SPRING 2004  WS 475  WOMEN’S SPIRITUALITY

Course Description:
The ways in which women experience the world are profoundly influenced by their gender. Spirituality, identifying and understanding one’s spiritual needs and learning how to fill these needs, all grow out of how one experiences the world. This course will take a multi-cultural approach towards an examination of some of the pre-dominant themes in women’s experience of the world as a means of understanding how women develop their spirituality.

Course Objective:
This course is designed to help the student gain insight into how women develop their spirituality. We will look for common themes in the development of women’s spirituality, then move beyond, to examine how cultural, social, economic and personal pressures modify these common themes. We will make use of many different case studies to help inform our understanding. Students will be expected to consider the factors that have influenced their own spirituality and evaluate these factors in the context of the multi-cultural milieu that we will be establish in the class.

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Other hours by appointment

Textbooks:


Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:

Examinations: Two take-home exams, each 15% of final grade.
Papers:
1. An evaluative essay on the student’s own epistemological position or theological world. (3-5 double-spaced pages) Due Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2004. 20% of final grade.
2. An analytical essay on a case study of a woman in transition or travail. Presentation of case (1-2 double-spaced pages) and an analysis of the issues affecting development of the case individual’s spirituality (2-3 double-spaced pages). Due Tuesday April 27, 2004. 20% of final grade.
3. An autobiographical essay on the development of one’s own spirituality. Due Tuesday, May 4, 2004. 20% of final grade.

Class Attendance and Participation: 10% of final grade.

Tentative List of Topics:
(Actual topics covered and order in which covered will depend on the needs and interest of the class.)

Spirituality differentiated from religiosity

Developmental themes in women’s experience

- Personality and Spirituality
- Self and identity
- Choice and authority
- Epistemological positions
- Theological worlds

Biological themes in women’s experience

- Biological rhythms: From menarche to menopause and beyond
- Pregnancy, parturition and post-partum changes

Women in transition

- Changes in relationships
- Career and vocational changes
- Changes in life-styles: A culture in transition

Women in travail- Case studies

- Battered women
- Depressed women
- Women survivors of Nazi concentration camps

The continuing search for meaning and spirituality
Selected Bibliography:


