

# Religion, Gender, and Peacebuilding

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is the relationship between religion and gender in peacebuilding contexts? This course answers this question by engaging with three related debates. First, much attention has been paid to the contributions of religious institutions, leaders, and organizations in peacebuilding processes. At the same time, religion is often portrayed as inherently problematic for the empowerment of women, as well as other marginalized groups (e.g., the LGBTQI community). Given these concerns, can religious approaches to peacebuilding provide the means for sustained peace grounded in equality and justice? Second, discussions about religion often focus on the tendency of religion to facilitate conflict *or* the unique ability of religion to promote peace. Does religion lead to public discord and violence? Or are religions inherently peaceful? Finally, in the last several decades, more attention has been paid to women's experiences in conflict, as well as their role as potential peacebuilders. Yet, many of these discussions are grounded in assumptions about inherent characteristics of women, leading to particular understandings about the role of women in conflict and peace. Is it the case that women are especially vulnerable in contexts of conflict? Are women uniquely qualified to facilitate peacebuilding?

This course draws on feminist/gendered/queer approaches to security, peace, and religion—approaches that prioritize the experiences and narratives of women and other marginalized groups—to critically engage with these and other questions, as well as their underlying assumptions. By the end of the semester, students will be able to examine and analyze specific issues of religion and peacebuilding through the lens of gender.

### Learning Goals:

- (1) Become proficient in feminist/gendered/queer approaches to conflict and peace studies.
- (2) Critically analyze representations, discourses, and policies related to religion, gender, and peacebuilding.
- (3) Move beyond critique to propose a better way to engage with a specific issue related to religion, gender, and peacebuilding.
- (4) Persuade through writing.
- (5) Organize an argument into a concise, and publicly-accessible, form.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

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- Carol Cohn, ed. (2013) *Women and Wars* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- Susan Hayward and Katherine Marshall, eds. (2015) *Women, Religion & Peacebuilding: Illuminating the Unseen* (United States Institute of Peace Press).

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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Personal learning objectives (5%): Students will write out 3-5 learning goals that they hope to achieve in the class by the end of the semester.

Class participation (25%):

- Attendance: All students are required to **attend all lectures**, complete all readings on time, and **actively** participate in class discussions.
- Moodle Forum: Students must post a 1-2 paragraph reflection on each assigned reading by 9pm the night before class. These can include general comments on the reading(s), issues you would like to discuss in class, and/or any clarifying questions.

Reading presentation (10%): Each student will lead the class in a discussion about a specific class reading. The presentation should include a **brief** summary of the reading, but should primarily consist of your own analyses, questions, and general thoughts to facilitate further discussion with your classmates.

Blog post analyses (10%): Students will analyze two blog posts provided by me.

- #1 - overview analysis: Describe and outline the post, identifying main argument, evidence, key features, writing style, etc.
- #2 - genre analysis: Describe and analyze the style of the genre. What language is used? How is the post organized? In what ways is the post different from a college essay?

Group project: Blog post series proposal (15%): In groups of 2-3, students will determine which theme or object of study (e.g. UNHCR videos, *The New York Times* opinion section) they want to analyze and critique for a blog post series. The groups will then put together a formal blog post series proposal and submit to a blog. Students are also required to write a one-page reflection on the assignment process and provide student and peer assessments. I will provide further assignment details in class.

- Rough draft
- Formal submission
- Reflection and self/peer assessments

Advocacy blog post (30%): Students will write a 1000-1200 word blog post analyzing and critiquing a news article/OpEd, book, film, or video that contains problematic assumptions, framing, or language related to issues of religion, gender, and peacebuilding in Africa. Students will submit the post to the [CIHA Blog: Critical Investigations into Humanitarianism in Africa](#). I will provide further details in class.

- Rough draft
- Final draft
- Formal submission

Student self-assessment (5%): At the end of the semester, students will look back over and assess the work they have completed over the course of the semester in this class. Students are required to turn in a 1-page assessment of their work and the extent to which they did or did not achieve the learning goals they set out at the beginning of the semester. Students should reflect on the following questions:

- Did you meet the learning goals that you set out at the beginning of the course?

- Did you meet the learning goals outlined by the Instructor?
- How did you improve?
- In what ways did you struggle and how could you overcome those issues the future?

