

# TR 418--GLOBAL RE-PRESENTATION OF WOMEN THROUGH FILM

Women's Studies Elective  
(Does not meet the Global Justice Requirement)

FALL SEMESTER 2003  
Tuesdays 6:00-9:15 pm

**Instructor:** Jann Cather Weaver

**Office Hours:** Thursday 1:30 – 4:00  
30-minute appointments

jweaver@unitedseminary-mn.org  
651/255-6135 (Direct Office Phone)

## Course Description:

Using film as theological text, this course focuses on diverse, global re-production and re-presentation of women and gender. Films from Asian, European, American, African American, Iranian, East Indian, and Latin@ cultures will be studied. All films will be seen out of class. Students will learn to engage film through a theological, visual method rooted in global liberation/feminist/womanist/*mujerista*/*minjung* theologies, a hermeneutics of suspicion and commitment, and literary and theological film theory.  
**N.B. This is not a film studies course.**

## Learning Objectives and Goals

- To discern how film serves—unto itself—as theological text: theological, mythical (status quo), as well as a resistant/parabolic text;
- To understand more fully the nature of images, re-presentation, and the global uses of stereotyping and cultural assumptions;
- To develop a critical theological method that examines global re-presentations and re-production of women and gender in film;
- To understand more fully the diversity of lives for women in their global context;
- To come to an understanding about how to “see” and dismantle/re-mantle in ministry, preaching, and teaching personal, cultural, and institutional racism, sexism, genderism, xenophobia, and heterosexism within a paradigm of faith.

## Class Format

Lecture, small and large group discussions.

**All viewing of films is the responsibility of student.**

Viewing films twice before class discussion is HIGHLY recommended if possible.

## Required Reading

Julie Dash. *Daughters of the Dust: The Making of an African American Film* (New Press: 1992.)

Michael Cunningham. *The Hours*. (Picador, 2002.)

Robert Johnston. *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue* (Baker Academic: 2000.)

Su Tong, *Raise the Red Lantern: Three Novellas* (Penguin Books: 1990.)

Selections from Reserve List (See Course Schedule.)

## On Reserve

All Required and Recommended Reading.

### Film in General

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (ca. 2002)

Joel W. Martin, Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr., eds., *Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth, And Ideology in Popular American Film* (Westview Press, 1995.)

James Monaco, *How to Read A Film : Movies, Media, Multimedia: Language, History, Theory*, Third Edition. (ca. 2001)

### Mujerista Theology

Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *En la Lucha (In the Struggle): A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.)

\_\_\_\_\_, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.)

### Asian Feminist Theology

Pui-lan Kwok, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2000.)

Chung Hyun Kyung, *Struggle To Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990.)

### Women of Islam

Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Medicines of the Soul: Female Bodies and Sacred Geographies in a Transnational Islam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001.)

Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies A People*, with a foreword by William Greider (New York: Olive Branch Press, 2001.)

Annemarie Schimmel, *My Soul is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam (Meine Seele ist eine Frau)*, trans. Susan H. Ray (New York: Continuum, 1997.)

Womanist Theology

Charles W. Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1984.)

Emilie M. Townes, ed., *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil and Suffering*, The Bishop Henry McNeal Turner Studies in North American Black Religion. Volume VIII (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.)

Women Liberation Theologies

Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., *Making Face, Making Soul* (Haciendo Caras) (San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 1990.)

Laura E. Donaldson and Pui-Lan Kwok, eds., *Postcolonialism, Feminism and Religious Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 2001.)

Margaret A. Farley and Serene Jones, eds., *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in honor of Letty M. Russell* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.)

Linda A. Moody, *Women Encounter God: Theology across the Boundaries of Difference* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.)

Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson, eds., *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.) **In Reference Section**

Literature and Film

Gerald Peary and Roger Shatzkin, eds., *Modern American Novel and the Movies* (New York: Ungar, 1978.)

**Films To Be Viewed:**

*All about Mother* (Spanish)  
*Blue* (French)  
*Central Station* (Brazilian)  
*Daughters of the Dust* (African American/Womanist)  
*Fire* (Indian)  
*Frieda (Kahlo)* (Mexican)  
*The Hours* (Euro-American)  
*Leila* (Iranian)  
*Raise the Red Lantern* (Chinese)  
*Red Firecracker Green Firecracker* (Chinese)  
*Shanghai Triad* (Chinese.)

**Required Work**

- 1) Weekly attendance and class participation essential.
- 2) Students will prepare a ONE PARAGRAPH RESPONSE/REACTION/REFLECTION (3-5 normal-length sentences) on each film to be shared and discussed in small groups each week. These may be **legibly** handwritten. These will be given to the instructor at the end of each class. The paragraphs will be P/NC.

- 3) One Research Film Project: Each student will choose a film already seen in class and more thoroughly research the film. The research film project is to include notes, original research, copies of primary sources, (if possible), along with a research paper **with** theological analysis of 8-10 pages (double-spaced, 12-14 point font). Research paper is to be written in an academic style, with footnotes and bibliography. This research project is to show the skills of researching, *seeing*, theological reflection, a hermeneutics of suspicion and commitment.  
**RESEARCH FILM PROJECTS ARE DUE in Instructor's faculty mailbox by Friday, OCTOBER 17.**
- 4) Final paper (12-15 pages, double-spaced, 12-14 point font) on a film/s seen, or a film topic discussed in class. Papers are to be written in an academic style, with footnotes and bibliography. **Due MONDAY, DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> at end of class.**

**All papers will be graded on the following criteria:**

- Integrating of reading materials and class discussions;
- Coherence and "Academic" Style;
- Ability to reflect both theological analysis and film analysis  
(Assume the reader has seen the film,  
i.e., please do not re-tell the narrative of the film unless it pertains to a critical point.)
- Accurate use of spellchecker, grammar checker, footnotes and bibliographic style.

**N.B.:**

**All written work is to be in a legible, 12-14 point font and double-spaced.**

**Please put page numbers on your work.**

**All written work is to follow grammatical and notation guidelines as printed in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, , edition 6. (In reference section of library or for sale in bookstore.) Other notation styles acceptable upon request.**

**Accurate use of grammar, spelling, and academic style notation is expected and used in grade evaluation.**

**\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE PUT YOUR BOX NUMBER  
ON ALL SUBMITTED WRITTEN MATERIALS.\*\*\*\*\***

**N.B.:** All work is expected to follow the Inclusive Language Policy in the Student Handbook (89-90).

All work is expected to follow the Academic Integrity Policy in the Student Handbook (35).

All work is expected to follow the Copyright Law Compliance in the Student Handbook (80-81).

All work is expected to follow the Policy regarding Confidentiality and Disclosure within Small Group Settings in the Student Handbook (100).

### **Terms of Course Evaluation**

Class attendance <b>and</b> Participation (including small groups)	35%
Weekly paragraphs	10%
Research Paper	25%
Final Paper	30%

For students taking this course P/NC, a B- grade equivalent is needed for a P.

Any unexplained absences and lack of class participation are subtracted from this given percentages. Please notify instructor, if possible, of any absences. More than two (2) absences are typically unacceptable, except in extreme circumstances.

### **Extensions: (4/28/00; Revised 1/17/01)I:**

"The work for a course is terminated at the end of the final class session. The performance in the course is evaluated on the basis of the work submitted by that time, unless an exception is made by the instructor, in which case a formal petition for extension must be approved by the instructor by the end of the final class session. Extensions (of course work) beyond the end of the semester will be approved only under extraordinary circumstances. Each instructor will include this policy on each course syllabus as well as the criteria by which she or he will grant such an exception. (Serious illness; Serious injury; Death or serious illness in family.)

In the event such as exception is agreed to, the student shall complete the petition for extension form and the instructor shall file the extension form with the registrar by the date grades are due. The Student Review Committee shall monitor extensions. If no petition for extension is filed, a final grade will be submitted.

An extension may be granted for a period not to exceed six months from the end of the term. If the work is not completed by the date petitioned, a final grade will be submitted. Any renewal of an extension must be approved by the instructor and filed with the registrar prior to the due date on the original petition. No extension or its renewal will exceed six months from the end of the term in question."

