

Junior Tutorial in the Comparative Study of Religion: Religion, Violence, and Reproduction

Fall 2023

Course Location: Barker 303

Course Meeting Day/Time: Wednesdays, 10-12

Instructor: Siobhan Kelly (siobhankelly@g.harvard.edu)

Course Description: Much has been written on religion as both a source of, and solace from, violence, suffering, and discrimination, particularly around issues of the family, reproduction, and gender. This junior tutorial looks at religion and its relation to violence and reproduction, focused predominantly on Christian and US-based conversations on these interrelated topics. We engage with theoretical arguments, ritual studies, ethnography, history, theology, ethics, and queer and feminist theory to make sense of the connections between religion, violence, and reproduction, also exposing students to key texts in the study of religion today. We will cover topics including, but not limited to: the Religious Right, abortion debates, anti-queer violence, sexuality and the Black Church, the history of birth control, ritual theory, religious sex scandals, and religious responses to sexual violence.

Readings: All readings will be available through HOLLIS or as PDFs on the course Canvas site.

Course Policies and Objectives

Assignments:

- *Participation:*
Come to our meetings having read the assigned texts closely and ready to discuss them. We will meet for two hours every week.
- *Weekly Writing Response:*
For 10 of the weeks (you can choose which 4 to skip), write 200-400 words in response to the readings for the week. These can take the form that makes the most sense for you given the texts. You can focus on a single quote and unpack it, highlight the main ideas in one text, relate multiple texts to each other, or put the week's readings in conversation with earlier readings in the course.
Marked Complete or Incomplete.
Due before 9 AM on Wednesdays
- *Midterm Paper:*
In 5-8 pages, put at least two (and no more than 4) readings from the semester thus far in conversation with each other. Focus on theoretical paradigms you have found useful (or

frustrating), describe a given paradigm, and then apply how you see it working in a given context of your choice. This need not involve any additional research, and can be as related or unrelated to your Junior Paper as you would like.

Letter graded.

Due October 13 by midnight

- *Junior Paper:*

Write a 20-25 page paper on a topic of your choice related to the course content. Be sure to cite at least *five* readings from the course, and at least *three* additional sources you have found on your own. We will talk more about this project as it approaches, and there will be scaffolding assignments along the way.

Final paper letter graded, prior smaller assignments marked complete or incomplete.

Topic Due November 3 by midnight.

Outline and Annotated Bibliography Due November 17 by midnight.

Rough Draft (approx. 10 pages) Due December 1 by midnight.

Junior Paper FINAL Due December 15 by midnight.

Grade Distribution:

- Participation: 25%
- Weekly writing response: 10%
- Midterm paper: 15%
- Junior Paper:
 - Topic: 5%
 - Outline and Annotated Bibliography: 10%
 - Rough Draft: 10%
 - Final Junior Paper: 25%

Extension Days = 5:

In light of the complexities and challenges of being a college student, including malfunctioning technology, coinciding due dates, socio-political turmoil/uncertainty, and illness, everyone starts the semester with **five** extension days, with which to extend the deadline of any assignment.

Some restrictions apply: you cannot use extension days for the weekly reading response posts, and Saturdays and Sundays count in the final tally. Please keep track of your own extension days. Once you have depleted your extension days, late assignments will be down-graded **1/3 letter grade per day (or portion of a day) late**. Please note that failure to complete any assignment can lower your final grade in excess of the stated percentage.

Research Librarian Visit (October 4, 10-11 AM):

The Study of Religion has two Library Liaisons, Reed Lowrie (lowrie@fas.harvard.edu) and Romona Islam (rlislam@fas.harvard.edu). At an early point in the semester, we will schedule a

library research tutorial with one of them. This is a chance to help you build research skills for your final paper and subsequent research. This is also an exciting opportunity to learn more about research librarians and the incredible skills and resources they have to offer.