In their self-assessment, each student should include a suggested course grade, reflecting how they think they performed overall in the course. (Professor Schwarz will take that grade into account in her overall assessment.)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

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### WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION

Day 1: Syllabus and introductions

### WEEK 2 WHAT ARE RELIGION, GENDER, AND PEACEBUILDING?

Day 1: Gender and Feminist Studies

- Laura Sjoberg. (2010) "[Feminist IR 101, Post #1.](#)" Blog series for *Duck of Minerva*. [Post #2](#), [Post #3](#). (Read the first three posts.)
- Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Josephine Beoku-Betts, Wairimu Ngaruiya Njambi, and Mary Osirim. (2004) "Women's Gender Studies in English-Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Research in the Social Sciences." *Gender & Society* 18(6): 685-714.
- **Due: Personal learning objectives (email BEFORE class)**

Day 2: Peacebuilding & Religion

- Johan Galtung. (1964) "An Editorial." *Journal of Peace Research* 1(1): 1-4.
- Ruth Braunstein and Grace Yukich. (2010) "[Toward a Sociology of Religion.](#)" *The Immanent Frame*.
- Tanya B. Schwarz and Cecelia Lynch. (2016) "[Religion in International Relations.](#)" *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.
- **Due: Blog post analysis #1 - overview (bring three hard copies to class)**

<b>PART 1: GENDER, CONFLICT, AND PEACE</b>
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### WEEK 3 FEMINIST APPROACHES TO CONFLICT, SECURITY, AND PEACE

Day 1: What does a feminist approach do?

- Cohn, *Women and Wars*, Ch. 1

Day 2: Looking beyond women

- Jamie J. Hagen. (2016) "Queering Women, Peace and Security." *International Affairs* 92(2): 313-332.
- **Due: Blog post analysis #2 – genre (bring three hard copies to class)**

Additional suggested readings:

- Catia C. Confortini. (2006) "Galtung, Violence, and Gender: The Case for a Peace Studies/Feminism Alliance." *Peace & Change* 31(3): 333-367.
- R. Charli Carpenter. (2006) "Recognizing Gender-Based Violence Against Civilian Men and Boys in Conflict Situations." *Security Dialogue* 37(1): 83-103.

## WEEK 4

### GENDERING CONFLICT

#### Day 1: Women in conflict: victims?

- Cohn, *Women and Wars*, Ch. 3 (DeLargy: "Sexual Violence and Women's Health in War")

#### Day 2: Women in conflict: soldiers?

- Cohn, *Women and Wars*, Ch. 6 (Mathers: "Women and State Military Forces")

#### Additional suggested readings:

- Lene Hansen. (2010) "Gender, Nation, Rape: Bosnia and the Construction of Security." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3(1): 55-75.
- Kimberly Hutchings. (2011) "Gendered Humanitarianism: Reconsidering the Ethics of War." In *Experiencing War*, ed. Christine Sylvester, (New York: Routledge), pp. 28-41.

## WEEK 5

### GENDERING PEACE

#### Day 1: Including women in peace processes

- NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security. (2017) "[Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council: 2016.](#)"
- Jamille Bigio and Rachel Vogelstein. (2016) "How Women's Participation in Conflict Prevention and Resolution Advances U.S. Interests." Discussion Paper, *Council on Foreign Relations*.

#### Day 2: Problematizing peace narratives

- Cohn, *Women and Wars*, Ch. 5 (Cohn and Jacobsen: "Women and Political Activism in the Face of War and Militarization.")
- *Due: Rough draft – blog post series proposal (email BEFORE class)*

#### Additional suggested readings:

- Heidi Hudson. (2012) "A Double-Edged Sword of Peace? Reflections on the Tension between Representation and Protection in Gendering Liberal Peacebuilding." *International Peacekeeping* 19(4): 443-460.

<b>PART 2: GENDER AND RELIGION</b>
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## WEEK 6

### THE "TWO FACES" OF RELIGION

#### Day 1: Religion as a driver of conflict

- Elizabeth Shakman Hurd. (2015) "[How International Relations Got Religion, and Got It Wrong.](#)" *The Washington Post*.
- Cecelia Lynch. (2014) "A Neo-Weberian Approach to Studying Religion and Violence." *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 43(1): 273-290.

#### Day 2: Religion as a facilitator of peace

- Gerard F. Powers. (2010) "Religion and Peacebuilding" in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, eds. Daniel Philpott & Gerard F. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 317-352.

Additional suggested readings:

- Slavica Jakelić. (2015) "Secular-Religious Encounters in Peacebuilding" in *Oxford Handbook on Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*, eds. Atalia Omer, R. Scott Appleby and David Little (Oxford University Press: 2015), pp. 124-145.

