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CH 605 Women in Methodism

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PURPOSE/DESCRIPTION

This seminar is a collaborative examination of the stories of women in Methodism, including attention to the biographical, theological, and historical dynamics of their various Christian vocations. Beginning with Susanna Wesley and concluding with Mercy Amba Oduyoye, the women included in this study will represent Methodist origins in Britain and subsequent expansion in America, in particular, and around the world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able:

1. To articulate a panoramic view of the role and influence of women in the history of Methodism;
2. To demonstrate an appreciation for the contributions of women to the ongoing life of the Christian community;
3. To show sensitivity to misogynist attitudes in Methodist communities that have created barriers to the full ministry of women in the life of the church;
4. To demonstrate mastery of specific women in Methodist history who can function as mentors for both spiritual growth and professional development today;
5. To translate the discoveries of the course into practical forms/actions that will shape or inform contemporary ministry and promote the place of women in the church.

SCHEDULE/OUTLINE

Tue, Feb 18 The Legacy of Women in the History of the Church

Tue, Feb 25 Susanna Wesley: Proto-Methodist Pattern

Background Reading for Today:
Chilcote, *Wesley and Women*, Introduction
Wallace, “Susanna Wesley’s Spirituality”

Tue, Mar 04 Autobiographical Portraits of Love in Action

Background Reading for Today:
Chilcote, *Her Own Story*
Tue, Mar 11  The Women Preachers of Early Methodism: A Window on a Movement

   Background Reading for Today:
   Chilcote, *She Offered Them Christ*

Tue, Mar 18  The Defense of Women’s Ministry

Tue, Mar 25  Early Methodist Women’s Writings (Mary Bosanquet Fletcher)

   Background Reading for Today:
   Chilcote, *The Writings of Mary Fletcher* manuscript

Tue, Apr 01  The Spirituality of Early Methodist Women

   Background Reading for Today:
   Chilcote, *The Spirituality of Early Methodist Women* manuscript

Tue, Apr 15  Women in American Methodism (19th Century)
   “A Lost History” - Video
   Two Presentations (Suggestions: Catherine Livingston Garrettson, Jarena Lee)

   Background Reading for the Remainder of the Course:
   Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*
   Keller, *Spirituality & Social Responsibility*

Tue, Apr 22  Women in American Methodism (19th Century)
   Three Presentations (Suggestions: Phoebe Palmer, Anna Howard Shaw)

Tue, Apr 29  Women in American Methodism (20th Century)
   Three Presentations (Suggestions: Frances Willard, Georgia Harkness)

Tue, May 06  Women in American Methodism (20th Century)
   Three Presentations (Suggestions: Mary McLeod Bethune)

Tue, May 13  Global Methodist Women
   Three Presentations (Suggestions: Elsa Tamez, Mercy Amba Oduyoye)

Tue, May 20  Closing Eucharist

RESOURCES

**Required Texts**

- Paul Chilcote, *Her Own Story*
- Paul Chilcote, *She Offered Them Christ*
- Jean Miller Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*
- Rosemary Skinner Keller, *Spirituality & Social Responsibility*

**Selections from:**

- Paul Chilcote, *The Spirituality of Early Methodist Women* manuscript
- Paul Chilcote, *The Writings of Mary Fletcher* manuscript
Recommended Texts (In no particular order)
Multiple manuscript materials in Prof. Chilcote’s library
Ruth Bordin, *Frances Willard: A Biography*
W. L. Doughty, *The Prayers of Susanna Wesley*
Georgia Harkness, *Understanding the Christian Faith*
Rackman Holt, *Mary McLeod Bethune: A Biography*
Sue E. Houchins, *Spiritual Narratives*
Rosemary S. Keller, *Georgia Harkness*
John Newton, *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition*
Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing*
Phoebe Palmer, *Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings*
Anna H. Shaw, *The Story of a Pioneer*
Elsa Tamez, *The Amnesty of Grace*
Charles Wallace, Jr., *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*
See also appended bibliographical materials

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. General Class Participation

   Your lively and informed participation in all class activities is valuable for you and contributes to the edification of all. Active involvement in class will be taken into account in determining final grades, both in terms of presence and engagement. In order to be disciplined in the reading of the necessary materials for the class, each student is required to submit a “reading journal” in which they indicate they have read the three required texts for the course and the assigned materials, noting the date and time of reading. While ungraded, no student will receive credit for the course without having completed this assignment. The reading journal is due on or before May 20. Notice of advanced reading prior to the beginning of the course will be distributed at least one month prior to the first day of class.

2. Written Assignments (60%)

   A) Chilcote Reflection Paper (10%)
   You are required to write a one page reflection paper on any one chapter in the Chilcote, *She Offered Them Christ* text, due on March 11. The purpose of this paper is for you to indicate your mastery of the main insights or concerns of the chapter and to draft one or two pertinent questions for discussion related to the material.

   B) Two Reflective Praxis Plans (20%)
   You are required to write two one page reflective praxis plans, one on Chilcote, *Her Own Story* (due March 4), and one on either the assigned material from Chilcote, *The Spirituality of Early Methodist Women* manuscript (due April 1) or Chilcote, *The Writings of Mary Fletcher* manuscript (due March 25). In these papers you are to identify a central characteristic or axial theme in the autobiographical or theological material presented that you wish to exemplify in your own life. Then discuss in concrete, practical terms how you hope to accomplish this. Each plan is valued at 10% of your grade.
C) Book Report (30%)  
You are required to prepare a **three page** book report on any book related to one of the Methodist women studied in the seminar and approved by the instructor. Guidelines will be provided for this exercise.

3. **Seminar Projects/Presentations (40%)**

All students are required to make a **30 minute biographical presentation** in class on a Methodist woman of their own choosing, in consultation with the instructor. The schedule for these presentations will be finalized on the first day of class. Exactly how students use this time is at their own discretion. Video materials may be used, active learning methods may be employed, first person dramatizations are welcome. The working assumption is that this presentation will be based upon at least one substantial [auto]biographical work related to the subject to be studied. The presentation should also include a “roughed out” 10-12 page paper (not necessarily to be read as the presentation!!), which also contains a **one page** summary handout related to the figure that is being introduced to the seminar and an **annotated bibliography** of resources related to the study of this figure, which may also include works published by this person.

N.B. **RESEARCH OPTION.** United Methodist students are encouraged to do original research on a Methodist woman for potential submission of papers for awards offered through the General Commission on Archives and History. Those exercising this option will be required to complete assignments 1 and 2 A & B above, but not 2C or 3. In other words, 30% of the final grade will be based on the Reflection Paper and Praxis Plans, while the balance of 70% will be awarded for the final research paper of **not more than 20 pages** in length (typed and double-spaced). These students will also be required to make a brief presentation in class in order to share their research plan with fellow students. The final paper is due **on or before May 22.**

**Women in Methodism**

*have long expressed their commitment*  
*to Christ,*  
*and to their sisters and brothers,*  
*through their engagement with the needs of the world*  
*and the life of the Spirit.*  
*The witness of these women*  
*calls the church to accountability*  
*and renewed commitment to discipleship*  
*in the life of the world today.*