

Queer Studies from a Multireligious Perspective

HRRS-8421 Fall 2012

Starr King School for the Ministry, Graduate Theological Union

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Syllabus

Course Description

In an increasingly changing and globalized world, the intersection of religious and queer studies is vital for understanding the construction of identities. This online course is designed to introduce you to the place given to gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, the sexual division of labor and gender role expectations within world religions' theo(ideo)/logical discourses. Drawing from an interdisciplinary approach you will develop a self-critical perspective on the way that sacred texts and dogmatic corpus influence the lives and spiritual practices of queer individuals and communities. Together we will explore the mutual constitution of queerness and subjectivity of religious experiences and their social and political implications towards the deconstruction of stereotypes, power dynamics, and marginalization.

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

- (1) Be familiar with the different theoretical tools needed to analyze the intersection of queer and religious studies;
- (2) Identify theoretical concepts that allow us to understand the different theo(ideo)logical discourses and sacred texts interpretations pertaining queer issues; and
- (3) Examine the particular experiences related to gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, the sexual division of labor and gender role expectations within world religions and particular (ethnic) spiritualities.

Given the time limitation of the course (one semester) it would be impossible to provide extensive insight into every religion. The main goal of the course is to provide the students with tools and key information that would guide them into deepening certain aspects in their own research or specific studies.

Course Materials

All the course materials will be available for access at the GTU Moodle's course site. Due to GTU's compliance with fair use regulations, you will not be able to download the reading materials. Audio-visual materials will be posted whenever technical means make this possible.

Course Requirements and Grading

In order to pass this course you are expected to fulfill the following requirements:

1. **Posting your comments** and interacting with the other students by **responding to their interventions on the conversations** on the Moodle's course site. This is a way to engage in a collective processing of the topics by paying attention to what others think and to what you reflect on both the materials and your experiences. Although you are not required to always agree with your peers, respect and politeness are expected on these responses. Whenever possible, please use gender inclusive language. You are expected to interact a minimum of three times per week in the conversations in order to get your grade. You have the right to be absent three times from the class (equivalent to one week) throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, this assignment will count for thirty (30%) percent of the course grade

2. At the end of sections one and two, students will submit a three (3) pages reflection paper. This is due at the start of the first class of section 2 and of section 3. It is a **reflection paper** and **not a summary** of class materials. In other words, this is the product of your analysis, intuitions, concerns, and/or «thirst» for knowing more on the class topics. The goal of the reflection is to encourage you to begin articulating your own discourse by expressing your own concerns, voicing your agreement or disagreement with the authors' scholarly work, etc. Each of these assignments will count for fifteen (15%) percent of your final grade (30% total at the end of the semester).

3. During the last week of classes, you are required to **submit a final project**. The overall idea of the final project is show how you would communicate the topics studied and discussed in this class to an audience that is not academic (for example, by imagining how to present the class topics to your congregation, faith-based organization or place of activism). The project should make evident your own voice articulating a theological discourse by using the social science tools acquired in the course. I am open to different formats for your final project: series of sermons, extensive blog entries, research papers, literature and art, among other formats. This assignment will count for forty (40%) percent of your grade in the course.

Academic Conduct

Throughout the course you are expected and encouraged to maintain an academic environment. Respect for the opinion and right of expression of your fellow classmates is mandatory. Inclusive and non-discriminatory language is expected in spoken and written formats. Proper attribution must be given to all formats of production (written, visual, auditive). Whenever in doubt on how to proceed on this issue, please contact the instructor **before** you submit your materials.

Reading Assignments and class schedule

Virtual exposition: Fr. Robert Lentz, OFM, *Sacred Icons*, 16 works.

Section I: Intersecting theoretical tools

Week 1 (Sep 2-8): Queer Theory

Required materials

- ✓ Jagose, Annamarie. 1996. *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, pp. 72–100.
- ✓ Kemp, Jonathan. 2009. «Queer Past, Queer Present, Queer Future». *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 6, Special Issue 1: pp. 3–23.

Optional materials

- ✓ Halperin, David M. 2003. «The Normalization of Queer Theory.» *Journal of Homosexuality* 45, No. 2/3/4: pp. 339–343.
- ✓ Marinucci, Mimi. 2010. *Feminism is Queer: The Intimate Connection Between Queer and Feminist Theory*. London: Zed Books, pp. 29–38.
- ✓ Grimwood, Benjamin. 2011. «‘To Be [Queer] or Not to Be [Queer]’: The Paradox of ‘Constant Revision’ and the ‘Paraphilia’ as Case Study.» *Transverse* 11: pp. 38–47.

