# Women in the New Testament

STMA 593-01 Monday 9:00 -11:50 AM / HUNT 110

Instructor: Leticia Guardiola-Sáenz Office hours: By appointment Email: guardiol@seattleu.edu Hunt 221 / 206-269-6436

## **DESCRIPTION**

This advanced level course is a sociocultural study of the role of women in first-century Christianity and a feminist re-reading of women stories in the New Testament. We will explore some characteristics of the religious and historical background of the New Testament to gain a better understanding of the representation of women in the Gospels and Pauline texts. We will delve into the possible motives of the common myths of invisibility and seclusivness of women in the primitive church, and will look to uncover and highlight the role of women in Judaism and early Christianity.

As part of its hermeneutical foundations, this course also surveys some of the major interpretive methods in biblical criticism, especially those of feminist hermeneutics, which will help us in the process of re-reading and appropriating the New Testament texts about women.

This course operates under a policy of inclusiveness and mutual respect. All readers read subjectively. Therefore all interpretations of biblical texts, whether historical, theological, literary or of any other sort are partial, non-universal interpretations and should be entertained as such.

The instructional methodologies of the class will include lecturing, discussion, group dynamics, and individual writing.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Equip students with a wider understanding of the New Testament narratives on women—and the role of women in early Christianity—to promote inclusive readings of the biblical text.
- Foster creativity for the renewing of the church and society through innovative expressions and

- interpretations of women stories in the New Testament, as a way of empowering the leadership of women in the church and the world.
- Encourage students to enact God's ways of justice and love in the world by promoting and living a discipleship of equals that is modeled in the Gospels.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

- A. A final scholarly paper (4000-5000 words), which can be an exegesis or a monograph, on a topic of your choice on issues of women in the New Testament. Use a minimum of five sources, three of which have not been used in class. Follow the rubric at the end of the syllabus when organizing your paper. Late submissions will earn a daily reduction of 5 points from a possible 100 per assignment. Due date: Dec. 8 (50%)
- B. A reading journal (hand-written or electronic) including: a brief paragraph summarizing the core content of the article (around 25-30 words); your insights, ideas, emotions, and criticism of the article and topic presented by it; and a pastoral, ministerial reflection or application; and all other reactions that your reading of the class materials awakens in you. There must be an entry of at least 200 words per each of the primary readings (21). There is no maximum of words as long as your writing includes the required elements and relates to the course-readings. There will be two submission dates: first part on Oct. 27; second part on Dec. 1. (25%)
- C. Punctual attendance, attentiveness, and well-informed participation. (25%). If, for whatever reason, you cannot come to class you have the opportunity to make-up for the 3-point-max-possible-value of the missed class by doing the suggested work in "D;" one time only.
- D. Extra points: a 500-written-word/2-minute-oral critical report on one of the articles from the secondary readings (check with instructor). The written part you present to the instructor; the oral part you present to the class. (3%) These extra points only work as such, on top-of; you

can use them to increase the potential value of assignments, not to replace it. Maximum 3.

#### **PRIMARY READING:**

- 1. Kraemer, Ross Shepard and Mary Rose D'Angelo, editors. *Women & Christian origins*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. (WCO)
- 2. Schüssler-Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her.* New York: Crossroad, 2000. (IMH)
- 3. Winter, Bruce W. Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearances of New Women and the Pauline Communities. Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003. (RW)

## **SECONDARY READING:**

- \* On reserve at Lemieux Library
- \*Balch, David L. and Carolyn Osiek, editors. *Early Christian Families in Context. An interdisciplinary dialogue*. Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003. **(ECF)**
- \*Christ, Carol P. and Judith Plaskow. Womanspirit Rising. A Feminist Reader in Religion. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992. (WSR)
- \*Collins, Adela Yarbro. ed. Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship. Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1985.

Corley, Kathleen E. Women & the Historical Jesus: Feminist Myths of Christian Origins. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2002.

Getty-Sullivan, Mary Ann. Women in the New Testament. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001.

#### **COURSE OUTLINE**

- 1. Introduction and hermeneutical foundations
- 2. Socio-historical context of women in the NT
- 3. The Jesus Movement
- 4. Representation of women in the Synoptic Gospels
- 5. John and his/her egalitarian community
- 6. Paul on Women and Gender in his own words
- 7. Pseudo-Paul: the beginning of bad news for women
- 8. More bad new: conformity and cultural masks
- 9. Reading women reading the New Testament
- 10. The Ekklesia of Women and the Good News of the Gospel

Kitzberger. Ingrid Rosa. ed. *Transformative Encounters*. *Jesus and Women Re-viewed*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

- \*Meyer, Marvin. The Gospels of Mary. The Secret Tradition of Mary Magdalene the Companion of Jesus. New York: HarperSan Francisco, 2004. (GOM)
- \*Miller, Patricia Cox, ed. Women in Early Christianity. Translations from Greek Texts. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005. (WEC)
- \*Newsom, Carol A. and Sharon H. Ringe, editors. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Lousville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992. **(WBC)**

Osiek, Carolyn. "Reading the Bible as Women." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. I, 181-187. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. (**NIB**)

- \*Schneiders, Sandra Marie. Written that you May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. New York: Crossroad Pub., 2003. (WTY)
- \*Schottroff, Luise, Silvia Schroer, and Marie-Theres Wacker. *Feminist Interpretation: the Bible in Women's Perspective.* Translated by Martin and Barbara Rumscheidt. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998. **(FI)**

Schüssler-Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.

\*Schussler-Fiorenza, Elisabeth. ed. *Searching the Scriptures*. Vol.1. New York: Crossroad, 1993. **(SC)** 

\*Torjesen, Karen Jo. When Women Were Priests. New York: HarperSan Francisco, 1995. (WW)

## **COURSE CALENDAR**

S.	Date	Topics, readings, assignments	
1	Sep. 29	<ol> <li>INTRODUCTION AND HERMENEUTICAL FOUNDATIONS         <ul> <li>Personal introductions</li> <li>Syllabus: content, methods, class format, etc</li> <li>Framing the study of women in the New Testament</li> <li>Ways of reading</li> </ul> </li> <li>Primary Reading:         <ul> <li>Seeing-Naming-Reconstituting (IMH, 3-95)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Secondary Reading:         <ul> <li>Women's Lives in The Ancient Mediterranean (WCO, 13-34)</li> <li>113 p.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	
2	Oct. 6	2. SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF WOMEN IN THE NT  Primary Reading:  1. Jewish Women and Christian Origins: Some Caveats (WCO, 35-49)  2. Jewish Women and Women's Judaism(s) at the Beginning of Christianity (WCO, 50-79)  3. The Appearance of New Wives (RW, 17-38)  Secondary Reading:  4. Everyday Life – Women in the Period of the New Testament (WBC, 390-6)  5. Women in the Early Christian Movement (WSR, 84-92)  6. Reading the Bible as Women (NIB, 181-7)  84 p.	
3	Oct. 13	3. THE JESUS MOVEMENT  Primary Reading:  1. The Jesus Movement as Renewal Movement Within Judaism (IMH, 105-159)  Secondary Reading:  2. Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History (SC, 290-310)  3. The New Testament as Source of Women's History (FI, 179-200)  4. Preachers, Pastors, Prophets, and Patrons, (WW, 9-50)	
4	Oct. 20	<ol> <li>REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS</li> <li>Primary Reading:         <ol> <li>Women in the Q Communities &amp; Traditions (WCO, 150-170)</li> <li>(Re) Presentations of Women in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke-Acts (WCO, 171-195)</li> </ol> </li> <li>Secondary Reading:         <ol> <li>Women and Domestic Life: Marriage (WEC, 253-275); 4. What became of God the Mother</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	
5	Oct. 27	Conflicting Images of God in E.C. (WSR, 107-119); 5. WBC, 252-292.  5. JOHN AND HIS/HER EGALITARIAN COMMUNITY  Primary Reading:  1. (Re) presentations of Women in the Gospels: John and Mark (WCO, 129-149)  2. Reconstructing "Real" Women in Gospel Literature: Mary Magdalene (WCO, 105-128)  3. The Language of Equality in Early Christian House Churches (ECF, 73-83)  Secondary Reading:  4. "Should We All Turn and Listen to Her?" Mary Magdalene in the Spotlight (GOM, 74-96)  5. Because of the Woman's Testimony" (WTY, 211-232); 6. WBC, 293-304.  Assignment due: First part of Reading Journal	

