

CH 430
Women's History and Experience in the Christian Tradition
Fall, 2010

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This course is designed to give students a general view of the experiences and roles of women against the backdrop of western Christian history while affording time for deeper study of themes such as leadership, spiritual practice, and service. Through presentations, reading and discussion, students will examine the ways in which women have been both victims and actors in the unfolding of the Christian story. Primary sources will be used to accent women's voice as well as secondary sources for analysis and synthesis. Students are encouraged to make connections between history and contemporary faith experience.

Goals:

Students will understand the variety of ways that women have provided leadership in the unfolding Christian story.

Students will hear a wide variety of women's voices expressed in their journals, sermons, and personal stories.

Students will develop an integrated understanding of Christian history that accounts for the experience of women as well as men.

Texts:

Furlong, Monica, *Visions and Longings*, Shambhala, 1997

Lindley, Susan Hill, *"You have Stept out of your Place"*, Louisville:
Westminster John Knox, 1996

Oden, Amy, *In Her Words, Women's Writings in the History of Christian Thought*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994

Ruether, Rosemary and Rosemary Keller, *In Our Own Voices, Four Centuries of American Women's Religious Writing*, HarperSanFrancisco, 1995

Requirements:

Response Papers

Students will write 1-2 pages each week on the assigned materials. The paper can be a summary of two or more of the separate readings, finding common themes and ideas OR it can be a thesis paper, raising particular issues for women that come from the texts. All papers will include two (or more) discussion questions that will be raised during the class sessions. To receive full credit, papers must be turned in at class time. (25%)

Class Participation

This course is a seminar and depends on the participation of all members. Participation is defined as reading the materials, considering the ideas, and actively engaging in discussion. Please make arrangements with the instructor if you must miss class. (15%)

Class Leadership

Each student will have specific leadership responsibility twice during the semester. The first will be during the discussion of the Furlong book where each student will choose one mystic and lead a portion of the class period on September 30. (5%) Each student will also choose one denomination's ordination struggle and do a short presentation on November 18. (5%)

Final Project

Students will research a woman, group of women, or woman's organization that has significance in Christian history. The results of this research will be presented to the class as well as take the form of a 12-15 page paper or other project (as approved by the instructor). If the project is other than a formal paper, students will need to provide significant materials explaining the research. The grade will be a combination of the in class presentation and the final product. (50%)

While the focus of the project will be to illuminate a period of history or people making history, students will want to consider how women were both victims and actors and how they either change or add to the story of Christianity. Finally students should consider how they have influenced elements of the Christian faith.

Schedule:

September

- 16 Getting Started - Introductions, Raising the Questions, Biblical Roots
- 23 Women of the First Millenium – Where? Who?
Reading: Oden, chapters 1-10
- 30 Mystics and Medievalism
Reading: Furlong

October

- 7 Reforming, Reclaiming
Reading: Oden, Section 3, Lindley, ch. 1-3
- 14 Early American Challenges
Reading: Lindley ch. 4, R&K 19-24, 34-38, 64-67,80-89,155-158, 169-170,262-269
- 21 A New Church, a New Woman
Reading: Lindley ch. 5-6; R&K 39-41, 68-71

November

- 4 Finding Voice
Reading: Lindley, ch. 7; R&K 42-45, 89-97, 159-163, 170-174, 210-215,222-238, 249-256, 269-281, 343-382
- 11 Mission at Home and Abroad
Reading: Lindley, ch. 8-13
- 18 Ordinations for All?
Reading: Lindley, ch. 14-18; R&K 45-48, 97-102, 175-185,238-240, 256-258, 281-288, 293-305, 311-340

December

- 2 The Glass Ceiling
Reading: Lindley, ch. 19-21; R&K 49-60, 102-108, 164-169, 185-205, 217-221, 240-245, 259-262, 288-290
- 9 Presentations

16 Presentations

20 Putting It All Together

Please note that other readings may be put on reserve or added if particular topics emerge. These will always be announced in class.