

**CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PEACEBUILDING**  
**CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY**

**Gender and Violence: Theology and Peacebuilding**

*BTS/PCTS – 3895C*

*SESSION II: JUNE 19-23, 2017*

**Course Syllabus**

Instructor: Carol Penner, Ph.D., (University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology)

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Lecture times: Monday to Friday, 8:30-5:00

Last date for voluntary withdrawal without academic penalty: July 15, 2017

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will examine the task of peacebuilding from the perspective of feminist theology. Feminist theologians deconstruct violence by identifying how gendered violence is experienced in different contexts and exploring the role Christianity has played in perpetuating that violence. The course will ask how to construct theologies of peace that are good news for both women and men. Topics will be approached biographically, seeking to hear from a variety of voices and exploring a range of experiences and thought. As well, discussions will include: approaches to Anabaptist feminist theology, directions for the future, and implications for peacebuilding.

*The course is offered either for training or for 3 hours of academic credit.*

**OBJECTIVES**

1. By the end of the course the student will be able to summarize what feminist theology is, including a variety of methodologies and approaches, and how it relates to peacebuilding.
2. The student will grasp a historical overview of the development of feminist theology.
3. The student will recognize a variety of leading thinkers in this field, from a variety of countries and social locations.
4. The student will be able to use feminist methodologies to begin to think about their own contexts for peacebuilding.

**TEXTBOOK AND OTHER REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED READING**  
**(Participants must order these books ahead of time – either on line or from local booksellers)**

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *The Power of Naming: A Continuum Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

Hunt, Mary E. and Diann L. Neu, eds. *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2010.

Other course readings will be sent to students as pdfs.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES** (for credit)

The following are the general outlines of requirements for those taking the class for credit. Others are encouraged to read as much as possible, however, in order to receive maximum benefit from the course. Assignments can be submitted in person during the course or via email to the instructor.

ASSIGNMENTS	DUE DATE	VALUE
<b>1. Critical Book Review</b>	<b>June 12, 2017</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>2. Class Journal</b>	<b>July 17, 2017</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>3. Research Paper</b>	<b>August 15, 2017</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>4. Class Participation</b>		<b>10%</b>

## **ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES** (for credit)

### **1. Critical Book Review**

Choose one of the following books for the critical book review:

Dori Grinenko Baker, *Doing Girlfriend Theology: God-talk with Young Women*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005. [A contemporary and interactive approach to theology from the grassroots, in this case from adolescent girls.]

Mary E. Hunt. *Fierce Tenderness: A Feminist Theology of Friendship*. New York: Crossroad, 1994. [A feminist look at friendship between women, and its theological significance.]

Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1983. [A classic text in feminist theology, this book provides a systematic overview of feminist theological thought.]

Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, *Sex, Race and God: Christian Feminism in Black and White*. New York: Crossroad, 1989. [A feminist theology survey that deconstructs race along with gender, a well-written classic.]

A critical book review should include both a concise summary of the book and your response to the book (equal parts summary and response). Did the argument make sense? Did you agree or disagree with the thesis? Was it well-written and organized or hard to understand? What questions does this book leave unanswered for you?

**Due:** Monday, June 12

**Length:** 1250-1500 words/5-6 pages

**Value:** 20%

## **2. Class Journal**

You will write ten approximately one and a half to two-page/400-500 words responses, one for each morning and afternoon of the class. Your journal records your personal engagement with the topic of a specific class. Did it resonate with your life, or was it an entirely new concept? Does it remind you of things you have heard about in the news or in popular media? You may comment on presentations, class discussions or readings for a morning or afternoon (however, this assignment should not consist entirely of reflections on the readings, i.e. it should not be written before the class begins).

NOTE: This assignment is due shortly after the course ends; therefore, your notes will be very valuable to you as you write your journals.

**Due:** Monday, July 17

**Length:** 3750-4500 words/15-18 pages **Value:** 30%

## **3. Research paper**

Write a paper on a topic in feminist theology that interests you. This topic needs to be negotiated with your instructor. Topics could include eco-theology, theology and abuse, Latina or indigenous feminist theology, or you may want to choose one feminist theologian and read several of her books or articles. Your research paper will include a clear thesis which explains your research topic and how you will explore it. Your research paper will include a bibliography that includes at least four books, and at least four articles from academic journals.

**Due:** Tuesday, August 15

**Length:** 2500-3000 words/10-12 pages **Value:** 40%

## **4. Class participation**

Attendance in class is part of the class participation mark, as is attention and participation in class discussions. High participation marks do not always go to the people who talk the most, but rather to the people who demonstrate that they have been listening carefully to the discussions. Your participation should reflect your respect of other people and their ideas and experiences.

