PURDUE UNIVERSITY
REQUEST FOR ADDITION, EXPIRATION,
OR REVISION OF AN UNDERGRADUATE COURSE
(10000-40000 LEVEL)

DEPARTMENT: Philosophy
EFFECTIVE SESSION: Fall 2010

INSTRUCTIONS: Please check the items below which describe the purpose of this request.

☐ 1. New course with supporting documents
☐ 2. Add existing course offered at another campus
☐ 3. Expiration of a course
☐ 4. Change in course number
☐ 5. Change in course title
☐ 6. Change in course credit type
☐ 7. Change in course attributes (department head signature only)
☐ 8. Change in instructional hours
☐ 9. Change in course description
☐ 10. Change in course requisites
☐ 11. Change in semesters offered (department head signature only)
☐ 12. Transfer from one department to another

PROPOSED:
Subject Abbreviation: REL
Course Number: 315
Long Title: Religion and Women
Short Title: Religion and Women

EXISTING:
Subject Abbreviation: 
Course Number: 

TERMS OFFERED:
Check All That Apply:
☒ Summer 
☒ Fall 
☐ Spring

CAMPUS(ES) INVOLVED:
☒ Calumet
☐ Cont Ed
☒ Tech Slatewide
☒ Ft. Wayne
☐ W. Lafayette
☐ Indianapolis

- CREDIT TYPE -
1. Fixed Credit: Cr. Hrs. 3
2. Variable Credit Range:
Minimum Cr. Hrs.
Maximum Cr. Hrs.
3. Equivalent Credit: Yes

- COURSE ATTRIBUTES -
1. Pass/Not Pass Only
2. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory Only
3. Repeatable
4. Credit by Examination
5. Special Fees
6. Registration Approval Type
7. Variable Title
8. Honors
9. Full Time Privilege
10. Off Campus Experience

Course Schedule Type:
- Lecture
- Recitation
- Presentation
- Laboratory
- Lab Prep
- Studio
- Distance
- Clinic
- Experiential
- Research
- Ind. Study
- Prac/Observ

Minutes Per Mg:
Weeks Offered:
% of Credit Allocated:

- MEETINGS:
- Week 1
- Week 2

- CROSS-LISTED COURSES

A comparative study of the position of women across the world's religious traditions with special attention given to the impact of the women's movement and feminist thought on the religious life of women in contemporary societies and the development of woman-oriented spiritual movements and religious practices.
TO: A&S Curriculum Committee  
FROM: Erik S. Ohlander (Philosophy; 1-0504; ohlandee@ipfw.edu)  
RE: New Course Proposal, REL 315 ("Religion and Women")  
DATE: 10/29/09

I thought it good to include some brief contextualizing comments regarding the attached new course proposal.

In a continuing effort to develop the curriculum of the Religious Studies program, we are proposing a 'new' course, REL 315 "Religion and Women", to be added as a regular course. In terms of type of topic and method of approach this course fits into a cluster of established thematic and comparative courses regularly taught by faculty in the program, namely: REL 314, "Religion and Violence" and REL 321, "Religion and the Civil Rights Movement". It is our intention to develop this cluster further.

As a test, the proposed course has already been taught, in Spring 2009, under the variable title course REL 293 "Topics in Religious Studies" and was cross-listed with WOST W240. Enrollment in the course was high at 36 students and post-offering evaluation extremely positive. Due to continuing student and faculty interest, it is also being offered under the same rubrics Spring 2010. We feel that it is now time to add it as a regular course to be offered on an annual basis beginning academic year 2010-2011.
WOMEN AND RELIGION

In-Class and Warsaw Students

L. Michael Spath, D.Min., Ph.D.

lmspath@msn.com (the first letter is a lower case "L") 260 481 0509
Teaching Assistant: Ms. Holly Sutter one.surrender@gmail.com

DISABILITIES STATEMENT: If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. Contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities (Wall, room 113, telephone number 481-6658), as soon as possible to work out the details. Once the Director has provided you with a letter attesting to your needs for modification, bring the letter to me. For more information, please visit the web site for SSD at http://www.ipfw.edu/ssd/.

THE COURSE

This course will examine the position of women in the ancient goddess and earth-centered traditions, and neo-Paganism, as well as in the major religious traditions of the world (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Historically and culturally women have been relegated to the status of a dark, profane, and passive ‘other’ in the domain of the religious. This religious alienation has profound implications not only for the spiritual lives of women but for the personal, social, political, and economic aspects of their existence as well. It also raises the question as to whether religion itself as a movement, institution, and cultural and spiritual category has been so compromised as to render it at best irrelevant for women in a post-modern world, or at worst, debilitating and destructive.

