

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 comprehend 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

- Abusharaf, Rogaiya Mustafa. 2009. *Transforming Displaced Women in Sudan: Politics and the Body in a Squatter Settlement*. University of Chicago Press.
- Castelli, Elizabeth A. Editor. 2001. *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader*. New York: Palgrave.
- Fidele, Anna. 2013. *Looking for Mary Magdalene: Alternative Pilgrimage and Ritual Creativity at Catholic Shrines in France*. Oxford University Press.
- Flueckiger, Joyce Burkhalter. 2013. *When the World Becomes Female: Guises of a South Indian Goddess*. Indiana University Press.
- Hayes, Kelly. 2011. *Holy Harlots: Femininity, Sexuality, and Black Magic in Brazil*. University of California Press.
- Maggi, Wynne. 2004. *Our Women are Free: Gender and Ethnicity in the Hindukush*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2005. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press.
- Reddy, Gayatri. 2005. *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chapters, articles and excerpts available on Blackboard

- Agnes, Flavia. 2012. "From *Shah Bano* to *Kausar Bano*: Contextualizing the "Muslim Woman" within a Communalized Polity." In *South Asian Feminisms*, edited by Ania Loomba and Ritty Lukose, 33-53. Duke University Press.
- Bucar, Elizabeth M. 2010. Bodies at the Margins: The Case of Transsexuality in Catholic and Shia Ethics. *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38.4:601–615.
- 2012. The "Invention" of Lesbian Acts in Iran: Interpretative Moves, Hidden Assumptions, and Emerging Categories of Sexuality. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 16:416–434.
- Cohen, Lawrence. 2012. "The Gay Guru: Fallibility, Unworldliness, and the Scene Of Instruction." In *The Guru in South Asia : New Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Jacob Copeman and Aya Ikegame. Routledge.
- Gold, Ann Grodzins. 1994. Selected chapters from *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* by G.G. Raheja and A.G. Gold. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 2000. "From Demon Aunt to Gorgeous Bride: Women Portray Female Power in a North Indian Festival Cycle." In *Invented Identities: The Interplay of Gender, Religion and Politics in India*, edited by Julia Leslie and Mary McGee, 203-230. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- 2001 Shared Blessings as Ethnographic Practice. *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 13(1):34-50.
- 2008 "Gender." In *Studying Hinduism: Key Concepts and Methods*, edited by Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby, 178-193. London: Routledge.
- 2008. Deep Beauty: Rajasthani Goddesses above and below the Surface. *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 12(2):153-179.
- 2014 "Gendered constellations: Women's place-making in Santosh Nagar." In *Routledge Handbook of Gender in South Asia* edited by Leela Fernandes. London: Routledge (in press).
- Lutz, Catherine. 1995. "The Gender of Theory," in *Women Writing Culture*, eds., Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1974. "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" In *Woman, Culture, and Society*, eds. M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, 67-87. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- 1996. "Gender Hegemonies" and "So, Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture? from *Making Gender*, 139-180. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Peletz, Michael. 2006. Transgenderism and Gender Pluralism in Southeast Asia since Early Modern Times *Current Anthropology* 47(2): 309-340
- Pratt, Geraldine and Victoria Rosner, eds. 2012. Selected chapters from *The Global and the Intimate: Feminism in Our Time*. Columbia University Press.
- Ram, Kalpana. 2012. How is Afflictive Possession 'Learned'? Gender and Motility in South India. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 77(2): 203-226.
- 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.

Week/Date Topic/Readings

interrogate the categories!

- 1 Tu 8/27 organizational and introductory session
- 2 Tu 9/3 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*
- 3 Tu 9/10 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 ••

gendered landscapes in flux: ethnographic and cosmological excursions

- 4 Tu 9/17 mountain women and claims of freedom in Chitral (Pakistan)
Read: Maggi, all
- 5 Tu 9/24 city women and critiques of autonomy in Egypt
Read: Mahmood, all
- 6 Tu 10/1 questing women and alternative spiritualities in Europe
Read: Fidele, all
• title and abstract of long paper due in class •

- 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* •