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HSSP 2580 Women and Religious Leadership  
Spring, 2007  
Tuesdays 7:10-9:30 FST Classroom

This course is an intermediate course exploring the history of women in leadership roles within Christianity. Methodologically, the course explores the topic of how women have achieved leadership roles throughout Christian history, therefore the lectures will be historical in nature and students will be expected to use historical method in their analyses. There will be ample room for student-generated input based on experience and research. In fact, students must anticipate being active co-creators of this course, since the topic is too broad for any single professor to teach in a comprehensive way.

Required Textbooks

Beverly Kienzle and Pamela Walker, eds. *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christian History*  
Patricia O'Connell Killen, *Finding our Voices*  
Barbara Brown Taylor, *Leaving Church. A Memoir of Faith*  
Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women were Priests*

The goals of this class are:

1. to develop an understanding of historical method and a historical approach to studying Christianity from the perspective of women's roles
2. to help make the distant past relevant to the present practice of the Christian faith
3. to develop oral presentation skills
4. to develop research skills, specifically in the discipline of history
5. to develop critical analysis of the Christian faith through the discipline of history

Grade is based on class participation including short oral presentations and short one-page thesis statements of works read for class discussion (35%); Take Home Midterm Exam (15%); Final Project (written and oral) 50%. The length of the Final Paper depends on the degree program you're in: Special Student and M. Div. 15 pages; MTS 20 pages; MA and Ph.D. 25-30 pages. (n.b. If you're in a ministerial degree program, think in terms of a project that you will be able to use in the future.) The Oral presentations should be about 20 minutes in length with 10 minutes for questions and discussion. The expectation is that these are professional quality oral presentations: well-organized; clear; engaging; with appropriate visual aids (short video clips; slides; overheads; PowerPoint, etc.)

**Jan . 30 Naming the Women Leaders in the Christian Faith**

Defining Leadership

How do we learn of women leaders?

How do we teach about women leaders?

Film Clips: Jesus Camp; Thea Bowman addressing American Council of Catholic Bishops

**Feb. 6 Ordination: The Goal or the Problem?**

To Prepare:

Critically read and be prepared to discuss Torjesen's *When Women were Priests*

Write and turn in a one-page statement of Torjesen's Thesis and argument (i.e. how does she prove or demonstrate her thesis)

**Feb. 13: Researching Historically**

Class will meet in GTU Library Computer Lab

To Prepare:

Read and consider how to implement in your own research for this class the handout on research and writing found at:

<http://courseweb.fst.edu/pryds/Study/research.pdf>

Read and consider how you will use the Template for notetaking found at:

<http://courseweb.fst.edu/pryds/Study/notes.pdf>

Bring to class three ideas of possible research paper subject areas

You will be asked to submit by the end of class a list of 5 scholarly books; 3 scholarly articles; 3 book reviews; one website; one movie on a possible area of research that will become the center of your research paper.

**Feb. 20: Guest Presentation and The Marys**

Guest Presentation: Katherine Kunz (former student in this class) and the Potential of Research Projects: "The Monastery of St. Gertrude: Benedictine Spirituality and the Land"

Historical Manipulations of Women about whom little is known.

To Prepare: Read Part One, Chapters 1-3 in Kienzle and Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets*

Bring in and be prepared to share one of your favorite images of Mary, mother of Jesus. To the best of your ability, explain the source and origins of the image, and share why the image is meaningful to you.

**Feb. 27: Medieval Women: Cloistered and Mendicant Modes of Leadership**

Anchoresses: Caged Women Leaders

Letter Writing: Catherine of Siena

Monasticism: Leadership Communities Behind the Walls

To Prepare: Read Kienzle and Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets*, chapters 6-9

Handout in class: Letter of Catherine of Siena

Film Clip: *The anchoress; The Nun's Story*

### **Mar. 6: The Active Approach**

Women Preachers

Redefining Preaching

Vita Apostolica, Beguines, Humiliati, 3<sup>rd</sup> Order

Heresy and the Marginalization of Women

To Prepare: Read Kienzle and Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets*, ch. 4-5

Handout: Passages from Joan of Arc's Inquisitorial Trial

Film Clip: *Joan of Arc*

### **Mar. 13 Reformation and the Place of Women in Church Communities**

Some scholars have argued that the status of women declined with the Protestant Reformation. We will assess this thesis in today's class.

To Prepare: Read Kienzle and Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets*, ch. 10-13

### **Mar. 20 Notions of Holiness and Story Telling**

Today's class will look at how a woman's reputation of holiness positively and negatively have affected a woman's ability to lead in late medieval through early modern Christian History. We will look at hagiography as a genre of text used by historians and we will explore story telling as a prominent means by which women's reputations are made or broken.

To Prepare: Read O'Connell Killen, *Finding Our Voices*

Optional: Be prepared to tell a story of a holy woman.

Assignment for Take Home Exam will be handed out in class. Due in class on Tuesday, April 2.

### **March 27: Reading Week/ No Class**

**Apr. 3** Discussion of Killen, *Finding Our Voices*

Take Home Exam Due

### **Apr. 10: Burnout: The Struggles of Women Today in Leadership**

Roundtable discussion of Local Religious Leaders [*class participants will help plan this event!*]

To Prepare: Read B.B. Taylor, *Leaving Church*

**Apr. 17: Modern Women and their Fight to Find Spaces of Leadership**

To Prepare: Read Kienzle and Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets*, ch. 14-17

Read:

Film Clip: Entertaining Angels

**Apr. 24 Student Presentations**

**May 1: Student Presentations**

**May 8: NO CLASS MEETING**

**May 15: Student Presentations and Conclusions**

All Term Papers are due in class today. No Exceptions.