



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Religious Studies 089H.002 / Sociology 089H.002
First Year Seminar – Honors Course
Researching Religion in Women's Lives
Fall 2017
T & TH 11:00am-12:15pm
Manning 307

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Seminar Description

Theories about the status of women in religions abound in scholarly literature and popular culture. Some say that religion (or religions) disempower women in relation to men in ways that are fundamentally unjust; others observe the respect women may earn as mothers or divine figures. Debates over gender and sexuality often refer to values such as freedom, agency and empowerment. But these ideas may themselves be contested—including by women within religious traditions. This course examines the relations between women and religion across different traditions and in diverse global contexts, asking how religious modes of authority and ethical being-in-the-world shape women's aspirations for self-actualization and position them in relation to both opportunities and constraints. The course also asks, how can we know and measure these relations? Arguments about women and religion are based on evidence that reflect different sets of assumptions and are collected in different ways. In this class, we'll explore key methods for data collection and analysis in the Humanities and Social Sciences, helping students to develop critical skills for evaluating evidence and its use. Students will spend the semester learning hands-on research skills and practicing data interpretation using both scientific and humanistic methods. The final paper will require students to analyze quantitative and qualitative data they themselves have generated in order to answer a question about the position of women within a religious culture.

We will structure our inquiries around three primary questions:

- a) How do religious beliefs and practices shape gender identities, values, and expectations in different religious cultures?
- b) How are these understandings reflected, contested, and/or creatively transformed by women within religious traditions, and at different times?
- c) How do we know what we think we know? That is, what theories and methods do scholars use to produce data about women and religion? And how can we evaluate the validity of evidence and the quality of interpretations?

This course will integrate social scientific and humanistic research methods to familiarize students with a broad range of research strategies and their uses in scholarly and popular arguments about women and religion. Practical experience generating and interpreting diverse types of data will reveal the ways that scientific and humanistic modes of inquiry can work together to pose and answer key questions about human social life.

Goals

By the end of this seminar, you will be able to:

- Critically consider and discuss the concepts of “women” and “religion” as they appear in academic and popular discourse
- Identify common ideas about women and gender within the religious traditions discussed in the class and explain the ways that these norms and values play out in men's and women's lives
- Propose research questions and select research methods that fit the questions

- Conduct independent research using qualitative and quantitative methods, and analyze the results using best scholarly practices
- Evaluate and assess scholarly (and popular) arguments by considering the nature of evidence and its sources

Course Materials

The following books (required for purchase) will be available at the campus bookstore and also put on reserve at the undergraduate library:

- El-Or, Tamar. 1994. *Educated and Ignorant: Ultraorthodox Jewish Women and Their World*. New York: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Bennett, Lynn. 1983. *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters: Social and Symbolic Roles of High Caste Women in Nepal*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Frederick, Marla. 2003. *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith*. Berkeley and LA: University of California Press.

All other readings will be available on the course Sakai site under the “Resources” tab in a folder called “READINGS.”

Seminar Format

We meet twice a week for 75 minutes. Our class meetings will primarily involve engaged discussion of the day’s readings, but some days will include group activities, media clips, writing exercises, or data analysis labs that represent and engage us with the material in unique ways. We expect students will attend and actively participate in each class meeting. Active participation involves listening to others, thinking critically, contributing ideas, and respecting all perspectives shared in class. The readings will often cover more material than we have time for in class, so if you have a specific question or topic to raise, please bring this to our attention during class.

Preparing for Class

For each hour spent in class, you will need to set aside about two hours for work outside of the class session. This time will involve reading, reviewing your notes, conducting research, and completing your assignments. Readings are listed in the syllabus on the day by which you will need to have read them. You are welcome to do the readings earlier than assigned. It is your responsibility to prepare for class each day.

Evaluation

There are four main components to your course grade, and their share of your final grade is included in the table at the bottom of this section. The first component of your grade is for *class participation*. This includes attendance and active and informed participation in class discussion. The use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices is not permitted in class except for when we indicate it as necessary for class purposes. Please alert us before class and put your phone on vibrate if you are expecting an emergency call. Any unapproved use of technology in class will count against your participation grade. Succeeding in this class will require regular attendance. Please do not schedule any appointments, meetings, or trips that would require you to miss class. If you know that you will be out of town and will have to miss a class, please let us know ahead of time. Also, if there is a family emergency, please contact us.

