WOMANIST-FEMINIST WORLDVIEWS AND METHODOLOGIES

COURSE NO.: PARW 7380-60       UNITS: 3       ONLINE

INSTRUCTORS: CAROL P. CHRIST & MARA KELLER

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               Mara Kéller: mkeller@ciis.edu; 415-575-6268 (office);

SEMESTER: SPRING      YEAR: 2007

OFFICE HOURS:
   Carol P. Christ: online.
   Mara Keller: online and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday by appointment.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT:
The focus of the course is two-fold: womanist/feminist worldviews and womanist/feminist research methodologies.

Students are asked to become more conscious of and to articulate their own worldviews; and empathize with and analyze those of others. Part of this process will include reflecting on the students’ own spiritual-cultural standpoints, including primary beliefs and values.

We will address the issues of standpoint and bias, and consider the questions: what is feminism? What is womanism? What is a womanist and/or feminist standpoint? How do we look for biases of gender, race, class, etc., in conceptual works? We will explore a variety of womanist and feminist worldviews, including multicultural and cross-cultural perspectives. We will consider theories of the biological and social construction of the self and relationships between gender, race, class, and culture.

Students will learn to evaluate womanist/feminist research and method in the following areas:

   Women and World Religions
   Ecofeminist and Feminist Philosophy
   Women’s Sacred Arts and Mysteries
   Bodywisdom, Women & Healing
   Archaeomythology and EcoSocial Anthropology
   Peace and Partnership Studies: Justice, Community, Sustainability
Students will be asked to write an early midterm in which they define and discuss womanism/feminism and their impact on their own worldviews; and a final paper in which they name and describe a womanist/feminist research topic in one of the above areas, that relates to the beliefs and values of their own worldview and/or search for spiritual meaning and transformation; explore relevant research bearing on their topic in a literature review); and construct a womanist/feminist methodology appropriate to the study of the chosen topic.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: After completing the course students will be able to:

○ Ground the beginning of their research in experience, including their own embodied, spiritual experience
○ Have a clearer understanding of their own worldviews
○ Articulate and define their own worldviews in their own voices
○ Discuss and define feminism and womanism
○ Discuss “feminist/womanist standpoint” as a point of beginning
○ Discuss and define the student’s own “womanist/feminist standpoint” as a beginning point for research
○ Discuss a variety of womanist-feminist worldviews
○ Contrast and compare womanist, and feminist methodologies in relationship to the more established methodologies of traditional disciplines, and also in relationship to non-traditional deconstructions and reconstructions of knowledge sets, such as deconstructive post-modernism and post-colonial discourse.
○ Discuss the implications of multiple womanist-feminist worldviews for the construction of womanist-feminist methodologies
○ Develop a short literature review essay on a selected research topic
○ Construct a multifaceted inter-disciplinary methodology suitable to a womanist/feminist research topic and inquiry question.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:
Format: Online only
Online lectures and discussions, guest speakers, student presentations on the readings, small group discussions, and on-going dialogues about our own and other worldviews and choices of methodologies.
Optional face-to-face class first week of classes, Friday, January 26, 3-6pm in Mission room 214.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assignment</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Attendance and discussion of assigned readings (students are expected to participate in discussion 2-4 times per week and to report on selected readings)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>2. Spiritual-cultural autobiography (2 succinct pages)</td>
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<td>3. Sketch of personal worldview: spiritual/cultural/philosophical primary beliefs</td>
<td>cr/nc</td>
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(2 succinct pages)

4. **Worldviews paper**
   (define womanism/feminism as worldviews, taking account of the readings and discussing the impact of womanism/feminism in shaping student’s worldview—incorporating relevant parts of 2 & 3 above)
   (4-5 pages M.A.s; 5-6 pages Ph.D.s)

5. **Introduction of research topic**
   (student will define and discuss a research topic in one of the research areas listed on one of the syllabus in that can be explored using womanist/feminist theory and method)
   (3-4 pages)

6. **Statement of Methodology for selected research topic**
   (5-6 pages)

