

THE 310 Women in Christianity

Dr. Rebecca Laird

Smee Hall 209

619 849 2993, rlaird@pointloma.edu

Office Hours M & W, 8:30-9:30am, 1:-2:30pm, TH 3-5pm.

Catalog Description: A study of issues related to women in the Bible and Christianity, including women's spiritual biographies, the use of gender-inclusive language, the ordination of women in ministry, women in the Wesleyan/holiness tradition, and feminist and liberation theologies.

Learning Outcomes. Students will be able to:

1. Examine the varied roles women have played in the biblical testimony to God's saving activity in the world.
2. Identify the ways women have often been marginalized or measured by cultural gender norms in Scripture and church tradition.
3. Express a biblical and theological defense of women in ministry.
4. Analyze the most pertinent and pressing issues in contemporary theological writing by Christian women, including ecology, patriarchy, and active participation in the ministries and sacraments of the church.

Required Reading

Peterson, Kristina LeCelle-Peterson, *Liberating Tradition: Women's Identity and Vocation in Christian Perspective*

Oden, Amy, ed *In Her Words: Women's Writings in the History of Christian Thought*

Laird, Rebecca *Ordained Women in the Church of the Nazarene: The First Generation (1890-1920)*

Webb, Val, *Why We are Equal: Introducing Feminist Thought*

Students will also choose a contemporary spiritual autobiography. Here are some examples:

Braestrup, Kate, *Here if You Need Me: A True Story*

Norris, Kathleen, *The Cloister Walk*

Taylor, Barbara Brown, *An Altar in the World*

Brooks, Joanna, *Book of Mormon Girl*

Caley, Kate Young *The House Where the Hardest Things Happened*

Ilibagiza, Immaculee, *Left To Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*

Okoro, Enuma, *Reluctant Pilgrim: A Moody, Somewhat Self-Indulgent Introverts Search for Spiritual Community*

Assignments

1. In class content quizzes or writing exercises will begin most classes to assess student reading and direct discussion. **75 points.**
2. In class discussion and participation **25 points.**
3. One 8-10 page paper and presentation on "A New Friend from the Past. Research a women in church history from the Bible through the 18th Century and 1) summarize her life and the culture in which she lived, 2) analyze her sources for personal and spiritual authority, and 3) discuss any issues

of gender or institutional barriers she encountered and her responses. 4) Describe her vision of God or service to the world. Six cited academic sources required.

20 points for paper, 10 for presentation.

- One 15 minute class presentation of a recently spiritual autobiography authored by a living woman. The presentation should summarize the contents of the book, introduce the rest of the class to the woman's theological and spiritual ideas and practices, and any significant gender-related experiences she describes. Students are encouraged to create a reader's theater for the class to read together or a role play to perform that comes from the book. **20 points.**

(Alternative assignment: interview a Christian woman over the age of 60 about the way the roles of women have changed in the church and society in her lifetime. Share an edited video, tape or edited transcription with the class.)

- Defense of Woman paper. A 2-3 page paper that summarizes your biblical and theological defense of women in ministry. **10 points.**
- Final Exam **40 points.**

Tuesday	Thursday
	1/10 Class overview and introductions
1/15 Le-Celle Peterson, Part One	1/17 LeCelle-Peterson, Part Two and Webb, Chp 2
1/22 Le-Celle Peterson, Chapter 7 Seeing the Invisible: Women in the Early Church Read Luke-Acts	1/24 Webb, Chp. 3 , Oden, Section One, Gospel of Mary, Thecla, Perpetua, and Egeria
1/29 Oden, Section Two, Hildegard of Bingen	1/31 LeCelle-Peterson, Chapter 8 through page 175, and Oden, Hrotsvit of Gandersheim
2/5 Oden, Section Two, Hadewjich of Brabant, Egeria	2/7 Oden , Julian of Norwich
2/12 Wiley Lecture	2/14 Oden, Catherine of Genoa and Webb, Chp. 3
2/19 Women of the Reformation Period Le-Celle Peterson, pages 175-180, Oden, Section 3 Teresa of Avila, Jane de Chantal	2/21 Webb, Chp . 4, Oden, Section 3 Madame Jeanne Guyon and Susanna Wesley
2/26 New Friends from the Past Presentations	2/28 LeCelle-Peterson, Chps. 10-11, Inclusive Language
Spring Break	Spring Break
3/12 LeCelle-Peterson, Chp. 9 Laird, Introduction and Chp 1; Oden, Section IV : Ann Lee, Phoebe Palmer	1/14 Webb, Chp. 5, Oden, Section IV Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton
3/19 Oden, Section IV Amanda Berry Smith and Pandita Ramabai	3/21 Laird, Chps 2-3
3/26 Laird, Chps 4-6	3/28 Easter Break
4/2` Webb, Chps. 6-7	4/4 Web, Chp 7-8
4/9 Webb, Chp 9	4/11 Laird, Prophetic Imagination: Dorothee Soelle
4/16 New Friends from the Present Presentations	4/18 Rereading Paul in the Company of Women: Problematic Texts and 4 Reasons Why Women Should Preach and Teach http://www.messiah.edu/christian_vocation/women_in_ministry/articles/article32.html
4/23 Defense of Women papers due	4/25 Review
	5/2 Final Exam 1-3pm

