RS370 "Women in Religion"

Time: MWF: 0900-0950

Classroom: AL 102

From Goddess- to- God- to- .... : The Development of Religious Thought and Human Consciousness

Prof. SL Stewart

Email: lstewart@mail.sdsu.edu (note: first character is a lower case "L")

Class email account: rs370.109@gmail.com - all assignments go to this email!

Office: AL 636 Hours: MWF: 1:00 - 2:00 pm drop-in; T/Th by appointment

Office Telephone: 619-594-1767

Course Description

Religious Studies 370 presents an exploration into the development of religious thought and human consciousness through the "lens" of archeomythology – specifically the myth of the Goddess who was worshiped and venerated by humanity for more than 20,000 years prior to the advent of the male-identified god. Citing the authors of our text: "The goddess myth needs to made known not because it is superior to the god myth, but because it has been lost so long that we have apparently forgotten what it meant. For all the limitations of its over-identification with the natural world, it did at least give expression to the indissoluble
relationship, even the identity that exists between part and whole and between visible and invisible in all orders of being. Above all, it gave emphasis to the wonder and delight of life, because it included all manifestations of life within the sphere of the divine. The question a study of the goddess myth invites us to consider now is whether (and how) we can participate in this relationship with the whole of life without sacrificing the consciousness for the sake of which we sacrificed the image of the divine in the natural world. (pg. 485)’ (emphasis added)

This course offers students an opportunity to investigate and reflect upon the foundations and development of religious thought over time, its impact on human history and society, and its consequent relationship with and to the development of human consciousness from its nascence to its evolutionary potential. Students will be challenged to imagine and conceptualize the next step in the development of consciousness and its subsequent impact on religious thought and human society.

This is an Explorations course in the Humanities and fine Arts. Completing this course will help you to do the following in greater depth: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) identify issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

Text:

Learning Objectives

- To gain a working knowledge and understanding of the development of religious thought and human consciousness through the media of mythoarcheology and developmental theology.
- To further develop critical thinking skills through the analysis of multiple forms of human expression that comprises the current body of religious thought and belief.
• To further develop self-reflective abilities and heighten self awareness through the practice of identifying thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions regarding religion and its influence on human history and modern culture.

• To develop integrative cognitive and expressive communication skills through active participation in group dynamics as well as preparation and composition of written assignments and projects.

### Course Requirements

#### Grading Scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
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* * - Incomplete - will only be given to students who have completed all assignments up to the time of request. No Exceptions

* If you register for this course on a Credit/No Credit option, please note that you must complete all assignments and obtain a cumulative 75% or higher to be issued a "C." 

* Computer and internet access are required for this course, and you must have an active, working email account in order to access Blackboard, view announcements and assignments, submit journals and papers, engage discussion groups, and receive email communications from me.

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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Questions (2pts./question)</td>
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<td>Minute-Papers (10 @ 10pts. Each)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper/Creative Project</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>600</td>
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Disclaimer
If your religious beliefs and practices are of the orthodox or conservative branch of the monotheistic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), you may reconsider taking this class. The course text and learning materials offered challenge the dominant paradigm of male-identified monotheism, patriarchal social structures, and culturally embedded interpretations of sacred texts. If you are not prepared or willing to engage this challenge with an open mind and heart or if your faith tradition prohibits such investigation, then I respectfully encourage you to drop this course.

Reading Assignments / Questions
You will be entirely responsible for pacing your reading to keep up with class demands. The chapter assignments listed in the class schedule portion of this syllabus are meant to provide you with a guideline for the reading you must have completed by the end of each week. Completed reading questions will be due in the class gmail account no later than midnight Saturday. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Minute Papers
Near the end of scheduled “minute paper” Fridays you will be given a specific topic or question upon which to reflect and write a journal-style (informal) paper. These assignments are meant to function as a gauge for determining your understanding of the material covered in the readings, overviews, and class discussions of the previous week. Minute papers will be completed and turned in to me by the end of the scheduled class session.

Participation
I consider class participation to be of utmost importance in any circumstance, and for upper division courses in particular. True understanding of viewed materials can only happen when that which has been viewed is articulated through written and verbal means, therefore, your presence in class and involvement in group dynamics and discussions is vital to your teaching and learning process. Scheduled Friday group sessions are meant to provide you with peer-support and an opportunity to review the week’s work in preparation for minute papers. If you cannot consistently attend class and/or give adequate time and contributions to your group, you should rethink taking this course.
Final Paper / Creative Project

Students will have the opportunity to choose their own topic or objective for either an academic paper or creative project for our final exam. Papers will be 8-10 double-spaced pages (not counting title page or bibliography) including a bibliography of no fewer than 5 (five) sources (only 2 of which may be internet sources). Projects will be a creative drawing, painting, video, sculpture, etc. that includes a brief description of the artist’s creative process, explanation of symbols used, and no fewer than 3 (three) sources of reference. Topics will be chosen by the individuals and proposals submitted to me for approval by Week 12.

