

REL343
Women, Violence, and Resistance
Dr. Rebecca Todd Peters

Course Introduction:

This course will take a serious look at a wide variety of forms of violence against women. Topics include domestic violence, prostitution, gang rape, economic violence, military violence, cultural violence, ecological violence, and incest. We will examine a variety of disciplinary approaches to the study of violence against women including psychology, anthropology, and sociology and we will focus on a variety of responses and resistance to violence including public policy, criminal justice, counseling, and faith communities. Particular attention will be paid to religious justifications for violence against women; and the role that faith communities have played in both condoning and resisting violence. An important aspect of the course will be exploring women's resistance to violence and public policy measures intended to address violence against women. From the attached course outline you will be able to see the variety of approaches and topics that we will be covering in the course.

One of the primary intellectual challenges of this course is for students to develop an understanding that violence is often culturally constructed, condoned, and sometimes even supported. A good portion of our efforts in the class will be placed on untangling the ways in which race, class, and gender work together to perpetrate violence against women around the world. Because U.S. students will often readily admit that these processes work in concert in the two-thirds world, but here in the U.S. women are equal with men, some attention is paid in the course to addressing domestic violence, prostitution, and fraternity gang rape in the U.S. context. The idea is for students to understand the structural dimensions of violence and to be able to see the ways in which the construction of gender and violence are present in the U.S. as well as in the "developing" world.

Objectives:

- *to develop an understanding of how experiences of gender and violence have been socially constructed in society

- *to develop a structural understanding of the problem of violence in contemporary society

- *to examine ways in which Christian theology and ritual serve to both justify violence and to liberate women from violence

- *to examine potential public policy responses to violence against women

COURSE MATERIALS:

available at bookstore:

Brock, Rita Nakashima & Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

Brock, Rita Nakashima & Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001.

Mananzan, Mary John, ed., et. al., *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996 (reprinted by Wilpf & Stock, 2003).

West, Traci. *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics*. NY: New York University Press, 1999.

Coursepack by Xanedu.

available online at www.bookfinder.com

Imbens, Annie & Ineke Jonkers, *Christianity and Incest*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

available on reserve at the library:

Gnanadason, Aruna. *Women, Violence and Non-violent Change*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996.

COURSE BUSINESS

Contact with Professor:

I enjoy meeting you during my office hours and even at other times. Feel free to talk about the course, questions you have, issues/points you do not quite understand, and anything else that is important to you. I am also very responsive to email and will make every effort to respond to your messages within 24 hours.

Blackboard:

It is your responsibility to check the Blackboard site on a regular basis. I will use it extensively as a way of communicating with you about assignments and other course material.

Writing:

Good writing skills are a critical aspect of a college education. Clarity of thought, good organization and presentation of ideas, original thinking, and creativity are required to receive an "A" on your formal essay assignments. I am also happy to read drafts of papers as long as I see them at least 24 hours before they are due. I am also happy to discuss your writing problems

with you on an individual basis. You may also want to consider visiting the Writing Center to work on any of these areas.

Writing Center Hours

3:30-5:30 PM Monday – Thursday

7-11 PM Sunday – Thursday

ASSIGNMENTS

Class facilitation

As a seminar, each student will be expected to “lead” class one day during the semester. This will entail presenting an overview of the major points from the reading and being prepared to lead off the class period with thoughtful questions. Students will be graded on the content as well as the delivery of their summary and on the depth and insightfulness of their questions.

Writing Assignments

Response papers:

You are required to write one and half to two pages *responding* to the day’s reading. This is to be a critical assessment of the reading in which you engage the ideas expressed by the author(s) of a particular assignment. You must do more than just agree or disagree with them, you must express why you do so. These response papers make up a large part of our class discussion as well as your grade. These must be typed, double-spaced, and turned in by the end of class each day (hand written response papers will not be accepted). Response papers will not be accepted on the days a student is absent. You will get a score of credit or no credit. You will receive credit for these papers if you demonstrate that you have read the material and critically engaged it on some level. Work that seems too quick or careless will receive no credit.

Case briefs (4-5 pages)

You will each be required to choose one particular type of violence against women (rape, domestic violence, economic or cultural violence, incest, prostitution, etc.). You will then be required to write a series of papers that analyze and discuss the problem and resistance to it.

1st – Narrative overview that provides the facts of the case/problem.

2nd – Analysis of the ways in which gender and violence are socially constructed.

3rd – Structural analysis of the situation of violence.