		Dec. 8 FINAL PAPER DUE – PLEASE SUBMIT IT AS ELECTRONIC FILE guardiol@seattleu.edu			
	Dec. 1	3. Women, Ministry, and Church Order in Early Christianity (WCO, 300-329)  Assignment due: Second part of Reading	117 p.		
10	1	10. THE EKKLESIA OF WOMEN AND THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL  Primary Reading:  1. The Patriarchal Household of God and the Ekklesia of Women (IMH, 285-342)  2. The Appearance of Women in the Public Sphere (RW, 173-204)  Secondary Reading:			
9	Nov. 24	NO CLASS – INSTRUCTOR @ THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE ANNUAL MEET  9. READING WOMEN READING THE NEW TESTAMENT  Secondary Reading: Matthew to Revelation, 252-382 (WBC)	TING 130 p.		
8	Nov. 17	8. MORE BAD NEWS: CONFORMITY AND CULTURAL MASKS  Primary Reading:  1. Deciphering the Married Woman's Appearance, 1 Tim 2:9-15, 97-122 (RW, 97-122)  2. The Appearance of Young Widows, 1 Tim 5:11-15, (RW, 123-140)  3. The Appearance of Young Wives, Titus 2:3-5, 141-169 (RW, 141-169); 4. WBC.			
7	Nov. 10	7. PSEUDO-PAUL: THE BEGINNING OF BAD NEWS FOR WOMEN  Primary Reading:  1. Rereading Paul: Early Interpreters of Paul on Women and Gender (WCO, 236-253) 2. Female Slaves, Porneia, and the Limits of Obedience (ECF, 255-274)  Secondary Reading: 3. Christian Mission and the Patriarchal Order of the Household (IMH, 251-284) 4. The Role of Women in the Expansion of Early Christianity (ECF, 157-184); 5. WBC	96 p.		
6	Nov. 3	6. PAUL ON WOMEN AND GENDER - IN HIS OWN WORDS  Primary Reading:  1. Reading Real Women Through the Undisputed Letter of Paul (WCO, 199-220)  2. Paul on Women and Gender (WCO, 221-235)  3. No Male and Female Gal. 3:28—Alternative Vision and Pauline Modification (IMH, 205-41)  4. The Appearance of Unveiled Wives in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (RW, 77-96)  Secondary Reading:  5. The Early Christian Missionary Movement (IMH, 160-204); 6. WBC.			

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Fall 2008

Seattle University – School of Theology and Ministry Seattle, WA 98122

## Student evaluation form

Name:	Final grade:
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Course Requirements:	value	student obtained
A. Final exegesis or monograph	50%	
B. Reading journal	25%	
C. Participation in class	25%	
D. Extra work (each @ 3 %)	9%	
Final grade %	109%	

us = unsatisfactory vg = very good g = goods = satisfactory Grading rubric for the final exegetical paper: comments g us vg **Grading Scale Programmatic introduction** 7% **Programmatic introduction**: start your paper with a brief but well Superior performance: organized introduction. Establish a clear course of action: by steps, sections, characters, topics, or whichever division or sequence you want to follow in the development of your paper. 96.36 - 109As part of the PI, clearly establish the thesis, purpose, or aim that Δ-92.72 - 96.35you will be pursuing in your final paper. 89.08 - 92.71**Organization of ideas** 9% 1. Develop your ideas 2. Sequence of topics 3. Structure of paper Good performance: 1. **Develop your ideas** fully: make sure you say what you want to 85.44 - 89.07say, do not leave gaps. 2. Sequence of topics: follow a particular logic to organize the R-81.80 - 85.43topics in the paper. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. **Structure of paper**: organize the content of the paper in a logical C+ 78.16 - 81.79way (parts/sections, chronology, topics, characters, settings, etc.) Minimal performance: Content of paper: 70% 1. Understanding of topic: 74.52 - 78.152. Clear voice of the author: C-70.88 - 74.513. Interaction with the text D+ 67.24 - 70.874. Use of methodology Poor performance: Political ramifications and /or Ministerial implications of the topic 3% D 63.60 - 67.23Conclusion or summary of major findings 5% D-60.00 - 63.59Failing: Use of quotes, sources, footnotes 2% 00.00 - 59.99Bibliography - content and format 2% General format & style 2%

Leticia Guardiola-Sáenz Instructor