
RELIGION 230: GOD, SEX, LOVE

Instructor: Dr. Onishi

Skidmore College

Office: Remote

Office Hours: Wed. 2-4, and by appt.

Phone: 714 833 4345

Email: bradley.b.onishi@gmail.com

Time: TR 11:40-1 :00pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Christian approaches to the divine have played a decisive role in the formation of Western and global cultures, including approaches to love, sex, and marriage. However, within the Christian tradition there are—and always have been—transgressive voices who have challenged and subverted these approaches. In this class, we will first examine Israelite and Christian constructions of love, gender, and marriage based on notions of the complementarity of the sexes, love as eternal union, and marriage as a divine intimacy with God. We shall then approach texts and figures that challenged such conceptions, and in some ways opened pathways for modern/contemporary discussions concerning love, sex, and partnership.

OBJECTIVES

1. To explore how conceptions of the divine shape approaches to sex and gender.
2. To explore how sex and gender shape conceptions of the divine.
3. To understand the complex relationships among sex, gender, and images of God in the history of Judaism and Christianity.
4. To develop the ability to read and think critically.
5. To employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is important but our primary concern at this time is your health and well-being. In this difficult climate, I ask that you only miss class when necessary (no explanation is needed). If you do need to miss class, I will work with you to the extent possible. Such absences will not be counted against you.

You can always reach out to me via email. We can setup individual Zoom meetings at any time in the semester.

However, in lieu of attendance requirements, you are required to send a minimum of 3 questions via Marco Polo throughout the semester.

- That means, 3 questions = for the whole semester.
 - One before September 15.
 - One before October 15.
 - One before November 15.
 - If you don't fulfill this requirement, I will deduct 3 percentage points from your final grade.

You can sign up with an email address (phone number is not required). Marco Polo allows for video messaging. It is essentially an easy way to send video text messages. You can record a short video of your question and I will respond with a similar video message. This will make asking questions "face-to-face" easier. You won't always need a Zoom meeting or have to write out an email. It is as easy as hitting a button and asking your question. I will try to respond within 12 hours.

[HTTPS://WWW.MARCOPOLO.ME/](https://www.marcpolo.me/)

CLASS STRUCTURE: SYNCHRONOUS/ASYNCHRONOUS

Each week there will be an **asynchronous** video or podcast to watch/listen to for the **Tuesday slot** of class.

- This will be linked to the first reading of the week.
- The podcast or video will be posted under **the Announcements tab on theSpring**.
- Your **Mind Map** assignment each week will be linked to this first reading and video/podcast.

Each week we will have a **synchronous** meeting **via Zoom** during the **Thursday slot** of the course. This will be linked to the second reading of the week.

- Your **Read-Watch** assignment each week will be linked to this second reading. This means attending the Zoom meeting and then writing up your assignment to **post by 8pm the following evening (Friday)**.
- I know synchronous can be difficult due to schedules, different time zones, etc. My hope is that you all will be able to attend this meeting each week. I think it will help build the discussion and understanding amongst all of us. However, you will not be penalized if you can't attend.
- The **recordings** will be made available for on-demand viewing.

SUMMARY:

Each week you will:

- A. *Tuesday: Watch/listen to a podcast or video.*
 1. There will be a reading linked to this podcast/video.

2. Complete a Mind Map assignment related to this content.

B. *There will be a meeting via Zoom on Thursday during class time. It will be recorded.*

1. There will be a reading for this meeting. *DO IT BEFORE THE MEETING.*
2. Most weeks you will complete a read-watch response to this meeting. The exceptions are 10/1 and 11/12, when our analysis papers are due.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Mind Map: 24% (MM) (2x12)
 2. Analysis Paper #1: 20%
 3. Read-Watch: 20% (2x10)
 4. Analysis Paper #2: 20%
 5. Case Study Assignment: 16%
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ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

READ-WATCH ASSIGNMENTS

SUMMARY

These are short assignments that ask you to respond to a particular question about the reading and related video/podcast episode.

Each read-watch assignment will have a prompt for you to follow.

They should be **300-500 words** in length.

TYPE OF WRITING

Treat these as short argumentative essays. You want to argue a thesis and provide evidence.

No need for flowery intros or hook paragraphs. Put the thesis near the top and then go directly into proving it using evidence from the reading and the zoom session.

RUBRIC:

2 pts: clear thesis / sufficient evidence / writing is a direct response to the prompt

1.5 pts.: clear thesis / some evidence / writing is relevant to the prompt

1 pt.: detectable thesis / little evidence / writing is related to the prompt

.5 pt: lack of thesis / little to no evidence / writing is indirectly related to the prompt

MIND MAP ASSIGNMENTS

There are 12 Mind Map Assignments (**MM**) for this course. Due dates are listed on the syllabus.

