

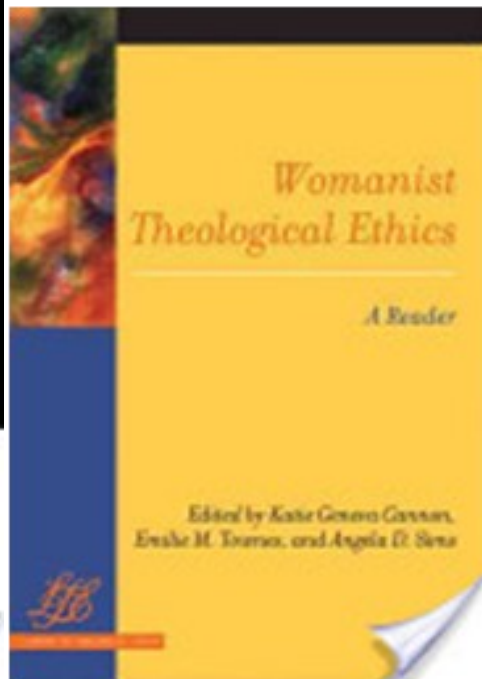
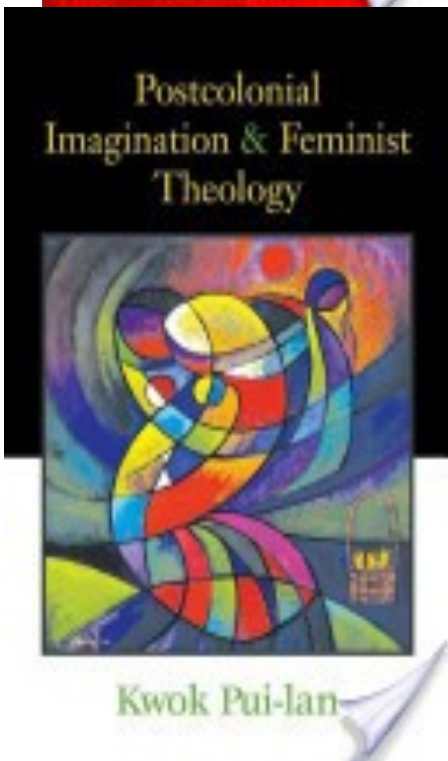
FALL 2012

FEMINIST AND WOMANIST THEOLOGIES

TH3466

Dr. Yolanda Pierce

Dr. Mark Taylor



SYLLABUS



GOALS

1. Overall, to examine the major issues and thinkers in womanist and feminist theologies through an integrative study of historical, literary, doctrinal and ethical resources and methods.
2. To expose course members to the inter-racial and polycultural dimensions of women's movements and discussions within which theological and ethical perspectives emerge.
3. To contribute to course members' practical dimensions of ministry, social justice organizing, and spiritual formation, as they are challenged by gender and sexual justice issues, cross-cut always by ethnic and racial issues.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will have displayed, in their written essays, serious engagement with the *theological content* of diverse feminist/womanist theologians, an ability to appraise critical debates about approaches in feminist/womanist theologies.
2. Also across the students' two essays, they will have demonstrated interpretive skill, a *basic "literacy of difference,"* in the reading of contrasting cultural, racial/ethnic and literary traditions in feminist/womanist theologies.
3. Student essays and course contributions will also have displayed an *inter-disciplinary capacity to integrate*, working amid three different academic disciplines (history, literature, theology), and integrating also disciplinary areas within their seminary course work, from biblical, historical, theological, ethical and practical studies.
4. In especially the second essay, students will be able to articulate *the impact that course readings* have had on their own Christian faith, *and* their significance for meaningful practice of Christian life in its personal, ecclesial and wider social and political meanings.

TEXTS

The following texts are in the PTS bookstore and on Reserve in Speer Library. Some essays assigned from these books are also on Blackboard. The book in the bookstore by Digby (Men Doing Feminism) only has some recommended reading for the weeks of October 9 and 16.

ABU-JABER, Diana. *Arabian Jazz*. A novel. Harcourt Brace 1993. W. W. Norton, reissue 2003.

