



Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

CHS680: WOMEN IN CHURCH AND CULTURE Block - Semester I, 2010-2011

Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available at http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential_Information. Additional technical support information can be found at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose and Master of Divinity Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS bookstore procedures
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

Instructor Information

Professors: Joy E Raser, PhD and
Harold E Raser, PhD

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between 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

Catalog Description

The seminar is designed to expose students to a wide range of resources and information pertaining to the experience of women, and the roles they have assumed in the past, and now assume in the Christian Church and the wider cultures in which women have lived and now live. It focuses on women and their roles in Western culture and church, with a strong emphasis upon American culture and church.

Course Narrative & Rationale

The course is conducted as a graduate seminar. It intends to acquaint students with a variety of theological, social, psychological, and other issues that arise from a careful examination of the historical experience of women in the world, particularly as women have experienced and dealt with the reality of living in largely patriarchal cultures that revolve around male-dominated institutions. While the course focuses especially on the historical experiences of women in the Christian Church, it also addresses women's experience in the wider cultures in which the Church has existed (and by which it has been influenced) - especially Western "European-American" culture. Along with works of historical narrative and analysis, the course also utilizes works of biblical exegesis, theology, the social sciences, autobiography, fiction, and film to illuminate women's experience and to encourage careful critical theological reflection on that experience.

The course directly addresses the concern expressed in the goals and objectives of all NTS degree programs that students gain an understanding of the history of the Christian faith, and an understanding of the contemporary environment in which ministry is carried out. It also addresses these programs' concern that students grow in self-understanding in order that they may render more effective service in Christ's Church.

Course Outcomes

1. Students will gain familiarity with a group of important texts (works of historical analysis, theological writings, social science studies, novels, short stories, autobiographies) and other materials that illuminate the experience of women in church and culture (*demonstrated* through regular participation in class discussion and other learning activities).
2. Students will develop understanding of the historical context of the contemporary discussion/debate about women's roles in church and society (*demonstrated* through regular participation in class discussion and other learning activities).
3. Students will develop sensitivity to the need to hear and take seriously women's reflection on their own experience of the world (*demonstrated* through regular participation in class discussion and other learning activities).
4. Students will acquire a growing ability to reflect theologically on a substantial range of issues relating to gender roles in the Christian Church and in one's wider society in an informed and faithfully Christian manner (*demonstrated* through regular participation in class discussion and other learning activities).
5. Students will acquire resources to help them to incorporate insights gained in the course into one's theology and practice of Christian ministry (foundations of this are *demonstrated* through all assigned work in the course; fruition of this can be demonstrated only in future ministry over time).

Required Texts & Course Materials

1. *Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition* (2nd edition - contains both narrative and primary source readings), Barbara J. MacHaffie.
2. *Sex and Gender* (2nd edition), John Archer and Barbara Lloyd.
3. *The Story of Avis*, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.
4. *O Pioneers!*, Willa Cather.
5. *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism*, Betty A. DeBerg.
6. *Feminism and Christianity: An Essential Guide*, Lynn Japinga.
7. *Mystery Flowers*, Grace Livingston Hill.
8. Articles and short pieces (available on the course site on NTS Moodle).

Course Assignments & Requirements

1. Consistent attendance and consistent and informed participation in class discussion. The course is conducted as a graduate seminar. It is *not* a lecture course. The professors occasionally make lecture-type presentations, but most often class periods are given to discussion of material read by the entire class, or to reports by students on significant texts not read by the whole class, or reports on individual or group research projects. **The success of the course depends upon regular full participation by each class member. Students that miss more than the equivalent of two class sessions may have their final grade in the course significantly reduced.**
2. Consistent completion of assigned reading. Students may be asked to verify this in writing or through occasional oral or written "pop quizzes."
3. Submission in writing of at least five (5) carefully prepared questions over the assigned reading each week when material has been assigned to the entire class. These questions should probe

below the surface of the reading to highlight significant issues and implications in the various works that merit group reflection and discussion.

4. One in-class oral presentation on a book, person, or other topic relevant to the course assigned by the professors.

INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR IN-CLASS ORAL PRESENTATIONS

A. Read the *entire* book. Do not try to make a coherent report based on a skimming of chapter titles and section headings, or a couple of chapters taken out of context.

B. Provide a concise, but comprehensive overview of the content of the book. Prepare a written outline and/or Power Point presentation to guide the class through the information being presented.

C. Clearly state the central thesis, point, or purpose of the book.

D. Present and concisely explain the essential main points highlighted by the author in developing the thesis, making the case, or telling the story.

E. Give some evaluation of the book - its strengths, weaknesses, any questions or issues that it raised for you, and the like.

