

REL: 3930H SEX AND THE SACRED

The saint turns from the voluptuary in alarm; she does not know that his unacknowledgeable passions and her own are really one.

Georges Bataille

Instructor: Dr. Ann Gleig (she/her/hers)

Time and Location: Tuesday and Thursday 3.00-4.15.

Email: Ann.Gleig@ucf.edu

Office Hour: Tuesday 1.00-2pm or by appointment (office hours will be virtual)

Course Description:

In the last decade, events such as Kim Davis, the Kentucky court clerk, refusing to issue a marriage license to a gay couple and craft store Hobby Lobby refusing to provide reproductive health care for their female employees on the grounds that such action conflicts with their Christian commitments have drawn attention to tensions between religious and secular sexual identities and ethics. While media coverage of these events tends to portray an inherent conflict between religious and secular approaches, through a focus on two major world religions—Buddhism and Christianity—this course will show there are multiple intersections between religion, spirituality, and sexuality. Students will be encouraged to extend both religious and secular theories of sexuality through examining the ways religion both polices and produces sexual practices and identities and through analyzing the spiritual dimensions of desire. Topics include sexual freedom and the limits of religious “tolerance,” mysticism and desire, and religion and contemporary political issues such as reproductive rights and LGBTQI rights.

Course Objectives:

- To develop **an historical consciousness** and cultivate **rational analysis** into the relationship between religion, spirituality, and sexuality.
- To **critically study** sexuality within its wider socio-cultural context.
- **To identify and interrogate** presumptive norms and dichotomies within both religious and secular theories of sexuality.
- To **analyze** contemporary cultural, political, and legal debates and clashes around national issues involving religion and sexuality.

Course Requirements:

- **Reading, Participation, and Attendance:** The engine that drives this course will be group discussion. Thus, it’s imperative that everyone arrives to class prepared to make it happen—having read carefully and prepared notes on the reading as well as thoughtful responses to discussion questions. If you haven’t done the reading and aren’t able to participate, I’ll deduct 1% from your participation grade. You will also be required to submit short writing assignments (350-450 words) as part of your participation grade. (4%)

- **“You’re the Professor” Exam Preparation:** To prepare you for each exam, you will do a group exercise in which you write up five exam questions from the module review terms and respond to classmate’s questions. It is essentially a space to study for the exam collaboratively (2% each, 6% total).
- **Unit exams:** There will be three exams—one for each of the first three units that will test students’ understanding of key terms, themes and debates of each unit (15% each, 45% in total) Each exam will contain 45 multi-choice questions and be 60 minutes long. Exams are open book and will be taken outside of class time.
- **Unit Reflection and Response Informal Papers:** There will be four short informal writing assignments papers, one for each unit. These will require you to **clearly describe, critically analyze, and affectively reflect** on the material from each module and respond to another classmate. They should be between 600-800 (reflection) and 400-500 (response) words. (5% each, 20% in total) Detailed instructions are provided in Webcourse.
- **Final Research Project: Small Group Class Design and Presentation:** In groups of four or five, students will be required to design and present a class on an issue relating to religion and sexuality using religious traditions --both major world religions and NRMs--that **has not been covered in the course.** You can also choose an issue--for instance, LGBTQI rights— that has been covered as long as you choose a different tradition. (25%) Detailed instructions are provided in Webcourse.

Extra Credit

There is a possibility of 1 % extra credit in this class. You can either write a review of a movie, documentary or podcast about religion and sexuality **OR** do the poem exercise “Where I Am From.” Details on webcourse.

Each will be worth 1% extra on your final grade.

Grading Scale:

A (94-100) A- (90-93) B+ (87-89) B (83-86) B- (80-82) C+ (77-79) C (73-76) C- (70-72) D+ (67-69) D (63-66) D- (60-65) F (0-59)

Learning During COVID

We are living through and learning during an unprecedented historical time due to the vulnerabilities, restrictions and limits of COVID. It is a time of real insecurity and anxiety on multiple levels: physical, psychological and financial. In addition to our own wellbeing, we all have families and friends we care about immensely. The most important thing is to take care of ourselves and each other. As such, I urge you to contact

me at any time, if you run into any issues and problems that impact your performance in the course. I am setting deadlines to maintain "normality" but given that we aren't living in normal times, I intend to be flexible with all my students. To make the course more doable during this time, I have made a couple of adjustments:

1. All exams will be open book and will be open for a three-day period to give you plenty of time to do it.
2. Reduced Exams: There will be 3 instead of 4 exams. There will be no final exam (module 4) at the end of the class.

