I. Course Description

What do Christian texts have to do with “it” – the construction of today’s social values and norms, that is? How much of their teachings have we maintained? What have we changed? This course will explore the cultural constructions of gender and sexuality in various New Testament and other early Christian writings. In dialogue with the interdisciplinary field of gender studies (including feminist theory and criticism and masculinity studies) we will analyze texts that illustrate that gender and sexuality were interrelated categories in early Christian literature. We will explore topics such as male and female roles/relations, gendered representations of God, eroticism, and virginity, etc. Interested yet? We will also deal with the “So What?” question: Why does it matter? Button-pushing conversations about women’s leadership in religious settings, violence against women and other “other-ed” individuals, and homosexuality (to name a few), should do the trick. You be the judge.

II. Course Objectives

- To explore the construction of gender and sexuality in Early Christian literature.
- To examine texts in their ancient contexts, and engage in literary and rhetorical inquiry, considering questions such as how, why, and for whom these texts were written.
- To critically reflect upon the ways in which these texts have impacted modern understandings of gender roles, and discuss hot topics such as eroticism, homosexuality, sexism, marriage, and divorce.
- To learn to read these texts closely, critically, and constructively, all the while considering that context matters in (biblical) interpretation.

III. Required Texts

*The only required text is a bible.* We will use the *New Revised Standard Version*. Students are encouraged to use Harold W. Attridge, ed. *The Harper Collins Study Bible*. New Revised Standard Version (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006). [ISBN: 978-0060786854] However, other acceptable NRS translations that provide study notes developed for the academic study of the Bible, such as the *Oxford Annotated Study Bible* or the *New Interpreter’s Study Bible*, are acceptable. *Please be sure to bring a Bible to every class.*

All other reading material will either be on reserve or distributed.

Students will be expected to read some material in preparation for the first day of class. (Class schedule and readings for first class will be available one week before start date.)
IV. Recommended Texts
The following books are recommended. Students may wish to purchase them for their personal libraries.


V. Course Requirements and Assessments

A. Presence, Participation, and Preparation (20% of Final Grade)

   This is a one-week intensive course. **Regular attendance at all class sessions and active participation in discussions are expected.** If you are unable to attend a class session, please notify the professor in advance or at the earliest opportunity. Please plan to arrive promptly to class, and stay for its duration. **It is also important that students return promptly after class breaks.** Your presence is necessary and important for maximal learning for everyone. **Missing one day** of class will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by a full letter.
grade (A to B; A- to B-; B+ to C+; B, B-, or C+ to C; and C to F). **Missing two or more** days of class will result in automatic failure of the course.

Be ready to ask questions and participate in discussions in a positive and constructive way. Rich, critical dialogue occurs when we discuss, debate, and consider the texts and various issues as a collective. Care should be taken when speaking; however, to make sure that everyone (including the less talkative ones) gets an opportunity to engage.

**B. Five Presentations (total 30% of Final Grade)**

Students will do **four 5-6 minute presentations (5% each)**, and **one 10-15 minute presentation (10%)**.

The **first four** will be based on the reading assignments. These presentations will be used to facilitate class discussion. **Presenters, that is, discussion leaders, should prepare 3 open-ended questions based on the reading to prompt discussion. (These may be collected.) She or he should also be ready to summarize the main points of the written work.** Every student is responsible, however, for the material.

The **last presentation** (to be done on the last day of class) will provide students with an opportunity to share their final paper topics with one another. **Students will present a working thesis, a preliminary outline for how their paper will develop, and major sources to be incorporated. A written copy of this information should be turned in on the day of the presentation.** Presenters will not only be questioned about their work, but will also have the opportunity to ask questions concerning its development.

Sign-up sheet to be distributed on the first day of class.

**C. Final Paper (50% of Final Grade)**

For the final, students will write a **research paper** on a topic or biblical passage related to this course. The paper should include references to primary texts discussed in class. In addition to some of the readings from the course, the paper must also incorporate **at least five works (including journal articles if available)** which were not assigned. **Paper topics must be approved by the instructor.**

Quality papers will show evidence of having been thoroughly researched. Include **properly formatted footnotes** (or some other standard form of documentation, such as author-date-page references inserted parenthetically in the main text) to acknowledge your debts to the scholarly literature that you use. **Avoid plagiarism.** At the end of the paper, include a **bibliography of works cited**, also correctly formatted.

Direct quotations are to be kept to a minimum, however. It is **your voice** that I want to hear in these papers. Although papers will need to be informed by scholarly opinion, students are encouraged to determine and state their position in relation to it. In other words, do you agree or disagree, and why?
Paper specifications:

- **Length:** between 1,500 and 1,750 words for Masters/Certificate students; between 2,000 and 2,500 words for PhD/DMin students. (Word limits exclude bibliography.)
  
  Please note: Once word limit is reached, I will stop reading.

- Double-spaced, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, NO justification, 1 inch margins

**Due date:** Friday, July 18, 2014.

Papers should be emailed to the professor as a Word document.

VI. Learning Resources and Expectations

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in student written work. You are expected to put your ideas in your own words. When the thoughts, ideas, or words of other persons are used, whether written or verbal, credit should be given by using quotations and proper citation. Proper documentation should also be included for sources used but not quoted verbatim. In addition, when you include small amounts of your own material from a previously submitted work, that work should be referenced appropriately. Although the latter is not “technically” plagiarism, it is treated in the same manner at this institution. For the policy and guidelines for avoiding plagiarism, see the Academic Policies for Graduate Programs section of the Catalogue or the Student Handbook.