WHAT IS A MIND MAP?

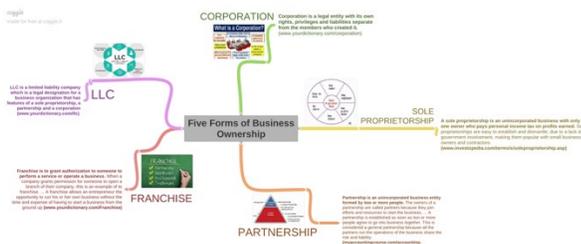
“A mind map is an easy way to brainstorm thoughts organically without worrying about order and structure. It allows you to visually structure your ideas to help with analysis and recall.

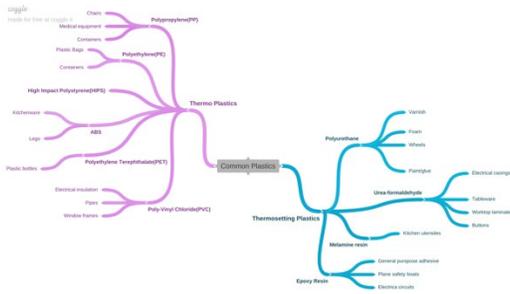
A mind map is a diagram for representing tasks, words, concepts, or items linked to and arranged around a central concept or subject using a non-linear graphical layout that allows the user to build an intuitive framework around a central concept. A mind map can turn a long list of monotonous information into a colorful, memorable and highly organized diagram that works in line with your brain's natural way of doing things.” (mindmapping.com)

GOAL

To make a visual map of the assigned reading and content. Mind maps allow you to organize the information in a visual format that allows for creativity and personalization. The goal is to place the main topic in the center and then to work outward in order to create a visual representation of the main ideas and their corollaries.

EXAMPLES





HOW DO I MAKE A MIND MAP?

1. If you like to work by hand, you can create your mind maps manually using pens and pencils. One of the major benefits of this is that manual production is shown to help retention and recall. If you choose this method, you will take a picture of your mind map and upload it to the assignment tab.
2. You can use Microsoft Word. Here is a helpful tutorial: <https://www.edrawsoft.com/mindmap/create-mind-map-on-microsoft-word.html>
3. You can use software: <https://coggle.it/>

RUBRIC

	Exemplary 4	Exceeds Standard 3	Adequately Meets Standard 2	Below Standard 1
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well organized Logical format Contains main concepts All key words and concepts necessary to promote an overview of the unit are used and well organized to give added meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoughtfully organized Easy to follow most of the time Contains most of the main concepts Most key words and concepts from the units are covered in a meaningful way and are thoughtfully organized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somewhat organized Somewhat incoherent Contains only a few of the main concepts Many key words and concepts from the unit are covered and are somewhat organized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choppy and confusing Contains a limited number of concepts Many key words and concepts from the unit are missing.
Content, Concepts and Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows an understanding of the topic's concepts and principles and uses appropriate terminology and notations No misconceptions/errors evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes some mistakes in terminology or shows a few misunderstandings of concepts Few misconceptions are evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes many mistakes in terminology and shows a lack of understanding of many concepts Some misconceptions are evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows no understanding of the topic's concepts and principles Many misconceptions are evident.
Connections and Knowledge of the Relationships among Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All words accurately connected. Connections indicate superior organization/understanding and enhance meaning. Arrows easily connect concepts in an informative manner. Identifies all the important concepts and shows an understanding of the relationships among them Meaningful and original insights demonstrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All words accurately connected. Connections are clear and logical. They connect concepts to promote clarity and convey meaning. Identifies important concepts but makes some incorrect connections Some meaningful connections made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most words accurately connected. Connections are somewhat clear and convey some meaning. Makes some incorrect connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some words accurately connected. Connections aren't clear, they convey little meaning and do not promote clarity. Fails to use any appropriate concepts or appropriate connection

Each Mind Map is worth 2pts.

- 4 = 2pt.
- 3 = 1.5pt.
- 2 = 1pt.
- 1 = .5pt.

BOOKS TO PURCHASE

NRSV Bible (can be found on the web if you don't want to purchase)

Sara Moslener, *Virgin Nation: Sexual Purity and American Adolescence*

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/virgin-nation-9780199987764?cc=us&lang=en&>

SCHEDULE

8/25: Introduction

8/27: Gender Studies—Basics

Reading: Gender Studies Terms

9/1: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

Reading: Genesis 1-12

MM #1 Due: Gender Studies Terms

9/3: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

Reading: Genesis 13-50

READ-WATCH #1: How would you explain the various genres and structures in Genesis 1-12 to your roommate who has not experience in Religious Studies or the Bible?

