This course will both trouble the bourgeois/normative concept of marriage and serve as a vehicle for the analysis and comparison of religious case studies. Wedding rituals, texts, symbolism, sacrality, commodification and cultural connections will be discussed in multiple contexts including same-sex marriage, polygamy, polyandry, interreligious marriage, arranged marriage and annulment. Overarching questions of the course are What is marriage? What makes a marriage religious? What’s at stake when religions deny marriage? Why do people marry religiously? Why do religions care about marriage?

OBJECTIVES
Students will:
1) Analyze religions critically through the lens of marriage.
2) Trouble and complicate the bourgeois/normative concept of religious marriage using theories of religious experience, psychology of religion, queer theory, feminist and Marxist theory.
3) Compare religious case studies without orientalizing, exoticizing, stereotyping, heteronormativity, patriarchy or promoting colonial legacies.
4) Develop/improve writing, critical thinking and presentation skills using religious case studies.

BOOKS
Available at SU Bookstore or from your favorite on-line retailer. All are on library reserve.


REQUIRED READINGS ON BLACKBOARD


Requirements

Attendance & Participation: We are partners in developing answers to the questions that this course poses… in making this marriage work, if you will. Therefore active participation in discussions and activities is an essential component of the course and attendance is a crucial part of your grade. Frequent (more than 2) absences will lower your final grade, except, of course, in the case of documented illness or emergency. Communicate with me prior to absences.

Reading: Engaged reading of texts should be completed prior to class. Bring copies of texts to class, along with notes, questions and comments.

Assignments:
1. 10 case studies/current events posted on Blackboard OR one field trip.
2. Short Papers: 3 out of 4 critical essays of 2-3 pages (400 words). The first paper is mandatory. If all 4 are written I will drop the lowest grade.
3. Theorist Introduction/Overview: Each student will prepare and present a brief (7-10 minutes), collaborative (with another student) presentation on one of our theorists.
4. Midterm exam.
5. Final presentation and paper: You and a partner will present a marriage case study with religious aspects or a marriage and religion debate to the class in a creative and engaging manner. Then each of you will write an individual 8-10 page paper analyzing your case critically with the critical theories of religion from class.

Assessment:
5% Case study/current event/field trip
20% participation (includes attendance and in class-writing/work)
20% 3 critical essays & theorist presentation
20% Midterm
10% final presentation
25% final paper
DUE DATES AND LATE WORK
Things are due when they are due. If you have extenuating circumstances, talk to me in advance and we will attempt to work something out. Do not, however, ask for an extension at the last minute and expect it to be granted. Late work that is accepted will have a point reduction.

COURTESY and RESPECT
Texting and surfing the web are not only extremely disrespectful, they inevitably dilute you and your classmates’ attention from the class. No cell phones in class.
Tardiness is unacceptable.
Listening to others carefully is expected, required, and key to learning.
I am excited to be doing this work with you. I will hold myself to the same standards that I ask of you. If I can do anything to enhance your learning, please let me know.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/.

The critical essays and the theorist introduction will be considered graduated learning assignments, so improper citation will be considered an academic deficit that can be remedied, not plagiarism (your grade will, however, reflect improper or missing citation). By the final paper students will have learned the citation expectations, and improper citation will be considered reportable plagiarism. Other forms of plagiarism apply to all course assignments. The course penalties for plagiarism are 1) reporting to the Office of Academic Integrity and 2) a zero for that assignment.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND SUPPORT FOR THE DIFFERNTLY ABLED
If you have academic accommodations I encourage you to use them to the fullest to support your learning. Syracuse University and I value diversity, and will work with you to provide access to services that accommodate the differently abled. For more information see the Office of Disability Services at http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/ or contact odssched@syr.edu.

All students can and will benefit from the services of the Writing Center. For more information see http://wc.syr.edu/.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES
Syracuse University and I value diversity. If you will be missing class due to a religious observance this semester, register for that observance on My Slice by September 9, 2011. Religious observances registered on My Slice will be considered excused absences that are in addition to the 2 “free” absences. Make-up work is due no later than a week after the absence. For more information see http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm
CLASS SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

1. M 8/29 Introduction
2. W 8/31 "What is Marriage?"
   Lopez, “Belief” pp 1-10 BB
   Coontz Intro: Terry Reeder

M 9/5 No class; Labor Day
3. W 9/7 Religions
   Smart Intro:
   Lopez Intro:

4. M 9/12 Troubling Marriage: The Beginning
   Jordan Intro:

5. W 9/14 Marriage Prep
   Jordan, ch 2; “A Proper Engagement” pp. 50-78
   First Critical Essay due at beginning of class.

6. M 9/19 Marriage Denied: Same Sex Unions
   Jordan, ch 4, pp.100-127

7. W 9/21 Marriage Denied II: American Chattel Slavery
   Selected readings from Harriet Jacobs & Angela Davis BB
   Davis Intro:
   Jacobs Intro:

   Jordan, ch 6, “Afterward; or, out of Bounds” and
   Said, Intro:

   Brooks, Nine Parts of Desire pp. 1-54
   Brooks Intro:

    Smart, Intro:
    Desire pp. 55-90
    Second Critical Essay due at beginning of class.

11. W 10/5 Marriage Bricolage: Temporary Marriage, Arranged and Rearranged
    Marriage, Marriage Multiplied, Walking Marriage, Interfaith Marriage, mass marials, virtual
    marriage, etc.
    Desire pp. 91-141

12. M 10/10 White Wedding: Female Purity Rhetorics & Bodies
    Desire pp. 142-182

13. W 10/12 Film: Monsoon Wedding I: Diaspora
Desire pp. 183-225

14. M10/17 Monsoon Wedding II
Finish Nine Parts of Desire pp. 226-Glossary
Nair Intro:
15. W 10/19 MIDTERM

16. M 10/24 Marriage & Psychosocial Development
Erikson, Erik, “Gandhi’s Truth” pp. 229-254 BB
Erikson Intro:
Wallwork Intro:
17. W 10/26 Marriage Ended: Divorce, Annulment
Jordan, ch 7 “Ending in Time” & “Epilogue” pp. 185-207
Case Studies/current events/field trip posted by beginning of class.

18. M 10/31 Marriage & Marxism: A critique of capitalism & patriarchy in Marriage
Davis, “The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework: A Working Class Perspective” BB
19. W 11/2 Weddings & Conspicuous Consumption
Bring hardcopies of wedding materials to class for group work.
Jordan, ch. 3 “Your Special Day” pp. 79-99
Third Critical Essay due at beginning of class.

20. M 11/7 Marriage Eternal: Mormon, Annulment denied, Sati
Spivak: “Can the Subaltern Speak” BB
Spivak Intro:
Greenberg, “Contemplating a Jewish Ritual of Same Sex Union: An Inquiry into the Meanings of Marriage” BB
Greenburg Intro:
Final Presentation Abstract due at beginning of class.

22. M 11/14 Troubling Marriage II: Another Beginning
23. W 11/16 TBA
Did we talk enough about sex? Celibacy, Josephite marriage, impotency, infertility, etc.
Did we talk enough about race? miscegenation laws, etc.
Did we talk enough about gender? Transgender/
Fourth Critical Essay due at beginning of class.

NO CLASS 11/21 & 23 THANKSGIVING BREAK!
24. M 11/28 Presentations
25. W11/30 Presentations
26. M 12/5 Presentations
27. W 12/7 Presentations
28. TR 12/15, 5:15-7:15: Final Exam Period. Presentations and/or, extra credit.
Final Paper due at 8:00 pm.