Lateness Policy

All due dates are real. Please meet them. If you expect to miss a deadline, please contact the professor before the due date, in order to negotiate a new due date. This new date becomes firm. Any assignments turned in after this new agreed-upon date will be docked 5 points per 24 hour period.

Language Issues

Good communication is crucial for ministry, scholarship, and collegiality. Students are encouraged to have their writing assignments reviewed by a writing consultant as needed. These services are offered at no additional cost to graduate program students (see Student Handbook for details). Students are also expected to use inclusive language in this course as stipulated by the Hartford Seminary Catalogue.
CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

**Please note that all readings are subject to change.
Students will be notified in advance.**

Monday, June 9: Introduction to the Course

Primary Reading:
- Gospel of Luke (Choose and read ONE passage that pertains to a female character.)
- Gospel of John 20:1-18
- Gospel of Thomas, Philip, Mary (selections) in Patricia Cox Miller, Women in Early Christianity: Translations from Greek Texts (Washington DC, CUA Press, 2005), pp. 305-307. (Furthermore, WEC)

Secondary Reading:

9:00 – 10:30 am
- Course Introduction: Syllabus Overview, Expectations, and Rules of Engagement
- Critical Reading of Early Christian Texts

Break: 10:30 – 10:45

10:45 – 12:00
- What is the meaning of (Biblical) texts? [Martin]

Working Lunch: 12:00 to 1:30 pm

1:30 – 3:30
- Gender and sexuality in Early Christian context

Break: 3:30 – 3:50

3:50 – 5:30
- The Gospel of John – At a glance
- Eroticism in the Gospel of John?
- Is There Something About Mary? [Jasper and Miller]
Tuesday, June 10: Gender and Sexual Discrimination in Paul? Part I

Primary Reading:
- 1 Corinthians 7
- Colossians 3:18-4:1; Ephesians 5:21-6:9; (and 1 Peter 2:18-3:7)

Secondary Reading:
- Martin, Sex and the Single Savior, pp. 103-104, 111-112, 121-124

9:00 – 10:30 am
- Who is Paul?
- What texts did he write? (The Problem of Pseudonymity)
- Paul as Moral Teacher?

Break: 10:30 – 10:45

10:45 – 12:00
- Colossians, Ephesians, and 1 Peter – At a glance

Working Lunch: 12:00 to 1:30 pm

1:30 – 3:30
- Societal Hierarchies - Haustafeln (Household Codes) [Furnish; Clarice Martin]

Break: 3:30 – 3:50

3:50 – 5:30
- 1 Corinthians – At a glance
- Sex, marriage, desire (or not), and divorce [Furnish]
- Contemporary Christian views on marriage and family [Dale Martin]
Wednesday, June 11: Gender and Sexual Discrimination in Paul? Part II

Primary Reading:
- Romans 1; 1 Corinthians 6
- 1 Corinthians 11 and 14
- 1 Timothy 2

Secondary Reading:
- Furnish, The Moral Teaching of Paul, pp. 55-93. (thoroughly skim)
- Sandra Polaski, A Feminist Introduction to Paul (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), pp. 53-60.

9:00 – 10:30 am
- Romans – At a glance

Break: 10:30 – 10:45

10:45 – 12:00
- Homosexuality: Initial Conversations [Long]
- Contemporary Application of an Historical Text: “On Homosexuality, Many Christians Get the Bible Wrong” by Adam Hamilton

Working Lunch: 12:00 to 1:30 pm

1:30 – 3:30
- Homosexuality – The conversation continues… [Furnish]
- Exercise: A Theology of Sexuality

Break: 3:30 – 3:50

3:50 – 5:30
- Women – “Veiled, Silent, or What?”: Conflict in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 [Polaski]
- Corinthian Women Prophets: One Perspective [Wire]
**Thursday, June 12: Sexualized Violence, Hypermasculinity, and Masculinized Martyrdom**

**Primary Reading:**
- Revelation 2:18-29; ch. 12; chs.17 and 18; ch. 21
- Revelation 5 and 14:6-13
- *The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity*
- *Letter of the Martyrs of Vienne and Lyons* (WEC 40-43)

**Secondary Reading:**

9:00 – 10:30 am
- Revelation: At a glance
- Women in Revelation: The Heroine or the Whore? [Pippin]

Break: 10:30 – 10:45

10:45 – 12:00
- God Become Man: A Hypermasculine Transformation [Frilingos]

**Working Lunch: 12:00 to 1:30 pm**

1:30 – 3:30
- Gendered Martyrdom: Must Women Become Men? [Castelli]

Break: 3:30 – 3:50

3:50 – 5:30
- Contemporary Reflections on Perpetua and Martyrdom [Streete]
- Research Prep for Final Papers and Presentations

Shanell T. Smith, PhD
**Friday, June 13: Virginity or Saintly Sex?**

**Primary Reading:**
- John Chrysostom, *On Virginity* (WEC 105-117)
- Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Saint Macrina* (WEC 192-207)

**Secondary Reading:**

9:00 – 10:30 am
- Research Papers: A Recap
- Virginity? [Chrysostom]

**Break: 10:30 – 10:45**

10:45 – 12:00
- Virginity in Early Christianity [Castelli]

**Working Lunch: 12:00 to 1:30 pm**

1:30 – 3:30
- Saintly Sex? [Gregory of Nyssa; Burrus]

**Break: 3:30 – 3:50**

3:50 – 5:30
- Final Research Paper Presentations
- Course Conclusion – “What do Christian texts have to do with ‘it’?”

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*Enjoy the rest of your summer!*