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CS 610 Women in Church and Society

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CS 610: Women in Church and Society
Asbury Theological Seminary
January 14-25, 2002
Dr. Christine Pohl, Professor

Office Location: McPheeters Center 308
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Purpose:

To equip students with an understanding and appreciation of women's contributions in church and society. To provide students with critical tools for interacting with contemporary issues of gender. To understand the role of gender in church and society--historically, sociologically, morally, and theologically.

Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able:

- * To recognize and critique historical texts that have shaped theological and cultural views of women and their roles, spheres, virtues, etc.
- * To explain their own understandings of the complex and ambiguous history of women in the church.
- * To explain the significance of gender in the various spheres of life: family, church, economy, polity, and culture.
- * To assess contemporary analyses of women in church and society.
- * To demonstrate understanding of issues that especially affect women and families today: e.g. pornography, working outside the home, abortion, abuse.
- * To articulate a normative framework for offering a Christian response to the current discussions of gender, gender difference, power and powerlessness, etc.

Texts:

Clark, Elizabeth, and Herbert Richardson, eds., *Women and Religion: The Original Sourcebook of Women in Christian Thought* (Harper Collins, 1996).

Evans, Mary, *Woman in the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Paternoster, 1998).

Japinga, Lynn, *Feminism and Christianity* (Abingdon, 1999).

Storkey, Elaine, *Origins of Difference* (Baker, 2001).

Selected readings on electronic reserve (Go to Intranet....Resources....Online Reserves....Pohl....CS610).

Evaluation:

- 15% Three 2-page reflection papers
- 30% 5-page paper and class/group presentation
- 45% Research paper
- 10% Class participation and reading record

Grade Range:

Work for CS610 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

- A = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives
- A- =
- B+ =
- B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
- B- =
- C+ =
- C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
- C- =
- D+ =
- D = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
- D- =
- F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Participation: Students are required to complete all assigned readings. Reading records will be collected on the last day of class. Attendance will be taken each day. Attendance, class participation and reading record will be factored into the student's final grade.

Written Work: All written work must be typed with 12-point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double-spacing. Please follow page limit requirements. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. Papers are due in class on assigned date.

All written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision.

Assignments:

1. For three modules of the course, students will write a two-page reflection paper (double-spaced), choosing to answer selected questions about one of the assigned readings for that module. See below for questions. Turn in paper at end of module (15%).
2. Write a five-page paper on a topic for one of the modules. Choose among the options listed below. Topics will be grouped under the relevant module and students whose topics are related will develop a shared presentation for class. Evaluation of class presentations will be based on content and creativity (15% paper, 15% presentation).

3. For the final research paper, students will choose a topic of current debate in gender discussions: e.g., pornography, abortion, language about God, ordination of women, women and racism, homosexuality. Paper should be 12-15 pages (double-spaced) and is due on January 31, 2002 (45%).
4. Class participation and reading record (10%).

CLASS MODULES: THEMES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

January 14 Module 1: Introductions to one another and to themes of the course.

Read: Clark and Richardson, 1-8.
Storkey, 7-133.

Module 2: Women and Old Testament Texts.

Read and carefully reflect on the following Old Testament passages:
Genesis 1-2; 12; 16; 29-30; 34; 38. Exodus 20:14, 17; 21:7-11, 22.
Leviticus 12; 15:19-33; 20:10-21. Deuteronomy 22:5, 13-30; 24:1-5; 25:5-10. Judges 4-5; 11:29-40; 19. Ruth. 1 Samuel 1-2:21; 25. 1 Kings 17.
2Kings 4:8-37; 22. Proverbs 5:1-6; 9:13-18; 31:10-31. Ezekiel 16. Joel 2:28-29. Hosea 1-3.

Read: Evans, 9-32
On reserve:
Scalise,
Thompson/Grudem/Thompson dialogue

January 15 Module 3: Women, Jesus, and the Gospels

Read and carefully reflect on the following Gospel passages: Matthew 1-2; 12:46-50; 15:21-28; 19:1-15; 22:23-33; 27:15-20; 27:55-28:20. Mark 5:21-43; 15:40-16:20. Luke 1-3; 7:11-17, 36-50; 8:1-3, 19-21, 40-56; 10:38-42; 13:10-17; 23:49-24:53. John 4:1-42; 8:1-11; 11:1-44; 12:1-8; 19:25-20:31.

Read: Evans, 33-60
Clark and Richardson, 9-17.

Module 4: Women and the New Testament Church

Read and carefully reflect on the following New Testament passages:
Acts 1:12-14; 2:14-21; 9:36-43; 12:12-17; 16:11-15; 18:1-3, 24-28; 21:8-9. Romans 16. 1 Corinthians 7; 11:1-16; 14:33-40. Galatians 3:26-28. Ephesians 5:21-33. Colossians 3:18-19; 4:15. 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 5:3-16. Titus 2:3-5. 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Read: Evans 61-133.

On reserve:

C. Kroeger, "Neglected History of Women"

January 16 Module 5: Women in Graeco-Roman thought, early church, patristic period, and middle ages.

Read: Clark and Richardson, 38-97, 104-118.

