WS 304-4: Women & Religion – Feminisms, Religious Bodies and Spiritual Discourses

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Women in World Religions is a substantial field of study. There are several potential approaches to the subject, and indeed we could spend the entire term on women in one religious tradition. However, my goal is to introduce several traditions and provide suggestions for further understanding of the significance of religion and gender roles. We will focus on feminist approaches to religious culture and communities within the context of the historical practices of patriarchy, hierarchy, and gender inequality, in Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Shifts in images, discourse, rituals and women's roles within their faiths will be discussed. Women as agents of resistance, as instruments of social change, as spiritual leaders in new and/or popular religious movements will be central to the material in the course. Global contexts and North American case studies will help us to understand the feminist challenge and contribution to religion.

Class discussion, films, guest speakers and student-centred approaches will be important to this course.

Required readings:
   ISBN: 0060930535
Reading packages will be on library reserve.

Course requirements and Grading Structure:
- Participation and Attendance: 15%
- Documentary Analysis (6 pages): 20%
- Midterm exam: 15%
- Research Paper (12 pages): 35%
- Final exam (take home): 15%

Prerequisites:
Six credits in Women's Studies including WS 101 and/or WS 102.

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT.