

**RS3017: Gender and Queer Approaches to the Study of Religion**

**15 credits, 12 weeks**

**PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:**

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen organisation page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any school regulation or procedure.

**You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.**

**COURSE CO-ORDINATOR/COURSE TEAM**

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**Discipline Administration:**

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## TIMETABLE

Lecture/Seminar: Thursday, 9-11am, Edward Wright, S86

Students can view the University Calendar at

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/13891.php>

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will look at how religions have constructed and regulated genders. From a comparative perspective, this encompasses not only what and who has been defined as male/masculine and female/feminine, but also the development of alternative genders. We shall examine theoretical developments from differentiating between biological sex and socio-cultural gender to the questioning of this distinction. More specifically, the effects of the gender binary within a heteronormative framework and the role of religion within that are scrutinised. Attempts at resisting and challenging heteronormativity will also be discussed. In addition to academic texts, use will be made of documentary and feature films as well as autobiographical and fictional writings, and relevant news items.

## INTENDED AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will critically assess discussions around gender and queer issues.

Students will gain an understanding of gender and queer studies in their historical, theoretical and social-research dimensions.

Students will demonstrate a thorough awareness of the political implications and consequences of gender and queer approaches to the study of religion.

## LECTURE/SEMINAR PROGRAMME

### WEEK 1, 18 September 2014

#### Introduction and Course Overview

**Readings:** Juschka, Darlene M. (2010), 'Gender', ch. 14 in: Hinnells, John (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion. Second edition*, London/New York: Routledge; 245-258.

Brintnall, Kent L. (2013), 'Queer studies and religion' in: *Critical Research on Religion*; vol. 1, no. 1; 51-61.

### WEEK 2, 25 September

#### Feminist Approaches

**Readings:** Neitz, Mary Jo (2014) [2011], 'Feminist methodologies', in: Stausberg, Michael/Engler, Steven (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, London/New York: Routledge; 54-67.

Schussler Fiorenza, Elisabeth (2013), 'Critical feminist studies in religion', in: *Critical Research on Religion*; vol. 1, no. 1; 43–50.

### **WEEK 3, 2 October**

#### **Masculinities**

**Readings:** Krondorfer, Bjorn/Culbertson, Philip (2005), 'Men's Studies in Religion', in: Jones, Lindsay (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion: Second Edition*. Vol. 9, Detroit et al.: Thomson Gale; 5861-6.

Samuel, Geoffrey (2011), 'Islamic Piety and Masculinity', *Contemporary Islam*, vol. 5; 309-22.

### **WEEK 4, 9 October**

#### **Femininities**

**Readings:** Clément, Catherine/Kristeva, Julia (2001), *The Feminine and the Sacred* (excerpt).

Sauer, Michelle M. (2013), 'Architecture of Desire: Mediating the Female Gaze in the Medieval English Anchorhold', *Gender & History*, vol. 25, no. 3; 545-64.

**Discussion of topics for review essays.**

### **WEEK 5, 16 October:**

#### **'Sexing Religion'**

**Readings:** Griffith, R. Marie (2012), 'Sexing Religion', in: Orsi, Robert A. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press; chapter 16.

### **WEEK 6, 23 October:**

#### **Homo/Sexualities 'East' and 'West'**

**Readings:** Vanita, Ruth (2012), 'Hinduism and Homosexuality', in: Boisvert/Johnson (eds.); 1-24.

Boswell, John (1980) (excerpt).

Foucault, Michel [1978], 'Sexuality and Power', in: Id. (1999); 115-130.

### **WEEK 7, 30 October:**

#### **Lesbian/Queer Spirituality: Religious Individualism?**

**Readings:** Wilcox, Melissa (2002), 'When Sheila's a Lesbian: Religious Individualism among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Christians', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 63, no. 4; 497-513.

Browne, Kath (2010). 'Dyke Spiritualities at Michigan Womyn's Music Festival', in: Browne/Munt/Yip; 139-67.

**WEEK 8, 6 November:**

**Bisexuality and Religion**

Cantarella, Eva (2002) [1992], *Bisexuality in the Ancient World: Second edition*, New Haven: Yale University Press; 211-22.

Toft, Alex (2012), 'Bisexuality and Christianity: Negotiating Disparate Identities in Church Life', in: Hunt/Yip (eds.).

**WEEK 9, 13 November:**

**Religion and TransLiberation**

**Readings:** Feinberg, Leslie (1996), *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press (excerpt).

Davy, Zowie/Steinbock, Eliza (2012), ' "Sexing Up" Bodily Aesthetics: Notes Towards Theorizing Trans Sexuality' in: Hines/Taylor (eds.); 266-87.

**WEEK 10, 20 November:**

**Androgyny and Hermaphroditism**

**Readings:** Gross, Rita M. (2009), 'Androcentrism and Androgyny in the Methodology of History of Religions', in: Ead., *A Garland of Feminist Reflections: Forty Years of Religious Explorations*, Berkeley: University of California Press; 55-64.

Foucault, Michel (1980), Introduction to *Herculine Barbin*.

**Discussion of topics for research essays.**

**WEEK 11, 27 November:**

**Queering Post-Diagnoses**

**Readings:** Munt, Sally R. (2013), 'Queer quakers: negotiating post-Christian selfhoods within the liberal sphere', in: Day Peters, Abby/Vincett, Giselle/Cotter, Christopher R. (eds.), *Social Identities between the Sacred and the Secular*, Farnham: Ashgate; 89-102.

Wilcox, Melissa M. (2012), 'Spirituality, Activism, and the 'Postsecular' in the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence', in: Nynäs, P./Yip, A. K. T. (eds.); 37-50.