Course Readings:

Part I: Theorizing Ritual, Trauma and Sexuality

Week 1: Ritual and Ethics (66 pages)

September 6

1. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* “Introduction” (3-12) **9 pages, PDF**
2. Molly Farneth, *The Politics of Ritual* Chapter 4: [“Habits, Virtues, and Freedom” \(113-147\) and Conclusion: “The Rituals of Our Politics” \(189-196\)](#) **41 pages**
3. Tamura Lomax, [“Theorizing the Distance Between Erotophobia, Hyper-Moralism, and Eroticism: Toward a Black Feminist Theology of Pleasure.”](#) (263-279) **16 pages**

Week 2: Thinking Trauma (83 pages)

September 13

4. Amy Hollywood, [“The Unspeakability of Trauma, the Unspeakability of Joy”](#) (44-64) **20 pages**
5. Rebecca Ann Parker, “Away from the Fire: Rebecca’s Story” (15-50) from *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us* **35 pages, PDF**
6. Ahmad Greene-Hayes, [“Black Church Rumor: Sexual Violence and Black \(Gay\) Gospel’s Reverend James Cleveland”](#) (115-143) **28 pages**

Week 3: Gender, Trauma, and Control (79 pages)

September 20

7. Michel Foucault, [“8 February 1978”](#) (115-134) Lecture in *Security, Territory, Population* and “Introduction” to *Herculine Barbin* (vii-xvii) **30 pages**
8. Hortense Spillers, [“Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book”](#) (203-229) **26 pages**
9. Amy Hollywood, [“Performativity, Citationality, Ritualization”](#) **23 pages**

Week 4: History of Sexuality (159 pages)

September 27

10. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction* (entire text)

Part II: Gender, Reproduction, and American Religion

Week 5: Genealogies of American Religion (135 pages)

October 4

Research Librarian Visit with Reed Lowrie from 10-11 AM in Widener

1. Kathryn Gin Lum, Introduction: "A Heathen's Inheritance" (7-19) [*Heathen: Religion and Race in American History*](#) **12 pages**
2. Paul Harvey, "Proud and Undutifull: Religion, Violence, and Death in the Early South" (7-31) in *Christianity and Race in the American South* **24 pages, PDF**
3. Kelly Brown Douglas, Part I: "The Roots of Black Theological Silence" (11-62) and Part II: "The Impact of the White Cultural Attack" (63-110) in *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective* **99 pages**

Week 6: Hatred, Harassment, and American Religion (109 pages)

October 11

4. R. Marie Griffith, [*"Sexual Harassment at Century's End"*](#) (241-272) in *Moral Combat: How Sex Divided American Christians and Fractured American Politics* **31 pages**
5. Michael Cobb, Introduction: "The Last Safe Group to Hate" (1-21) in *God Hates Fags* **20 pages, PDF**
6. Jakobsen and Pellegrini, "Why Religion, Why Sex" (1-18) in [*Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance*](#) and Jakobsen, "Because Religion" (33-65) in [*The Sex Obsession: Perversity and Possibility in American Politics*](#) **49 pages**

Week 7: Evangelicalism and Submission (135 pages)

October 18

7. R. Marie Griffith, [*"Introduction"*](#) (1-24), [*"For Such a Time as This: Aglow and American Culture"*](#) (24-54), and [*"Free to Submit: Discipline, Authority, and Sacrifice"*](#) (139-168) in *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* **83 pages**
8. Amy DeRogatis, "Be Fruitful and Multiply" (93-128) from [*Saving Sex: Sexuality and Salvation in American Evangelicalism*](#) **35 pages**
9. Caroline Blyth, "Introduction" (1-9) in [*Rape Culture, Purity Culture, and Coercive Control in Teen Girl Bibles*](#) **8 pages**
10. Michael Warner, [*"Tongues Untied: Memoirs of A Pentecostal Boyhood"*](#) (215-224) **9 pages**

Week 8: Scandal (132 pages)

