RS370 Women and Religion

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Course Description
This course explores the ways in which women have fit into and not fit into religious traditions, both mainstream and marginal. In so doing we will encounter the many ways in which women have been excluded and silenced as well as the many ways in which women have triumphed over those limitations to make significant contributions to their religions. We will be looking at women who are reinterpreting and transforming the teachings and practices of traditional religions as well as women who see themselves as inventing new forms of religion that reject male dominance and focus on the experiences and needs of women. Since many of us may bring to the course our own prior experiences with religion and may hold strong opinions about the intersections between women and religion, we will make every effort to conduct the class in a spirit of openness and tolerance for different points of view.

Required Texts
Lucinda Joy Peach, Women and World Religions
RS370 Reader (available only at KB Books on College Ave.)

Course Requirements
Classes will be conducted in a lecture/seminar format, which means that you will be participating in discussions as well as taking lecture notes. To encourage more active engagement in the course, you will be graded on your contributions to class discussions and small group work. In order to have good class discussions, you will need to keep up with the readings each week and in order to make sure you read, you will be given weekly short quizzes on the readings. (There will be a total of 12 quizzes--QUIZZES MUST BE TAKEN AT THE SCHEDULED TIME, AND MAY NOT BE MADE UP FOR ANY REASON, BUT YOU MAY DROP YOUR TWO LOWEST QUIZ GRADES.) In addition, you will work in small groups on a presentation of some aspect of women in religion that interests you. This presentation ideally should be a completely collaborative effort for which you will receive a collective grade. To keep everyone involved, however, your individual final grade for the presentation will in part be determined by peer evaluations from your group members. More detailed information about the group presentation will be given as the class proceeds. There will be two exams over the readings, lectures and discussions. Exams may include both objective and essay questions.

Grading scale
Class Participation 20 pts.
Weekly Quizzes 100pts.
Group Presentation 70 pts.
Mid-Term Exam 70 pts.
Final Exam 80 pts.
Total Possible Points 340pts.
Part II: RELIGIONS OF THE WEST

Feb 25 Women in Indigenous Traditions
QUIZ 6/Discussion of women in indigenous religions
I. Talamentez, "The Presence of Isanaklesh" (Reader)
G. Anzaldua, "Entering into the Serpent" (Reader)

Feb 27 MIDTERM EXAM

Mar 4 The Tale of Two Sisters: Eve and Lilith
Mar 6 Feminist Critiques of Male Dominant Religions
QUIZ 7/Discussion of feminist Critiques
E. Cady Stanton, "The Christian Church and Women" (Reader)
S. Johnson, Biography and "From Housewife to Heretic" (Reader)
J. Plaskow, "The Coming of Lilith" (Reader)
N. El Saadawi, "Man the God, Woman the Sinful" (Reader)

Mar 11 Judaism: Sarah's Daughters
Women and World Religions, pp. 157-199
Mar 13 QUIZ 8/Discussion of women in Judaism
J. Plaskow, "Jewish Memory from a Feminist Perspective" (Reader)
J. Plaskow, "Feminist Judaism and the Repair of the World" (Reader)

Mar 18 Christianity: Subordination and Liberation
Women and World Religions, pp. 201-248
Mar 20 Christianity cont.
R. Ruether, "Sexism and God-Language" (Reader)
R. Ruether, "The Kenosis of the Father" (Reader)
QUIZ 9 WILL BE OVER ALL THE MATERIAL ON WOMEN IN CHRISTIANITY

Mar 25 QUIZ 9/Discussion of women in Christianity
S. Mc Fague, "The Ethic of God as Mother, Lover and Friend" (Reader)
B. Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love" (Reader)

Mar 27 Guest Speaker

Apr 1-3 Spring Break

Apr 8 Group Presentations 1-2
Apr 10 Islam: Submission and Empowerment
Women and World Religions, pp. 249-297

Apr 15 QUIZ 10/Discussion of women in Islam
N. Hijab, "Islam, Social Change, and the Reality of Arab Women's Lives"

Apr 17 Group Presentations 3-4

Apr 22 Radical Feminism and Women's Spiritualities
QUIZ 11/Discussion of radical feminism/spiritualities
A. Loades, "Practical Consequences" (Intro to M. Daly's work)
and M. Daly, "The Looking Glass Society" (Reader)
M. Daly, "The Metapatriarchal Journey of Exorcism and Ecstasy" (Reader)