Week 2 (Sep 9-15): Religious Studies

Required materials

- ✓ Schippert, Claudia. 2011. «Implications of Queer Theory for the Study of Religion and Gender: Entering the Third Decade.» *Religion and Gender* 1, No. 1: pp. 66–84.
- ✓ Abraham, Ibrahim. 2007. «‘On the Doorstep of the Work’: Ricoeurian Hermeneutics, Queer Hermeneutics, and Scripture.» *The Bible and Critical Theory* 3, No. 1: pp. 4.1–4.12.

Optional materials

- ✓ Schippert, Claudia. 2005. «Queer Theory and the Study of Religion.» *REVER: Revista de Estudos da Religião* 4: pp. 90–99.
- ✓ Thiem, Annika. 2007. «No Gendered Bodies without Queer Desires: Judith Butler and Biblical Gender Trouble.» *Old Testament Essays* 20, No. 2: pp. 456–470.

Week 3 (Sep 16-22): Ethnic and (Post-)Colonial Studies

Required materials

- ✓ Punt, Jeremy. 2008. «Intersections in queer theory and postcolonial theory, and hermeneutical spin-offs.» *The Bible and Critical Theory* 4, No. 2: pp. 24.1–24.16.
- ✓ De Wald, Erich. 2001. «Theorizing the “Under-Theorized.”» In: *Postcolonial and Queer Theories: Intersections and Essays*, edited by John C. Hawley. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 173–196.

Optional materials

- ✓ Povinelli, Elizabeth A. And George Chauncey. 1999. «Thinking Sexuality Transnationally: An Introduction.» *GLQ* 5, No. 4: pp. 439–450.
- ✓ Nagel, Joane. 2000. «Ethnicity and Sexuality.» *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: pp. 107–133.
- ✓ Cohen, Cathy. 2011/2012. «Death and Rebirth of a Movement: Queering Critical Ethnic Studies.» *Social Justice* 37, No. 4: pp. 126–132.

Section II: Queer Studies and Religions

Week 4 (Sep 23-29): Christianity

Required materials

- ✓ Jordan, Mark D. 2007. «God’s Body.» In: *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, ed. Gerard Loughlin. Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 281–292.
- ✓ Cheng, Patrick S. 2010. «Rethinking Sin and Grace for LGBT People Today.» In: *Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection*, edited by Marvin M. Ellison and Kelly Brown Douglas. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, pp. 105–118.

Optional materials

- ✓ Althaus-Reid, Marcella. 2005. «From Liberation Theology to Indecent Theology: The Trouble with Normality in Theology.» In: *Latin American Liberation Theology: The Next Generation*, edited by Ivan Petrella. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, pp. 20–38.
- ✓ Wilcox, Melissa M. 2002. «When Sheila’s a Lesbian: Religious Individualism among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Christians.» *Sociology of Religion* 63, No. 4 (Winter): pp. 497–513.

Assignment: Submission of reflection paper #1.

Week 5 (Sep 30 - Oct 6): Judaism

Required materials

- ✓ Boyarin, Daniel. 2007. «Against Rabbinic Sexuality: Textual Reasoning and the Jewish Theology of Sex.» In: *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*, edited by Gerard Loughlin. Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 131–146.
- ✓ Michaelson, Jay. 2009. «On the Religious Significance of Homosexuality; or, Queering God, Torah, and Israel.» In: *The Passionate Torah: Sex and Judaism*, edited by Danya Ruttenberg. New York: New York University Press, pp. 212–224.

Optional materials

- ✓ Greenberg, Steven. 2004. *Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 217–261.
- ✓ Alves, Andrea Moraes. 2010. «Identity, Judaism and Homosexuality: Two Stories About Belonging.» *Vibrant* 7, No. 1: pp. 78–102.

Week 6 (Oct 7-13): Islam

Required materials

- ✓ Čvorović, Jelena. 2006. «Islamic Homosexuality.» *Antropologija* 1: pp. 85–103.
- ✓ Hendricks, Muhsin. 2010. «Islamic Texts: A Source for Acceptance of Queer Individuals into Mainstream Muslim Society.» *The Equal Rights Review* 5: pp. 31–51.
- ✓ Shannahan, Dervla Sara. 2010. «Some Queer Questions from a Muslim Faith Perspective.» *Sexualities* 13, No. 6: 671–684.