ALLEN, Paula Gunn. *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows*. A novel. Aunt Lute Books. 1983.

ATWOOD, Margaret. *A Handmaid's Tale*. A novel. Anchor Books, 1996 (pub. 1985).

CANNON, Katie Geneva, and TOWNES, Emilie. Editors. *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.

CASTILLO Ana. *So Far from God*. A novel. W.W. Norton, 2005 (pub. 1995).

COLEMAN. Monica A. *Making a Way Out of No Way: A Womanist Theology*. Fortress Press.
2008.

DIGBY TOM. Editor. *Men Doing Feminism*. With a Foreword by Sandra Bartky.
Routledge, 1998.

HUNT, Mary E. and NEU, Diann L. Editors. *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many
Views*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2010.

McCANN. Carole R. and KIM, Seung-kyung. Editors. *Feminist Reader: Local and Global
Perspectives*. Routledge, 2003.

MIRIKITANI, Janice. *Love Works*. San Francisco Poet Laureate Series. San Francisco: City
Lights Foundation Books, 2003.

PINEDA-MADRID, Nancy. *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juarez*. Minneapolis, MN:
Fortress Press, 2011.

RUSSELL, Letty M., and CLARKSON . J. Shannon. Editors. *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*.
Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

WALKER. Alice. *Meridian*. A novel. Harvest Books 2003 (pub. 1976).

ZARU, Jean. *Occupied with Nonviolence: A Palestinian Woman Speaks*. Minneapolis, MN:
Fortress Press, 2008.

--Readings of and from the following texts are only on Blackboard. The specific readings from
these and other sources on Blackboard are given in the "Agenda below, and marked below also
by "(**BB**)."

AGOSÍN, Marjorie, and CRAIGE, Betty Jean. *To Mend the World: Women Reflect on 9/11*.
Buffalo, New York: White Wine Press. 2002.

CASTILLO, Ana. *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma*. Plume, 1994.

KIDWELL, Clara Sue, NOLEY, Homer TINKER, George E. "Tink." *A Native American Theology*. Orbis Books, 2001 .

KWOK Pui-lan, *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women's Theologies*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010.

SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, Elisabeth. *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*. Continuum, 1994.

SILKO, Leslie Marmon. *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. Simon & Schuster, 1996.

(Additional books *beyond* those listed here, may also be placed on Reserve from time to time, which may be especially important for class research. Check the Reserve listings for this course in the library.)

REQUIREMENTS

- 1 Faithful, weekly attendance and participation in every class.
- 2 Two, 10-12 page papers on the following themes and due on the dates given below:

Paper One: Focusing on the theological implications of two of the literary and historical traditions read for the first half of this course. **Due: October 30.**

Paper Two: This final paper is to focus on your reflections concerning the significance of course readings for your own theology, *drawing from readings in the second half of the course*. Examples of questions you may wish to take up: What key themes and emphases from the readings do you find it important to make primary in your theology? In what ways has your theology changed in light of light of the course's readings? How do you assess key themes of this course from what you consider to be your core theological beliefs? These questions are only examples The main point of this final paper is to provide a personal/synthetic theological statement that takes account of the readings of the course and their impact upon *you*. **Due: December 10.**

3. Serve at least once as a *Precept Initiator*, bringing no more than five minutes of opening questions and/or commentary on readings of the week. (Please tie your question(s) to material of the week that everyone was assigned). The course professor will serve as moderator of the precept, even though the students initiate it in this way.

EVALUATING OUR WORK TOGETHER

Advisories: This course in feminist and womanist theologies usually poses special challenges to us all, as we explore together new and often excluded theological visions and perspectives on life, faith and spirit. All views of all participants are to be treated with openness and respect. In this spirit, inclusive language regarding human beings – with respect to gender and all modes of human difference – is expected, and is also encouraged with respect to language about God.

All students with learning or other disabilities, please feel free to contact us about changes that can be made to facilitate your full participation in this course. Some preparatory conversations about these needs and opportunities have already occurred.

