REL3990 Women and Religion #2158
Special topic: Goddess Myths
eLearning course 100% online

Instructor: June D. Watkins, M.A.,Ph.D. Cand.
Office: 53/221
Phone: (850) 474-2918
Email: junewatkins@uwf.edu (preferred, please add course number to subject line)
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 AM - noon, 1:00 - 2:00 PM or by appointment

Required Texts:


   This book is available online as an electronic resource at the UWF library. Search for the book through the library catalog. You must be logged into Argus and enter your library card number if you are off campus.

Description
We will trace the evolution of images of the Great Mother, the nature goddess, the sexual goddess, the goddess raped and murdered, the subjugation of the goddess into the obedient virgin of the Abrahamic monotheistic religions, and finally the reemergence of the goddess in neo-paganism and feminist theology. The course explores the symbolic significance of the goddess myth and the impact of its loss on all aspects of Western culture. By critically reflecting on how spiritual symbols have been used historically to empower and disempower women, the course draws connections between the sacred legacy of the goddess and women's relationship to the contemporary feminist spirituality movement. Today, this movement manifests in many forms both within the major religions and outside of religious organizations. Contemporary expressions include ecofeminism, Wicca, environmental activism, as well
as the more conventional movements within organized religions to ordain women, gender-inclusive language, and reclaiming feminine images of the divine (theology).

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- Identify the major historical periods named by religious studies scholars in the current literature on goddess studies
- Name five prominent religious studies scholars doing research on goddess studies today
- Locate the field of goddess studies within the larger field of feminist theology, and feminist theology within the larger field of religious studies
- Illustrate how the academic field of religious studies differs from religious practice or “belief”, especially when dealing with myth
- Distinguish between the ways that myth functions both symbolically and literally
- Critically analyze arguments and controversies within the field of goddess studies, and develop a thesis and support it based on evidence
- Use a variety of research tools, especially library databases, to locate peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Present arguments and research findings in multiple formats such as research papers, PowerPoint presentations, and discussion forums.

**University Policy on Academic Conduct**

Honesty in our academic work is vital, and we will not knowingly act in ways which erode that integrity. Accordingly, we pledge not to cheat, nor to tolerate cheating, nor to plagiarize the work of others.

(UWF Student Life Handbook).

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and will be taken seriously. Please refer to the UWF Student Life Handbook for a list of behaviors that fall under the definition of academic misconduct. The handbook also outlines the penalties for academic misconduct and the due process procedures that must be followed. (Links to the Student Life Handbook and the UWF Academic Conduct Statement are posted on the UWF web site at: [http://www.uwf.edu/cas/resources_other.cfm](http://www.uwf.edu/cas/resources_other.cfm).)

**Additional Information on Plagiarism**
Your writing is your intellectual property. Guard it carefully. Do not leave copies of your work on computers that are in common use. You could find yourself in the unpleasant position of trying to prove that you are the true author of this work. Save preliminary drafts of your work, reading notes, data collection sheets, and copies of library sources you make while researching your paper. You may be
asked to produce these if questions of authorship arise. Make back-up copies to protect your work from computer failures.

*Turnitin Notice*
UWF maintains a university license agreement for an online text matching service called Turnitin. At my discretion I will use the Turnitin service to determine the originality of student papers. If I submit your paper to Turnitin, it will be stored in a Turnitin database for as long as the service remains in existence. If you object to this storage of your paper you must let me know no later than two weeks after the start of this class. I will then utilize other services and techniques to evaluate your work for evidence of appropriate authorship practices.

*Assistance for students with special needs*
Students with special needs who require specific accommodations for examinations or other course activities should contact the Student Disability Resource Center (SCRC) (web address: http://www.uwf.edu/SDRC, telephone: 474-2387). SDRC will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify recommended accommodations for individual students.

*Evaluation:*
Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

- 93% or better A
- 90% to 92% A-
- 87% to 89% B+
- 83% to 86% B
- 80% to 82% B-
- 77% to 79% C+
- 73% to 76% C
- 70% to 72% C-
- 60% to 69% D
- 50% or less F

The final grade will be assessed from these major categories:

- Midterm exam 15%
- Summarize 2 journal articles 20%
- Abstract and bibliography 05%
- Research Paper 30%
- Discussion Forum 20%
- Participation/Professionalism 10%

Exams and papers must be turned in on the date listed on the schedule below. Late papers/exams will only be accepted in the case of serious illness (that is one that requires medical treatment) or emergency (defined as an event that can be documented). You must contact me within a week from when the assignment is due. Without meeting the above criteria, assignments might be accepted, and will result in a lowered grade at my discretion.

The midterm will be an exam taken from our readings and lectures. This exam is a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay. The focus will be on the context of the field of study and will concentration on terminology, facts and concepts.
You will find two journal articles (using library resources), choosing from the list at the end of the syllabus, and summarize the article in 2 pages. In your summary you should also write a short critique, noting any areas of disagreement with the author as well as areas of agreement and appreciation. Due dates for these are on the schedule below.

Research gathering and methodology is an important component to our study. You will be assessed on thorough and in-depth research as demonstrated on your abstract and bibliography.

Evaluation of the research paper is based on a well-constructed thesis statement supported by evidence from high quality sources. Students must demonstrate that they are familiar with literature on their topic as well as the counter arguments and dissenting views, and adequately explain why these views are rejected.