October 25

11. Laura Kipnis, [*"Adultery"*](#) (289-327) **38 pages**
12. Kristin Kobes Du Mez, "Introduction" (1-14), "God's Gift to Men" (60-73), and "Evangelical Mulligans: A History" (272-294) in *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* **47 pages, PDF**

13. Dorothy Roberts, “The Dark Side of Birth Control” (56-103) in *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* **47 pages, ebook**

Week 9: *Roe v. Wade* (125 pages)

November 1

14. R. Marie Griffith, “The Battle over Birth Control in the Roaring Twenties” (1-48) and “The Abortion War Before and After *Roe v. Wade*” (201-240) in [Moral Combat](#) **86 pages**
15. Randall Balmer, selections from *Bad Faith: Race and the Rise of the Religious Right* **15 pages, PDF**
16. Bev Harrison, “The Morality of Procreative Choice” (32-56) in *Our Right to Choose: Toward a New Ethic of Abortion* **24 pages, PDF**

Part III: Understanding Violence

Week 10: Rethinking Origins (83 pages)

November 8

1. Nancy Jay, “Sacrifice and Social Structure in Christianity” (112-127) and “Theories of Sacrifice” (128-146) in *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion, and Paternity* **34 pages, PDF**
2. Alexis Wells-Oghoghomeh, “Georgia Genesis: The Birth of the Enslaved Female Soul” (16-50), “The Birth and Death of Souls: Enslaved Women and Ritual” (131-160), and “Spirit Bodies and Feminine Souls: Women, Power, and the Sacred Imagination” (161-193) in *The Souls of Womenfolk: The Religious Cultures of Enslaved Women in the Lower South* **95 pages**

Week 11: Responses to Violence (131 pages)

November 15

3. Traci West, “Garnering Methods of Resistance” (151-208) in [Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics](#) **57 pages**
4. Stephanie M Crumpton, “A God I Recognize” and “WomanistCare: Reshaping Images and Paradigms for Care” (93-148) in [A Womanist Pastoral Theology Against Intimate and Cultural Violence](#) **55 pages**
5. Rhiannon Graybill, Meredith Minister and Beatrice Lawrence, “Introduction: Engaging Rape Culture, Reimagining Religious Studies” (1-20) in *Rape Culture and Religious Studies: Critical and Pedagogical Engagements* **19 pages, PDF**

Week 12: N/A

No Class November 22- Thanksgiving Break

Week 13: Towards Healing? (72 pages)

November 29

6. Ann W. Duncan, “Introduction” (1-18) and “Paradigms of Motherhood” (19-50) in [*Sacred Pregnancy: Birth, Motherhood, and the Quest for Spiritual Community*](#) **50 pages**
7. Audre Lorde, “A Burst of Light: Living with Cancer” (149-152) **3 pages, ebook**
8. Barbara Johnson, [“Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion”](#) (28-47) **19 pages**

Additional Information

Writing Resources: Writing is difficult! Not only that, but it is taxing for different people in different ways. This syllabus includes several milestones designed to help you complete your assignments successfully, with the least possible amount of stress, and with the most effective support. Harvard has several resources available for learning more and improving your writing. These include: — The Harvard Writing Project — check out their writing guides and student resources pages. <https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu> They also have several types of resources available, from online accountability groups, to writing tutors, to handouts and guides. — *A Guide to Writing in Religious Studies* is available at this link https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/religious_studies.pdf from their website. This guide is not just incredible, it is short, which means there is time to read it in full before thinking about topics. *At minimum, I recommend reading the two-page section on writing and asking good questions in the first two weeks of term.* It will help you start thinking about writing and about asking productive questions of your reading.

Absences:

If you are unable to make class for any reason, let Siobhan know with at *least* 24 hours’ notice from your set meeting time. If we cannot reschedule a meeting in a given week, you will write a two-page response outlining the readings for the week and how you see the texts relating to each other.

Technology:

Feel free to use your laptop as needed during our conversations for taking notes and referencing texts. I expect all technological use during class time will be related to the course. Please bring the assigned readings to class in either digital or printed form, and a way to take notes.

