Syllabus

Course Description

In an increasingly changing and globalized world, the intersection of religious and queer studies is vital for understanding the construction of identities. This online course is designed to introduce you to the place given to gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, the sexual division of labor and gender role expectations within world religions’ theo(ideo)/logical discourses. Drawing from an interdisciplinary approach you will develop a self-critical perspective on the way that sacred texts and dogmatic corpus influence the lives and spiritual practices of queer individuals and communities. Together we will explore the mutual constitution of queerness and subjectivity of religious experiences and their social and political implications towards the deconstruction of stereotypes, power dynamics, and marginalization.

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

(1) Be familiar with the different theoretical tools needed to analyze the intersection of queer and religious studies;

(2) Identify theoretical concepts that allow us to understand the different theo(ideo)logical discourses and sacred texts interpretations pertaining queer issues; and

(3) Examine the particular experiences related to gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, the sexual division of labor and gender role expectations within world religions and particular (ethnic) spiritualities.
Given the time limitation of the course (one semester) it would be impossible to provide extensive insight into every religion. The main goal of the course is to provide the students with tools and key information that would guide them into deepening certain aspects in their own research or specific studies.

**Course Materials**

All the course materials will be available for access at the GTU Moodle’s course site. Due to GTU’s compliance with fair use regulations, you will not be able to download the reading materials. Audio-visual materials will be posted whenever technical means make this possible.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

In order to pass this course you are expected to fulfill the following requirements:

1. **Posting your comments** and interacting with the other students by responding to their interventions on the conversations on the Moodle’s course site. This is a way to engage in a collective processing of the topics by paying attention to what others think and to what you reflect on both the materials and your experiences. Although you are not require to always agree with your peers, respect and politeness are expected on these responses. Whenever possible, please use gender inclusive language. You are expected to interact a minimum of three times per week in the conversations in order to get your grade. You have the right to be absent three times from the class—equivalent to one week—throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, this assignment will count for thirty (30%) percent of the course grade.

2. At the end of sections one and two, students will submit a three (3) pages reflection paper. This is due at the start of the first class of section 2 and of section 3. It is a reflection paper and not a summary of class materials. In other words, this is the product of your analysis, intuitions, concerns, and/or «thirst» for knowing more on the class topics. The goal of the reflection is to encourage you to begin articulating your own discourse by expressing your own concerns, voicing your agreement or disagreement with the authors’ scholarly work, etc. Each of these assignments will count for fifteen (15%) percent of your final grade (30% total at the end of the semester).

3. During the last week of classes, you are required to submit a final project. The overall idea of the final project is show how you would communicate the topics studied and discussed in this class to an audience that is not academic (for example, by imagining how to present the class topics to your congregation, faith-based organization or place of activism). The project should make evident your own voice articulating a theological discourse by using the social science tools acquired in the course. I am open to different formats for your final project: series of sermons, extensive blog entries, research papers, literature and
art, among other formats. This assignment will count for forty (40%) percent of your grade in the course.

**Academic Conduct**

Throughout the course you are expected and encouraged to maintain an academic environment. Respect for the opinion and right of expression of your fellow classmates is mandatory. Inclusive and non-discriminatory language is expected in spoken and written formats. Proper attribution must be given to all formats of production (written, visual, auditive). Whenever in doubt on how to proceed on this issue, please contact the instructor **before** you submit your materials.

**Notice to Students About Your Privacy**

Starr King School for the Ministry takes maximum care to maintain safety for our students. Under FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances your records will not be released without your signed consent although certain directory information may be released without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy at [http://www.sksm.edu/academics/policy-statements/ferpa-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/](http://www.sksm.edu/academics/policy-statements/ferpa-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/).

At the same time, SKSM faculty members are encouraged to use whichever educational technologies support learning objectives, but you need to remain aware that anything that gets posted —whether assumed private or not— can always be re-posted and broadcast widely. In this course, we will be working with third party applications online —i.e. chat and internet phone systems—. While GTU Moodle has built-in safeguards meant to protect you from privacy infringements, different proprietors of these external sites may or may not have privacy guarantees, nor does FERPA policy at the GTU ([http://gtu.edu/academics/registrar/policy-statements/ferpa](http://gtu.edu/academics/registrar/policy-statements/ferpa)) apply to these sites. It will be your responsibility to read the privacy documentation at each site. There are other options for protecting your information at these sites. If you have filed the paperwork and are classified as protected under the GTU FERPA qualifications, it will be acceptable for you to use an alias when using the Web 2.0 sites required for this course. If you still have concerns, please e-mail SKSM registrar Kat Croswell at [kcroswell@sksm.edu](mailto:kcroswell@sksm.edu) as soon as possible to discuss your options.
Reading Assignments and class schedule


Section I: Intersecting theoretical tools

Week 1 (Jan 30 - Feb 5): Queer Theory

**Required materials**


**Optional materials**


✓ Grimwood, Benjamin. 2011. «‘To Be [Queer] or Not to Be [Queer]’: The Paradox of ‘Constant Revision’ and the ‘Paraphilia’ as Case Study.» *Transverse* 11: pp. 38–47.

Week 2 (Feb 6-12): Religious Studies

**Required materials**


**Optional materials**

Week 3 (Feb 13-19): Ethnic and (Post-)Colonial Studies

Required materials


Optional materials


Section II: Queer Studies and Religions

Week 4 (Feb 20-26): Christianity

Required materials


Optional materials


Assignment: Submission of reflection paper #1.

Week 5 (Feb 27 - March 5): Judaism

Required materials


Optional materials


Week 6 (March 6-12): Islam

Required materials


✓ Shannahan, Dervla Sara. 2010. «Some Queer Questions from a Muslim Faith Perspective.» *Sexualities* 13, No. 6: 671–684.

**Optional materials**


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**Week 7 (March 13-19): Buddhism**

**Required materials**


**Optional materials**


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**Week 8 (March 20-26): Hinduism**
**Required materials**


**Optional materials**


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**Week 9 (March 27 - Ap 2): Reading Week**

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**Week 10 (Ap 3-9): Paganism**

**Required materials**


**Optional materials**


Section III: Queer Spiritualities


**Required materials**


**Optional materials**


**Assignment:** Submission of reflection paper #2.


**Required materials**


Optional materials


Required materials


Optional materials


Week 14 (May 1-7): Queer Native (South/North)American Spiritualities

Required materials


Optional materials


Week 15 (May 8–14): Study Week

Week 16 (May 15-19): Wrapping Up

Assignment: Submission of final projects.