



Professor Matthew Blake Strickland
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Class Time & Location

MWF Period 4 (10:40 – 11:30)
AND 0019

Office Hours

MW 11:30 – 12:30
FLI 220

Course Description

This upper-level history course explores the complex and often overlooked roles of women in the religious landscapes of the Atlantic world from the 17th to the 18th century. Focusing on the intersection of gender, race, and religion, the course examines how women of African, Indigenous, and European descent navigated and shaped religious practices across the Americas, the Caribbean, and Africa. Through a close reading of primary sources and key texts, students will analyze the contributions of women to religious movements, the impact of colonialism on their spiritual lives, and the processes of religious syncretism and adaptation.

The course will encourage students to engage in comparative analysis, develop historical research skills, and reflect critically on the ethical dimensions of religious history. By the end of the semester, students will have gained a deep understanding of the diverse ways women influenced and were influenced by the religious dynamics of the Atlantic world.

Course Objectives

With this course, students will:

1. Analyze the significant contributions of women in the religious landscapes of the Atlantic world, including their roles in conversion, leadership, and resistance.
2. Explore how gender and race shaped religious experiences and practices in the Atlantic world, particularly for women of African, Indigenous, and European descent.
3. Investigate how women navigated and contributed to the blending of religious traditions, including the interactions between African, Indigenous, and European belief systems.
4. Critically assess how colonialism affected women's religious practices and identities, considering both the imposition of European Christianity and the persistence of Indigenous and African religious traditions.
5. Compare and contrast the religious experiences of women across different Atlantic contexts, developing a nuanced understanding of the diversity of women's religious lives.
6. Make concise arguments in both written and oral form.
7. Think critically and analytically regarding historical people, events, and themes.

Required Texts

John Thornton, *The Kongolesse Saint Anthony*

Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint*

Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*

Catherine A. Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World*

Course Grading Policy

Perusall Annotations	10%
Book Review	10%
Topic 1 Exam	20%
Topic 2 Exam	20%
Topic 3 Exam	20%
Topic 4 Exam	20%

Grading Scale

Percent	Grade
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-

77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0-59	E

Only course grades of C or better will satisfy Gordon Rule, general education, and college basic distribution credit.

Mandatory Meeting: You are required to meet with me during office hours at least once during the semester. This meeting serves two purposes: 1) it allows me to get to know you and you to get to know me, and 2) this is an opportunity for students to get help or insight before major assignments are due. The meeting should be a short check-in (5-10 minutes). While attending these meetings will not be graded, a failure to complete this requirement will result in a grade reduction.

Book Review: From the following list, select one book to review. All of these books contend with women and religion in the Atlantic world. After a book has been selected, you will write a book review that 1) examines the author's main arguments, 2) shows how the author structures their narrative, and 3) analyzes the sources used. This paper must be 5-6 pages and follow standard formatting. You must bring a hard copy to class to be graded, and you must submit a digital copy on Canvas to be checked through Turnitin. Please note that if you have previously completed a book review for one of my classes, you MAY NOT resubmit the same book review. Turnitin will flag it as plagiarism.

Topic Exams: You will have four take-home exams that cover four separate topics. I will post the essay topic on Canvas at 5:00pm the day before, and you will have until 11:59pm on the following day (the due date) to complete the essay(s). You may use your notes and any readings to address the writing prompts. You may not use outside sources, and you definitely cannot use AI chatbots. Responses to each essay should be around 5-6 typed pages using standard formatting. Each exam should take about two hours to complete.

***Standard Formatting:** Times New Roman; 1-inch margins on all sides; 12-point font; double-spaced; no extra indentions or line spacings beyond what is appropriate in writing mechanics.

Most assignments will be submitted as a hard copy for grading and on Canvas to be checked through Turnitin. Specific requirements will be addressed for each assignment.

Course Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Attendance:

In order to ensure success in this course, it is imperative that you attend all class meetings. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class. Without showing up to class, you cannot fully participate.