Academic Integrity:

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards

of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs. I ask all students to bookmark and consult regularly the Harvard Guide to Using Sources website at <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu>. You are urged to take great care in distinguishing your own ideas and thoughts from information and analysis derived from printed and electronic sources, and you are responsible knowing and following the College's policy on proper use of source. These policies are stated clearly at the Harvard Guide to Using Sources website.

We expect that all work students submit for this course will be their own. We specifically forbid the use of ChatGPT or any other generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools at all stages of the work process, including preliminary ones. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct. We draw your attention to the fact that different classes at Harvard could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Harvard University values inclusive excellence and providing equal educational opportunities for all students. Our goal is to remove barriers for disabled students related to inaccessible elements of instruction or design in this course. If reasonable accommodations are necessary to provide access, please contact the Disability Access Office (DAO). Accommodations do not alter fundamental requirements of the course and are not retroactive. Students should request accommodations as early as possible, since they may take time to implement. Students should notify DAO at any time during the semester if adjustments to their communicated accommodation plan are needed.

Junior Paper Grading Standards (from Harvard's guidelines for Junior Tutorials):

A/A-

- **Thesis:** interesting, arguable, incisive; sufficiently limited in scope; stated early on and present throughout
- **Structure:** logical, progressive (not just a list), supple (invites complications, consideration of counter-arguments) with strong and obvious links between points; coherent, well-organized sections
- **Evidence:** sufficient, appropriate, and well-chosen; presented in an accessible and understandable way; deployed to motivate as well as support the argument; quoted correctly
- **Analysis:** insightful and fresh; more than summary or paraphrase; shows how evidence supports thesis; dwells in depth on key examples
- **Style:** clear and smooth; diction level sophisticated but not stuffy

B+/B

- **Thesis:** arguable but may be vague or uninteresting, or feature unintegrated parts; may be only implied, not stated early on; may not be argued throughout, disappears in places

- **Structure:** generally logical but either confusing in places (big jumps, missing links) or overly predictable and undeveloped; few complications or considerations of counter-arguments; some disorganized paragraphs (either bloated or skimpy)
- **Evidence:** generally solid but may be scanty or presented as undigested quotations; quoted correctly (for the most part) but deployed in limited ways, often as a straw dummy or simply as affirmation of a single viewpoint
- **Analysis:** at times insightful but sometimes missing or mere summary; makes inconsistent connections between evidence and thesis
- **Style:** generally clear; may be weighed down by stuffy diction; may exhibit some errors in punctuation, grammar, and spelling

B-/C+

- **Thesis:** vague, descriptive, or confusing; parts unintegrated; only implied or not stated early on; not argued throughout, disappears in places
- **Structure:** confusing (big jumps, missing links) or overly predictable; few complications or considerations of counter-arguments; disorganized paragraphs (usually skimpy), often headed with descriptive (versus argumentative) topic sentences
- **Evidence:** either missing or presented as undigested quotations (plopped in); may be taken out of context; may be quoted incorrectly; used merely as filler or affirmation of a single viewpoint
- **Analysis:** some insightful moments but generally either missing or mere summary; may present some misreadings
- **Style:** may be unclear and hard to read; may evince many technical errors

C/C-

- **Thesis:** missing or purely descriptive (an observation or statement of fact), or may be a total misreading
- **Structure:** confusing; little focused development (usually short but may be rambling); disorganized paragraphs (also usually short)
- **Evidence:** very few examples; undigested quotations (plopped in); taken out of context; incorrectly quoted; used as filler
- **Analysis:** missing or based on misinterpretations or mere summary
- **Style:** difficult to read; riddled with many technical errors

Note: The research paper guidelines are adapted from Gordon Harvey, while the research paper grading standards are adapted from Kerry Walk. Both the guidelines and grading standards are based on resources distributed by the Harvard Writing Project.