Course Description:

Science and religion represent two powerful institutions, their histories intertwined and inextricably interconnected. Patriarchal institutions, often hostile to women and gender, feminists have challenged both with great vigor. This course examines these contestations using a comparative analysis of the United States and India. The founders of the United States imagined secularism as a separation of church and state – religion being relegated to the private, and to non-state actors. In contrast, the founders of India imagined secularism as pluralism – the state actively supporting all religions. Despite these contrasting visions, there are animated challenges to secularism in both countries today. The “religious right” in the U. S. invokes its Judeo Christian origins to insist on the centrality of Christianity. Similarly, religious nationalists in India insist on privileging the dominant religion, Hinduism. The course will examine the complexities of the histories of science and religion, and our gendered visions of tradition and modernity. It will emphasize the defining role of gender, race, class and sexuality in the histories of science and religion in both contexts, and how these categories of difference continue to shape the gendered landscapes of religion and science India and the U. S. The course will include discussion on the new reproductive technologies, debates on evolution and the definitions of life, and our ecological futures.

Readings and Course Material:

There are no texts for this course. All readings are available on MOODLE. They are organized by week.

This course is organized as a seminar, and meets once each week. It is imperative that everyone has done the readings, analyzed them and is prepared to discuss them during the weekly class meetings. To use our weekly class discussion times well, I am organizing a discussion board on MOODLE. Each of you will sign up to be a discussant once during the semester. For that week, you will post your essay reflecting on the readings by Sunday 5 p. m the week before. Your essay will end with a set of questions that you recommend as key issues for the week’s readings. The rest of the class will post their responses to the readings and your essay by 9 a. m on the day of the class. It is my hope that this will help us have a more engaged and deeper conversation on the materials for the week.
Course Requirements and Grades:

This is a reading intensive seminar organized around weekly discussions. Each week, you should have done the readings assigned and come prepared to discuss the materials. Most of the course is organized around the weekly discussions. Your engaged participation in the discussion counts for about half the course grade. The other half will be organized around a mid-semester analytic essay and a final project.

Discussant Essay and Presentation (10%): Each of you will serve as discussant once during the semester, and help lead the class discussion that week. For the week you have chosen, you will write a 3 page reflection on the week’s reading. You will end with a set of questions that will help organize the class discussion. The essay must be posted on MOODLE by 5 p.m on the Sunday before the discussion. Since there will be more than one person each week, you should collectively meet with me to plan the class session.

Journal (20%): Since this is a long class each week, we will do some in class writing each class. The goal of the writing is for you to make note of your growing knowledge, and reflect on the interconnections between feminism, religion and science. If you would like to, you are welcome to add or edit your journal out of class. Three times during the semester (Feb 20, April 3, May 1) you will submit your journal for comments.

Attendance and Class & Moodle Discussion Participation (20%): Everyone will post weekly reflections on the discussant’s summary and questions each week. Your post is due by 9 a.m on the day of the class. Each post should be at least 200 words. You are allowed two absences in your postings. Attendance and arriving on time is critical for a good class and discussion. More than two class absences will negatively affect your final grade. Please see me if there are any problems.

MidTerm Essays (20%): One mid term is due on March 6. The questions will be presented to you one week before. It will be a take home assignment due at the start of class. Coming late to class or turning it at the end of the class will count as a “late” paper, i.e., please do not miss class to finish your essays.

Final Project (20%): There will be one final project. You can do this individually or in groups. The format is also open. If you choose to write an essay, it should be about 10-12 pages long. I encourage you to be creative in the content and format. A final project proposal (title and abstract) is due March 27. Final Project is due April 17. Please think of what you would like to work on early in the semester. You are welcome to work in pairs or groups and choose formats other than an essay. You will present your project to the class at the end of the semester.

Final Project Evaluation (10%): For the final, you will evaluate someone else’s final paper/project. Your evaluation (about 3-4 pages) will be due on Wednesday, April 24. Details on the final project and evaluation will be on MOODLE and discussed in class.
Academic Honesty:
Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for educating yourself about the University’s official policy on academic honesty. Following is a summary - you can read it in full at [http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/rights/acad_honest.htm](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/rights/acad_honest.htm)

Accommodation Policy Statement:
The University is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements: [http://www.umass.edu/disability/procedures.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/disability/procedures.pdf)

Weekly Schedule:

**January 23 – Science, Rationality and Skepticism**

- Introductions & Course Overview
- Ethan Bronner and Isabel Kershner, “Israelis Facing a Seismic Rift Over Role of Women, NYT, January 14, 2012.

**January 30 – Science and its origins**

- David Noble, *A World Without Women: The Christian Clerical Culture of Western Science,* Chapters 8 & 10
- **For In-Class Debate:** Sandra Harding, “Is Science Multicultural: Challenges, Resources, Opportunities, Uncertainties,” *Configurations* 2.2 (1994) – Come prepared to debate the issues.

**February 6 - A Quick Overview of India and South Asia (Guest: Priyanka Srivastava)**

February 13 – Case Study – Definitions of Life (Guest: Laura Briggs)


February 20 – Religion, State and Secularism (Guest: Susan Shapiro)

- Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pelligrini, *Secularisms*, Introduction
- **Writing Journal Due**

February 27 - Science, Secularism and Religion


March 6 – Case Study: Evolution

- **Mid Term Essays Due**
March 13 - Case Study- Ecology and the Environment - Ecological Futures


March 20 – Spring Break – No Class

March 27 – Case Study: Politics of Gender and “Purity”

- Mark Oppenheimer, “Purity Balls Get Attention but Might not be all they Claim,” NYT, July 20, 2012.
- Final Project Title and Abstract Due

April 3 – Case Study: Reproductive Justice

- Jael Silliman, Marlene Gerber Fried, Loretta Ross, Elena Gutierrez, Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice, Chapter 1.
- Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice: http://reproductivejustice.org/what-is-reproductive-justice
- Response to Dukhanova by Joel Brind and to the study by Jillian Henderson
- Writing Journal Due
April 10 -- Case Study: Reproductive Politics – Surrogacy (Guest: N. Sarojini, SAMA)

- Nilanjana S. Roy, “Protecting the Rights of Surrogate Mothers in India,” NYT, Oct 4, 2011.

April 17 -- Monday Schedule

April 24 – Alternate Sciences

- Final Projects Due

May 1 – Class Presentations

- Writing Journal Due
- Project Evaluation Due