4th – Public policy suggestions for addressing the violence.

Final paper:

Students will be expected to synthesize their case briefs into a coherent final paper on the topic of “Violence, Women, and Resistance.” While they may draw on their case briefs, the final product will be expected to show both response to my written feedback on the case briefs and new material or insights not in the original papers. In other words, students cannot just string the four case briefs together and expect to have completed the assignment in a satisfactory way.

Major assignment for the class

The project for the class is to work together to figure out what to do with your case briefs and the knowledge that you have gained to try to address the issues raised by the course related to women, violence, and resistance. Your options are limitless and I encourage you to be as

creative as you can to develop a class project that shares what you have learned with the Elon community or the larger world.

ASSESSMENT

10% - class facilitation

40% - daily writing assignments

20% - case briefs (5% each)

10% - final paper

20% - class project (participation, process, essay, and evaluation)

Your daily writing grade will be determined as follows: 27-22 points = A; 21 = A-; 20 = B+; 19-18 = B; 17 = B-; 16 = C+; 15-14 = C; 13 = C-; 12 = D+; 11-10 = D; 9-0 = F.

Schedule of Readings

Weeks 1 & 2 – The Social Construction of Gender and Violence

Feb. 4

Traci West. Part I in *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics*. New York: New York University Press, 1999, p. 11-51.

The first half of this book focuses on listening to women's stories as a lens into understanding how violence against women is perpetrated and justified.

Feb. 6

Traci West. Part II in *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics*. New York: New York University Press, 1999, p. 55-88.

Feb. 11

Mary John Mananzan, et. al. ed. "Violence against Women's Bodies," ch. 6 in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 66-79.

This chapter both focuses on the relationship between gender, power, and violence and proposes a new paradigm of power as a strategy of resisting violence.

Gnanadason, Aruna, ed. et. al. "Canada: After the Massacre," by Lynn Granke, ch. 6 in *Women, Violence and Nonviolent Change*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996. (library reserve)

Feb. 13

R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash, eds. "Violent Men and Violent Contexts," ch. 6 and "The Hand That Strikes and Comforts: Gender Construction and the Tension Between Body and Symbol," ch. 7 in *Rethinking Violence Against Women*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998. (coursepack)

Week 3 – International Voices and Resistance to Domestic Violence

Feb 18

Mary John Mananzan, et. al. ed. , "Ties that Bind: Domestic Violence Against Women," by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, ch. 4 and "Domestic Violence in Indian Perspective," by Stella Baltazar, ch. 5 in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 39 – 65.

These chapters provide a systemic analysis of domestic violence and examine the experience and resistance of women in India.

Feb. 20

Mary John Mananzan, et. al. ed., "Violence and Women's Bodies in African Perspective," by

Elizabeth Amoah, ch. 7 in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 39 – 65.

This chapter examines the experience and resistance of women in Africa.

Mimi Scarf, “Marriages Made in Heaven? Battered Jewish Wives,” in *On Being a Jewish Feminist: A Reader* by Susannah Heschel, ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1995. (coursepack)

This chapter discusses the experience of American Jewish women with domestic abuse.

Gnanadason, Aruna, ed. et. al. “Vietnam: Nonviolent Activities to Prevent Violence,” by Le Thi Nham Tuyet and Ma Thi Phuoug Tien, ch. 16 in *Women, Violence and Nonviolent Change*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996. (library reserve)

Weeks 4 & 5 – Examining Incest and the Role of Religion in Justifying Violence

Feb. 25

Annie Imbens and Ineke Jonker. “Part I: The Experience of Incest,” ch. 2 & 4 *Christianity and Incest*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 116-131 and 168-185.

This book examines the trauma of incest, with particular attention to the ways in which Christian images and themes are used to justify and perpetuate the abuse.

Feb. 27

Annie Imbens and Ineke Jonker. “Part II: Christian Influences,” ch. 5 in *Christianity and Incest*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 189 – 234.

March 4

Annie Imbens and Ineke Jonker. “Part II: Christian Influences,” ch. 6 in *Christianity and Incest*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 235-263.

March 6

Annie Imbens and Ineke Jonker. “Part II: Christian Influences,” ch. 7 in *Christianity and Incest*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 264 – 276.

