

**Gonzaga-in-Florence Summer 2009**  
**RELI385/WOMS355: Feminist Theologies**  
**Dr. C. Siejk**

Pre-requisites: RELI 100 and 200  
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**Course Description**

This course introduces students to liberation theology understood as a new way of doing Christian theology that begins with the revelation of God in peoples' concrete lives. The focus of our study shall be on the work of Christian feminist theologians in the United States, Latin America and Africa who not only critique conventional ways of doing theology but also challenge the way in which contemporary Christians think about faith, theology, and God. We shall trace the work of feminist theologians as they interpret Scripture, reclaim and revision conventional Christian symbols, and reconstruct concepts of Christian theology such as the Trinity, sin, and Jesus. Special attention shall be given to examining the role of women in the community around Jesus especially his mother Mary. We will draw on the churches and artwork of Florence and other sites to enrich the students' in class learning.

**Objectives**

- To introduce students to Liberation theology.
- To introduce students to the work of various first and third world feminist and womanist theologians.
- To show students the relevance of liberation theology to the conditions of contemporary life and the relevance of Christian faith for present thinking and living.
- To provide students with the basic tools they need to think theologically

**Format**

This course employs elements of feminist pedagogy and, therefore, emphasis is placed on the personal and on collective learning. Ordinarily classes will include background presentation (for putting the theme and reading of the day in the context of the wider study), discussion and group process. Class participation is highly encouraged. Students should be prepared for each class meeting by doing the assigned reading and anything else suggested by the professor in order to be ready for that day's work. Preparation expresses your commitment to the idea that everyone is responsible for the quality of the course and your willingness to do your share.

**Required Readings**

- Beyond Patching.* Sandra Schneiders
- Truly Our sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints.* Elizabeth Johnson
- Introducing Feminist Theology.* Anne Clifford
- Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens: Feminist Theology in Third World Perspective* ed. L. Russell, K. Pui-lan, A. Isasi-Diaz, K. Cannon.
- Xeroxed articles

## **Class Requirements**

Students are expected to attend class regularly, to do the assigned readings and actively participate in class discussion. Other assignments include:

1. Church visits followed by a paper and classroom presentation.
2. Three in class exams
3. Writing assignments and quizzes as needed

### Breakdown of Final Grade

Church visit papers and presentation=40%

Exams=60%

### **Course Calendar** (some revisions may be made throughout the semester)

Week #1 **Setting the stage.** Topics include:

What is theology?

What is feminism?

How can we understand patriarchy and oppression?

Week #2: **Doing theology from the feminist perspective.** Topics include: What are feminist theologies?

Who are Womanist and Mujerista theologians?

What are some of the accomplishments and failures of Feminist/Womanist theologies?

Week #3 How **feminists are revisioning and recreating some basic Christian teachings.** Topics include: How do feminist theologians approach the Bible?

Who is God according to feminist theologians?

Understanding the Christian God as relational

Week #4 **Remembering Mary and her sisters.** Topics include:

Who are the Women in Jesus' life?

Who is Mary, the Mother of Jesus and what does she mean to contemporary people?

Week #5: **What are feminists in Latin America and Africa offering to the conversation of Christian theology?**

Week #6: **Feminist Christian spirituality and other non- Christian voices.** Topics include: Who is the Goddess?