**Value:** 10%

## **STYLISTIC REQUIREMENTS**

CMU as adopted the following as its standard guide for all academic writing:

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. Sixth edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.

The final paper should follow an accepted academic format for citations, bibliography, etc. (e.g. APA, Chicago). You may choose the format but whichever you use, be sure to use it properly and consistently.

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

1. All material referred to in any assignment **MUST** be appropriately referenced. Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students should be aware of CMU Academic Policies, particularly those

regarding academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating), which apply to all University courses. These are detailed on CMU's website (<http://www.cmu.ca/students.php?s=registrar&p=policies>) and in the CMU Calendar (also available online: <http://www.cmu.ca/academics.php?s=calendar>).

2. Assignments are due as scheduled. Marks will be deducted (5% deduction per day late) for lateness, unless previous arrangements have been made with the instructor.
3. I encourage all students to take up any concerns/questions regarding grades, first with the instructor, then with the Associate Dean of Program, Ray Vander Zaag. The CMU Calendar outlines its appeals process clearly.
4. Email: Substantive discussions are best done person to person, not electronically. During the CSOP, participants are encouraged to engage in substantive discussions in person.

## EVALUATION

In general, I expect you to *follow the guidelines* of the assignment and to discuss deviations from them with me before turning it in. In evaluating your work, *quality* is more important than quantity. I appreciate creativity, clear expression of ideas, evidence of engagement with the reading and class sessions, and projects that are of real interest and value to you.

In your papers, be sure to avoid any form of *plagiarism*. If you have doubts about what is appropriate, a useful website is <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>. Plagiarism is a serious issue and will result in grade reduction or action by the university (see university policy on this).

Good communication skills are essential for justice and peacebuilding work. Students will be expected to communicate knowledgeably, clearly, effectively, concisely and persuasively. All written work should be well informed, well organized and well documented.

Each completed assignment will be given a numerical grade (according to its value toward the final grade) and the corresponding letter grade. The final mark for each student is determined by the sum total of all numerical grades, which is then assigned a letter grade according to the scale below.

## LETTER GRADE/PERCENTAGE SCALE

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Descriptor
A+	95-100	4.5	Exceptional
A	88-94	4	Excellent
B+	81-87	3.5	Very Good
B	74-80	3	Good
C+	67-73	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-67	2	Adequate
D	50-59	1	Marginal
F	0-49		Failure

<u>Criteria</u>	A - Excellent	B - Competent	C - Below Expectations
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<b>CONTENT</b> (quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them)	- has clarity of purpose - has depth of content - displays insight or originality of thought -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources	- has clarity of purpose - has substantial information and sufficient support - contains some originality of thought -uses quality resources	- has clarity of purpose -lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - has little originality of thought -uses mostly quality resources
<b>STRUCTURE</b> (logical order or sequence of the writing)	- is coherent and logically developed -uses very effective transitions	- is coherent and logically developed -uses smooth transitions	- is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed -has some awkward transitions
<b>CONVENTIONS</b> (appearance of the writing: sentence structure, usage, mechanics, documentation)	- has virtually no errors of conventions	- has minimal errors of conventions	- is understandable <u>but</u> has noticeable problems of sentence structure, usage, mechanics or documentation
<b>STYLE</b> (personality of the writing: word choice, sentence variety, voice, attention to audience)	- is concise, eloquent and rhetorically effective -has nicely varied sentence structure -is engaging throughout and enjoyable to read	- displays concern for careful expression -has some variation in sentence structure -is generally enjoyable to read	- has some personality <u>but</u> lacks imagination and may be stilted and may rely on clichés -has little variation in sentence structure -is not very interesting to read

**NOTE:** The *CMU Student Handbook* is a useful guide for further information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, and appeals. Grades are not final until vetted and approved by the Dean’s Office.

## **FINAL DATE FOR WITHDRAWAL**

Final date to withdraw from this course without academic penalty is July 15, 2017.

If a student is unable to complete the requirements of a course by the end of the semester, the student must submit a written appeal for an “incomplete” to the Registrar’s office: [spenner@cmu.ca](mailto:spenner@cmu.ca). The student should seek the instructor’s support for the appeal and submit the appeal before the last day of classes. If the student’s appeal is granted, the instructor will enter a grade of I (for incomplete) accompanied by a temporary grade (which is based on completed work and assigns a value of zero for uncompleted work). Instructor grades are due by August 21st. If the student completes the remaining work within the extension period, the grade will be recalculated and the incomplete status will be removed. If the student does not complete the work within the extension period, the incomplete status will be removed and the grade will remain as originally entered. The maximum extension is: December 1, for courses ending in August.