The Western world in particular is in the midst of a massive paradigm shift in which the full humanity of women is beginning to be recognized and affirmed, albeit much too slowly and not uniformly throughout; nevertheless, this tectonic shift has begun and there is no turning back.

This course will explore patriarchal and hierarchical patterns of domination as they are grounded in and legitimated by androcentric religious systems of meaning. We will also explore transformative alternatives that exist within the world’s religious traditions themselves in an effort to identify sources of empowerment, mutuality, and justice for both women and men, indeed, for the world itself.

Throughout the course, it will be essential to understand the great diversity of women’s spiritualities arising out of their particular contexts: cultural, social, economic, and religious. We will be primarily concerned both with the description of women’s religions, and with the development of some theoretical models to help us understand the nature and functions of women’s religious beliefs and practices. We pay special attention to the interaction of religion and culture, and the ways in which religion helps form women’s roles in different societies. Issues raised will include the impact of the women’s movement and feminist thought on the religious life of women in particular contemporary societies, and the development of contemporary woman-oriented spiritual movements and religious practices.

TEXTS

REQUIRED (the student must purchase ALL of the following):


Readings:
Leonard Swidler, Jesus Was a Feminist
Women and Religion Sacred Texts
Images of Women in Ancient Art
Venus of Willendorf
Women in Religion, Mythology, and Herstory

http://www.godswordtowomen.org/studies/articles/feminist.htm
http://www.sacred-texts.com/vmn/
http://www.arthistory.sbc.edu/imageswomen/f3-women.html
http://witcombe.sbc.edu/willendorf/willendorfgoddess.html
http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/1582/#Table

FILMS

Margaret Atwood. The Handmaid’s Tale
Sue Monk Kidd, The Secret Life of Bees

Toni Morrison, Beloved
Arthur Golden, Memoirs of a Geisha
SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS (the student must purchase ONE of the following):
Anita Diamant. *The Red Tent*
Sue Monk Kidd, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*

**EVALUATION**
- Class Attendance and Participation: 25%
- Critical Review – supplemental text: 25%
- Group Presentation Project: 25%
- Final Exam and Essay: 25%

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Class Attendance and Participation**
Each class session’s lectures and discussion are integral parts of the course.

**Attendance** at each class is required. Your grade may be affected by more than three unexcused absence.

Your **Preparation** consists of doing the assigned reading and coming to class prepared to interact with the instructor and other students with questions and insights that will further the understanding of the material.

Your **Active Participation** in class discussion is critical to the learning process. Inquire, discuss, challenge, offer insights during class. Mere presence in class is not enough.

**Critical Book Review – Supplemental Text**
The student will choose one of the supplemental texts. The student will then write a four-page (double-spaced, one-inch margins all the way around) Critical Review of the chosen supplemental text.

The first half (1/2) page (NO MORE) will be a summary of the novel.

The final three-and-a-half (3 ½) pages of the Critical Review will address the following:
- What are the issues that the novel raises in the relationship between religion and the culture?
- What are the issues that the novel raises with regard to women in BOTH the culture and religious tradition in which she finds herself?
- What are the obstacles, the problems, the harm done to the woman character(s) in the novel by the culture-embodied religion in the novel? And what were the resources that the woman character(s) find within their religious tradition to overcome the obstacles, problems she faces?
- Because of the issues raised in the novel you have chosen, what have you learned about how religion and the prevailing American culture with its complex religious relationships – how have both these, religion and culture, shaped and formed you for good and for ill?

You are NOT to simply answer these questions above in order, but rather **you are to develop a narrative with a central thesis in order to discuss the issues raised in the novel.** As you read through the book, begin developing your own personal thesis about the subject matter addressed in the book. University-level essays do not merely report what is in the book but provide analysis and critique, as well as synthesize the material with knowledge from other disciplines and personal experiences. Therefore, in your essay, **DEVELOP A THESIS** that you will be arguing throughout your essay. That means that your **first paragraph should have a very clearly stated Thesis Statement**, which the rest of the paper will support and argue. Above all, be specific with examples from the book as well as from your own personal experience.