**Concluding discussion.**

**RECOMMENDED READING**

The following readings are meant to provide you with some inspiration for your essays. They can be found in the Heavy Demand section of the Sir Duncan Rice Library or on-line. There are, of course, many more relevant books, articles and websites to be discovered by you, which is why you are strongly encouraged to conduct your own literature/resource searches.

Armour, Ellen T./St. Ville, Susan M. (eds.) (2006), *Bodily Citations: Religion and Judith Butler*, New York: Columbia University Press (ebook).

Barbin, Herculine (1980), *Herculine Barbin: Being the recently discovered memoirs of a nineteenth-century French hermaphrodite*. Translated from the French, New York: Pantheon Books.

Boisvert, Donald L./Johnson, Jay Emerson (eds.) (2012), *Queer Religion: 2 vol.s*, Santa Barbara, CA/Oxford: Praeger.

Boswell, John (1980), *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay people in Western Europe from the beginning of the Christian era to the fourteenth century*, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

Boyarin, Daniel (1997), *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Berkeley, CA/London: University of California Press.

Boyarin, Daniel I./Itzkovitz, Daniel/Pellegrini, Ann (eds.) (2003), *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, New York: Columbia University Press (ebook).

Braidotti, Rosi (2008), 'In Spite of the Times: The Postsecular Turn in Feminism', *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 25, no. 6; 1-24.

Browne, Kath/Munt, Sally R./Yip, Andrew K. T. (2010) (eds.), *Queer Spiritual Spaces: Sexuality and Sacred Places*, Farnham/Burlington, VT: Ashgate (also as ebook).

Cuffel, Alexandra (2007), 'Reorienting Christian "Amazons": Women Warriors in Medieval Islamic Literature in the Context of the Crusades', in: Ead. et Britt, Brian (eds.), *Religion, Gender, and Culture in the Pre-Modern World*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; 137-66.

Doniger, Wendy (1999), *Splitting the Difference: Gender and Myth in Ancient Greece and India*, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

Engels, Friedrich [1884], *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (ebook).

Fetner, Tina (2008), *How the Religious Right Shaped Lesbian and Gay Activism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (ebook).

Foucault, Michel (1979) [1976], *History of Sexuality: Vol. 1*, London: Lane (also available as ebook; hard copies of vol.s 2 and 3 can be found in the library).

Foucault, Michel (1999), *Religion and Culture*. Edited by Jeremy Carrette, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hines, Sally/Taylor, Yvette (eds.) (2012), *Sexualities: Past Reflections, Future Directions*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hunt, Stephen J./Yip, Andrew K. T. (eds.) (2012), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Contemporary Religion and Sexuality*, Farnham: Ashgate,

Jakobsen, Janet R./Pellegrini, Ann (2003), *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance*, New York: New York University Press.

King, Ursula/Beattie, Tina (2004/5), *Gender, Religion, and Diversity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, London: Continuum (also as ebook).

Kuefler, Matthew (2001), *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity*, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

Latham, Jacob (2012), "'Fabulous Clap-Trap": Roman Masculinity, the Cult of Magna Mater, and Literary Constructions of the *galli* at Rome from the Late Republic to Late Antiquity', *The Journal of Religion*, vol. 92, no. 1; 84-122.

Neitz, Mary Jo (2000), 'Queering the Dragonfest: Changing Sexualities in a Post-Patriarchal Religion', *Sociology of Religion*, vol. 61, no. 4; 369-91.

Naphy, William G. (2004), *Born To Be Gay: A History of Homosexuality*, Stroud: Tempus.

Nynäs, P./Yip, A. K. T. (eds.) (2012), *Religion, Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life*. Farnham: Ashgate.


Page, S./Yip, A. K. T. (2012) 'Hindu, Muslim and Sikh young adults: Gendered practices in the negotiation of sexuality and relationship', in: Nynäs, P./Yip, A. K. T. (eds.); 51-69

Roden, Frederick S. (2009), *Jewish/Christian/Queer Crossroads and Identities*, Farnham/Burlington, VT: Ashgate (ebook).

Sanday, Peggy Reeves (1981), *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality*, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.

van Klinken, Adriaan (2011), 'Male Headship as Male Agency: An Alternative Understanding of a "Patriarchal" African Pentecostal Discourse on Masculinity', *Religion and Gender*, vol. 1, no. 1; 104-24.

Wilcox, Melissa M. (2009), *Queer Women and Religious Individualism*, Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Yip, A. K. T./Keenan, M./Page, S. (2011) [Religion, Youth and Sexuality: Selected Key Findings from a Multi-faith Exploration](#) , Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

## **ASSESSMENT**

One presentation (10%), one 3,000 word review essay (40%), one 4,000 word research essay (50%).

Essay topics will be discussed in class and negotiated with the course co-ordinator.

## **ASSESSMENT DEADLINES**

1st deadline, for the review essay: Tuesday, 4 November, 3pm.

2nd deadline, for the research essay: Tuesday, 9 December, 3pm.

## **SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

Submit one paper copy to the drop boxes in CB008 in 50-52 College Bounds and one electronic copy to Turnitin via MyAberdeen. Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

## **RESIT INFORMATION**

One two-hour written exam (100%).

Access to the resit is provisional on:

- All submitted coursework having been submitted and graded at E3 or higher. All submitted coursework having been submitted and graded at E3 or higher. New Coursework can be submitted in agreement with the course co-ordinator. It is the student's responsibility to contact the co-

ordinator if the student has failed a course. The final date for resubmission of coursework is the Thursday of Revision week in the half-session in which the course is taught.

- Student having a valid Class Certificate. Students with C7's are not eligible for resits.

*Past exam papers can be viewed at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/learning-and-teaching/for-students/exam-papers/>.*