## SCHEDULE AND TOPICS & Readings List

### Monday

Morning

#### Reading the Bible as A Peace Activity

Spotlight on: Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Readings:

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 107-113.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton. *The Women's Bible*. (Seattle: Coalition on Women and Religion, 1987, orig. pub. New York: European Publishing Company, 1895), pp.1-9, 97-111.

Afternoon

#### Building Peace from Violent Sacred Texts

Spotlight on: Phyllis Trible

Readings:

Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 64-91.

#### Using the Bible to Make Peace Theology

Spotlight on: Marjorie Proctor-Smith

Readings:

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 175-186

Proctor-Smith, Marjorie. "Reorganizing Victimization': The Intersection between Liturgy and Domestic Violence" in *Violence Against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Marie M. Fortune (New York: Continuum, 1995), pp. 428-443.

### Tuesday

Morning

#### Building a History that is Good News for Women

Spotlight on: Teresa of Avila

Readings:

Malone, Mary. *Women and Christianity, Vol. 1*, (Ottawa: Novalis, 2000), pp. 17-42.

*Power of Naming*, pp. 216-241.

#### Diverse Voices for Peace

Spotlight on: Elsa Tamez

Readings:

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 11-29; 79-85; 100-106.

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 14-26; 36-43

Afternoon

#### Racism and a Feminist Theology of Peace

Spotlight on: Kwok Pui-Lan

Readings:

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 3-10; 117-126.

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 250-258.

## **Wednesday**

Morning

### Violence Against Women and Peace Theology

Spotlight on: Carolyn Holderread Heggen

Carolyn Holderread Heggen, *Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches*, (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1993), pp. 26-48.

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 138-148.

Smith, Andy. "Born Again, Free from Sin? Sexual Violence in Evangelical Communities" in *Violence Against Women and Children*, pp. 339-350.

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 96-104.

### How is feminist theology a peace topic?

Spotlight on: Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 86-99.

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 3-13

Daly, Mary. "Beyond God the Father," in *Feminism and Theology*, eds. Janet Martin Soskice and Diana Lipton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 41-46.

Afternoon

### Building a Theology of Peace in the Face of War

Spotlight on: Dorothee Soelle

Readings:

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 105-123; 150-160.

Dorothee Soelle, *The Arms Race Kills Even Without War*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 11-23

### Poverty and Peace

Spotlight on: Dorothy Day

Readings:

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 60-69, 83-95, 142-149.

## **Thursday**

Morning

### Building a Peace Church

Spotlight on: Letty Russell

Readings:

Russel, Letty. *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*, pp. 20-45.

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 30-40, 64-76, 285-293.

### Women in Ministry

Spotlight on: Women in ministry we've known

Readings:

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 235-268.

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 208-215; 307-315.

Afternoon

Motherhood and Theology: a Peace Topic?

Spotlight on: Our mothers

Readings:

*The Power of Naming*, 115-131, 292-299.

Peace and Sexuality

Spotlight on: Virginia Ramey Mollenkott

Readings: *New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 127-137, 158-165.

**Friday**

Morning

Building a Theology of Peace with the Earth

Spotlight on: Sallie McFague

Readings:

*The Power of Naming*, pp. 132-141, 324-338.

Worship as a Path to Peace

Spotlight on: Congregations we know

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 167-232.

Afternoon

Canadian Theology and Visions of Peace

Spotlight: On ourselves as peacemakers

*New Feminist Christianity*, pp. 294-295.

Nadeau, Denis. "Restoring Relationship: Toward a Theology of Reparations as Gift" in *Feminist Theology with a Canadian Accent: Canadian Perspectives on Contextual Feminist Theology*, eds. Mary Anne Beavis with Elaine Guillemin and Barbara Pell, (Ottawa: Novalis, 2008), pp. 220-234.

Eaton, Heather. "O Canada! Our Home and Native Land: Nature and Identity Within Canadian Feminist Theologies" in *Feminist Theology with a Canadian Accent: Canadian Perspectives on Contextual Feminist Theology*, eds. Mary Ann Beavis, Elaine Guillemin and Barbara Pell, (Ottawa: Novalis, 2008), p. 235-254.

Note: Coffee Breaks are normally 10:30-11:00 am and 3:30-4 pm.