7. **Literature review essay and bibliography**
   (5-6 pages)

8. **Final paper:** (15 pages for MAs, 20 pages for PhDs)
   (incorporates 4, 5, 6, 7)

**LEVEL OF INSTRUCTION:** M.A., Ph.D.

**ENROLLMENT LIMITATIONS:** CLASS SIZE: **18 max**

**GRADING OPTIONS:**  **Letter Grade** for WS Students; other students, **Student Option**

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Susan Silva-Wayne and Althea Prince, eds. *Feminisms and Womanisms: A Women’s Studies Reader*. Women’s Press

www.cspi.org/womenspress/books/f/feminismwomanism.htm


**MAs choose 9 of the following 11 texts; PhDs read all 11:**

**WOMEN AND WORLD RELIGIONS**

   (ISBN 0-415-90451-x paper)


**ECOFEMINIST AND FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY**


Starhawk, *Earthpath: Grounding your Spirit in the Rhythms of Nature*
WOMEN’S SACRED ARTS AND MYSTERIES

BODY WISDOM, WOMEN AND HEALING
Karen McCarthy Brown, Mama Lola

ARCHEOMYTHOLOGY AND ECOSOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Elizabeth Wayland Barber, Women’s Work: The First 20,000 Years
Peggy Reeves Sanday, Woman’s Power, Male Dominance Cambridge: University Press. 1981

PEACE AND PARTNERSHIP STUDIES: JUSTICE, COMMUNITY, SUSTAINABILITY
Alice Walker, Anything We Love Can be Saved

in addition a number of selected essays or chapters in books will be assigned

COURSE SCHEDULE

I. INTRODUCTIONS TO WOMEN’S SPIRITUALITY AND WOMANIST-FEMINIST WORLDVIEWS AND METHODOLOGIES

WEEK 1. JANUARY 22, 2007
Women’s Spirituality as an embodied way of being, knowing, and doing

A. Introductions. Course overview
   *fill in student profile, add photo, introduce self, download syllabus & review, purchase texts.
   Students are expected to participate in class 2-3 times per week (Attendance & participation in discussions will be documented by the online program.)
   *Please introduce yourself with a sketch of your own spiritual-cultural journey.

B. What is Women’s Spirituality?
   R: Elizabeth Shillington, The Moon in Her Womb: An Organic Inquiry into Women’s Stories of Menstruation and Women’s Spirituality, Introduction. CIIS DSS 2004

C. Worldviews, belief systems, and values & the social construction of knowledge

C. What is a womanist-feminist worldview:
   R: Asoka Bandarage, "In Search of a New World Order"
WEEK 2  JANUARY 29
What is Feminism/Womanism as theory and method?
A. Women’s Studies as Worldview and Methodology
   Text: Ilva-Wayne and Prince, Feminisms and Womanisms
B. *Sketch of personal worldview: primary beliefs & values including
   standpoint in relation to womanism and feminism (2 pages)
   due: February 4

WEEK 3.  FEBRUARY 5
Womanist-Feminist Standpoints
A. Text: Ilva-Wayne and Prince, Feminisms and Womanisms
   R: Alice Walker: “Definition of Womanist”
   R: Karen Baker Fletcher, Sisters of Dust, Sisters of Spirit, v, 8-12; definition
   of “sisterist” by Jane Evershed
B. * Womanist/Feminist Worldview Papers Due: Feb. 11
   Define feminism and womanism as worldview and relate to
   student’s own worldview. This will also serve in part as a first
   draft for the intro of the final paper.

