

IPT/TH 5/720 (3 credits) Gender and Sexuality in Religious Traditions (Topics in Interfaith Engagement), Spring 2023

Instructor: Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan-Kaplan

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Office hours during term: T,W, Th 1:00-5:00 pm & by appointment

Purpose: Today's spiritual leaders will confront urgent questions about gender and sexuality. These affect our experience of our own traditions as well as our perception of other traditions. In this introductory course, we will focus on three issues within Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Indigenous communities. (1) Sacred stories about the first human beings and their implication for gender norms. (2) Traditions, theologies, and teachings used to support or condemn full LGBTQ2+ participation in religious life. (3) Diversity of women's roles in spiritual community. As we explore the issues using theological language, we will be mindful of each tradition's unique history, view of God, and reliance on religious law. Students will also consider their own leadership roles in addressing these issues within their communities of faith and in inter-religious dialogue.

Competence Objectives: Students will be expected to learn and demonstrate the ability to:

- Define basic concepts in gender studies (e.g., human rights, gender, stereotypes, intersectionality, feminisms, equality vs. equity)
- Explain questions about gender raised in human origin stories from Torah, Quran, and Haida traditions, along with selected multiple answers offered in the traditions
- Summarize key debates about LGBTQ2+ participation as expressed in the particular language and contemporary social context of the four traditions
- Understand some contemporary discussions about religious roles of women in the four traditions, with sensitivity to multicultural contexts and inter-religious dialogue
- Integrate the knowledge into one's own leadership approach

Format: Thursdays, 6:00 pm–9:00 pm. Jan. 19, 26; Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23; Mar. 9, 16, 23, 30.

Identification of the levels at which the course can be taken: Audit, Certificate, Basic (Diploma/MA/M.Div) or Advanced (Th.M).

Required articles and chapters: Posted on Populi

Anderson, Kim. "Grandmothers and Elders" in *Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012.

Butler, Judith. "Acting in Concert" in *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Cohen-Almagor, Raphael. "Discrimination Against Women in Halacha (Jewish Law) and in Israel." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2016.

Dzmura, Noah. "The Literal and Metaphorical *Mechitza*" in *Balancing on the Mechitza: Transgender in Jewish Community*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010, loc. 115-256.

Haqqani, Silvers, Khaki, and Jackson, "Islam" in *Struggling in Good Faith: LGBTQI Inclusion from 13 American Religious Perspectives*, edited by Mychal Copeland and D'vorah Rose. Nashville, TN: Skylight Paths, 2015.

Chaudhry, Ayesha S. "Producing Gender-Egalitarian Islamic Law" in *Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition*, edited by Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Mulki al-Sharmani and Jana Rumminger. London: OneWorld Publications, 2015.

Cheng, Patrick S. "God: The Sending Forth of Radical Love" in *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology*. Plano, TX: Seabury Books, 2011.

DeLay, Tad. "Against Sexuality" in *Against: What Does the White Evangelical Want?* Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2019.

Greenberg, Steven. "Leviticus" in *Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality and the Jewish Tradition*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004.

Heath, Rachel A. "Lessons in Multifaith Chaplaincy and Feminist Thought: Making Room for Multiple Religious Belonging in Interfaith Praxis." *The Journal of Interreligious Studies*, March 2017.

Jewett, Paul. "The Argument that the Masculinity of God Entails a Male Order of Ministry in the Church" in *The Ordination of Women*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980.

Pui-lan, Kwok. "Gender and Interfaith Dialogue" in *Globalization, Gender, and Peacebuilding: The Future of Interfaith Dialogue*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012.

Mir, Mustansir, "The Story of Adam" in *Understanding the Islamic Scripture: A Study of Selected Passages from the Qur'an*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2008.

Pardes, Ilana. "Creation According to Eve" in *Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1993.

Plaskow, Judith and Elliot Kukla, "Remapping the Road from Sinai." In *Balancing on the Mechitza: Transgender in Jewish Community*, edited by Noach Dzmura. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010, 134-140.

Reid, Bill and Robert Bringhurst. "Raven Steals the Light" in *The Raven Steals the Light*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1988.

Rosemarie Tong and Tina Fernandes Botts, "Introduction" in *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, 5th edn. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Spatz, Virginia A. "Towards a Gender-Aware Approach to Abrahamic Dialogue." *Interreligious Dialogue* Number 9 (2012): Issue 9, 25-30.

Statistics Canada. "A Statistical Portrait of Canada's Diverse LGBTQ2+ Communities." <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>

Wadud, Amina. "The Qur'anic View of Women in This World" in *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Wilson, Alex. "First Nations" in *Struggling in Good Faith: LGBTQI Inclusion from 13 American Religious Perspectives*, edited by Mychal Copeland and D'vorah Rose. Nashville, TN: Skylight Paths, 2015.

Ziad, Amina. Selection from "American Women's Understandings of Hijab and Modesty." Honors thesis, Women's and Gender Studies (Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College), 2017.

Recommended reading: Additional short readings may be posted on Populi.

Recommended background readings:

If you are new to Judaism, Islam, or Christianity, please read the relevant chapters in this book: Prothero, Stephen. *God is Not One* (New York: HarperOne), 2011.

If you are new to Indigenous traditions, please read: Yellowhorn, Eldon and Kathy Lowinger, *Turtle Island: The Story of North America's First People*. Toronto: Annick Press, 2017.

Assignments: For all students:

- Attendance in accordance with VST policies
- Thoughtful, engaged participation in class discussion and activities
- Completion of assigned readings
- Current events in-class presentation: One five-minute in-class oral presentation on a relevant recent short news or opinion article. Suggested sites will be listed in class. Your presentation should (1) present the main point of the article; (2) Offer your response to it; (3) Close with a thought-provoking question to the class; (4) Last no more than five minutes. (If you write it out in advance, that's 500 words.) Each week where no guest speaker is scheduled, one or more students will present. A sign-up sheet will be distributed at the first class.

Additional for Certificate-level, Basic-level, and Advanced-level students:

- Book Review: One 750-1000 word book review of a book on the course's research bibliography [on Populi] or a related book of your choice. Your book review should (1) summarize the main points of the book; (2) explain how the book contributes to your growing knowledge of the field; (3) note something you appreciated; (3) note something you disagreed with, or thought could use more development. Book reviews will be made available to fellow students in class.

Additional for Basic-level students (MATS, M.Div, MAPPL, MAIIS, Diploma):

- Research Paper: A 3000-word research paper on a topic of the student's choice, demonstrating two or more of the course competencies, and involving research (5 sources) beyond the assigned course readings. (Due April 14 for graduating students; April 21 for all others. *For submissions after these dates, you will need a medical extension through the Dean's office.*)

Additional for Advanced-level students (Th.M., Graduate Diploma):

- Research Paper: A 5000-word research paper on a topic of the student's choice, demonstrating two or more of the course competencies, and involving significant research (10 sources) beyond the assigned course readings. (Due May 23.)

Prerequisites: None.