Course Description
World Christianity has been described as a “women’s movement” and the historical missionary movement from the United States estimated as two-thirds female or more. Historians have also indicated that Christianity has always been majority female: women were the last at the cross, the first at tomb, and make up the majority of Christians today. Many revitalization movements – both historically and currently – are led by women. This course unpacks these statements about women and the world church by investigating the historical contributions to the development of Christianity and also diving into the realities women face today in their ministry contexts worldwide. The course takes a historical approach in covering women from roughly the 19th–21st centuries; a geographical approach in specifically focusing on women in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania; as well as an ecclesial approach by focusing on Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Pentecostal women. Issues covered range from sexual and gender-based violence and oppressive patriarchies to women-led revival movements and successful non-profit organizations and mother's unions. This course introduces students to a global history of women's involvement in the church and makes the case for the centrality of women’s contributions to global Christianity, both past and present.

Learning Objectives
This course introduces students to women in World Christianity from historical, missiological, and theological perspectives. As a result of taking this course, students will be able to:

- Develop a historical framework for the impact of women on the church from roughly the 19th–21st centuries.
- Reflect missiologically on the contributions of women in the growth of Christianity worldwide.
- Think theologically about the uniqueness of women’s experiences worldwide and how those experiences impact the creation of feminist and womanist theology.
- Understand the differences among women’s church-based experiences in various geographic and ecclesial contexts worldwide.

Assignments
All assignments are due the day and time indicated below and should be submitted on Canvas.

- Class participation (10%)
  - Attendance at weekly classes is crucial to get the most out of this course. Students are expected to complete the weekly readings on time and come to class prepared to discuss the readings. We will often work in small discussion groups where all students are expected to participate and self-reflect and self-theologize on course material.
Each student on the Hamilton campus is required to visit the Center for the Study of Global Christianity in D building and meet with Dr. Zurlo at least once during the semester. Students taking the class virtually can meet with Dr. Zurlo over Zoom.

- Biography project of a women in Christian history (20%)
  - Choose a woman in Christian history and write a 4–5 page biography of her life, including (but not limited to) her Christian influences, theological leanings, and key contributions to mission or World Christianity. More details on this assignment are available on Canvas.
  - Due Friday, February 28 at 5pm on Canvas.

- Theological reflection on a female theologian from the global South (20%)
  - Choose a female theologian from Asia, Africa, Latin America, or Oceania.
  - Choose one book (or a series of articles with approval from the professor) of hers to read in its entirety and write a 5–6 page summary/reflection paper on key points of her theology. More details on this assignment are available on Canvas.
  - Due Friday, March 27 at 5pm on Canvas.

- Final paper and presentation (50%)
  - 15–20 pages, plus footnotes and bibliography (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font) investigating a subject in women and World Christianity outside of the student’s own context (e.g., if you are an American Baptist from Kansas you cannot write about American Baptist women from Kansas). You may take a historical, theological, or social scientific approach in your paper. More details on this assignment are available on Canvas.
  - You must communicate your paper topic with Dr. Zurlo by Friday, April 3. This is not a formal written assignment, but you must email or speak with her about your topic to ensure you choose something that is researchable in the time given.
  - Each student will provide a brief presentation (with PowerPoint) to the class during the last week of class on their chosen paper topic (either April 28 or April 30, we will assign dates by splitting the class alphabetically by last name).
  - Final paper due Monday, May 4 at 5pm on Canvas.

- Special instructions for students taking this course to substitute for WM601:
  - You must substitute one of the papers worth 20% of your grade for an analytical reflection paper on the following texts (more details available on Canvas):
    - David Bosch, Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, 2nd edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), the following sections only (more if you so choose!):
      - Part 1: New Testament Models of Mission (chapters 1, 2, 3, 4)
      - Conclusion to the anniversary edition, p533–550
  - Due on the original due date for the paper you substituted. If you substituted the biography paper, then your due date is February 28. If you substituted the theology paper, then your due date is March 27.

Grading scale: A+ 97-100; A 94-96; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73; D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 60-63; F 0-59.
  - Assignments will be docked half a letter grade each day they are late.
Required Texts
- Reports, articles, and selections of books available on Canvas.