## WEEK 7

### RELIGION & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT/AGENCY

Day 1: Religion as an obstacle to women's empowerment

- Deepa Shankaran. (May 2010) "[The Right to Have Rights: Resisting Fundamentalist Orders.](#)" *50.50: Inclusive Democracy*.
- **Due: Final draft - blog post series proposal (email BEFORE class)**

Day 2: Religion as an obstacle to gender equality

- Line Nyhagen and Beatrice Halsaa. (2016) "Religious Women and Gender Equality" in *Religion, Gender and Citizenship: Women of Faith, Gender Equality and Feminism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), pp. 153-185.
- **Due: Submission - blog post series proposal (cc Prof Schwarz)**
- **Due: Reflection & self/peer group assessments (email BEFORE class)**

Additional suggested readings:

- Nathaniel Adams. (December 2015) "Religion and Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh." *Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs*.
- Shahra Razavi and Anne Jenichen. (2010) "The Unhappy Marriage of Religion and Politics." *Third World Quarterly* 31(6): 833-850.

## WEEK 8

### SPRING BREAK

## WEEK 9

### PROBLEMATIZING RELIGION/GENDER NARRATIVES

Day 1: Rethinking the relationship between women/gender & Islam

- Lila Abu-Lughod. (2002) "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others." *American Anthropologist* 104(3): 783-790.

Day 2: Broadening the critical lens

- Nikita Dhawan. (2013) "The Empire Prays Back: Religion, Secularity, and Queer Critique." *Boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture* 40(1): 191-222.

Additional suggested readings:

- Ziba Mir-Hosseini. (2013) "Justice, Equality and Muslim Family Laws: New Ideas, New Prospects" in *Gender and Equality in Muslim Family Law: Justice and Ethics in the Islamic Legal Tradition*, eds. Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Kari Vogt, Lena Larsen, and Christian Moe (London and New York: I.B. Tauris), pp. 7-36.

- Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh. (2015) "Engendering Understandings of Faith-Based Organizations" in *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Development*, eds. Anne Coles, Leslie Gray, and Janet Momsen (London: Routledge), pp. 560-570.

<b>PART 3: BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER</b>
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**WEEK 10 RELIGION, WOMEN, AND VIOLENCE**

Day 1: Women and religious terrorism

- Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry. (2007) "Dying for Sex and Love in the Middle East." In *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*, pp. 112-140 (London: Zed Books).

Day 2: NO CLASS

- WATCH: "Pray the Devil Back to Hell"
- WRITE: 1-pg essay reflecting on how the film speaks to or challenges discussions/readings from class.

Additional suggested readings:

- Atreyee Sen. (2006) "Reflecting on Resistance: Hindu Women 'Soldiers' and the Birth of Female Militancy." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 13(1): 1-35.

**WEEK 11 RELIGIOUS WOMEN AND PEACEBUILDING (PT. 1)**

Day 1: Intro; approaches to peace

- Hayward and Marshall, *Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding*, Ch. 1

Day 2: Religious women and approaches to peace

- Hayward and Marshall, *Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding*, Ch. 4
- *Due: Rough draft blog post (bring three hard copies to class)*

**WEEK 12 RELIGIOUS WOMEN & PEACEBUILDING (PT. 2)**

Day 1: Case studies

- Hayward and Marshall, *Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding*, two chapters to be chosen by class.

Day 2: Moving forward

- Hayward and Marshall, *Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding*, Chapters 14

**WEEK 13 RELIGION, GENDER, & PEACE: INSTITUTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION**

Day 1: Platforms and initiatives

- UN Women. (2017) "[Global Platform on Gender Equality and Religion Launched.](#)"
- Georgetown University. (2016) "'Bridging Voices' Final Report: Gender, Religion and Countering Violent Extremism."

Day 2: In-Class Writing Workshop

- No readings

- Bring laptop to class

**WEEK 14 CHALLENGES TO PEACE**

Day 1: Barriers to participation

- Julie Xuan Oullet. (2013). "Women and Religion in Liberia's Peace and Reconciliation." *Critical Intersections in Education* 1(1): 12-20.
- ***Due: Final draft blog post (email BEFORE class)***

Day 2: In-Class Writing Workshop

- No readings
- Bring laptop to class

**WEEK 15 WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? WHAT NEXT?**

Day 1: Wrap up

- No readings
- ***Due: Submission of blog posts (cc Prof Schwarz)***

**FINAL EXAM WEEK**

- No final exam
- Self-assessments due