

Cathy Agor  
RE 350

SD '03

## Women and Religion

**Description:** This course will examine the lives and contributions of women in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures; Catholic female saints, and contemporary Christian women who have made outstanding contributions to the Church and society.

**Objectives:**

1. To give students an appreciation of the heroines of the Bible
2. To increase their knowledge of the Ancient Jewish culture as it applies to the status and role of women in that society.
3. To enlighten the student's understanding of the radical ness of Jesus' approach to relationships and the dignity of personhood.
4. To introduce the students to some of the influential female saints of the church and their contributions.
5. To examine the on-going contributions of contemporary Catholic and Christian women.
6. To increase self-worth and esteem, especially in the female students by offering them both role models and virtues which can be emulated today.

**Method:** Lecture, small group work, video, research and portfolio. Each student will be expected to submit research homework as it is assigned. Each student will also prepare a portfolio on a particular woman. (See attachment for details)

**Text:** **Women of the Old Testament by**  
**Women of the New Testament by**  
**Catholic Bible** (Handouts will be given throughout the course.)

<b>Grading:</b>	Class attendance	15%
	Mid-Term and Final Exam	20%
	Quizzes	15%
	Research Assignments	20%
	Portfolio	30%

### TENTATIVE LESSON BREAK DOWN OR CALENDAR

(Adjustments will be made as needed to include review and exams)

- Week 1:** Overview of the course; brief introduction to the Bible; research into Ancient Jewish culture and the understanding of women as seen in patriarchal societies; Biblical laws in regard to women and relationships.  
**Research:** Ashtarte or Ashtoreth; Asherah; Lilith; Eve
- Week 2:** Sarah & Hagar; Rebekah (Genesis) *Quiz*
- Week 3:** Miriam, Deborah, Ruth & Naomi (Exodus, Numbers, Judges, Ruth)  
Judith & Esther (books of the same name)

- Week 4:** Rachel & Leah; Dinah; Tamar;  
**Research:** What happened to the Levite's concubine? (Judges)  
 How did this affect the tribe of Benjamin?
- Week 5:** Begin to look into New Testament society and the women who related with Jesus beginning with Mary and Elizabeth. (Luke & Matthew)  
 Mary of Magdala & female disciples (all gospels) **Quiz**
- Week 6:** The Samaritan Woman (John 4:4-42) The Woman taken in adultery and the woman who anoints Jesus (John 8:1-11; Mt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50; John 12:1-8)
- Week 7:** Mary & Martha; Woman with a hemorrhage; Woman Jesus calls a bitch; Joanna; Mary, wife of Cleophas and mother of James & Joses **Quiz or mid-term**
- Week 8:** Lydia; Priscilla; Phoebe (Paul on women)  
 Doctors of the church: Catherine of Sienna & Theresa of Avila  
**Research: your patron saint if female or a female saint of your choosing**
- Week 9:** Other female saints of the church - presented by students in brief.
- Week 10:** Women who have made a difference. Dorothy Day; Thea Bowman; Mother Marianne Cope; Sr. Anna McAnany; video vignettes **Quiz**
- Week 11:** A look at women's issues – the present status of women in today's society and the correlation with history. **Research:** Domestic Violence; feminization of poverty; female genital mutilation; Machismo (honor killings); Taliban treatment of women; inequities in the workplace; Sexual harassment; leadership in the church/ordination *or any related topic of the student's choice.*
- Week 12:** Above continued.
- Week 13:** Sharing of women who have had a personal influence in your own growth as a person. Who are the heroines in your own life?
- Week 14:** **Catch all week – Quiz**
- Week 15:** Review for final **DINNER PARTY & PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION**



**PORTFOLIO:      Worth 30% of your grade.**

Each student is required to prepare a portfolio outlining a particular woman's life. The woman must have made a major contribution to society or the church. The portfolio will be presented at a dinner party the last week of class and should include the following:

1. **A complete place setting depicting scenes from the life of your chosen woman; symbols which represent some aspect of her life, character, virtues, or contributions.**

*A place setting consists of: table cloth and/or placemat, dish, cup, silverware, napkin, and name card.*

**Creativity is key! You may use any art form including needlepoint, ceramics, painting, etc. For those who are musically inclined, write a song about your heroine and perform it for us. Perhaps your place setting could include a triptych or collage.**

**The cup, silverware or napkin could be cleverly used as symbols. USE YOUR IMAGINATION AND BRIGHT VIVID COLORS. Bring your heroine alive for us!**

2. **A potluck dish, which is representative of her native country or of the people to whom she ministered.**  
*We will all share a scrumptious meal together in celebration of women as our last class.*
3. **A three page written paper including a brief biography of her life and contributions; explanation of your place setting, and your personal reaction to the woman. What intrigued you? What did you admire? Dislike?**

**AT THE DINNER PARTY, IT IS EXPECTED THAT EVERYONE WILL OPENLY SHARE ABOUT THEIR CREATIVE WORK AND THE WOMEN THEY CHOSE.**

**A WORD ABOUT RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS:**

These are like homework and will be assigned either individually or in small groups. They are meant to engage you in learning for yourself and sharing with the class what you have discovered. Deadlines will be given. Failure to meet the deadline is considered a failing grade for that research assignment.