COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course we will examine the various ways in which religion and gender intersect, across cultures and across historical time periods. We will survey the major world's religions, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, using gender as the key category of analysis as we ask the following kinds of questions: Is the primary God/Goddess of this religion viewed as male, female or without gender? Are the primary religious leaders for this religion male or female and what do they teach about prescribed gender roles? How do the key religious texts refer to men and women in society and do they foster gender equality or inequality? In what ways have various world's religions upheld gender role segregation? How have men and women found empowerment within various religions in spite of societal gender equality? Which religions have allowed women to also begin to step forward as spiritual leaders? How have those in the LGBTQ+ communities been embraced or excluded by various religions? In addition to studying the world's main “patriarchal” religions, we will also examine some of the religions of Indigenous peoples as well as some of Goddess religious traditions and examine concepts such as the “Divine Feminine.” Finally, at the end of the course, we will also examine the complex intersection between gender, religion, and sexuality.

This course will occur “on-line” through Blackboard. The class will basically run on a Mon/Wed schedule with reading assignments and journal postings on the readings for the week due on both Mondays and Wednesdays. Some weeks there will be only one journal assignment due. On days journals are due, students are also expected to respond to other students’ journal postings. This will constitute our class “discussion” of the topics.

**Please note this syllabus is subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes the instructor may make through announcements that will be posted to the course on Blackboard.

Also, please note that this is NOT a self-paced course. It is expected that you keep up with the weekly assignments and post them on time.

Please make sure that you have high-speed Internet access and Quick Time as a large part of this class includes videos that you need to be able to watch. If you do not have Quick Time you should contact U Maine IT Center for help.
EXPECTATIONS:

* Students will participate in the online discussion through their Mon/ Wed journal entries and responses to each other by posting their journals on time. Please note that you will have reading assignments due twice per week, but some weeks there will be two journals due and some weeks there will only be one journal due.

* Students will complete all the assignments that are listed on this syllabus on time.

* The instructor will provide feedback for all written assignments other than the daily journal responses.

* Assignments are due on the designated date. Late assignments will not be accepted.

* Academic Honesty. Plagiarism violates the University of Maine Student Conduct Code as outlined in the Student handbook. Make sure you cite all direct quotes, images, ideas, facts, and opinions that are not your own.

* All written work, including journals should be well written with attention to grammar. Please write your own journal before reading other students’ journals. If your journal is very similar to one posted before yours, you may not receive credit for yours.

* Please review University of Maine codes for what is considered civil conduct and etiquette for the online classroom. Students must be civil and respectful in all communications with the instructor and fellow students.

Accommodation of Disabilities:
Any student who because of a disability may need arrangements or accommodations to meet the requirements of this course is encouraged to discuss these needs with me as soon as possible.

Non-sexist Language Policy: The University of Maine, as an equal opportunity educational institution, is committed to both academic freedom and the fair treatment of all individuals. It therefore discourages the use of sexist language. Language that reinforces sexism can arise from imprecise word choices that may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory, or demeaning even if they are not intended to be. Accordingly, all University communications, whether delivered orally or in writing, shall be free of sexist language.

Sexual Discrimination Reporting

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity.

If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:

For confidential resources on campus: Counseling Center: 207.581.1392 or Cutler Health Center: at 207.581.4000.
For confidential resources off campus: Rape Response Services: 1.800.310.0000 or Spruce Run: 1.800.863.9909.

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:

For support services on campus: Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207.581.1406, Office of Community Standards: 207.581.1409, University of Maine Police: 207.581.4040 or 911. Or see the OSAVP website for a complete list of services.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
1. *Religion and Gender* edited by Ursula King
3. *Women in Christian Traditions* by Rebecca Moore

https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umaine/detail.action?docID=1048839#goto_toc

Course articles will be posted to the Blackboard course conference under Course Content and Course Readings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class Participation through Weekly Journal Postings:** The course will run as a discussion seminar and will center on our readings. Each student will be expected to do a daily journal posting on Mon and Wed of each week of the semester to the Blackboard course conference with a summary and discussion of the readings for the day, including any questions about the readings and personal reactions to it. Students will also be expected to read other students' journal postings and are encouraged to respond to each other as appropriate (for example agreeing or disagreeing – respectfully – with one another's opinions about the readings). Each student will be expected to respond to at least two other students’ journal postings per day in order to facilitate “discussion” about the readings. These twice-weekly postings should be approximately one-to-two pages long for undergraduate students and 2-3 pages long for graduate students. This activity is designed to provide a forum for online discussion, to help students keep up with the reading, and as a way to learn about how other students feel about the subject. The postings themselves will not be graded, but if you miss two or more daily journal postings, do not respond to other students, or if the journals are not of the quality for which I am looking (in other words if you are not active in the online discussion), the grade for this component of the grading will be lowered. In these journals, I would like you to first summarize and give the main points in the reading and then include your personal reactions to them. **Please note that journal postings are always due by 9:00 am on the day they are due—so plan ahead and do them the night before if you need to. Again, please note that your participation will be graded on the quality of your journals as well.**
Students who do not join the class on time and keep up with the expected postings each week should expect to receive a poor grade. It is not an option to make up the work for this class at the end as all students are expected to move through the material together. No credit will be granted for late journals.

2. **Research Essay:** By the second week of class, students will be asked to identify a particular research topic to explore related to masculinity and gender in society. In a 7-8 page research essay due at the end of the semester students will explore this topic and this essay should consist of an introduction, a conclusion, citations, and a bibliography. For graduate students, your final paper should be 10-12 pages. Students will post their essays to the appropriate Blackboard folder and are expected to read and comment on two other students' papers. This final essay is due on Monday Nov. 27th at 9:00 am.

3. **Final Exam:** There will be a take-home (open-book) Final Exam that will be posted to the conference during the last week of the course and will be due by 9:00 am on Wed. Dec. 13th. The exam will consist of defining terms, some short answers and essay questions. The exam will be posted to the folder and students will be expected to email their completed exams directly to the professor.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal Postings/ Class Participation</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Essay</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Jan 23**  
*Introduction to Gender and Religion*  
Reading: *Religion and Gender* edited by Ursula King, pp. 1-31, and “Spirituality and Gender Viewed Through a Global Lens” by Ursula King  
Read instructor’s *Introduction to the Course*  
Please also review the syllabus to make sure you understand it and familiarize yourself with Blackboard. **In your first journal posting due today by 9:00 am, please summarize the readings and also “introduce” yourself to the class, covering such things as what your major is, where you are in your studies, any exposure you have had to gender studies, and what you hope to get out of the class.**

**Jan 28**  
*Theoretical Reflections on Religion, Gender and Feminist Theology*  
Reading: *Religion and Gender* edited by Ursula King 41-75, and “Feminist Theology as Theology of Religions” by Rita Gross  
No journal response due.

**Jan 30**  
*Religion and Gender*
Reading: *Religion and Gender* edited by Ursula King, pp. 121-190

**Journal due** by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on the readings for Jan 28 and Jan 30.

**Feb 4** *Christianity and Gender*

Reading: *Women in Christian Traditions* by Rebecca Moore, pp. 1-45

No journal response due.

**Feb 6** *Christianity and Gender*

Reading: *Women in Christian Traditions* by Rebecca Moore, pp. 47-105

No journal response due.

**Feb 11** *Christianity and Gender*

Reading: *Women in Christian Traditions* by Rebecca Moore, pp. 107-158

**Journal due** by 9:00 am with a summary and reactions to all of the reading for Feb 4, 6, and 11.

**Feb 13** *Judaism and Islam and Gender*

Reading: *Gender in Judaism and Islam* by Kashani-Sabet and Beth Wenger, pp. 1-41

No journal due.

**Feb 18** *Judaism and Islam and Gender*

Reading: *Gender in Judaism and Islam* by Kashani-Sabet and Beth Wenger, pp. 46-100

No journal due.

**Feb 20** *Judaism and Islam and Gender*

Reading: *Gender in Judaism and Islam* by Kashani-Sabet and Beth Wenger, pp. 106-154

**Journal due** by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on all the readings for Feb 18 and Feb 20.

**Feb 25** *Judaism and Islam and Gender*

Reading: *Gender in Judaism and Islam* by Kashani-Sabet and Beth Wenger, pp. 155-199

No journal due.