Posting regularly on the discussion board is essential. You are required to post at least 2 posts per week, and you should strive to read at least 80% of the other posts by students, and 100% of the posts by the instructor. Discussions will take place Monday through Friday, and I will do the grading on Friday afternoon. Please don’t wait until Sunday night to post your weekly comments. This would defeat the purpose since a new module begins Monday morning and there wouldn’t be time for responses.

Each post is worth 3.33 points. (2 x week for 15 weeks =100 pts). In order to receive all 3.33 points, the post must be substantive, which means that it should have sufficient content to be relevant. In other words, posts such as “I agree” will not count. The best practice here is to note any questions or comments you have while you are reading. Then you may post the question or statement on the discussion board. There will also be questions to answer relating to the week’s reading assignments. You should have no problem posting twice a week. Each post should be between 30 words and 100. Your post should not be any longer than this paragraph and no shorter than the following paragraph.

The Participation/Professionalism grade is based on your level of engagement, professional attitude, respect towards others, time management, and consistency. It is especially important in religious studies to have an open mind and a willingness to engage with those whose beliefs may differ from your own.

**Attendance Policy**
Regular log-ins are required. Generally, at least 2 log-ins each week are needed. If you are participating on the discussion boards (and you will be), then you should be checking in regularly to see if someone has replied to you or commented on your post. Modules will begin at 5 AM on Monday mornings and end at 11:59 PM on Sunday night. However, you should post your first comment early in the week. The course will not work well if everyone logs in on Friday and posts all of their discussions all at once. Shoot for one discussion post prior to Wednesday, and then another after Wednesday. These are guidelines and not strictly enforced rules.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 5-11</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Post greeting in “discussion forum”; upload test file in dropbox; read and understand UWF Plagiarism Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 12-18</td>
<td>Terms, Sources, Literary Criticism, Archaeology, Limits of study</td>
<td>Ruether, Intro, Ch. 1 “Gender and the Problem of Prehistory”</td>
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<td>Film -- <em>Goddess Remembered</em>; 54 minutes. A look at the archaeological and anthropological evidence of the goddess in prehistory: from France, Malta, Britain, Greece (Delphi and Crete) (with Merlin Stone, Carol Christ, Starhawk, Charlene Spretnak and others). The films will be on reserve in the library beginning Jan. 12 and are optional. If I can find a way to digitize them, I will upload it, otherwise it is not required.</td>
<td>Gimbutas, Intro</td>
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**Methodological Foundations and Overview**

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<th>Week</th>
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<tr>
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<td>First Journal article summary due Jan 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 26- Feb 1</td>
<td>Matriarchal Prehistory: Reality or Myth?</td>
<td>Articles: Stella Georgoudi, &quot;Creating a Myth of Matriarchy&quot;; Sally Binford, &quot;Are Goddesses and Matriarchies Merely Figments of Feminist Imagination&quot; (and all responses); Cynthia Eller, &quot;Not Just God in a Skirt&quot;; Merlin Stone, &quot;The Great Goddess&quot;. These will be available under “content” a week early</td>
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<td>Feb 2-8</td>
<td>Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic Goddess Mythology</td>
<td>Baring, &quot;Chapter 1: In the Beginning&quot;; &quot;Chapter 2: The Neolithic Great Goddess&quot;.</td>
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<td>Feb 9-15</td>
<td>Ancient Mediterranean Goddess Mythology</td>
<td>Ruether, ch. 2 “Goddesses and World Renewal”</td>
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<td>Gimbutas Part II (for images)</td>
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<td>Feb 16-22</td>
<td>The Hebrew God and the Rise of Monotheism</td>
<td>Ruether Ch 3 2nd Journal article summary due Feb 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
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<td>Feb 23- Mar 1</td>
<td>Goddess Mythology in the Judeo-Christian Tradition</td>
<td>Baring, &quot;Chapter 14: Mary&quot;</td>
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<td>Film -- Joseph Campbell, <em>The Power of Myth: Love and the Goddess, Part II</em> (abridged). 35min. Campbell, with Bill Moyers discusses the role of the Virgin Mary in the Catholic church, and link her to part of a larger goddess tradition. Great attention is paid to the significance of her &quot;virginity&quot; and the &quot;virgin birth&quot;.</td>
<td>Ruether, ch. 5 and 6</td>
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<td>Mar 2-8</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Midterm due March 8</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Break March 9-15</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 16-22</td>
<td>Life-giving Goddess: Gaia/matrix</td>
<td>Gimbutas Part II</td>
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<td>Abstract and Bibliography for research paper due Mar 22</td>
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<td>Mar 23-29</td>
<td>Death and Goddesses</td>
<td>Baring ch 7 “Tiamat”</td>
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<td>Sjoo p. 244-275</td>
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<td>Gimbutas Ch 18 (images)</td>
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<td>Apr 6-12</td>
<td>Rebirth of the Goddess: Feminist Spirituality</td>
<td>Ruether ch. 10</td>
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<td>Research paper due April 12</td>
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<td>Baring, Ch. 14</td>
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<td>Apr 20-26</td>
<td>Rebirth of the Goddess: Wicca and Goddess figures in contemporary culture (Mysts of Avalon)</td>
<td>Margot Adler, &quot;The Craft Today&quot;; Ruether, &quot;Godesses and Witches&quot;; Mary Jo Weaver, &quot;Who is the Goddess and Where Does She Get Us&quot;; Ruether, &quot;Female Symbols&quot;</td>
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Death of the Goddess Journal articles


Other journal articles may be added and if you have one you’d like to summarize that is not on this list, please contact me for approval.