The second component of your grade comes from *reading memos* completed by the start of each class meeting and posted to Sakai. Your memos will address a set of guiding questions we will provide for each set of readings in a folder on Sakai. The questions will require you to identify the authors’ arguments as well as their evidence in support of the arguments. The questions will also encourage thoughtful critique of the readings’ main conclusions and implications. Our prompts will encourage you to put different readings in dialogue with one another. These reading memos will all be graded either a 3, 2, 1, or 0 (which reflect a score of 95%, 90%, 80%, and 0% respectively).

The third part of your grade comes from a series of *research assignments* throughout the course. You are required to write up a description of a research question that interests you (5%), conduct participant-observation and write up your fieldnotes (5%), conduct a recorded semi-structured interview and transcribe it (10%), write a memo summarizing 5 articles or books on the topic of your proposed project and specifying one or more questions that your group will address (and the relation of these questions to the reviewed literature) (10%), write a memo proposing the quantitative data analysis your group will use for your final research paper (10%), and write a qualitative data analysis memo developing one preliminary finding to be included in your final research paper (10%).

The fourth component of your grade will be a *group research paper*. Students will be divided into small groups to collaborate throughout the semester on a group project. Groups will decide on a common research question/s and focus their participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and quantitative data analysis on answering their research question/s. The final product will be a group research paper that introduces the research question/s, provides a relevant literature review, describes the data and methods used, presents findings from at least one source of qualitative data and one source of quantitative data, and draws conclusions. All students are expected to contribute equally to the writing of the paper, and group members will provide confidential evaluations of all other group members at the conclusion of the project. Grades will be based on the overall quality of the paper as well as individual contributions as rated by the other group members.

Grade components

Class participation	10%
Reading memos (posted to Sakai)	20%
Research assignments	50%
Final group paper	20%
Total	100%

Late memos, assignments, or papers will receive a 1/3 reduction in points for each day they are late.

We do not grade on a curve and there is no extra credit available. You will receive point values, but not letter grades, for individual tests and assignments. We intend to award final grades using this scale:

A = 92-100%	B+ = 88-89%	C+ = 78-79%	D+ = 68-69%	
A- = 90-91%	B = 82-87%	C = 72-78%	D = 62-68%	F < 60%
	B- = 80-81%	C- = 70-71%	D- = 60-61%	

Communicating with Professors Leve and Pearce

Often the most efficient line of communication with us is email. We will respond to most email within 24 hours. When communicating with any of your professors, it will serve you well to keep the interaction professional. For example, use a professional greeting such as “Dear Professor Leve” or “Hi Dr. Pearce.” In fact, always refer to instructors as Professor or Dr. unless explicitly instructed to do otherwise. Be clear, concise, and courteous in your emails. Check your grammar and spelling. Finally, carefully consult the syllabus before asking a question that is answered in it.

For some questions, you may prefer to come to office hours or set an appointment to meet with us. We will gladly work with you on a reading you do not understand or a concept we have covered in class, we will happily clarify assignments, and we are available to discuss your class performance. We also welcome the opportunity to get to know you better and answer any questions you might have about our disciplines, graduate school, research opportunities, or related topics.

We are committed to supporting all students in their efforts to succeed in this class. If you find you are having difficulties of any kind that get in the way of your ability to perform well in class, including physical or mental health challenges, learning issues, housing or food insecurity, or family needs, please come talk to us. We can provide advice and/or refer you to others on campus who can help. Students who need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to speak to us as soon as possible. The Department of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>) is available to assist

students in arranging these accommodations. The Dean of Students' Office is an all-around great resource on campus for managing life situations that interfere with your academic performance.