## **Class Schedule**

### September 9

Review Syllabus and Class Setup  
Film as mythic/parabolic  
Film as implicitly/explicitly religious

### September 16

**View:** *Central Station* (Brazilian), directed by Walter Salles.

**Readings:**

Farley and Jones, eds., Chapter 16.  
Isasi-Díaz, *En la Lucha*, Preface, Introduction, Chapter 1  
Johnston, Introduction, Chapter 1  
Moody, 115.5- 119.5

Meditation: Vicki  
Film as mythic/parabolic  
Film as implicitly/explicitly religious  
Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

### September 23

**View:** *Frieda (Kahlo)* (Mexican), directed by Julie Tamor.

**Readings:**

Farley and Jones, *Skim* Chapter 16  
Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*, Chapter 4 ("Mujerista Theology: A Challenge to  
Traditional Theology"); Chapter 7 ("Elements of a *Mujerista*  
Anthropology")  
Johnston, Chapter 3  
Moody, *Skim* Chapter 2  
Russell and Clarkson, Entry on "Hermeneutics of Suspicion," 140-141.

Meditation: Shirley  
Hermeneutics of Suspicion and Hermeneutics of Commitment  
Tools for Structural Analysis of Film: *Chocolat*  
Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

### September 30

**View:** *Raise the Red Lantern* (Chinese), directed by Zhang Yimou

**Readings:**

*Raise the Red Lantern*, by Su Tong.

Meditation:  
Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

October 7

**View:** *Shanghai Triad* (Chinese), directed by Zhang Yimou

**Readings:**

Johnston, Chapter 4

Kyung, Chapter 3

Meditation:

Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

October 14

**View:** *Red Firecracker Green Firecracker* (Chinese), directed by He Ping

**Readings:**

Johnston, Chapters 5 and 6

Kwok, Chapter 1 "Changing Asia: Promises and Crises."

Meditation:

Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

**October 17: Research Paper due in faculty box (before building closes at 4 PM.)**

October 21 – Reading Week

October 28

**View:** *Daughters of the Dust* (African American; Gullah), directed by Julie Dash.

**Readings:**

Anzaldúa, "Definition of Womanist," 370.

Dash, *Daughters of the Dust* (Including Screenplay and Notes)

Farley and Jones, *Skim* Chapter 15

Joyner, *Skim* Chapter 7

Moody, 119-120 "Distinctions of Womanist Theology."

Townes, *Skim* Chapter 2

**Supplemental:**

Moody, Chapter 3

Meditation:

Thunder Perfect Mind

Gullah Peoples

Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

November 4

**View:** *Fire* (Indian), directed by Deepa Mehta

**Readings:**

Schimmel, Skim Chapter 7: "Women as Manifestations of God."  
Research the Religious Clothing of Islamic Women of Differing Cultures  
Research Islamic Views of Sexualities.

Meditation:

Sexualities within religion and culture

Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

November 11

**View:** *Leila* (Iranian), directed by Dariush Mehrjui

**Readings:**

Shaheen, Part I: Introduction  
Schimmel, Introduction, Chapter 1 "Women and the Prophet."  
Donaldson and Kwok, eds., Part II: Skim Chapter 6: "Multiple Critique: Islamic  
Feminist Rhetorical Strategies."

Meditation:

Seeing outside paradigms of culture and religion

Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

November 18

**View:** *Blue* (French), directed by Polish Director, Krzysztof Kieslowski

**Readings:**

Farley and Jones, Chapter 11  
Johnston, Chapter 8  
Moody, Chapter 5: "Clues for Doing Theology across the Boundaries of  
Difference."

Meditation:

Theology across Boundaries of Difference as seen through film

Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

November 25 – No class

Work on Final Paper and Preparation for December 2<sup>nd</sup> class.

December 2

**View:** *The Hours* (Euro-American/British), directed by Stephen Daldry

**Readings:**

*The Hours* by Michael Cunningham  
Peary and Shatzkin, eds., Introduction

**Supplemental:**

Browse *Mrs. Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf  
See film, *Mrs. Dalloway*, directed by Marleen Gorris (1997) (of *Antonia's Line*)

Meditation:

Small and Large Group Work on assigned film

December 9 – Last Class

**View:** *All about Mother* (Spanish), directed by Pedro Almodóvar

**Due:** Final Paper by end of class.

Meditation:

Small and Large Group Work on assigned film  
Evaluations