Optional materials

- ✓ Minwalla, Omar, B. R. Simon Rosser, Jamie Feldman and Christine Varga. 2005. «Identity Experience among Progressive Gay Muslims in North America: A Qualitative Study within Al-Fatiha.» *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 7, No. 2 (March): pp. 113–128.
- ✓ Abraham, Ibrahim. 2007. «The Veil and the Closet: Islam and the Production of Queer Space.» Proceedings of the Conference «Queer Space: Centres and Peripheries», University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Sydney, Australia, February 20–21, pp. 1–6.
- ✓ Kligerman, Nicole. 2007. «Homosexuality in Islam: A Difficult Paradox.» *Macalester Islam Journal* 2, No. 3: pp. 52–64.

Week 7 (Oct 14-20): Buddhism

Required materials

- ✓ Shore-Goss, Robert. 2011. «Queer Buddhists: Re-visiting Sexual Gender Fluidity.» In: *Queer Religion: Homosexuality in Modern Religious History*, edited by

Donald L. Boisvert and Jay Emerson Johnson. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, pp. 25–50.

- ✓ Scherer, Burkhard. 2006. «Gender Transformed and Meta-gendered Enlightenment: Reading Buddhist Narratives as Paradigms of Inclusiveness.» *REVER Revista de Estudos da Religião* 3: pp. 65–76.
- ✓ Maher, Colleen. 2010. «Unanswered Questions Buddhism and Homosexuality.» *Voices* 1 (Spring): pp. 19–26.

Optional materials

- ✓ MacPhillamy, Daizui. 2003. «Can Gay and Lesbian People Train in Buddhism?» *Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives* (Spring): pp. 1–11.
- ✓ Wilson, Jeff. 2012. «“All Beings are Equally Embraced by Amida Buddha”: Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and Same-Sex Marriage in the United States.» *Journal of Global Buddhism* 13: pp. 31–59.

Week 8 (Oct 21-27): Reading Week

Week 9 (Oct 28 - Nov 3): Hinduism

Required materials

- ✓ Hunt, Stephen J. (2011). «Conservative Hindu reactions to non-heterosexual rights in India.» *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 3, No. 9: pp. 318–327.
- ✓ Vanita, Ruth. 2009. «Same-Sex Weddings, Hindu Traditions, and Modern India.» *Feminist Review* 91: pp. 47–60.

Optional materials

- ✓ Bacchetta, Paola. 1999. «When the (Hindu) Nation Exiles Its Queers.» *Social Text* 61 (Winter): pp. 141–166.
- ✓ Penrose, Walter. 2001. «Hidden in History: Female Homoeroticism and Women of a “Third Nature” in the South Asian Past.» *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, No. 1 (January): pp. 3–39.

Week 10 (Nov 4-10): Paganism

Required materials

- ✓ Neitz, Mary Jo. 2000. «Queering the Dragonfest: Changing Sexualities in a Post-Patriarchal Religion.» *Sociology of Religion* 61, No. 4 (Winter): pp. 369–391.
- ✓ Kraemer, Christine Hoff. 2012. «Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Paganism.» *Religion Compass* 6, No. 8: pp. 390–401.

Optional materials

- ✓ Roscoe, Will. 1996. «Priests of the Goddess: Gender Transgression in Ancient

Religion.» *History of Religions* 35, No. 3 (February): pp. 195–230.

- ✓ Green, David. 2012. «What Men Want? Initial Thoughts on the Male Goddess Movement.» *Religion and Gender* 2, No. 2: pp. 305–327.

Section III: Queer Spiritualities

Week 11 (Nov 11-17): Queer Asian/Asian-American Spiritualities

Required materials

- ✓ Cheng, Patrick S. 2011. «The Rainbow Connection: Bridging Asian American and Queer Theologies.» *Theology and Sexuality* 17, No. 3 (September): pp. 235–264.
- ✓ Goh, Joseph N. 2013. «Nyah–Islam: The Reconstruction of God and Institutional Islam by Malaysian Male-to-Female Transsexuals.» In *God's Image* (forthcoming).
- ✓ Shrake, Eunai. 2009. «Homosexuality and Korean Immigrant Protestant Churches.» In: *Embodying Asian/American Sexualities*, edited by Gina Masequesmay and Sean Metzger. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 145–156.

Optional materials

- ✓ Wong, Yuenmei. 2012. «Islam, Sexuality, and the Marginal Positioning of *Pengkids* and Their Girlfriends in Malaysia.» *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 16: pp.1–14.
- ✓ Kwok, Pui-Lan. 2007. «Asian and Asian American Churches» In: *Homosexuality and Religion: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Jeffrey S. Siker. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 59–62.