On reserve:

Aristotle-selections

P. Brown, "Daughters of Jerusalem"

Warren, "Five Religious Options"

Module 6: Women and the Protestant Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Wesley)

Read: Clark and Richardson, 144-168.

On reserve:

Luther, "Genesis"

Luther, "Misuse of the Mass"

Calvin, "Institutes"

Calvin, "Genesis"

Calvin, "1 Corinthians"

Calvin "2 Corinthians, Timothy"

Dempsey, "What Calvin Learned"

Tucker & Liefeld, "Reformation Protestantism"

Wesley, "On Visiting the Sick"

E. Brown, "Women of the Word"

January 17 Module 7: Women in the 18th and 19th centuries, with focus on the U.S. context.

Read: Clark and Richardson, 237-264.

On reserve:

Lobody, "A Wren Just Bursting..."

Hardesty, "Amanda Berry Smith"

Kant-selections
 Wollstonecraft, "Vindication"
 Schopenhauer, "Of Women"
 Dayton, "Evangelical Roots"
 MacHaffie, "Women Organizing"
 Riggs, "Get a Witness"
 L. Lee, "Woman's Right to Preach" (skim carefully)

Module 8: Women and the 20th century: Overview of Contemporary Feminisms.

January 22 Module 9: Contemporary Analyses of Gender

Read/Review: Storkey, 7-133.

Module 10: Women and the Family

Read:

On reserve:

Van Leeuwen, "Family Justice" (*After Eden*, 416-451)

Knoppers, "Is Someone in the Kitchen?" (*After Eden*, 503-533).

January 23 Module 11: Women and the Economy (work and household issues)

Read:

On reserve:

Knoppers, "Pink, White, and Blue Collars" (*After Eden*, 534-573)

Andersen, "Women and Work"

Module 12: Women and the Political Sphere (power, pornography, violence, abuse)

Read:

On reserve:

Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"

Lips, "Interpersonal Influence"

Tannen, "Talk"

Elshtain, "Power and Powerlessness"

January 24 Module 13: Women and Culture (language, education, dress)

Read:

On reserve:

Sterk, "Whatever Happened to the Fig Leaf?" (*After Eden*, 299-339)

Module 14: Women and the Church (ordination, ministry, missions, theology, language about God)

Read: Japinga, entire book

Storkey, review 87-133

January 25 Module 15: Women and the Church, continued.

Read:

On reserve:

Saiving, "The Human Situation"

Andolsen, "Agape"

Van Leeuwen, "Biblical Drama"

GUIDELINES FOR PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Organizing questions for 2-page reflection papers:

A. When dealing with historic texts, choose to answer three of the following five questions:

1. How are women portrayed in the text? What virtues and vices are associated with women; with which roles and spheres are they normatively identified? What is the significance of this?
2. Are women and men distinguished in the text? If so, what is the significance of the distinctions drawn? How does the author characterize the normative relations between men and women? According to the author, what makes for distortion in relations? Are all women viewed in the same way or are there distinctions? What is the basis for distinctions or lack of them?
3. What are the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the author of the text? Why is he/she writing it? Does this matter?
4. What theological, philosophical, and 'natural' assumptions underlie the argument?
5. If you had a chance to talk with the author for a few minutes about his or her writing, what would you say? What critique, commendation would you offer? On what basis would you frame your response?

B. When dealing with contemporary texts, use all of the following questions to frame your paper:

1. Identify a key issue raised in the readings for this week. How does the author analyze the issue?
2. What philosophical, sociological, and theological assumptions underlie the author's argument?
3. Which parts of the analysis are convincing? Which are problematic? What are the most significant or effective responses?
4. What key theological/biblical themes or commitments help in interpreting the issue?

Guidelines for Final Paper

Your final paper should help you to understand the significance of gender for a particular issue (e.g. abortion, pornography, ordination) or sphere of life (e.g. family, church, economy, culture). From your research and reflection, you should draw normative conclusions about the issue you have worked on (how should the Christian respond to this issue and why).

The first half of your paper should address the following questions:

1. What are the key issues and arguments related to your topic?

2. How do questions of gender, power (social, economic, or political), and belief affect this topic?
3. Which persons and institutions are most affected by this topic and how is this significant to the issue?
4. Why is this topic contested? Which aspects are most compelling to you?

In the second half of your paper you should develop a framework for addressing the issue. It should take seriously the relevant biblical materials, theological commitments, and concerns about the well-being of all persons, but especially address concerns about the well-being of women. It should include some practical implications and strategies.

The paper should be 12-15 pages long—divided into two parts—the first is an analysis of the issue and its interpretations; the second half should provide a normative response to the issue.

Topics for 5-page paper and Class Presentation:

Women's double day—combining work and family

Daycare and children's well-being

Women and abortion

Gender and child-rearing

Gender and reproductive technology

Teen pregnancy

Women and poverty/welfare

Workplace innovations

Women and the military

Harassment

Women and pornography

Women as criminals and crime victims

Domestic violence

International concerns:

Well-being of girl children

Rights of women

Abortion and gender selection

Domestic workers

Women in Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism

Gender in the classroom

Women and fashion

Women and media images

Gender and body

Gender and eating disorders

Contemporary men's movements

Gender and conversational styles

Gender and friendship

Women in missions

Ordination

Women and contemporary goddess worship

Women and Promise Keepers

Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood