

Starr King School for the Ministry ~ January Intersession 2011

SPRS 4101: Women, Spirituality, and Social Change

Instructor: Liza J. Rankow, MHS, PhD

January 18-21 • Tuesday - Friday, 1:30 - 6:30 PM daily (1.5 unit course)

Compassion requires a plunge to the depths of life – where oneness is reality and divisions merely an illusion.... The force of love is the force of total revolution. It is the unreleased force, unknown and unexplored as a dynamic for change.

~ Vimala Thakar

In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.

~ Wangari Maathai

Without a revolution of the spirit, the forces which produced the iniquities of the old order would continue to be operative, posing a constant threat to the process of reform and regeneration.

~ Aung San Suu Kyi

This course will examine the powerful synergy between spirituality and social action. In the context of current world concerns, we will look to the lives and wisdom of women from diverse cultures and faith traditions for insight and inspiration. Readings and class explorations will include Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Indigenous sources. We will particularly consider women whose recognition of the unity of life, and whose love for the Divine in all creation, compelled and sustained their work of peace and justice-making.

A highly interactive lecture-discussion format will be complemented by audio and video recordings of several of the women studied, inspirational music, spiritual practices (visioning, centering meditation, etc), and resources for ongoing study.

Because the course is an intensive format, please check the syllabus for reading assignments to be completed prior to our first session. (Some readings will be available on-line, others in a course packet students will need to purchase from Copy Central.) A final reflection paper will be due one week after the conclusion of the course.

Instructor Contact Information:

The best way to reach me is by e-mail to: rankow@onelifeinstitute.org. *Please put "GTU Class" as the subject line so I will be able to recognize it as coming from you.* I will acknowledge all e-mails. If you do not receive a response within 24-hours, please do confirm that I received your message. As an adjunct faculty member, I will not have formal office hours, but am pleased to make arrangements to consult with you on an as-needed basis during our time together.

Readings:

A **course packet [CP]** will be available at Copy Central (2483 Hearst Ave, Berkeley; 849-9600). Please purchase your copy in advance as some pre-course reading assignments are included in it. Additional required (and some optional) reading PDFs, as well as web-links and multimedia resources, will be available on a course-specific **web page [W]** at **www.onelifeinstitute.org/SKSMclass.html**. You will need to download and print out your own copy of these materials and bring to class.

→ **Please note that there is a reading assignment, as well as a short (1-3 page) self-introductory paper, in preparation for our first class session. See below for details.**

Learning Objectives:

Through full and committed participation in this class students will:

- Deepen their understanding of engaged spirituality as it is found in diverse traditions
- Consider the ethical implications of a mystic (or unitive) worldview
- Discuss the synergy between personal and social transformation
- Reflect on the lives of women whose spirituality informs their work for peace and justice
- Examine the relevance and applications of course learnings to their own commitments & lifework

Student Expectations:

- Daily attendance and engaged participation in class discussion and activities.
- Timely completion of assigned readings. (I strongly recommend you do the reading in advance of the course, as much as possible, and then just review the assignments as we go.)
- Brief self-introductory paper, **due at the first session** (1-3 pages). Please share something about yourself, your reason for taking the class, your spiritual walk, purpose / intentions, etc
- Keep a reader's journal of ideas, insights, questions, revelations, disagreements, reflections, resonances, applications, quotes, etc to fuel and focus class discussions and final papers. (These are for your use and will not be handed in.)
- Final paper exploring themes covered in the class, **due by Monday, Jan. 31, 2011.** (8-10 pg).

Course Evaluation:

SKSM students will receive a written narrative evaluation. For students from other schools, this class may be taken on a Pass / No Pass basis. (Please let me know if your program requires you to receive a letter grade.) Assessment will be based on the quality and depth of your engagement with the material as evidenced by class participation, preparation, and final paper.

Brief Course Outline

- Jan. 18: Spiritual Experience and the Unitive Worldview**
Tues. *Introductions, Foundations, and Defining Our Terms*
Readings: Soelle (CP), Holmes (CP), Armstrong (W)
Assignment: Brief self-introductory paper, see details on p.2.
- Jan. 19: Peacemakers, Tzaddikim, and Ordinary Bodhisattvas**
Weds. *Interfaith Paradigms of Engaged Spirituality*
Readings: Frankel (CP), Macy (W), Winston (W), Mahameed (W), Starhawk (W)
- Jan. 20: The Ethical Demands of Oneness**
Thurs. *Mysticism and Ethics*
Readings: Lanzetta (CP), Pinto (W), Harris (W), Chan Khong (W)
- Jan. 21: Living the Vision: Walking on the Two Feet of Love**
Fri. *Personal and Social Transformation*
Readings: Rakoczy (CP), Thakar (W), Huerta (W), Pere (W)
** Reminder: Final paper due by Monday, Jan. 31st.*

Course Packet Readings:

(These are noted with an asterisk in the daily reading assignment list below.)

Frankel, E. *Sacred Therapy: Jewish Spiritual Teachings on Emotional Healing and Inner Wholeness*. Boston: Shambhala, 2003, 4-5, 25-31, 130-131.