Graduate Research Consultant: Claire Chipman

In this course, you will be working with a Graduate Research Consultant--Claire Chipman (cchipman@live.unc.edu). Claire is a graduate student in the Department of Sociology. She will help run some of the quantitative analysis labs in class and be available to advise you on the analyses you will be doing for your group research project. The GRC Program is sponsored by the Office for Undergraduate Research (<http://our.unc.edu>), and you may be able to use this research-exposure course to meet a requirement of the Carolina Research Scholars Program (<http://our.unc.edu/students/crsp>). We encourage you to visit the OUR website to learn about how you might further engage in research, scholarship and creative performance while you are at Carolina.

Honor Code

The University Honor Code is in effect for all written assignments and exams. Please read the provisions of the Honor Code carefully, and make certain that you understand and follow them. Violations of the Code will not be tolerated.


You can view the Honor Code online -- <http://honor.unc.edu/>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date		Topic	Selected Readings, Assignments, and Activities	
Aug	22	T	Welcome & Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting on faith [videorecording]: women's new religious activism in America produced and directed by Rachel Antell, narrated by Dr. Diana L. Eck. (<i>watch first half in class</i>)
	24	TH	Arguments and evidence in the study of women and religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glass, Jennifer and Jerry Jacobs. 2005. "Childhood religious conservatism and adult attainment among black and white women." <i>Social Forces</i> 84(1): 555. Beaman, Lori G. 2001. "Molly Mormons, Mormon feminists and moderates: religious diversity and the Latter Day Saints Church." <i>Sociology of Religion</i> 62(1): 65-86.
	29	T	"Woman" as universal object: complexifying the category	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McQueeney, Krista. "We are God's Children, Y'all: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Lesbian- and Gay-Affirming Congregations." <i>Social Problems</i> 56 (1):151-73 Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 104.3 (2002): 783-790.
	31	TH	"Religion" beyond scriptures and male authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orsi, Robert. 1998. "'He Keeps Me Going': Women's Devotion to St. Jude Thaddeus and the Dialectics of Gender in American Catholicism, 1929-1965". In <i>Religion in American History: A Reader</i>, edited by Jon Butler and Harry Stout. Oxford University Press, pp. 441-467. Lawless, Elaine. 1991. "Rescripting Their Lives: Spiritual Life Stories of Pentecostal Women Preachers" <i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>. Vol 7 (1): 53-71. Watch Alaa Murabit's TEDTalk 2015 "What my religion really says about women." 12 minutes.
Sep	5	T	Statistical reasoning: Jewish women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DellaPergola, S. (2000) "Jewish Women in Transition: A Comparative Sociodemographic Perspective", in J. Frankel (ed.), <i>Studies in Contemporary Jewry</i>, 16. New York, Oxford University Press, 209-242.

	7	TH	Ethnographies of agency I: Ultra-Orthodox Jewish women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> El-Or, Tamar. 1994. <i>Educated and Ignorant: Ultraorthodox Jewish Women and Their World</i>. pp. 1-87
	12	T	Ethnographies of agency II: Ultra-Orthodox Jewish women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> El-Or, Tamar. 1994. <i>Educated and Ignorant: Ultraorthodox Jewish Women and Their World</i>. pp. 89-133 <p>🚩 Due: A paragraph describing a research question regarding religion and women</p>
	14	TH	Methodology focus: ethnographic participant-observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frederick, Marla. 2003. <i>Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith</i>. "Introduction" (pp. 1-29) Emerson, Robert. <i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i> (chapters 2-3, pp. 17-65)
	19	T	Visual arguments and modes of evidence: Ultra-Orthodox Jewish women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evening Film Screening (Monday 9/18 @ 7pm in Undergrad library 205): <i>Kadosh</i> (117 minutes). Reading TBA <p>GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Yaron Shemer, Dept. of Asian Studies, UNC</p>
	21	TH	A filmic rebuttal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evening film screening (Tuesday, 9/19 @ 7pm in Undergrad library 205): <i>Ha-Ushpizin</i> (92 minutes)
	26	T	Gender, kinship, and sexuality among high caste Hindus in Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bennett, Lynn. 1983. <i>Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters: Social and Symbolic Roles of High Caste Women in Nepal</i>. New York: Columbia University Press. (chapters 1-3)
	28	TH	Gender, kinship, and sexuality among high caste Hindus in Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bennett, Lynn. 1983. <i>Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters: Social and Symbolic Roles of High Caste Women in Nepal</i>. New York: Columbia University Press. (chapters 4-6)
Oct	2		Assignment Due at 5pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DUE 10/2 at 5pm: Participant-Observation and Fieldnotes exercise
	3	T	Methods Lab: Ethnographic participant-observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In class: discussion of participant-observation and fieldwork exercise
	5	TH	Dharma and power in Hindu scripture and on TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wikipedia. "Draupadi" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draupadi Mankekar, Purnima. "Television Tales and a Woman's Rage: A Nationalist Recasting of Draupadi's 'Disrobing'" <i>Public Culture</i>. Spring 1993 5(3): 469-486 (Note- the essay ends on page 492. You may feel free to skip the conclusion.)
	10	T	The question of empowerment: considering assumptions and indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leve, Lauren. 2007. "'Failed Development' and Rural Revolution in Nepal: Rethinking Subaltern Consciousness

