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**HSSP 2580 Women and Religious Leadership**  
**Spring, 2003**  
**Revised**

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*  
Catherine Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America*  
Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women were Priests*

A Reader of selected articles and primary texts is available at Copy Central on Hearst.

Grade is based on Class Participation (20%); Take Home Midterm Exam (15%); Oral Report on Interview with a female religious leader (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. 10 pages; MTS 15 pages; MA and Ph.D. 20 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.)

**Feb. 4 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: *Elizabeth*

### **Feb. 11 Virginity and Christian Leadership**

A Very Long History...Chastity and Religious Leadership

Read: Early Fathers on Virginity; Freedom from Social Expectations; Freedom from Gender Identification; A Woman as Leader of Men: Joan of Arc;" "True Lies: Transvestism and Idolotry" (In Reader)

Film Clips: *Joan of Arc; The anchoress* [vowed virginity]

### **Feb. 18: Ordination: The Ultimate in Leadership?**

This class will focus on the historical argument presented by Torjesen; be prepared to discuss the topic of women's ordination historically.

Read: Torjesen, When Women Were Priests

Film Clip: *Elizabeth; The Nun's Story* [consecration scenes]

### **Feb. 25: Female Models and Challenges of Religious Leadership**

Challenges women still face with finding appropriate voices.

Read: O'Connell Killen, Finding Our Voice

Film Clip: *The Sorceress; Elizabeth* [claiming a voice to be heard]

### **Mar 4: Privatized Leadership**

One-on-One Ministry

Anchoresses: Caged Women

Letter Writing: Catherine of Siena

Monasticism: Behind the Walls

Read: Coakley Article; Letters of Catherine of Siena (In Reader); B. Newman, "Authority, Authenticity, and the Repression of Heloise" (In Reader)

Film Clip: *The Anchoress; The Trouble with Angels; The Nun's Story* [finding forms of discipline alone and in community]

### **Mar. 11: The Active Approach**

Women Preachers

Redefining Preaching

Vita Apostolica, Beguines, Humiliati, Devotio Moderna, 3rd Order

Kienzle and Walker, Women Preachers and Prophets (The chapters will be divided so each student presents one chapter)

*Film Clip:* Thea Bowman [giving voice to personal conviction]

**Mar. 18 Women Preachers, cont.**

Women preachers, speakers, etc.

Film Clip: *Gods of Time Square* [street preachers]

**Mar. 18 Story Telling**

Tell a Story of a Holy Woman

**March 25: Reading Week/ No Class**

**Apr. 1 Take Home Exam Due: Book Review of Catherine Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims***

Discussion of *Strangers and Pilgrims*

**Film Clip: Your Pick** [please email dpryds@fst.edu if you plan to bring in a film clip. Let me know what the film is and how long the clip is]

**Apr. 8: Reports on Interview with Female Religious Leader**

**Film Clip: Your Pick** [please email dpryds@fst.edu if you plan to bring in a film clip. Let me know what the film is and how long the clip is]

**Apr. 15: Communitarian Leadership and the Seeking for Utopia**

Historical Case: Beguines; Sojourner Truth; Mormon Women; Shakers; Twin Oaks Community

Read: Articles from Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the U.S. (In Reader)

Film Clip: *Entertaining Angels*

**Apr. 22 Student Presentations**

**Apr. 29 Student Presentations**

**May 6 Student Presentations**

**May 13 Now Let's Name the Women Leaders Again**