All of us are dealing with extra stress right now. I hope the class structure, which is still quite rigorous, will provide some focus but will not be too overwhelming. **Please reach out to me, if you find yourself having any problems. I am here for you.**

UCF official COVID statement and policy:

I recognize and understand the difficult times we are all in. The COVID-19 pandemic impacts us all in many ways, including physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, academically, and professionally. I will work with you on challenges you may be encountering and to provide support to help you succeed. However, please keep in mind that I will hold you accountable, especially in terms of class attendance, participation, and contributions.

Statement Regarding Masks in Class:

UCF expects that all members of our campus community who are able to do so get vaccinated, and we expect all members of our campus community to wear masks indoors, [in line with the latest CDC guidelines](#). Masks are required in approved clinical or health care settings.

Class Rules of Engagement:

- This class is an educational safe zone. It welcomes and respects the viewpoints of students of all sexual orientations and genders as well as all races, ethnicities, religions, and abilities. All members of the learning community are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity.
- Exams are open book but all exams require strict adherence to the honor code and must include the following "I hereby certify that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment (signature)"
- Deadlines: Due to Covid pressures, I am being more flexible with deadlines but you must contact me beforehand if you have a conflict with a deadline. Otherwise, I will deduce points for late assignments out of respect for your classmates who meet them.

UCF POLICES

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the [UCF Golden Rule](#) for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Student Accessibility Services

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accessibility for all persons. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu> Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Campus Safety Statement

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.

Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html. Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.

If there is a medical emergency during class, students may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those are located, see <http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/AEDlocations-UCF>.

To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <https://my.ucf.edu> and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the toolbar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on the Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."

Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.

To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video (<https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk>).

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Required Texts:

Megan Goodwin, *Abusing Religion: Literary Persecution, Sex Scandals, and American Minority Religions* (Rutgers University Press, 2020).

Janet R Jakobson and Ann Pellegrini *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance* (NYU Press: New York, 2003).

Linda Klein, *Pure: Inside the Evangelical Movement that Shamed a Generation of Young Women and How I Broke Free* (Atraia Books, 2018).

In addition to these books, a number of articles and book chapters will be available either directly to read as an e-text in the library or as a PDF or weblink via Webcourse

The class is structured around four units, which are between three and four weeks long:

- **Unit One: Christianity**
- **Unit Two: Buddhism**
- **Unit Three: Rethinking Assumptions: Tolerance, Modernity, the Erotic and “Cults”**
- **Unit Four: Snapshots: Student Led Classes**

JANUARY

Preamble: Introductions

11th Course & Community Introductions

13th Overview of the Academic Study of Religion and Sexuality

Watch The Virgin Daughters: Documentary

Available free online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGD0Jbbjug4>

Module One: CHRISTIANITY

18th Christianity: Sexuality and Sexual Ethics in Christianity: Historical Context

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Jeanine Viau

Start Klein, *Pure* 1-98

20^h Evangelical Purity Movement

Klein, *Pure*, Movement I p. 99-179

25th Evangelical Purity Movement

Klein, *Pure*, Movement II p. 179-296

27th Evangelical Masculinities

Kristin K.D. Mez, *Jesus and John Wayne* chps.

Stephen Pihlaja, "Bearing the Burden" *Shiloh Project*

https://www.shilohproject.blog/bearing-the-burden/?fbclid=IwAR1XEKh7K4_zDIK17ScuckogZFpJaUaumwTxLXCTITeygQIMUKSITcABvHM

February

1st After Purity: Lecture by Dr. Sara Moslener

3rd LGBTQI+ Christians

Heather White, *Reforming Sodom* Introduction "How the Bible Came to Speak About Homosexuality," and Chapter 1 "The Therapeutic Orthodoxy."

8th Pray the Gay Away: Conversion "therapy"

Tanya Erzen, *Straight to Jesus* selections

10TH Queers in the Kingdom: (74 minutes) OR Fish Out of Water (60 minutes)

No Virtual Class (Choose One or Both documentaries)

Queers and the Kingdom is focused on Evangelical Christianity though the case study of Wheaton College. Fish Out of Water is more general. Both are available to stream free via UCF library. Write a Critical Analysis.