**Feb 27** *Judaism and Islam and Gender*

Reading: *Gender in Judaism and Islam* by Kashani-Sabet and Beth Wenger, pp. 203-262

No journal due.

**Mar 4** *Judaism and Islam and Gender*

Reading: *Gender in Judaism and Islam* by Kashani-Sabet and Beth Wenger, pp. 268-346

**One-page proposal on your Final Research Essay due by 9:00 am.** Please email your proposal directly to the instructor.
Journal due by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on all the readings for Feb 25, Feb 27 and Mar 4.

Mar 6  World Religions and Gender: An Introduction  
Reading: Women in World Religions edited by Arvind Sharma, pp. 1-36  
No journal due.

Mar 11  Tribal Religions  
Reading: Women in World Religions edited by Arvind Sharma, pp. 37-58  
Journal due by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on all the readings for Mar 6 and Mar 11.

Mar 13  Hinduism  
Reading: Women in World Religions edited by Arvind Sharma, pp. 59-103  
No journal due.

Spring Break!

Mar 25  Buddhism  
Reading: Women in World Religions edited by Arvind Sharma, pp. 106-133  
Journal due with responses to all the readings for Mar 13 and Mar 25.

Mar 27  Confucianism and Taoism  
Reading: Women in World Religions edited by Arvind Sharma, pp. 135-181  
Journal due by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on all the readings.

Apr 1  Judaism and Christianity  
Reading: Women in World Religions edited by Arvind Sharma, pp. 183-250  
Journal due by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on all the readings.

Apr 3  Religion, Gender and Sexuality  
Reading: Religion, Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life: The Politics of Collective and Individual Identities by Peter Nynäs and Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip pp. 12-44  
No journal due.

Apr 8  Religion, Gender and Sexuality  
Reading: Religion, Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life: The Politics of Collective and Individual Identities by Peter Nynäs and Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip pp. 45-73  
No journal due.

Apr 10  Religion, Gender and Sexuality  
Reading: Religion, Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life: The Politics of Collective and Individual Identities by Peter Nynäs and Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip pp. 74-107  
Journal due by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on all the readings for Apr 3, 8 and 10.
April 15  Religion, Gender and Sexuality
Reading: Religion, Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life: The Politics of Collective and Individual Identities by Peter Nynäss and Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip pp. 108-136
No journal due.

April 17  Religion, Gender and Sexuality
Reading: Religion, Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life: The Politics of Collective and Individual Identities by Peter Nynäss and Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip pp. 137-153
Journal due by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on all the readings for Apr 15 and 17.

April 22  Goddess Religions, Neopaganism, and Witchcraft
“Is the (Hindu) Goddess a Feminist?” by Rita Gross, and “Witches of the West: Neopaganism and Goddess Worship as Enlightenment Religions” by Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, and “Witchcraft and Women's Culture” by Starhawk.
No journal response due.

April 24  Goddess Religions, Neopaganism, and Witchcraft
“Hindu Female Deities as a Resource for the Contemporary Rediscovery of the Goddess” by Rita M. Gross, “From God to Goddess” by Carol P. Christ, and “Witchcraft and Neopaganism” by Helen A. Berger.
Journal due by 9:00 am with a summary and reflections on all the readings for Apr 22 and Apr 24.

Note – No assignments the week of April 29
Please use this time to work on your final research papers,

May 6  Final Research Paper Due. Please post your paper to the appropriate folder by 9:00 am. Please also read and respond to at least two other students’ papers.
No reading or journal response due today.

May 8  Native American Religions
Last Class
Last journal response due by 9:00 am with a general overview and reflections on the readings for today and also on the whole semester and please also include your final comments or questions on the course as a whole, including what you feel you learned or got out of the class as a whole, and the primary insights, themes that you found helpful, useful, etc.

Instructor will post Final Take-Home Exam to the class folder during the second-to-last week of the semester.
The exam will be due by Monday May at 9:00 am (to be emailed directly to the instructor cut and paste into the main body of the message and also as an attachment).

Late exams will not be accepted. You will receive your corrected exam within one week.

Have a great summer!