F. Explain how, in your view, the information in the book contributes to or informs our understanding of women in church and culture.

Evaluation of the presentation by the instructors will be based on the above criteria, and students will receive feedback and a grade from the instructors within one week of making their presentation.

5. A semester research project that explores some aspect of women in church and culture. This is to be submitted to the professors in some "material" form as well as reported on orally during a seminar session. The last several weeks of the seminar will be given to oral presentations reporting on this research. Two or three (maximum) students may collaborate on a project. **The project is to be submitted no later than Monday, November 22, 2010.**

The research project can be as creative as you care to make it, but it must be a work of substance, providing evidence of careful research, reflection, and preparation. Also, it must be anchored in and address in an explicit and clear manner an issue or issues raised in the seminar. Each project, whatever form it takes, is to be accompanied by a bibliography of sources that have informed the work. Also, if a questionnaire is used in the research, the questionnaire and responses received should be submitted along with the final project. Research in previous seminars has ranged widely and included such things as: a multi-media presentation (utilizing visual illustrations, audio and video recording, etc.) on women in ministry in the Church of the Nazarene; a Power Point presentation designed to sensitize members of a church congregation to the historical experience of women in the Christian Church; historical analysis of the relation of fashion in women's clothing to women's roles and status in society; creation of a liturgical calendar and resources for use with it that highlights the contributions of women to the Christian Church; analysis of a questionnaire sent to selected Nazarene pastors and district superintendents concerning their views of women in ministry; and a wide variety of other topics examined from different angles.

A written "prospectus" of the research project describing the topic, the methodology or means to be used in approaching the topic, and at least a preliminary bibliography of sources that could inform the project is to be submitted to the professors no later than Monday, October 25, 2010.

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

	hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions	38
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	0
Reading	67
Writing	0
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	30
Exams & Quizzes	0
TOTAL	135

Method for Submitting Assignments

Questions required for sessions when reading material has been assigned to the entire class (see #3 above) should be submitted on the course site on NTS Moodle. There is clearly-marked link for each class session where questions may be posted, and accessed and evaluated by the instructors. **All written discussion questions are due by 5:30 p.m. Central Time on the day on which the assignment is due.** Semester research projects, if written, should also be submitted on the course site on NTS Moodle. Research projects that cannot be submitted in electronic form on NTS Moodle should be handed in to the instructors in class. **All research projects, in whatever form they take, are due by 6:00 p.m. Central Time on the day on which this assignment is due.**

Form and Style Expectations

There is no mandatory “style sheet” for this class. Students are, however, expected to consistently follow one of the standard forms for theses and term papers. The most current Turabian style manual is always an excellent choice.

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

As stated above questions over assigned reading are to be submitted on the course site on NTS Moodle by no later than 5:30 p.m. Central Time on the day on which the assignment is due. **Questions posted late will not receive credit.** Research that are in electronic form that can be posted on NTS Moodle are due no later than 6:00 p.m. Central Time on the day on which this assignment is due, as are projects that cannot be submitted on Moodle. Late research projects are reduced ½ letter grade for every three days (or portion thereof) overdue.

Course Grading

For all written work, the following criteria are employed in evaluation and grading: 1) **“A” quality work** - is superior in every way - writing is clear, essentially without error in syntax, grammar, spelling, word usage, etc. - content evidences very careful reflection, insight, and original thought;

2) **“B” quality work** - is above average - writing is generally clear, with few errors in syntax, grammar, spelling, word usage, etc. - content evidences careful preparation and meets the minimum expectations of the assignment; 3) **“C” quality work** - average - writing is adequate, but may have errors - content is adequate - meets the minimum expectations of the assignment, but lacks insight and originality; 4) **“D” quality work** -- below average - writing is poor, marred with excessive errors - content evidences lack of insight or lack of understanding of the assigned material; 5) **“F” quality work** - failure to do satisfactory work - work evidences haste, lack of careful preparation, lack of basic understanding of the assigned material.

FINAL GRADES IN THE COURSE WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING WEIGHTING OF ASSIGNMENTS:

1. General class participation (including regular attendance, consistent and informed participation in class discussion) **counts 30%** of the final grade. Class participation will be evaluated and graded at three specific points in the course, and **students will receive feedback from the professors on their participation at these times. Participation assessment will be made after week 4 of the course, after week 8, and after week 11.**
2. Consistent preparation of thoughtful discussion questions over assigned reading **counts 10%** of the final grade.
3. The assigned in-class oral presentation **counts 20%** of the final grade.
4. The semester research project **counts 40%** of the final grade.

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities, Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies which have been beneficial for the student in the past.