Tardiness:

Come to class on time. Tardiness causes unnecessary distractions for the teacher and for students attempting to engage with the course. While it may be unavoidable sometimes, no student should be late a majority of the class. I understand this is a large campus. However, you must develop a schedule that is logistically possible (i.e. that which allows you to move quickly from one place to another).

Participation:

For the purposes of this class, participation means you are **actively** contributing to the discussion. This could include probing questions, insights regarding readings, or making connections across multiple weeks in the course. All of these involve communicating to me and the rest of the class that you are prepared and engaged with the lectures and/or material.

Late Work:

All assignments should be turned in by the due date. The instructor may accept late work for a ten-point deduction for every day the assignment is late. However, it is not guaranteed that the instructor will accept late work. It is the student's responsibility to communicate problems or concerns with the instructor.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism constitutes intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. It is the failure to properly cite and give credit when you use the ideas, words, phrases, or arguments of other people in your writing assignments. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." For more information regarding the Honor Code, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>

Please note that the use of AI programs is plagiarism. These resources are often misleading, incomplete, or completely wrong. They have also been known to cite non-existent sources.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.

Objectivity and Classroom Respect:

People learn best when they are encouraged to ask questions and express their diverse opinions on course content which may include images, texts, data, or theories from many fields. This is especially true in courses that deal with provocative or contemporary issues. UF offers many such courses, in which students encounter concepts of race, color, sex, and/or national origin. We teach these important issues because understanding them is essential for anyone who seeks to make economic, cultural, and societal contributions to today's complex world. With this in mind, we do not limit access to, or classroom discussion of, ideas and opinions—including those that some may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. In response

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to challenging material, students and instructors are encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another's ideas. But hostility, disruptive and disrespectful behavior, and provocation for provocation's sake have no place in a classroom; reasonable people disagree reasonably. These guidelines can help instructors and students as they work together to fulfill the mission of the University of Florida, which includes the exploration of intellectual boundaries, the creation of new knowledge and the pursuit of new ideas.

Course Schedule

*This schedule may change.

Course Introduction & Framework	
F 8/23 Course Introduction	- Access the syllabus [Canvas]
M 8/26 Women and Religion	Perusall Annotations: - Ann Braude, "Women's History is American Religious History"
W 8/28 Atlantic Connections: Europe, Africa, and America	Perusall Annotations: - Carla Pestana, "Religion before English Expansion"
Topic 1: Women and Religion in Africa	
F 8/30 Overview: Traditional Religion in Africa	
M 9/2 Labor Day	No Class
W 9/4 Women in Traditional African Religion	Perusall Annotations: - Atinuke Olubukola Okunade, "The Role of Women in African Traditional Religion" - Lucy Creevey, "Islam, Women and the Role of the State in Senegal"
F 9/6 Feminist Impact into the Modern World	Perusall Annotations: - Adepeju Johnson-Beshua, "African Traditional Religion, Gender Equality, and Feminism"
M 9/9 Christianity in the Kongo	In-Class Discussion: - John Thornton, <i>The Kongolesse Saint Anthony</i> , p.1-104
W 9/11 Dona Beatriz' Movement	In-Class Discussion: - John Thornton, <i>The Kongolesse Saint Anthony</i> , p.105-214
F 9/13 Topic 1 Exam	No Class Today – Complete your Take-Home Exam Your first exam will be due by 11:59pm on this day. The topic will be posted to Canvas around 5:00pm on the preceding day (9/19).
Topic 2: Native American Religion and Christianity	
M 9/16	

Overview: Religion in
Native America

W 9/18
Christian Conquest

Perusall Annotations:
- Jeanette Favrot Peterson, "The Virgin of Guadalupe: Symbol of Conquest or Liberation?"
- Rachel Wheeler, "Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican Village," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 13 (2003), 27-67

F 9/20

Ramon A. Gutierrez, "Women on Top: The Love Magic of the Indian Witches of New Mexico"

M 9/23
Spiritual Communities
Collide

In-Class Discussion:
- Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, chs. 1-4

W 9/25
Catherine Tekakwitha

In-Class Discussion:
- Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, chs. 5-9

F 9/27
No Class

No Class Today – Complete your Take-Home Exam

Your second exam will be due by 11:59pm on this day. The topic will be posted to Canvas around 5:00pm on the preceding day (10/10).