Gnanadason, Aruna, ed. et. al. “Australia: The Family Secrets Exhibition,” by Jo Barter, ch. 4 in *Women, Violence and Nonviolent Change*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996. (library reserve)

Week 6– Examining Fraternity Gang Rape

March 11

Peggy Reeves Sanday. *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus*, ch. 2 & 5, New York: New York University Press, 1990. (coursepack)

This book is an anthropological study of fraternities and how they create a culture that not only condones rape, but one that encourages it.

March 13

Peggy Reeves Sanday. *Fraternity Gang Rape: Sex, Brotherhood, and Privilege on Campus*, ch. 6 & 8, New York: New York University Press, 1990. (coursepack)

Week 7– Examining Prostitution**March 18**

Rita Nakashima Brock and Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite. “Part I: A Systematic Analysis of Prostitution in Asia and the United States,” in *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

Part I of this book examines the reality of the international sex industry. It addresses prostitution from economic, legal, social, and psychological perspectives.

March 20

Rita Nakashima Brock and Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite. “Part I: A Systematic Analysis of Prostitution in Asia and the United States,” in *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

Spring Break March 24 - March 28**Week 8 – Rethinking the Sexual Exploitation of Women****April 1**

Rita Nakashima Brock and Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite. “Part II: Prostitution: A Liberation Response,” in *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

Part II of this book moves to lay the groundwork for responding to the problem of prostitution. The response begins by redefining the problem as one of the sexual exploitation of women and children. From there the authors think the problem in a new way and work to develop strategies for “change and solidarity.”

April 3

Rita Nakashima Brock and Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite. "Part II: Prostitution: A Liberation Response," in *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996.

Gnanadason, Aruna, ed. et. al. "Nepal: Devaki – Socio-Cultural Violence Against Women," by Meena Poudel, ch. 11 in *Women, Violence and Nonviolent Change*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996. (library reserve)

Week 9 – Economic and Military Violence

April 8

Mary John Mananzan, et. al. ed. "Economic Violence against Minority Women in the USA," by Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, ch. 8 and "Economic Violence in Latin American Perspective" by Maria Pilar Aquino, ch. 9 in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 89–108.

This section of the book examines how poverty and militarism can both become forces of violence in women's lives.

April 10

Mary John Mananzan, et. al. ed. "Militarism: A Thrust towards Globalization," by Marlene Perera, ch. 10 and "Militarism in North American Perspective" by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, ch. 11 in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 109-125.

Gnanadason, Aruna, ed. et. al. "United Kingdom: Women and Nonviolence – A Greenham Approach," by Di McDonald, ch. 15 in *Women, Violence and Nonviolent Change*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996. (library reserve)

Week 10 – Cultural Violence

April 15

Mary John Mananzan, et. al. ed. "Cultural Violence against Women in Latin America," by Elsa Tamez, ch. 1 and "Spirituality, Struggle, and Cultural Violence," by Letty M. Russell, ch. 2 in *Women Resisting Violence: Spirituality for Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996, p. 11-26. This section of the book looks at the ways in which cultural violence is manifested in the lives of women, particularly in the two-thirds world.

April 17

R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash, eds. "Violence Embodied? Circumcision, Gender Politics, and Cultural Aesthetics," ch. 4 and "Violence Against Women in Societies Under Stress," ch. 5 in *Rethinking Violence Against Women*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998, p. 77-140. (coursepack)

Week 11 – Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics

April 22

Traci West. Part 3 in *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics*. New York: New York University Press, 1999, p. 91-147

The second half of this book focuses on making sense of violence within the black community and illustrating how black women have and continue to resist violence in their lives.

April 24

Traci West. Part 4 in *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics*. New York: New York University Press, 1999, p. 151 – 207.

Week 12 – Transformative Social Justice

April 29

R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash. Chs. 4, 5, and 6 in *Women, Violence and Social Change*. London: Routledge, 1992, p. 99-212. (coursepack)

These chapters examine the justice system and public policy avenues for working toward social change in the area of violence against women.

May 1

R. Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash. Chs. 8 and 9 in *Women, Violence and Social Change*. London: Routledge, 1992, p. 251-298. (coursepack)

Gnanadason, Aruna, ed. et. al. “The Netherlands: Nonviolence and Social Defence,” by Shelley Anderson, ch. 12 in *Women, Violence and Nonviolent Change*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996. (library reserve)

Weeks 13 & 14 – Violence, Redemptive Suffering & the Search for What Saves Us

May 6

Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001, Part I, p. 15 – 85.

May 8

Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001, Part II, p. 89-161.

May 13

Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001, Part III, p. 165-247.