Assignment: Submission of reflection paper #2.

Week 12 (Nov 18-24): Queer Latin-American / Latina/o Spiritualities

Required materials

- ✓ Althaus-Reid, Marcella. 1999. «On Wearing Skirts Without Underwear: Indecent Theology Challenging the Liberation Theology of the Pueblo. Poor Women Contesting Christ.» *Feminist Theology* 7, No. 20: pp. 39–51.
- ✓ Nickoloff, James B. 2003. «Sexuality: A Queer Omission in U.S. Latino/a Theology.» *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 10, No. 3: pp. 31–51.
- ✓ Ribas, Mario. 2006. «Liberating Mary, Liberating the Poor.» In: *Liberation Theology and Sexuality*, edited by Marcella Althaus-Reid. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, pp. 123–135.

Optional materials

- ✓ Lara, Irene. 2008. «Goddess of the Américas in the Decolonial Imaginary:

Beyond the Virtuous Virgen/Pagan Puta Dichotomy.» *Feminist Studies* 34, No. 1/2 (Spring - Summer): pp. 99–127.

- ✓ Latorre, Guisela. 2008. «Icons of Love and Devotion: Alma López's Art.» *Feminist Studies* 34, No. 1/2 (Spring - Summer): pp. 131–150.

Week 13 (Nov 25 - Dec 1): Queer African/African-American Spiritualities

Required materials

- ✓ Kornegay, EL Jr. 2004. «Queering Black Homophobia: Black Theology as a Sexual Discourse of Transformation.» *Theology & Sexuality* 11, No. 1: pp. 29–51.
- ✓ Punt, Jeremy. 2006. «Using the Bible in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Its Influence and Impact Amidst the Gay Debate.» *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 62, No. 3: pp. 885–907.
- ✓ Jeffries, William L., Brian Dodge, and Theo G. M. Sandfort. 2008. «Religion and Spirituality Among Bisexual Black Men in the USA. » *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 10, No. 5 (June): pp. 463–477.

Optional materials

- ✓ Bryant, Larry, and Lorenzo Bowman. 2011. «The Role of Spirituality in the Lives of Black Same Gender Loving Men at Midlife.» Proceedings of the «52nd Annual Adult Education Research Conference,» University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, June 10-12, pp. 70–75.
- ✓ Betts, Elana C. 2012. «Black Lesbian Spirituality: Hearing Our Stories.» Proceedings of the «53rd Annual Adult Education Research Conference,» State University of New York (SUNY), Saratoga Springs, NY, June 1–3, pp. 32–40.

Week 14 (Dec 2-8): Queer Native (South/North)American Spiritualities

Required materials

- ✓ Roscoe, Will. 1999. «We'wha and Klah: The American Indian Berdache as Artist and Priest.» In: *Que(e)rying Religion: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gary David Comstock and Susan E. Henking. New York: Continuum, pp. 89–106.
- ✓ Bacigalupo, Ana Mariella. 2004. «The Mapuche Man Who Became a Woman Shaman: Selfhood, Gender Transgression, and Competing Cultural Norms.» *American Ethnologist* 31, No. 3 (August): pp. 440–457.
- ✓ Driskill, Qwo-Li. 2010. «Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native and Queer Studies.» *GLQ* 16, Nos. 1–2: pp. 69–92.

Optional materials

- ✓ Epple, Carolyn. 1998. «Coming to Terms with Navajo “Nádleehí”: A Critique of “Berdache,” “Gay,” “Alternate Gender,” and “Two-Spirit.”» *American Ethnologist* 25, No. 2 (May): pp. 267–290.
- ✓ Greensmith, Cameron and Sulaimon Giwa. 2013. «Challenging Settler Colonialism in Contemporary Queer Politics: Settler Homonationalism, Pride

Toronto, and Two-Spirit Subjectivities.» *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37, No. 2: pp. 129–148.

- ✓ Pape, Kyle. 2013. «Between Queer Theory and Native Studies: A Potential for Collaboration.» In: *Queering Paradigms 3: Queer Impact and Practices*, edited by Kathleen O'Mara and Liz Morrish. Oxford: Peter Lang, pp. 63–92.

Week 15 (Dec 9-13): Wrapping-up

Assignment: Submission of final project.



Kurt Löwenstein Educational Center International Team (2006) - *Religious Diversity*
Source: Wiki Commons