**RELIGION AND WOMEN RIGHTS**

**Capsule Statement:**

This course discusses several religions, mainly Islam and their traditions as regards to gender and women’s rights. Briefly discussing the development of major religious beliefs, the course focuses on how have women’s religious beliefs and practices differed from those of men, if at all? Are religious traditions, beliefs, and systems liberating or oppressive to women? Considering the feminist approaches to the religious experiences of women, this course studies the distinction between the sacred and the profane as being a distinction between male and female activities.

#### Objectives:

After the completion of this course, students will be able to

* Discuss several religious traditions in context of gender rights and duties
* Discuss to what extent can a religious tradition be changed to eliminate inequalities based on gender
* Identify the most effective strategies for empowering women and weaker segments of the society within religious traditions

#### Contents:

1. **Overview of the religious traditions.**
	1. Why study women, gender, and religion?

#### Introduction to Gender and Religion

* 1. An introduction to Gender and Religion-a survey of contemporary writings that explore the relations between gender and religion from historical, anthropological, theological and philosophical perspectives

#### Gender and religious Imagination

* 1. Building on the widely accepted assumption that religion is a cultural phenomenon and that gender is a critical aspect of cultural formation
	2. Introduction to non-revealed and revealed religions
		1. Hinduism
		2. Budhism
		3. Judaism
		4. Christianity
		5. Islam

#### Women and gender in world religions:

* 1. Hinduism: Relationship of female-gendered and feminine images and symbols to ‘real’ women.
		1. The status of women in the religious texts of Hinduism
		2. Introducing goddesses and their power
	2. Women and Buddhism: The issue of female presence in the Buddhist discourse
		1. The ordination of women in the Buddhist sangha.
		2. Women and the issue of ‘enlightenment’.
	3. Women and Judaism: The concept of Eve and the original sin
		1. Lilith and Eve –the duality of female representation.
		2. The concept of purity, chastity, and control of the female body
	4. Women and Christianity
		1. Images of women in the New Testament
		2. Virgin Mary and the place of women in the Church organisation
	5. Women and Islam
		1. Women and gender in the Qur’an
		2. Interpretations (patriarchal) of the Text, male authority, and marginalisation of women in Islamic religious traditions.
	6. Women and African religions
	7. Woman and Goddess-centered religious
	8. New scholarship and activism: Women claiming their lost position in the realm of religious knowledge and practices.
	9. Religion and human rights. Discussion of women's rights in light of religious teachings with focus on possible solutions to current problems within those teachings.

#### Gender-based segregation and inequalities; religious or traditional

**Suggested Readings:**

Ahmed, Leila. (1992). *Women and Gender in Islam.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.

Awde, Nicholas. (1998). *Women in Islam: An anthology from the Quran and Hadith*.

London: Curzon Press.

Badawi, Jamal A.(1995). *Gender Equity in Islam: basic principles*. Plainfield, Ind: American Trust Publications.

Badawi, Jamal A. (1980). *The Muslim Woman’s Dress: According to the Qur’an and Sunnah*. London, Ta-ha Publishers.

Barlas, Asma. (2002). *“Believing Women” in Islam-Unreading Patriarchal*

*Interpretations of the Quran*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Cooke, Miriam. 2001. *Creating Islamic Feminism Through Literature: Women Claim Islam.* New York: Routledge.

Firdous, Rehana. (2003). “A Permissible Step for Restraining Man’s Unilateral Right to Divorce: *Talaq-i-tafwid* (Delegation of Power of Divorce)’ in *Pakistan Journal of Women’s Studies,* Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 73-79.

Firdous, Rehana. (2000). “Woman’s Right of Separation (Khul’): Can she claim it as a matter of Law? In *Pakistan Journal of Women’s Studies,* Vol. 57 No. 1, pp. 1- 20.

Firdous, Rehana. ( 1998). “Polygamy in Islam” in *Pakistan Journal of Women’s Studies,* Vol. 5, No. 1 & 2, pp. 1-16.

Hassan, Riffat. (1994). “Family Planning and Islam: A Muslim Women’s Perspective” in *Pakistan Journal of Women’s Studies,* Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 25-33.

Maudoodi, Syed Abul ʻAla, and al-Ashʻari. 1972. *Purdah and the Status of Woman in*

*I*h*s*o*lam*. La re: Islamic Publications.

Mernissi, Fatima. (1996). *Women’s Rebellion & Islamic Memory*. London: Zed Books. Mernissi, Fatima. ( 1991). *Woman and Islam- An Historical and Theological Enquiry*.

Oxford: Blackwell Ltd.

Murshid, Tazeen M. (2005). “ Islam, Shariah Law, and the Role of Women in Muslim Societies: Myths and Perceptions” in *Pakistan Journal of Women’s Studies,* Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 1-21.

Naseef, Fatima Umar, and Saleha Mahmood Abedin. 1999. *Women in Islam: a Discourse in Rights and Obligations*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

FRaazhlmura.n,(1980). *Major Theme s of the Qur’ān*. Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica.

Roald, Anne Sofia. (2001). *Women in Islam-The Western Experience*. London: Routledge.

Schimmel, Annemarie.(1997). *My Soul is a Woman: The Feminine in Islam*. New York: Continuum.

Siddiqi, Mazheruddin. (1981). *Women in Islam*. Delhi: Islamic Book Trust. Skramstad, Siri Helene. (2006). “Sex and Gender in Maryam Jameelah’s Writings” in

*Pakistan Journal of Women’s Studies,* Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 81-91.

Smith, Jane I. and Haddad, Yvonne Y. 1982. “Eve: Islamic Image of Woman”, in

*uWdoiemsan’s St International Forum,* Vol. 5, pp. 135-145.

Spellberg, D. A. (1994). *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic past: The Legacy of ʻAʼisha bint Abi Bakr*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Thurlkill, Mary F. ( 2007). “Holy Women, Holy Vessels: Mary and Fatima in Medieval Christianity and Shi’ite Islam” in *Pakistan Journal of Women’s Studies,* Vol.

14, No. 2, pp. 27-51.

Wadud, Amina. ( 1997). “Women and Islam: Beyond the Stereotypes” in *Pakistan Journal of Women’s Studies,* Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 1-14.

Wadud, Amina. ( 1999). *Qur’an and Woman- Rereading the Sacred Texts from a Woman’s Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.