

RE 330-001: Goddesses and Amazons

Spring 2011

Instructor: Mary Zeiss Stange, Ph.D.

Ladd 213

Office Hours: T-Th 1:00-2:00, Wed. 11:00-12:00 & 2:00-4:00, and by appt.

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An investigation of culturally encoded ideas about female power—physical, intellectual, spiritual and moral—as they play out in myth and history. Our exploration will be far-ranging: from ancient Greece to contemporary goddess spirituality, from the warrior priestesses of the Siberian steppes to modern hunter-horsewomen in Kazakhstan, from the Virgin Mary to the seer/soldier Joan of Arc to the poet Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz to that “positively revolting hag” Mary Daly. The Western “dark goddess” Artemis will be played off against her Eastern counterpart, Kali. In every case, our focus will be on the interplay between the patriarchal drive to contain or control these manifestations of female self-assertion, and the liberating potential these mythical and historical figures hold for women, and men too, in contemporary society.

Texts:

Ginette Paris, *Pagan Meditations: Aphrodite, Hestia, Artemis*

Cynthia Eller, *Living in the Lap of the Goddess: The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America*

Rachel Fell McDermott & Jeffrey J. Kripal, Eds., *Encountering Kali: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West*

Régine Pernoud, *Joan of Arc: By Herself and Her Witnesses*

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden, *Poems, Protest, and a Dream*

Jeannine Davis-Kimball, with Mona Behan, *Warrior Women: An Archaeologist's Search for History's Hidden Heroines*

Plus additional materials to be distributed in class.

Evaluation:

Midterm essay	25%
Final essay.....	25%
Class participation.....	10%
Discussion days (2).....	20%
Academic Festival project.....	<u>20%</u>
	100%

The Midterm and Final essays are each substantial (10-12 page) writing assignments that will engage you with the readings in critically creative ways. Class participation means coming to class fully prepared to listen actively, as well as to advance discussion of the readings, film etc. Additionally, twice during the semester each of you will work with a colleague in the class to prepare the assigned readings and to lead our discussion (these are the two “Discussion days”). Finally, working as a group, the class will put together something—exactly what, in terms of form and function, is yet to be determined—to present at Academic Festival.

Attendance Policy:

Because regular attendance and active participation are vital to success in this course, no more than three unexcused absences will be tolerated. Exceeding this limit will result in an automatic lowering of your semester grade, 3 percentage points for each additional class day missed.

Etiquette:

- Plan to arrive in class on time.
- Be sure your cell phone is turned off, and stowed out of sight, before class begins.
- Use of a laptop during class is prohibited, unless you can document a medical reason.
 - Use of any and all other electronic devices during class is strictly prohibited.
- We will take a five-minute break approximately halfway through class each day. This is the *only* time you should leave the room during the class period.

Syllabus:

All reading must be completed prior to the class period for which it is assigned; comprehension of lectures and media presentations, and effective participation in discussions, will depend upon thorough preparation. Reading as far ahead as possible will be an excellent idea, given the size of portions assigned for many individual class sessions. Handouts for use in class will be available ahead of time, to afford ample time for preparation.

Reading Schedule:

- Jan 25: Introduction: A-V: *The Warrior Princess*
27: Abby Wettan Kleinbaum, *The War Against the Amazons*, Introduction and Chapter 1 [Handout]; A-V: *Unchained Heart*
- Feb 01: Kleinbaum reading, continued. Guest: Prof. Leslie Mechem
03: Paris, *Pagan Meditations*, Introduction (1-7), Part Four, “Old Goddesses and New Women” (191-199), and Chapter 13, “Artemis the Amazon” (156-163); and Mary Stange, *Woman the Hunter* Chapter 5, “Artemis: She Who Slays” [Handout]
- Feb 08: *Pagan Meditations*, Part Two: Artemis, Chapters 8-12, (109-155)
10: Jean Shinoda Bolen, *Goddesses in Everywoman: A New Psychology of Women*, Chapters 3-4, “The Virgin Goddesses” and “Artemis: Goddess of the Hunt and Moon, Competitor and Sister” [Handout]
- 15: Carol Christ, “Why Women Need the Goddess” [Handout] Film: *Goddess Remembered*.
17: Eller, *Living in the Lap of the Goddess*, Chapters 1-4 (1-82). Guest: Practicing Pagan Nancy Wheeler
- 22: *Living in the Lap of the Goddess*, Chapters 5-7 (83-149)
24: *Living in the Lap of the Goddess*, Chapters 8-10 (150-230)
- Mar 01: *Encountering Kali*, “Introducing Kali Studies” (1-19) & Chapters 1 “Kali,” & 2 “Kali the Terrific and Her Tests” (23-59)
03: *Encountering Kali*, Chapters 3. “The Domestication of a Goddess” & 4, “Dominating Kali: Hindu Family Values and Tantric Power” (60-99)
Film: *Devi*.
- Mar 08: *Encountering Kali*, Chapter 7, “Wrestling with Kali: South Asian and British Constructions of the Dark Goddess” & Chapter 8, “India’s Darkest Heart: Kali in the Colonial Imagination” (145-195)
10: *Encountering Kali*, Chapter 9, “Why the Tantrika is a Hero,” (196-222), Chapter 11,

“Margins at the center: Tracing Kali through Time, Space, and Culture “ &
Chapter 12, “Kali’s New Frontiers: A Hindu Goddess on the Internet” (249-295)
Midterm Essay due

15-17: *Spring Break*

22: Video: *Blinking Madonna*. Discussion of the Cult of the Virgin in Catholicism.

24: *Joan of Arc*, Introduction (5-8), Chapters 1-4 (15-107)

29: *Joan of Arc*, Chapters 5-7 (108-227). Video: *The Burning Times* (excerpt)

31: *Joan of Arc*, Chapters 8-9 (228-277); Andrea Dworkin, from *Intercourse*, “Virginity” [Handout]

Apr 05: Sor Juana, *Poems, Protest, and a Dream*, Introduction (xi-xliii); Film: “I, the Worst of All”

07: Sor Juana, “Response to the Most Illustrious Poetess Sor Filotea de la Cruz” (3-75); “Letter to the R.F.M. Antonio Nunez” [Handout]

12: Sor Juana, “First I Dream” (77-129)

14: Sor Juana, “*Loa for the Auto Sacramental: The Divine Narcissus*” 195-239; Gloria Anzaldua, “Entering Into the Serpent” [Handout]

19: Davis-Kimball, *Warrior Women*, Preface & Chapters 1-5 (xi-95)

21: *Warrior Women*, Chapters 6-9 (96-168)

26 *Warrior Women*, Chapters 10-13 (169-240)

28: Film: *Secrets of the Dead: Amazon Warrior Women*

May 03: Wrap-up. **Academic Festival** set-up.

04: Academic festival.

There is no final exam in this course. The *****Final Essay***** is due Monday May 9th for seniors, Friday May 13th for everyone else.

Gender Studies Program Goals:

The Gender Studies program offers interdisciplinary courses that draw upon feminist theories and gender scholarship to accomplish the following goals:

- Distinguish between the biological bases of sex differences and the social construction of gender.
- Critically examine cultural assumptions about gender and how it intersects with race, ethnicity, nationality, social class, and sexual orientation to construct identity.
- Analyze systems of gender in order to engage in social change.
- Identify how feminist analyses contribute to the understanding of women and gender to challenge the boundaries and concepts of traditional disciplines.
- Describe feminists’ contributions to the production of knowledge and ways of knowing.
- Understand the historical background of Gender Studies, including the development of Women’s Studies.
- Develop skills for gathering, interpreting, integrating, and communicating diverse forms of information.