ENGENDERING: GOD AS MALE AND HUSBAND

9/8: Key Episodes in Genesis and Exodus

Reading: Exodus 1-20

MM #2: The Israelites from Abraham to the Exodus

9/10: Key Episodes in Genesis and Exodus

Reading: Exodus 21-40

READ-WATCH #2: How would you explain the relationship between Yahweh and the Israelites to your roommate who has not experience in Religious Studies or the Bible?

9/15: *God's Phallus (Homoerotic Dilemma + Moses)*
MM #3: What is the homoerotic dilemma?

Reading: God's Phallus: Intro +

9/17: *Queering Moses*

Reading: God's Phallus: Chapter 4

READ-WATCH #3: How does Moses embody the homoerotic dilemma?

9/22: *Song of Songs*

Reading: Song of Songs (Bible-entire)

MM #4: The Surprising Parts of the Song of Songs

9/24: *Song of Songs*

Reading: Carr: Gender and the Interpretation of the Song

READ-WATCH #4: Despite its female narrator, how does the Song of Songs relegate the female role to a sexualized and subservient role?

9/29: *Idolatry/Adultery*
Not

Reading: Hosea 1-3 (Bible) + Graybill, Are We Men? (Hosea)

MM #5: Israel and Yahweh: The Marital Metaphor in Song of Songs and Hosea— Love, Union, Jealousy, Abuse

CHRISTIANITY, THE BODY, AND QUEER IDENTITY

10/1: Analysis Paper #1

10/6 *Christianity: Infancy narratives, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection*

Reading: Matthew 1-28 (Bible) + Intro to New Testament

MM #6: Jesus is the New Moses

10/8: *Jesus and the Body (Lecture: Incarnation and God's Body)*

Reading: Pelikan, Jesus Through the Ages

READ-WATCH #5: What changes when Christians believe that God, Jesus Christ, has a body that can be adored, visualized, and remembered?

10/13: *Paul and Sex*

Reading: I Corinthians 6-7; Galatians 3; Romans 5-8

MM #7: Paul's Christian Approach to Sexuality

10/15: *Virginit*

Reading: Acts of Paul and Thecla

READ-WATCH #6: Is Thecla a feminist exemplar or a subservient Christian woman?

10/20: *Origen*

Reading: Origen on the Song of Songs

MM #8: Origen, Gender, and Sexuality in the Song of Songs

10/22: *Origen*

Reading: Moore: The Song of Songs in the Hist. of Sexuality

READ-WATCH #7: Despite the interpretation of human males as spiritually female, is it the case that Origen's reading of the Song of Songs and theology of sexuality only reinforces heteronormativity?

10/27: *Jesus's Vagina*

Reading: Karmen Lochrie: Mystical Acts/Queer Tendencies + Jesus's Vagina (video) (Myths of Love)

MM #9: Queer Interpretations of Jesus's Side Wound

10/29: *Hadewijch*

Reading: Hadewijch

READ-WATCH #8: How does Angela use erotic imagery to subvert gender roles?

CONTEMPORARY ITERATIONS

11/3: *Dating Jesus*

*Reading: "What is an Evangelical and Why Are They Running My Life?" (SWAJ) + "Dating Jesus" (SWAJ) + **Purity Culture Chapter***

MM #10: Purity Culture

11/5: *Women, Religion, and Sexuality in the USA*

Reading: Compromising Positions: "Sex: The Story of Feminists and Whores"

READ-WATCH #9

11/10: *Hypermasculinity, Sex, and the Nation*

Reading: Compromising Positions: "Nation: The Story of American Values" + Interview with Leslie Dorrough Smith (SWAJ)

MM #11

11/12: *Sexless Ed*

Reading: Slominski, Immanent Frame + Sexless Ed (SWAJ)

Analysis Paper #2 Due

11/17: *Virgin Nation*

Reading: Virgin Nation, Chapter 4 + Interview with Sara Moslener (SWAJ)

MM #12

11/19: *Virgin Nation*
READ-WATCH #10

Reading: Virgin Nation, Chapter 5

11/24: *Go over Case Study Assignment*

PLAGIARISM:

All cases of suspected plagiarism will be taken to the Honor Council for official investigation. The consequences for any student found guilty of plagiarism range from suspension to expulsion.

The following summary will help you think about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it:

See: www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism:

"WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?"

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

ACCORDING TO THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY, TO "PLAGIARIZE" MEANS

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

BUT CAN WORDS AND IDEAS REALLY BE STOLEN?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ARE CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)
- Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. See our section on [citation](#) for more information on how to cite sources properly."

LATE WORK

Late work will not be accepted without an instructor-approved extension, which will be granted in cases involving documented illness, family emergencies, or other health-related issues.