

RS 3351/WGS3351

CRN: 36054/35075

Dr. Barbara Zimbalist

Office Hours: Online from 10-11 daily

[bezimbalist@utep.edu](mailto:bezimbalist@utep.edu)

# Gender and Religion: Women, Gender, and Religious Experience

## Summer Session I 2021

### Course Description

This course surveys the tradition of women's religious experience in the Christian tradition from the European Middle Ages to the present day, with a special emphasis on Gender and the gendered construction of religious experience. We will read works by and about women (and others) from different languages, genres, and traditions as we work toward an understanding of the ways in which women and gender function as forces that have shaped, resisted, and transformed ideas about spiritual practice and religious authority throughout Christian history. As we develop a broad view of the construction of gendered religious agency from medieval Europe to modern America, we will consider contemporary women's voice and authority in religious and popular discourse, and work toward a deeper understanding of gender as a shaping force in religious and literary history.

The class requires students to engage in critical reading, analytical writing, and academic argument. It teaches students methods for understanding primary texts from different genres, developing analytical writing skills, and engaging with the academic discourse of different disciplines.

### Course Objectives or Expected Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop a working definition of "gender," "women," and "religion"
- Articulate the generic, stylistic, and historical features of women's religious experience
- Engage in written academic conversation in an online setting
- Develop formal analytical writing skills through individual response and peer review
- Construct a comparative argument that considers multiple primary sources and effectively integrates textual evidence
- Practice informed evaluation and assessment of digital sources
- Collaborate with peers to clearly communicate new information in a digital setting

### Required Materials

Franzmann, Majella, *Women and Religion* (Oxford UP)

Warner, Marina, *Alone of All her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*

All other readings will be available in pdf format on BlackBoard

Regular access to a computer, Blackboard, and your UTEP email account.

## Course Assignments and Grading

Grade Distribution:

1000-900 = A    899-800 = B    799-700 = C    699-600 = D    599 and Below = F

- 200 points: Participation in class discussion board
- 300 Points: Exams (Midterm and Final, 150 points each)
- 200 Points: Group Project (week 3)
- 300 Points: Essays

Participation: Because this is not only an online course but a summer course in abbreviated time frame, students will be required to participate through frequent discussion board posts – in both initial posts and responses to your peers. Each of these activities will be given point values that add up to the total 200-point participation grade. These points cannot be made up.

Exams: Students will complete an essay-based Midterm and Final exam.

Group Project: During week 3 of the course groups will create and deliver presentations on different historical, cultural, racial, and even gendered manifestations of the figure of Mary, arguably the most—or one of the most—influential woman in Western history and culture, and one of the origin points for ideas about gender across religious traditions. These presentations can take a variety of forms, from video to powerpoint to website, but must demonstrate collaborative work; all students will be required to respond to the presentations as part of the grade.

Essays: Students will write two micro-essays in response to readings, videos, group presentations, and independent research. These short writing assignments (250-500 words) will function as the foundation for your longer comparative essay, and may be used as “first draft” material for your final essay and exam.

Students will develop a short research essay during weeks 3 and 4 on some issue or figure we have discussed during class. This essay requires analysis of a primary texts, as well as research in support of that analysis. All previous writing may be used as you develop your argument. The essay should consider the historical context and gendered construction of the figure you analyze.

**\*Note: This is a Reading- and Writing- Intensive Course. Be Prepared to Do Both!!!\***

## Attendance Policy

Because this is an online course, attendance is determined by class participation online. Students must participate in online individual responses, group discussions, and group projects/presentations. All course modules must be completed in order to understand and incorporate the analytical writing strategies and research tools necessary to complete the final assignment. Participation is worth 20 percent of the final grade.

- Students WILL be dropped from the course for failure to submit online writing for five (or more) class days (the equivalent of one week of class).

## Technology Requirements

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system (LMS). Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web. You may use any of the primary Web browsers—Explorer, Google Chrome, Firefox, Safari, etc. When having technical difficulties, try switching to another browser.

You will need to have or have access to a computer/laptop, a webcam, and a microphone. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe, Flashplayer, and Windows Media Player. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course. **If you encounter technical difficulties of any kind, contact the Help Desk.**

## Netiquette

- Always consider audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings. Use academic language and avoid abbreviations and/or slang.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated, and any instances of cyberbullying or other inappropriate online behavior will be referred immediately to the appropriate campus office.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face classroom environment and strive to remain on-topic and professional.
- All postings to our class BlackBoard site should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s). When in doubt, email the instructor!

## Late Work Policy

### Major Writing Assignments

- Major writing assignments will be due by the end of the day specified in the syllabus. BlackBoard will specify this as midnight (11:59 PM). No late work will be accepted.

### Quiz and Blog/Discussion Assignments

- All quiz, blog, and discussion board assignments will be due by the end of the day/ midnight (11:59 PM). No late work will be accepted.

## Drop Policy

To drop this class, please contact the Registrar's Office to initiate the drop process. If you cannot complete this course for whatever reason, please contact me. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course.

## Accommodations Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services: phone: (915) 747-5148; email: [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). Please also contact me privately in regard to this course to make arrangements.