Class Etiquette

If you wish to be doing anything other than participating in class, e.g. listening to your iPod, surfing the web, texting your friends; then you should not be in class, and I will not be shy about pointing that out to you should I observe such rude behavior. I treat my students with respect, and expect no less in return. By now you are all reasonably experienced students, and should know well how to behave in class, so I will not bore any of us with a long list of prohibited behaviors. This class is based on an “engaged learning” model – meaning, interactive and conversational as opposed to didactic or lecture-based, and I expect all discussions to be conducted with utmost respect for self and others. I will not hesitate to dismiss a student who is in any way disrespectful or abusive in speech or action.

Class Activities / Reading Schedule

Week 1

Myth of the Goddess... Forward, Preface, Chapter 1

Mon. 8/31 Introduction / Orientation
Wed. 9/2 Overview, Ch. 1
Fri. 9/4 Full Moon ©
“Goddess Remembered”

Week 2

Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 2

Mon. 9/7 Holiday – No classes
Wed. 9/9 Overview, Ch. 2
Fri. 9/11  Class Discussion
          Minute Paper 1

Week 3
    Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 3

Mon. 9/14  Class Discussion
Wed. 9/16  Overview, Ch. 3
Fri. 9/18  New Moon ☿
          Furlough Day – no class meeting

Week 4
    Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 4

Mon. 9/21  Class Discussion
          Happy Autumnal Equinox! (9/22)
Wed. 9/23  Overview, Ch. 4
Fri. 9/25  Groups
          Minute Paper 2

Week 5
    Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 5

Mon. 9/28  Class Discussion
Wed. 9/30  Overview, Ch. 5
Fri. 10/2  Furlough Day – no class meeting

Week 6
    Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 6

Mon. 10/5  Full Moon ☿
          Class Discussion
Wed. 10/7  Overview, Ch. 6
Fri. 10/9  Groups
          Minute Paper 3
### Week 7
**Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 7**

| Mon. 10/12 | Class Discussion |
| Wed. 10/14 | Overview, Ch. 7 |
| Fri. 10/16 | Groups
  
  Minute Paper 4 |

### Week 8
**Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 8**

| Mon. 10/19 | New Moon 🌕
  
  Class Discussion |
| Wed. 10/21 | Overview, Ch. 8 |
| Fri. 10/23 | Groups
  
  Minute Paper 5 |

### Week 9
**Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 9**

| Mon. 10/26 | Mid-term Evaluation & Debriefing – worth 25 participation points! |
| Wed. 10/28 | Overview, Ch. 9 |
| Fri. 10/30 | Groups
  
  Minute Paper 6 |

### Week 10
**Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 10**

| Mon. 11/2 | Full Moon 🌚
  
  "Mists of Avalon" part 1 |
| Wed. 11/4 | "Mists of Avalon" part 2 |
| Fri. 11/6 | "Mists of Avalon" part 3 |

### Week 11
**Myth of the Goddess... Chapters 11-12**

| Mon. 11/9 | "Mists of Avalon", conclusion |
| Wed. 11/11 | Overview, Ch. 11 & 12 |
Fri. 11/13  Class Discussion
       Minute Paper 7

Week 12
Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 13
Submit proposal for Final Exam Individual Paper/Project

Mon. 11/16  New Moon ☽
       Class Discussion
Wed. 11/18  "The Burning Times"
Fri. 11/20  Groups
       Minute Paper 8

Week 13
Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 14

Mon. 11/22  Class Discussion
Wed. 11/25  Furlough Day – no class meeting

Fri. 11/27  Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 14
Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 15

Mon. 11/30  Class Discussion
Wed. 12/2  Full Moon ☽
       Overview, Ch. 15
Fri. 12/4  Groups
       Minute Paper 9

Week 15
Myth of the Goddess... Chapter 16

Mon. 12/7  Class Discussion
Wed. 12/9  Final Overview – Ch. 16
Fri. 12/11  Last day of class!!
       Minute Paper 10

   **Chapter 16 reading questions will count as extra credit** ☽
Week 16 - Finals Week

Final Papers due in gmail account and projects turned in to me by 1000a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 16th

Happy Holidays!!