Helpful Digital Resources
- Center for the Study of Global Christianity (www.globalchristianity.org)
- Dictionary of African Christian Biography (www.dacb.org)
- Boston University School of Theology missionary biographies (www.bu.edu/missiology/missionary-biography)
- The Global Church Project (www.theglobalchurchproject.com)

Schedule of Classes (subject to change)
Readings are due the day they are assigned. **There is indeed reading due the first day of class.** It is a good practice to take notes when you read so you are ready to discuss the reading during class.

*January 28*
Why women and World Christianity?
- Introduction to women’s history, gender and mission, and World Christianity

Readings

*January 30*
Was early Christianity a feminist movement?
- Vignettes of women in the Bible and the early centuries of Christianity

Readings

*February 4 & February 6*
Women in the history of Christian mission
- American women in mission
- Bible women in the spread of Christianity worldwide
Readings
- Robert, Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers, chapter 1

February 11 & February 13
Women in Asia
- History, theology, mission, contemporary issues

Readings
- Robert, Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers, chapter 12 & 13

For reference:

Reading week: February 17–21

February 25 & February 27
Women in Latin America
- History, theology, mission, contemporary issues

Readings
- Selection from Maria Pilar Aquino, Our Cry for Life: Feminist Theology from Latin America (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).
- Gender article TBA from Christianity in Latin America (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

For reference:

February 28: Biography paper due by 5pm on Canvas

March 3 & March 5
Women in Africa
- History, theology, mission, contemporary issues

Readings
• Please have read all of Hodgson, The Church of Women by week 6.

For reference:
• Lists of African female theologians TBA

March 10 (March 12 no class)
Women in Oceania
• History, theology, mission, contemporary issues

Readings
• Gender article TBA from Christianity in Oceania (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).
• Choose one:

For reference:
• Lists of female theologians from Oceania TBA

Reading week: March 16–20

March 24 & March 26
Orthodox women
• History, theology, contemporary context and challenges

Readings
• Selection from Leonie B. Liveris, Ancient Taboos and Gender Prejudice: Challenges for Orthodox Women and the Church (Farnham: Ashgate Pub., 2007).

March 27: Theological paper due by 5pm on Canvas

March 31
Special session on women in World Christianity for the GCTS conference on the World Christian Encyclopedia, 3rd edition

Readings
- Robert, Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers, chapters 9–11

April 2
Catholic women
- History, theology, contemporary context and challenges

Readings

April 3: Due date to discuss final paper topic with Dr. Zurlo

April 7 & April 9
Protestant women
- History, theology, contemporary context and challenges

Readings
- Article on Protestant women in Europe, TBA
- Robert, Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers, chapters 2 & 3

April 14 & April 16
Pentecostal/Charismatic/Evangelical women
- History, theology, contemporary context and challenges

Readings
- Robert, Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers, chapters 4–8, 14

April 21 & April 23
Global contemporary issues
- Gender-specific religious persecution
- Global migration: trafficking, domestic workers
Readings

April 28 & 30 (final exam week)
Student PowerPoint presentations of final paper research

May 4: Final paper due on Canvas by 5pm

ADA Accommodations
Gordon-Conwell is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you have a special need or disability, please meet with the Dean of Students (Jana Holiday, jholiday@gcts.edu) to request an official accommodation through the Request for Accommodations form. Students who receive an accommodation are asked to meet with the Dean of Students to discuss the provisions of their accommodation as soon as possible.

Other Accommodations
This course is heavy on research and writing. Please reach out to Dr. Zurlo for help if you struggle in these areas. She can help you with the writing process, organization of research, finding resources, time management, etc. Dr. Zurlo is open to other kinds of academic accommodations if necessary.

Extension Policy
Students who wish to submit coursework after the last day for written work must receive prior approval from the Student Life Office upon formal petition. Additional time will be granted to students who have lost time for unforeseen reasons. Students should consult the full extension petition and policy, located in the Registration Hub in Canvas for detailed instructions. Petitions must be filed before the last day for written work as specified in the Academic Calendar. Students who require ongoing extensions for medical or physical reasons should review the Disability Accommodations Policy outlined in the Policies & Procedures section of the handbook and consult the Dean of Students.

Select Bibliography on Women in World Christianity


