Gender and Religion in Theory and Practice
REL 696 / ANT 600-M005 Fall 2013
Tuesday 3:30 - 6:15  504 Hall of Languages

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Office hrs.:  Th 12:30 - 1:30 and by appointment

Course description

This seminar’s focus is the intertwining of gender and religion, and various positioned attempts to comprehends and see through, or beyond, the tangle. We are concerned with religious realities in their own terms: gendered visions of power in mythic, symbolic, and ritual phenomena. We also want to consider the ways religious realities reflect and mold gender roles and gender hierarchies in society, and the ways political and economic conditions influence these configurations. Readings present varieties of feminist, anthropological and critical theory, and a range of culturally located ethnographic texts and contexts. Some of our course materials are most concerned with particular cosmologies and / or practices; others offer analyses operating at the broadest levels of human existence. Most attempt to bridge theories and cultural specificities.

Readings

8 required books should be available at the University Bookstore. They have also been placed on reserve in Bird. It is of course always worth checking comparative prices on the web. In addition, a number of articles and book sections will be accessible as PDFs on our Blackboard course site: ANT/REL.600/696.Merged.Fall13.Gender&Religion:Theory&Practice (29511.1141c)

Books

Chapters, articles and excerpts available on Blackboard


Wikan, Unni. 2012. Selected chapters from Resonance Beyond the Words. University of Chicago Press. ("Man Becomes Woman: The Xanith as a Key to Gender Roles"; "The Nun’s Story: Reflections on an Age-Old Postmodern Dilemma"; "In the Middle Way: Childbirth and Rebirth in Bhutan")

Responsibilities

seminar process All participants should be committed to faithful attendance and diligent reading of all required materials. Responsibility for commenting and raising questions on each week’s syllabus readings, and posting your "talking points" to blackboard -- ideally no later than 9 pm Monday evening -- is shared by all seminar members. Normally everyone will circulate brief points
(about one page) on the entire week’s readings; sometimes readings will be parceled out in advance with students providing slightly more detailed commentary (about two pages) on specified portions. In class you will have a chance to recapitulate your thoughts as discussion starters.

writing  Students may choose between two alternative routes to fulfill writing requirements. You may produce two shorter papers: about 8 pages due at the end of Week 7 and about 12 pages due at the end of the semester. These will expand on issues and readings originating in the syllabus, although the second piece should incorporate at least one additional perspective or case study. Alternatively, you may pursue a sustained research project on any topic that engages in some fashion with gender and religion. On the longer paper route, the project will build, under the instructor’s supervision, through stages of title and abstract (week 6), outline or preliminary draft with bibliography (week 10), oral presentation (weeks 12-15), and final product: about 20 pages to be submitted electronically no later than Monday December 12.

speaking  Beyond regular participation -- that is, raising points and responding in our weekly conversations -- each seminar member should plan to give one more substantial, coherent and succinct (about 15-minute) oral presentation – based on their individual writing and moving beyond or expanding on syllabus preoccupations. Whether you are taking the longer or shorter paper route, this will allow you to discuss your ideas and benefit from group feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic/Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Tu 8/27</td>
<td>organizational and introductory session</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Tu 9/3</td>
<td>interrogate the categories, question the terms, hatch the phoenix? Read: Castelli, ed. Introduction and Part I (all), chapters 1-9, pp. 1-145 plus Lutz; Ortner, 1974; Ortner, 1996 all 3 on BB</td>
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<td>3 Tu 9/10</td>
<td>trailing gender and religion through multiple texts and contexts Read: Castelli, ed. Part II (all), chapters 10-14, pp. 149-253 plus these additional chapters in Castelli: 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27 plus Agnes 2012 on BB •• guidelines for writing projects distributed ••</td>
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<td>4 Tu 9/17</td>
<td>mountain women and claims of freedom in Chitral (Pakistan) Read: Maggi, all</td>
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<td>5 Tu 9/24</td>
<td>city women and critiques of autonomy in Egypt Read: Mahmood, all</td>
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<td>6 Tu 10/1</td>
<td>questing women and alternative spiritualities in Europe Read: Fidele, all • title and abstract of long paper due in class •</td>
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7 Tu 10/8  possessed women: "Don't mess with her / That girl is dangerous"
Read: Hayes, all plus Ram, BB
• short paper # 1 due in class •

bodies, souls and sexualities in and beyond South Asia

highly recommended: Tu 10/15 South Asia seminar by Joyce Flueckiger, Professor of Religion, Emory University; 12:30 pm in Public Events Room, 220 Eggers

8 Tu 10/15  goddess guises and ethnographic theology
Read: Flueckiger, all
Query the author session 1; Professor Flueckiger will respond to your questions about her book

9 Tu 10/22  listening to women, retrospectively and prospectively
Read: 6 pieces by Gold, published between 1994 and 2014, all on BB
Query the author session 2

10 Tu 10/29  altered bodies
Read: Reddy, all
• partial draft of long paper due in class •

11 Tu 11/5  gender pluralisms
Read: Cohen; Peletz; Bucar 2010; Bucar 2012, all on BB
from 3:30-4:30 anthropology Ph.D. candidate Faris Khan will join us, via Skype, to discuss his research experience with transgender Pakistanis"

crossings and disruptions

[student presentations to be scheduled  weeks 12, 13, 15]

12 Tu 11/12  displacement and its consequences in Sudan: politics, identity and ritual
Read: Abusharaf, all

highly recommended: Th 11/14 and Fr 11/15 RGO invited speaker Kalyani Menon, Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, DePaul University (and Syracuse Anthropology PhD alum); Public lecture Th. 7 pm; seminar with graduate students Fr. morning; further details TBA

13 Tu 11/19  newer, subtler? insights and angles: intimacy and resonance
Read: Pratt and Rosner, selections plus Wikan, selections, both on BB

14 THANKSGIVING BREAK

15 Tu 12/3  presentations and concluding comments

• short paper #2 or final draft of long paper both due Monday 12 December via email •