## Scholastic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. I report all suspected cases of plagiarism to the Dean of Students. University policies and guidelines for avoiding plagiarism are available at: <http://academics.utep.edu/Portals/1559/plagiarism%20statements.pdf>

To learn more, see HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

## Student Resources

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

- UTEP Library: Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- Help Desk: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.
- University Writing Center (UWC): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- Math Tutoring Center (MaRCS): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- History Tutoring Center (HTC): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- Military Student Success Center: UTEP welcomes military-affiliated students to its degree programs, and the Military Student Success Center and its dedicated staff (many of whom are veterans and students themselves) are here to help personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- RefWorks: A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

# Course Calendar: RS 3351/WGS 3351

Summer Session 1: June 7th—July 1st

The due date for all assignments is ALWAYS the end of the day at 11:55 PM (MST). No late work accepted.

	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments Due	Notes
<b>Week One/ Unit One</b>	<b>Women, Gender &amp; Religion: Introduction</b>			
Day 1: 6/7 M	Class introduction, syllabus, Introduction to the academic study of Religion	Syllabus, netiquette guide, introduction video, and Franzmann, "Introduction"		Week One lecture/ powerpoint available
Day 2: 6/8 T	Introduction to the Academic study of Women and Gender	Judith Butler, from <i>Gender Trouble</i>	Discussion Board #1: Gender and Religion	
Day 3: 6/9 W	Introduction to the Academic study of Literature	Franzmann Chapter 1, "Hearing Voices"  Hildegard of Bingen, from <i>Scivias</i>	Discussion Board #2: Women and Religion	
Day 4: 6/10 R	Literature: Women's Religious Writing	Franzmann Chapter 2, "Learning Languages"	Discussion Board #3: Writing and Religion	
Day 5: 6/11 F	Intersections: women's religious literature as gendered experience	Franzmann, Chapter 3, "Voices from Offstage"  Birgitta of Sweden, from <i>Revelations</i>	MicroEssay #1 Due	*Sign up for groups (Group Project and peer editing/ review)
<b>Week 2/ Unit 2</b>	<b>Analyzing Religious Experience in Context</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Day 6: 6/14 M	Gender and Religious Authority in Early Modern Europe	Franzmann, Ch. 4, "Voices from Center Stage"  from Theresa of Avila, <i>The Autobiography</i>	Discussion Board #4: Gender and Authority	Week Two lecture/ Powerpoint available
Day 7: 6/15 T	Gender and Religious Authorship in Nineteenth Century Europe	Franzmann, Chapter 5, "A Chorus of Many..."  St. Thérèse of Lisieux: <i>The Story of a Soul</i>	Discussion Board #5: Gender and Authorship	

Day 8: 6/16. W	Gender & Religion in Nineteenth Century America	“The Life and Religious Experience of Mrs. Jarena Lee”  Rebecca Cox Jackson, <i>Gifts of Power</i>	Discussion Board #6: Religion & Gender in Early America	
Day 9: 6/17 R	Gender & Religion in Contemporary America	Selections from Tanya Luhrmann, <i>When God Talks Back</i>	MicroEssay #2 Due	
<b>Day 10: 6/18 F</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>		<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
<b>Week 3/ Unit 3</b>	<b>Case Study: Mary Group Presentations Essay Planning</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Day 11: 6/21 M	Women & Mysticism in Nineteenth Century Europe  Locating Critical Sources	Warner, Part 1: Virgin Bernau, <i>Virgins</i> (Bb)  Video: Researching Academic Finding Aids	Group 1 Presentation; Peer Response 1	Week Three Lecture/ Powerpoint Available
Day 12: 6/22 T	Evaluating Critical Sources	Warner, Part 2: Queen	Critical Source Annotation #1  Group 2 Presentation ; Peer Response 2	
Day 13: 6/23 W	Contrasting Critical Sources	Warner, Part 3: Bride	Critical Source Annotation #2  Group 3 Presentation; Peer Response 3	
Day 14: 6/24 R	Integrating Critical Sources	Warner, Part 4: Mother	Critical Source Annotation #3  Group 4 Presentation; Peer Response 4	
Day 15: 6/25 F	Developing an Argument with Critical Sources	Warner, Part 5: Intercessor	Group 5 Presentations; Peer Response 5  Thesis statement & Introductory Paragraph	

<b>Week 4/ Unit 4</b>	<b>Course Conclusions, Final Essay</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Day 16: 6/28 M	Editing and Peer Review Workshop	Drafts of peer essays	Complete draft of Critical Response Essay	Peer Review Group Work
Day 17: 6/29 T	New Directions in the Study of Gender & Religion, pt. 1	Selections from <i>Queer Religiosities: an Introduction to Queer and Transgender Studies in Religion</i>	Discussion Board #7: New Methodologies	Week Four Lecture/ Powerpoint Available
Day 18: 6/30 W	New Directions in the Study of Gender & Religion, pt. 2	Selections from <i>Queer Religiosities: an Introduction to Queer and Transgender Studies in Religion</i>	Discussion Board #8: New Definitions	
Day 19: 7/1 R	<b>Final Exam Review; Exam Available online</b>		<b>Final Draft of Critical Response Essay</b>	