-Papers will be evaluated in terms of the following five criteria (of the numbers, 5 is the highest)

1. Presentation 1 2 3 4 5
(writing style, clarity of prose, grammatical and spelling competence, sentence and paragraph flow)
2. Clear Statement of Thesis or Argument 1 2 3 4 5
(what is the main “point” or “purpose” of your essay. Is it stated clearly, early in the essay)
3. Description of Sources 1 2 3 4 5
(fair and accurate analysis and treatment, in the students’ own words, of the perspectives of the writers dealt with, and proper citation of materials used)
4. Critical Engagement with Sources 1 2 3 4 5
(display of a capacity to move beyond mere description and summary to creative and critical engagement with the novel)
5. Balance of Theological with Literary-Historical Dimensions 1 2 3 4 5
(the ability of the essay writer to distinguish and relate clearly and cogently, the theological to the literary dimensions of the novel, and where appropriate, to the historical dimension as well)

COURSE FORMAT

Plenary Sessions. Both instructors will try to be present for all class sessions in order to facilitate dialogue, but each week just one of the professors will have lecture and discussion leadership responsibility for the first two hours of our three hours together. The last hour will normally involve breaking out into precept groups for discussion. Things will be different within *the first two weeks*, with professors sharing each session’s lectures, and leading plenary dialogues without precepts being held.

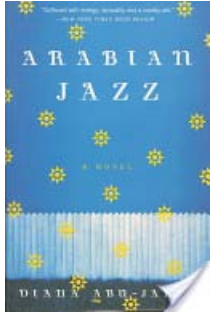
Precepts. Within the first two weeks, students will sign up to serve as initiator for one of the week's discussion in the semester. "Initiating" does not mean presenting a long verbal summary or position, or submitting an essay of any length. It does mean initiating the precept *dialogue with a crisply-focused question or comment (maybe two of these)*, which refers to a specific passage or passages in the readings assigned for that week. So prepare by knowing the readings well, thinking creatively about your own concerns/questions/faith issues, and about what might be key issues of concern for your precept colleagues. The professor or preceptor will still serve as moderator of the precept discussion, even though the discussion is initiated by the student.

For Two of Our Precept Meetings, we will meet according to gender group, men in one precept with Dr. Taylor, women with Dr. Pierce. This will occur on the dates of October 9 and October 16, the days we are working on texts related to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Some recommended readings, from Tom Digby's *Men Doing Feminism*, are listed on the Agenda for those weeks (see below).

AGENDA

I – ARAB-AMERICAN LITERARY TRADITIONS & THEOLOGY

Diana Abu-Jaber, *Arabian Jazz*



Diana Abu-Jaber

September 11 – Experiences, Perspectives, Historical Traditions

Marjorie Agosín, “Prologue,” 9-11; Mahnaz Afkhami, “Epilogue: Our Shared Human Values,” 227-9; and Toni Morrison, “The Dead of September 11,” 149-50; in Agosín and Craige, *To Mend the World: Women Reflect on 9/11*. (BB)

PAWA – *Palestinian-American Women’s Association* (explore and assess the website)

<http://www.pawasca.org/>

September 18 – Theological Reflection

Nawal El Saadawi, “The Forgotten ‘-ism:’ An Arab American Women’s Perspective on Zionism, Racism and Sexism,” http://www.incite-national.org/media/docs/5846_forgotten_ism.pdf

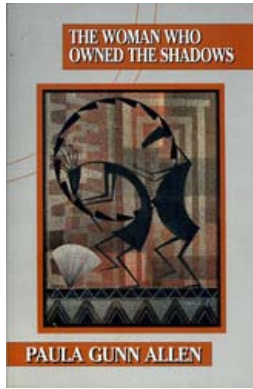
Jean Zaru, *Occupied with Nonviolence: A Palestinian Woman Speaks* (Fortress Press, 2008), chapters 1, 2 and 9.



