u>

Rita M. Gross, Feminism and Religion: An Introduction, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). Ch. 5 - 6.

Recommended Reading:

Rita M. Gross, Feminism and Religion: An Introduction, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). Ch. 3.

<u>26 October 2020</u>

Introduction to Theory: "Reform"ing Religion

Reading:

Judith G. Martin, "Why Women Need a Feminist Spirituality," in *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 1/2, Spirituality and Religions (Spring/Summer, 1993), pp. 106-120.

2 NOVEMBER 2020

Introduction to Theory: "Revolution"izing Religion

Reading: Carol P. Christ, "Why Women Need the Goddess," in *Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) pp. 117-132. ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE VIA MOODLE

9 NOVEMBER 2020

Exploring Traditions, Week 1: Islam Reading:

Amira El-Azhary Sonbol, "Rethinking Women and Islam," in *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christanity, and Islam*, edited by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, (University of Florida Press, 2001), pp. 108-146.

Fatima Seedat, "Islam, Feminism, and Islamic Feminism: Between Inadequacy and Inevitability," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2013), pp. 25-45.

<u>16 November 2020</u>

Exploring Traditions, Week 2: Buddhism

Reading:

Cathryn Bailey, "Embracing the Icon: The Feminist Potential of the Trans Bodhisattva, Kuan Yin," *Hypatia*, Vol. 24, No. 3, (Summer, 2009), pp. 178-196.

Rita M. Gross, "The Suffering of Sexism: Buddhist Perspectives and Experiences," *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 34 (2014), pp. 69-81.

23 NOVEMBER 2020

Exploring Traditions, Week 3: Christianity Reading:

Reading:

Mary E. Hunt, "Women-Church: Feminist Concept, Religious Commitment, Women's Movement," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (Spring 2009), pp. 85-98.

Rosemary Radford Reuther, "Christian Feminist Theology: History and Future," in *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christanity, and Islam*, edited by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, University of Florida Press, 2001, pp. 65-80.

Recommended Reading:

Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Dualism and the Nature of Evil in Feminist Theology," *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 5 no 1 (April 1992), p 26-39. ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE VIA MOODLE

<u>30 NOVEMBER 2020</u> Exploring Traditions, Week 4: Feminist Spirituality Reading: Cynthia Eller, "Relativizing the Patriarchy: The Sacred History of the Feminist Spirituality Movement," *History of Religions*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Feb., 1991), pp. 279-295.

Carol P. Christ, "Why Women, Men and Other Living Things Still Need the Goddess: Remembering and Reflecting 35 Years Later," *Feminist Theology*, Vol. 20, No.3, (2012), pp. 242-255.

7 DECEMBER 2020

Exploring Traditions, Week 5: Judaism

Reading:

Leila Gal Berner, "Hearing Hannah's Voice: The Jewish Feminist Challenge and Ritual Innovation," in *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christanity, and Islam*, edited by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito, University of Florida Press, 2001, pp. 35-49.

Marcia Falk, "Notes on Composing New Blessings toward a Feminist-Jewish Reconstruction of Prayer," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring, 1987), pp. 39-53.

14 DECEMBER 2020

Exploring Traditions, Week 6: Hinduism

Reading:

Vrinda Dalmiya, "Loving Paradoxes: A Feminist Reclamation of the Goddess Kali," *Hypatia*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter, 2000), pp. 125-150.

Sharada Sugirtharajah, "Hinduism and Feminism: Some Concerns," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall, 2002), pp. 97-104.

6 JANUARY 2021

CLASS: TBA

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE VIA MOODLE ON 13 JANUARY BY MIDNIGHT.