II. WOMANIST-FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES

A. WOMEN AND WORLD RELIGIONS

WEEK 4   FEBRUARY 12
Women’s Spirituality & Religious Studies
A. Text: Gross, Rita. Feminism and Religion.
   R: Carol P. Christ. “Thealogy Begins in Experience”
   R: Carol P. Christ and Mara Lynn Keller, “Methodological Questions for
   Feminist Scholars in Women’s Spirituality”
B. Areas of Emphasis and Specialization in Women’s Spirituality, etc.
   • Women and World Religions
   • Ecofeminist and Feminist Philosophy
   • Women’s Mysteries and Sacred Arts
   • Bodywisdom, Women and Healing
   • Archaeomythology and EcoSocial Anthropology
   • Peace and Partnership Studies/Justice, Community, Sustainability

WEEK 5   FEBRUARY 19
Critiquing and Balancing Masculinist and other Bias in Religion and
Religious Studies
A. Text: Donaldson & Kwok, Pui Lan.
B. Preparing the Final Papers.
   1. Introduction of a research topic, in context of meaning given by
      your own worldview (beliefs and values), spiritual narrative,
      and standpoint
B. ECOFEMINIST & FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY

WEEK 6  FEBRUARY 26
What is Ecofeminism?
A. R. Charlene Spretnak on Ecofeminism from *Reweaving the World.*
C. What is your topic and inquiry question?
   * Students are to select and introduce a womanist/feminist topic and inquiry question

WEEK 7  MARCH 5
Reflective Activism as a Source of Knowledge
A. text: Starhawk, *The Earth Path* .
E. What makes a good literature review?
   Guest Speaker: Lise Dykeman, Director of CIIS Library on using library resources
   R: Women’s Spirituality Research Paper Guidelines

C. WOMEN’S SACRED ARTS AND MYSTERIES

WEEK 8  MARCH 12
Women’s Sacred Arts
A. text: Paula Gunn Allen, *The Sacred Hoop* 
   Guest Speaker: Paula Gunn Allen
B. Rubric on Proposal Writing Guidelines
C. Midterm Evaluations

WEEK x  MARCH 18-24  SPRING VACATION

WEEK 9  MARCH 26
Women’s Ritual as a Way of Knowing
A. Text: Adelman, Penina V. *Miriam’s Well: Rituals for Jewish Women Around the Year*
   R: Mara Keller, *The Greater Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone.* Research Methodology
B. *Short Literature Review essay due

D. BODYWISDOM, WOMEN AND HEALING

WEEK 10  APRIL 2
Women as Healers
A. Text: Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola*
B. Use of Human subjects or co-researchers?
   R: CIIS/ HRRC “Research with Human Participants” Application

WEEK 11   APRIL 9
Integral Worldviews and Methodologies in Womanist/Feminist Healthcare
A. text: Marilyn Davis Rosen Method: Coming Alive and Staying Alive
   In the 21st Century
   R: Arisika Razak, “Toward a Womanist Analysis of Birth”

WEEK 12 APRIL 16
What makes a good methodology?
A. R: Mara Lynn Keller, “I Stand Here, in this Time and this Place. Womanist-Feminist Standpoint and Agency of the Self in Women’s Spirituality Research”
B: R: Elizabeth Shillington, The Moon in Her Womb: An Organic Inquiry into Women’s Stories of Menstruation and Women’s Spirituality, Methodology Statement

E. ARCHAEOMYTHOLOGY AND ECOSOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 13   APRIL 23
Archaeology and Archaeomythology
A. text: Elizabeth Wayland Barber. Women’s Work: The First 20,000 years
   R: Carol Christ " Resistance to Goddess History” in Rebirth of the Goddess
B. *Short Methodology Statement (4-5 pages) due today
   students are to present online a first draft of the methodology statement for their inquiry, including an explanation of the suitability of the choice of methods for one’s particular study. If one is to conduct interviews, or otherwise work with “human research participants,” then a sketch of this aspect of the research design should be included as well.

WEEK 14   APRIL 30
Matristic and Patriarchal Kinship Systems: An EcoSocial Anthropology Approach
A. text: Peggy Reeves Sanday, Woman Power, Male Dominance

F. PEACE AND PARTNERSHIP STUDIES/ COMMUNITY, JUSTICE, SUSTAINABILITY

WEEK 15
Spiritual Autobiography and Cultural Transformation
A. Text: Alice Walker, Anything We Love Can be Saved

MAY 14    FINAL PAPERS DUE
Final paper: (15 pages for MAs, 20 pages for PhDs)