[Jean Zaru \(center\).](#)

II – AMERICAN INDIAN LITERARY TRADITIONS & THEOLOGY

Paula Gunn Allen, *The Woman Who Owned the Shadows*



Paula Gunn Allen

September 25 – Experiences, Perspectives, Historical Traditions

1. Leslie Marmon Silko, “America's Debt to the Indian Nations: Atoning for a Sordid Past” (73-9), “Auntie Kie Talks About U.S. Presidents and U.S. Indian Policy” (80-4), “Tribal Councils: Puppets of the U.S. Government” (92-5), “Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit” (60-72), in Silko, *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. **(BB)**
2. Inés Maria Talamantez, “Seeing Red: American Indian Women Speaking about their Religious and Political Perspectives,” in Keller and Ruether, eds. *In Our Own Voices* (WJKP, 1996), 385-423. **(BB)**



Inés Maria Talamantez, U. Cal./San Diego

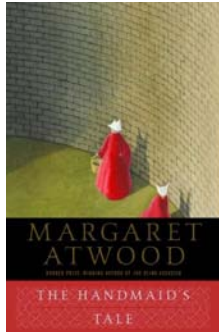
October 2 – Theological Reflections

1. “Christology: Who Do You Say That I Am” in Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley and George E. “Tink” Tinker, ed. *A Native American Theology* (Orbis Books. 2001), 62-84. **BB**
2. “Theologies: Indigenous Women’s,” by Janet Silman, in Russell and Clarkson, *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, 292-95.

3. Andrea Smith (Cherokee, USA), “Dismantling the Master’s House with the Master’s Tools: Native Feminist Liberation Theologies,” in Kwok Pui-lan, *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women’s Theologies* (Orbis Books, 2010), 72-85. **BB**

III – EUROAMERICAN LITERARY TRADITIONS & THEOLOGY

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*



Margaret Atwood

October 9 – Experiences, Perspectives, Historical Traditions

1. “Introduction,” and “*The Second Sex*, ‘Introduction’,” in McCann and Kim, *Feminist Theory Reader*, 12-21, 32-40.
2. “Introduction,” Ruether, “Feminist Theology in Theological Education,” 11-20, Scanzoni, “Why We Need Evangelical Feminists,” 64-78, in Hunt and Neu, *New Feminist Christianity*.
3. Recommended from *Men Doing Feminism*: “Foreword” by Sandra Bartky, “Introduction” by Tom Digby, and “My Father the Feminist” by Susan Bordo,” in Digby, xi-xiv, 1-14.

October 16 – Theological Reflection



Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Harvard University Divinity School

1. “Feminist Theologies: European,” and “Feminist Theologies: North American,” in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, 102-4, 106-8.

2. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Execution of Jesus and the Theology of the Cross," in Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*. Continuum, 1994, pages 97-128. (BB)
3. Marie Fortune, "Seeking Justice and Healing: Violence Against Women as an Agenda for Feminist Christianity," in Hunt and Neu, *New Feminist Christianity*, 138-48.
4. Marjorie Proctor-Smith, "'The Ones Who Have Gone Before Us': The Future of Feminist Artistic and Liturgical Life," in Hunt and New, *New Feminist Christianity*, 222-9.
5. Traci West, "What Does Anti-Racist Christian Feminist Social Ethics Look Like?" in Hunt and Neu, *New Feminist Christianity*, 117-26.
6. Recommended from *Men Doing Feminism*: Joy James, "Antiracist (Pro)Feminisms and Coalition Politics: 'No Justice, No Peace'" in Digby, 237-53.

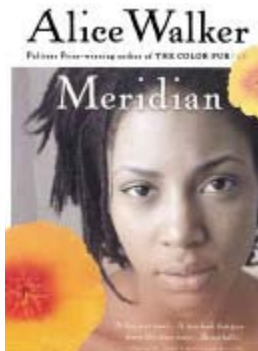


FALL READING PERIOD

October 19-29

IV – AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERARY TRADITIONS & THEOLOGY

Alice Walker, *Meridian*



October 30 – Experiences, Perspectives, Historical Traditions

1. bell hooks, "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression," "The Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement", "The Bridge Poem," Audre Lorde, "I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities," in McCann and Kim, *Feminist Theory Reader*, 50-6, 164-71, 172-3, 255-59, 318-33.

2. Karen Baker-Fletcher, "How Women Relate to the Evils of Nature," Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "The Loves and Troubles of African-American Women's Bodies: The Womanist Challenge to Cultural Humiliation & Community Ambivalence," M. Shawn Copeland, "Wading Through Many Sorrows: Toward a Theology of Suffering in a Womanist Perspective," in Cannon & Townes, *Womanist Theological Ethics*, 64-79, 81-97, 135-54.
3. Monica Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way*, "Introduction," "Chapter 1," and "Chapter 2" (1-84).