**Group Presentation Project**

**TEXTS ON WOMEN**
- Mill’s *Subjection of Women*
  - Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4
- Wolstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*
  - All students read chs. 1-3; individual groups read chs. 4-5; chs. 6-7; chs. 8-9; chs. 10-11; chs. 12-13
- *The Female Review, or Memoirs of an American Young Lady*
Final Exam

The final exam is made up of three parts:

PART ONE – Critical Film Review

The student will choose one of the following films:

**FILMS**

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*  
Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Life of Bees*  

The student will then write a four-page (double-spaced, one-inch margins all the way around) Critical Review of the chosen supplemental text.

The first half (1/2) page (NO MORE) will be a summary of the film.

The final three-and-a-half (3 ½) pages of the Critical Review will address the following:

- What are the issues that the novel raises in the relationship between religion and the culture?  
- What are the issues that the novel raises with regard to women in BOTH the culture and religious tradition in which she finds herself?  
- What are the obstacles, the problems, the harm done to the woman character(s) in the novel by the culture-embodied religion in the novel? And what were the resources that the woman character(s) find within their religious tradition to overcome the obstacles, problems she faces?  
- Because of the issues raised in the novel you have chosen, what have you learned about how religion and the prevailing American culture with its complex religious relationships – how have both these, religion and culture, shaped and formed you for good and for ill?

You are NOT to simply answer these questions above in order, but rather you are to develop a narrative with a central thesis in order to discuss the issues raised in the novel. As you read through the book, begin developing your own personal thesis about the subject matter addressed in the book. University-level essays do not merely report what is in the book but provide analysis and critique, as well as synthesize the material with knowledge from other disciplines and personal experiences. Therefore, in your essay, DEVELOP A THESIS that you will be arguing throughout your essay. That means that your first paragraph should have a very clearly stated Thesis Statement, which the rest of the paper will support and argue. Above all, be specific with examples from the book as well as from your own personal experience.

PART TWO – Special Topic

In addition, the student will choose from one of the following topics and write a three-page, double-spaced essay about it, discussing in particular the religious and feminist issues raised by the individuals or that have to do with the particular topic chosen. The student will append the essay to the final exam. Possible topics, individuals, and themes include:

**Mary Daly**  
**Women’s suffrage in America**  
**Hymns to the Goddess**  
**Carter Heyward**  
**The Hite Report – Shere Hite**  
**Naomi Wolf**  
**Kuan Yin**  
**U. S. court cases regarding women**  
**Beauty Pageant Protests**

Choose a religious tradition other than your own and discuss one of the following topics:


PART THREE – Questions on the Readings

Dr. Spath will provide a Study Guide over the semester's readings.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Feminist Hermeneutics  
Reading sacred texts; the impact of Fundamentalisms  
The relationship between religion and culture  
Womanist and minority critique of Western feminism  
Read Fisher, chapter 1

Women's Bodies  
Menstruation, Menopause, Childbirth, Celibacy, Sexual Orientation, Sexuality and Reproductive Rights, Genital Mutilation  
Speakers: David Jolliff and Sandy Moliere, Our Whole Lives Curriculum

The Goddess  
Paleolithic and Neolithic, and present incarnations  
Goddess Remembered  
Speaker: Ms. Daphne Derbyshire

Hinduism  
Hindu women  
Goddess (including Devi, Kali) in India; Krishna and women; sexual iconography; caste  
Feminist critique of Hinduism  
Speaker: Ms. Holly Sutter, IPFW

Buddhism  
Buddhist women  
Religious orders; the ambiguity of “pleasure”  
Feminist critique of Buddhism  
Speaker:

Judaism  
Women in the Hebrew Bible  
Jewish women  
Lilith and Eve; God as Mother; Shekinah; Wisdom literature  
Feminist critique of Judaism  
Speaker: Rabbi Marla Spanjer, Temple Achduth Vesholom

Christianity  
New Testament women  
Women in Christian history  
Original sin and denigration of the sexuality; Mary as Goddess; Jesus as feminist; Gnostics; women’s ordination  
Feminist critique of Christianity  
Speaker:

Islam  
Women and the Qur’an  
Women in Islamic History  
Hijab, genital mutilation; Qur’anic hermeneutics; Shari’a and women  
Feminist critique of Islam  
Speaker: Ms. Amani El-Hefni

Group Presentations  
The Goddess as Symbol – Reformation or Rejection of Religion?  
Womanist Theologies; Theology; Earth Spirit Movements; Ecofeminism; Wicca  
Speaker: Ms. Margaret Hofelder, Sophia’s Portico  
Full Circle

Wrapping Up  
Revisioning Religion by and for women