Module One Reflection & Response Due Feb Sunday 13th 11.59pm

Module One Exam Friday 11th -Sunday 13th

Module Two: BUDDHISM

15th Buddhism, Sexuality, and Sexual Ethics

Ann Gleig, "Embodied Desire in Buddhism: Poison and Antidote"

17TH Spring, Summer, Fall, Winterand Spring Movie

No Class meeting –Write a Critical Analysis

Sharon Suh, chapter from *Silver Screen Buddhism*

22nd Sex as Ritual/ Ritualized Sex: Tantric Buddhism

Jeffrey Hopkins, "The Compatibility of Reason and Orgasm in Tibetan Buddhism"

24th American Buddhism and Sexual Abuse: Accounts

The readings this week include first-hand accounts of sexual abuse and misconduct in Buddhist communities. These readings can be emotionally intense especially if you have any history with sexual trauma so please take your time in reading them and if you have any adverse emotional reactions, please put the reading aside and contact me to discuss an alternative approach.

Lama Willa Miller, "Breaking the Silence of Sexual Misconduct" at Lion's Roar

<https://www.lionsroar.com/breaking-the-silence-on-sexual-misconduct/>

Rebecca Jamison "Woven: Leaving Shambhala"

<https://entropymag.org/woven-leaving-shambhala/>

March

1st American Buddhism and Sexual Abuse: Responses

Amy Langenberg, "Did the Buddha Teach Consent?" *Lions Roar*

Gleig, "Interpretative Frameworks and Generative Responses"

<http://blog.shin-ibs.edu/sexual-violations-in-american-buddhism-interpretive-frameworks-and-generative-responses/>

Gleig and Langenberg, "Centering Survivors" available at

<https://www.shilohproject.blog/sexual-misconduct-and-buddhism-centering-survivors/>

March 3rd Trauma-Informed Yoga Class

Guest teacher: Sameera Qureshi

To help us digest the challenging material on sexual abuse in Buddhism we will end Module Two with a trauma informed yoga class. Be sure to wear comfortable clothes! There is no official reading but please take a moment to look over Sameera's website and watch her YouTube video (7 minutes) on What is Trauma Informed Yoga?

<https://sexualhealthformuslims.com/yoga>

SPRING BREAK 6th-13th MARCH

Module Two Response & Reflection Paper Due March 8th

Module Two Exam Due March 4th-6th

*****Arrange groups for Module 4 at the end of Module 2**

Module 3: RETHINKING ASSUMPTIONS: MODERNITY, LIBERALISM & “CULTS”

15th Sex, Religion and Law

Janet Jackobsen and Ann Pellegrini, *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance* p. ix-44

17th Sex, Religion and Law

Janet Jackobsen and Ann Pellegrini, *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance* p. 44-151

22nd Queer Religion Beyond Liberalism

Ann Gleig, “Queering Buddhism or Buddhist De-Queering?”

Hsiao-Lan Hu, “Queering Identities: Resources and Resilience” <https://www.society-buddhist-christian-studies.org/timely-issues/2019/3/7/queering-identities-resource-and-resilience>

24th Transgender Inclusivity

Guest lecture: Ray Buckner

Ray Buckner “Zen in Distress: Theorizing Gender Dysphoria and Traumatic Remembrance within Soto Zen Meditation” *Religions* available at

<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/11/11/582/htm>

“Our Opportunity to Include All Genders in Buddhist Communities”

“<https://www.lionsroar.com/our-opportunity-to-include-all-genders-in-buddhist-communities/>”

WITHDRAWAL DATE: Friday March 25th

29th Abusing Religion

Megan Goodwin, *Abusing Religion (Introduction and Part 1)*

31st Abusing Religion

Megan Goodwin, *Abusing Religion (Part 2 & Part 3)*

Module Three Reflection and Response April 3rd

Module Three Exam April 1st-3rd

April

Module 4: SNAPSHOTS: STUDENT LED CLASSES

Readings for each class will be provided by each group one week before as part of the final assignment

5th Student-Led Class Group 1

7TH Student-Led Class Group 2

12TH No Class: Watch “The World Before Her” (critical analysis)

14TH Student-Led Class Group 3

19th Student-Led Class Group 4

21st LAST CLASS: REFLECTIONS

Audre Lourde, “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,”

<https://liberationspring.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/the-uses-of-the-erotic-the-erotic-as-power.pdf>

Extra Credit Due: April 24th

Grades Available: May 8th