November 6 – Theological Reflection

1. "Feminist Theology: African," by Mercy Oduyoye, "Theology: Womanist" by Delores Williams, "Ethics: Womanism" by Emilie Townes " "Racism" by Nancy D. Richardson "Emancipatory Historiography" and "Virtue: Womanist" by Katie Cannon, in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, 112-14, 299-301, 91-2, 234-35, 81, 313.

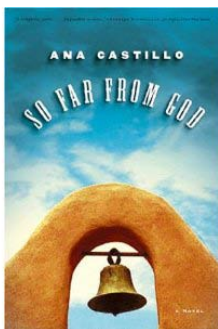


Monica Coleman, Claremont School of Theology

2. Monica Coleman, *Making a Way Out of No Way*, "Chapters 3, 4, 5 (85-168).

V – LATINA LITERARY TRADITIONS & THEOLOGY

Ana Castillo, *So Far From God*



Ana Castillo

November 13 – Experiences, Perspectives, Historical Traditions

1. "La Chicana" by Elisabeth Martinez, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness" by Gloria Anzaldúa "Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of

Experience" by Chandra Talpade Mohanty in McCann and Kim. *Feminist Theory Reader*, 41-4, 179-87, 460-71.

2. Ana Castillo "A Countryless Woman: Early Feminista," in Castillo, *Massacre of the Dreamers*, 21-43. **BB**

November 20 – Theological Reflection

1. Nancy Pineda-Madrid, "Latina Feminist Theology: Charting Future Discourse," in Hunt and Neu, *New Feminist Christianity*, 21-9.
2. "Feminist Theology: Latin American," by María Pilar Aquino, and "Theology: Mujerista," by Ada-María Isasi-Díaz, in *Dictionary of Feminist Theology*, 114-66, 295-6.
3. Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juarez*, ix-x, 1-38, 69-95, 97-122.



Nancy Pineda-Madrid, Boston College

AAR/SBL & FALL FESTIVALS

November 16-26



Corn Mother



VI – ASIAN-AMERICAN LITERARY TRADITIONS & THEOLOGY

Janice Mirikitani, *Love Works*



November 27 – Experiences, Perspectives, Historical Traditions

1. "Invisibility Is an Unnatural Disaster: Reflections of an Asian-American Woman," by Mitsuma Yamada, "Reflections on U.S. Women of Color and the UN Fourth World Conference on Women and NGO Forum in Beijing, China" by Mallika Dutt, "Beyond Bean Counting" by JeeYeun Lee and "Going Home: Enacting Justice in Queer Asian America" by Karin Aguilar-San Juan, in McCann and Kim, *Feminist Theory Reader*, 174-78 197-203, 472-76 267-76.
2. Wonhee Anne Joh, "Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: Integrating the Diverse Politics of Identity in Our Theology," in Hunt and Neu, *New Feminist Christianity*, 52-63.

December 4 – Theological Perspectives



Kwok Pui-lan, Episcopal Divinity School

1. "Feminist Theologies, Asian," by Kwok Pui-lan, "Feminist Theologies, Pacific Island," by Lisa Meo, "Feminist Theologies, South Asian," by Aruna Gnanadason, all in *The Dictionary of Feminist Theology*, 100-2, 108-10, 110-12.
2. Kwok Pui-lan, "A Postcolonial Feminist Vision for Christianity," in Hunt and Neu, *New Feminist Christianity*, 3-10.

3. Gale A. Yee, "Where Are You Really From: An Asian-American Feminist Biblical Scholar Reflects on Her Guild," in Hunt and Neu, *New Feminist Christianity*, 79-85.
4. Surekha Nelavala, "Inclusivity and Distinctions: The Future of Dalit Feminist Theology," in Hunt and Neu, *New Feminist Christianity*, 100-6.
5. Eunjoo Mary Kim, "Asian American Women and Renewal of Preaching," in *New Feminist Christianity*, 245-53.