Holmes, BA. *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004, 138-147, 199.

Lanzetta, BJ. *Radical Wisdom: Feminist Mystical Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005, 193-211, 234-236.

Rakoczy, S. *Great Mystics and Social Justice*. NY: Paulist Press, 2006, 191-208.

Soelle, D. *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001, 1-6.

To Access Additional Required (and Optional) Readings and Resources:

For instructions, links, and downloads please see: www.onelifeinstitute.org/sksmclass.html

Detail of Daily Reading Assignments

Day One :: January 18th

* Dorothee Soelle. *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001, 1-6.

* Barbara A. Holmes. *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004, 138-147, 199.

Jeannette Armstrong. "I Stand With You Against the Disorder." *Yes! Magazine* (2006)
www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=1346

Day Two :: January 19th

* Estelle Frankel. *Sacred Therapy: Jewish Spiritual Teachings on Emotional Healing and Inner Wholeness*. Boston: Shambhala, 2003, 4-5, 25-31, 130-131. See also Additional Resources.

Joanna Macy - (1) "The Bodhisattva"; (2) "Dependent Co-Arising" (one document file) – readings from <http://www.joannamacy.net/resources/engaged-buddhism.html>

Diana Winston. "You Too Can Be a Bodhisattva." *Turing Wheel Magazine* (2002) www.bpf.org

Ibtisam Mahameed - Jerusalem Peacemakers (PDF of website).
<http://jerusalempeacemakers2008.jerusalempeacemakers.org/ibtisam/index.html>
Optional video: www.globalonenessproject.org/interviewee/ibtisam-mahameed

Starhawk - "Toward an Activist Spirituality." Reading from: www.starhawk.org

Optional:

"Grandmothers, Tell Us Your Wisdom." *World Pulse* e-magazine (www.worldpulse.com). Please also visit the website for the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers: www.grandmotherscouncil.com

Hagit Ra'anana - <http://jerusalempeacemakers2008.jerusalempeacemakers.org/hagit/index.html>
www.bridgesofpeace.org/Bridges/HagitFrame-1.htm

Joanna Macy - *Turing Wheel* interview (optional). Surf website: www.joannamacy.net
Also, video interview(s) on www.globaloneness.org site

Day Three :: January 20th

* Beverly J. Lanzetta. *Radical Wisdom: Feminist Mystical Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005, 193-211. See Additional Resources for link to more.

Valdina Pinto. (1) "Candomblé Cosmology and Racism as an Environmental Issue"; (2) Interview with Valdina Oliveira Pinto; (3) "Candomblé: A Religion of the African Diaspora" by Rachel Harding. www.veteransofhope.org/section4_connections/connection_4h.htm

Rabia Terri Harris - "Nonviolence is Jihad: Thoughts on the evolution of resistance." Keynote address text. Fellowship of Reconciliation (July 3, 2005). Also see Additional Resources.

Sister Chan Khong - "Order of Interbeing Beginnings" www.iamhome.org/order_interbeing.htm

Optional:

Valdina Pinto - This and several linked pages on the Veterans of Hope website profile an environmental education project in Bahia, Brazil, organized by Valdina Pinto. www.veteransofhope.org/section3_models/model2a.htm

Sister Chan Khong - (1) "No Trace Left Behind"; (2) Dharmaweb Interview Optional short video just so you can see/ hear her: www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfOgWhCrbOg

Ingrid Washinawatok - "Working Toward Peace" For context surf the site: www.flyingeaglewomanfund.org/FEWF/about_ingrid_washinawatok_el_issa.htm Brief audio clip: <http://www.dialoguebetweennations.com/timeimmemorial/english/ingrid.asp>

Day Four :: January 21st

* Susan Rakoczy. *Great Mystics and Social Justice: Walking on the Two Feet of Love*. NY: Paulist Press, 2006, 191-208.

Vimala Thakar - "Awakening to Total Revolution: Enlightenment and the World Crisis." *What is Enlightenment Magazine* (2001) www.wie.org/j19/vimala.asp See Additional Resources for more.

Rangimarie Turuki Pere - "Nga Kawai Rangatira O Te Wheke Kamaatu" Keynote address text. Australian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (Feb. 2006). From: www.nzafc.org.nz/acan/speakers/pere.shtml Please view these two short video interview excerpts: www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwN3TcsLXsU and www.youtube.com/watch?v=79II_eXKoWo&feature=channel

Dolores Huerta - "Ahimsa on the Line: Non-Violence and Social Justice." Brief excerpt from a talk at AHIMSA Conference in Berkeley, CA (1993).

Optional:

Hafsat Abiola - (1) Haveford speech; (2) "Working Toward Peace" Optional brief video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osB6wSPqKXc>

Wangari Maathai - (1) "You Strike the Woman..." Profile / Interview (1991). Please explore her website: <http://greenbeltmovement.org> And view this short video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHtFM1XEXas

Elisabet Sahtouris. "Skills for the Age of Sustainability." (May 2002) Website with MANY resources: www.ratical.org/LifeWeb/#articles

Victoria Jackson Gray Adams - (1) "Learning the Language of Peace"; (2) NYT obit