				<p>and Women’s Empowerment.” <i>Anthropological Quarterly</i>. 80(1): 127-172.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malhotra, Anju and Sidney Ruth Schuler. “Women’s empowerment as a variable in international development” In <i>Measuring empowerment: Cross-disciplinary perspectives</i>. Deepa Narayan, ed.. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank. pp. 71-88 https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/7441 License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.”
	12	TH	UNIVERSITY DAY	No Class
	17	T	Methodology focus: Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charmaz, Kathy. Chapter 3 of <i>Constructing Grounded Theory</i>. Sage, 2014.
	19	TH	Fall Break	No class
	24	T	Methodology focus: Quantitative data analysis I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis in Babbie, E. 2014. <i>The Basics of Social Research</i>. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
	26	Th	Women and Christianity the U.S.: contemporary evangelicals, families, and gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uecker, J. and L. Pearce. 2017. “Conservative Protestantism and Horizontal Stratification in Education: The Case of College Selectivity.” <i>Social Forces</i> 1-29.
	31	T	Library orientation	<p>🚩 Due: Interview transcript and reflection</p>
Nov	2	TH	Faith, race and struggle in Halifax County, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frederick, Marla. 2003. <i>Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith</i>. (pages 30-127)
	7	T	Faith, race and struggle in Halifax County, NC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frederick, Marla. 2003. <i>Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith</i>. Berkeley and LA: University of California Press. (pages 131-220) <p>🚩 Due: Literature Review and Research Question/s</p>
	9	TH	Methodology focus: Qualitative data analysis II (Coding and analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saldaña J. 2013. “Chap 1: An Introduction to Codes and Coding.” <i>The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers</i>. Los Angeles: Sage. • Ryan G and Bernard R. 2003. “Techniques to Identify Themes.” <i>Field Methods</i> 15:85-109.
	14	T	Methodology focus: Qualitative data analysis III (Coding and Analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new readings <p>🚩 Due: Qualitative & Quantitative Data Analysis Memos</p>
	16	TH	Methods Lab I	Supervised work on class project (quantitative and qualitative data analysis)

	21	T	Methods Lab II	Supervised work on class project (quantitative and qualitative data analysis)
	23	TH	Thanksgiving	No class
	28	T	Women, agency and Islam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faust, Kimberly et al. 1993. "Young Women Members of the Islamic Revival Movement in Egypt" <i>Muslim World</i>. 82:55-64 • Mahmood, Saba. 2005. <i>Politics of Piety</i>, (Chapter 3-- Pedagogies of Persuasion), pp. 79-113 (Note: the chapter ends on p. 117; however, the required reading ends at p. 113)
	30	TH	Women, agency and Islam (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, J. N. G. (2007). More of a Bridge than a Gap: Gender Differences in Arab-American Political Engagement. <i>Social Science Quarterly</i>, 88(5), 1072-1091.
Dec	4	M	Research Forum (6-8pm)	Presentation of Research Results
Dec	5	T	Final Class	Wrap Up and Overview  Due: Group Research Paper