Topic 3: Religion in the Black Atlantic

M 9/30
Overview of Religion in
the Black Atlantic

W 10/2
Slave Religions

Perusall Annotations:
- Tracey E. Hucks, "'I Smoothed the Way, I opened Doors': Women in the Yoruba-Orisha Tradition of Trinidad"
- Rachel Elizabeth Harding, "É a Senzala: Slavery, Women, and Embodied Knowledge in Afro-Brazilian Candomblé"

F 10/4
Slave Religions

Perusall Annotations:
- Clarence V. H. Maxwell, "'The Horrid Villainy': Sarah Bassett and the Poisoning Conspiracies in Bermuda, 1727-1730", *Slavery and Abolition* 21, 3 (2000): 48-74

M 10/7
Race and Gender

Perusall Annotations:
- Joan C. Bristol, "'Although I am black, I am beautiful': Juana Esperanza de San Alberto, Black Carmelite of Puebla"

W 10/9
Black Christianity

Perusall Annotations:
- Jon Sensbach, "Prophets and Helpers: African American Women and the Rise of Black Christianity in the Age of the Slave Trade"

F 10/11

In-Class Activity:

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Women and Anglicanism	- Anglican Baptismal Registries in Jamaica and Barbados
M 10/14	In-Class Discussion - Jon Sensbach, <i>Rebecca's Revival</i> , 1-100
W 10/16	In-Class Discussion - Jon Sensbach, <i>Rebecca's Revival</i> , 101-248
F 10/18 Homecoming	No Class
M 10/21 Black Women, Christianity, and Modern Activism	- Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "My Mother's God is Mine': Finally the Most Powerful Importance of Women to African American Religion"
W10/23	
F 10/25 Topic 3 Exam	No Class Today – Complete your Take-Home Exam Your third exam will be due by 11:59pm on this day. The topic will be posted to Canvas around 5:00pm on the preceding day (10/31).
Topic 4: Outspoken Women & Persecution	
M 10/28 Speaking Out and Running Away	Perusall Annotations: - Sor Juana - Lieutenant Nun
W 10/30 Teaching and Preaching Among Quakers	Perusall Annotations: - Rebecca Larson, "In the service of truth': Impact of women ministers' travels on the transatlantic Quaker community" - Rebecca Larson, "Love yt (that) many waters cannot quench': Women Ministers Travelling"
F 11/1 Teaching and Preaching Among Quakers	Select Primary Sources by Quaker Women: Margaret Fell, Katharine Evans and Sarah Chevers, Mary Penington, Elizabeth Webb, Sarah Grubb, and Mary Turner
M 11/4 Anne Hutchinson and Puritanism	Ben Baker-Benfield, "Anne Hutchinson and the Puritan Attitude toward Women"
W 11/6 Revivalism	In-Class Discussion: - Catherine A. Brekus, <i>Sarah Osborn's World</i> , Part One

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F 11/8 The Value of Christianity	In-Class Discussion: - Catherine A. Brekus, <i>Sarah Osborn's World</i> , Part Two
M 11/11 Veterans Day	No Class
W 11/13 Witch Hunts in the Atlantic	
F 11/15 Salem	Various documents from Salem Bernard Rosenthal, "Tituba," <i>OAH Magazine</i>
M 11/18 Women & the Inquisition	- Ronald Surtz, "Morisco Women, Written Texts, and the Valencia Inquisition"
W 11/20 Women & the Inquisition	Inquisition Docs
F 11/22 Women & the Inquisition	Inquisition Docs
M 11/25 Thanksgiving	No Class
W 11/27 Thanksgiving	No Class
F 11/29 Thanksgiving	No Class
M 12/2 Course Conclusion	
W 12/4 Topic 4 Exam	No Class Today – Complete your Take-Home Exam Your fourth exam will be due by 11:59pm on this day. The topic will be posted to Canvas around 5:00pm on the preceding day (12/5).