

“The theology of the body, which is linked from the beginning with the creation of man in the image of God, becomes in some way also a...theology of masculinity and femininity...”

*St. John Paul II,
Theology of the Body Catechesis, 9:5.*

COURSE SYLLABUS

GENDER IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

Instructor: Jennifer E. Morel, STD
E-mail : jemorelstd@gmail.com

Semester: Fall 2024

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to be a man or a woman? Is my gender imposed on me, or is it something that I can create? What role does culture play in the understanding and exercise of gender? Despite Christianity’s early and radical engagement with “the second sex,” theological responses to contemporary questions on sex and gender are often lacking in scholarly rigor or drawing upon outdated Scriptural exegesis. Hence, Christians are faced with either embracing gender fluidity or creating borders between the sexes by means of stereotypical gender roles, thus contributing to cultural confusion. This course presents a “a third way,” by utilizing St. John Paul’s II methodology for Scriptural exegesis regarding sex and gender; by drawing upon resources already in the Tradition, present within the various cultures of the universal Church; and by encouraging students to critically think further about how sex and gender can be fruitfully lived and understood within our contemporary context.

II. CLASS CONTRIBUTIONS

Video Presentation: Students will be assigned a question dealing with sex and gender for which they must give a presentation to a certain audience, e.g., a local TV journalist, a group of clergy, a diocesan newspaper. This presentation, to be submitted as a video, must be 3-4 minutes long and highlight the Church’s Tradition and teaching in a precise, positive, enthusiastic way that presents this teaching as a call to holiness.

III. PRE-CLASS READING ASSIGNMENTS

Before each class, students will read and study the assigned texts.

IV. COURSE CALENDAR: 12 CLASSES: 24 HOURS

- 17 October: **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**
What are sex and gender?
 - *Ancient Greece*: The Beginning of the Debate
 - *Jesus Christ*: A Radical Novelty

- 24 October: **A THEOLOGY OF MASCULINITY:**
Reading: Ibarra, Diana, “¿Es Aristóteles al ‘sexo’ lo que Platón al ‘género’?” in *Devenires* XIII, 24 (2011): 108-127.
What can we learn from Scripture?
 - *Matthew 22:23-32*: Resurrected as Men and Women
 - *Genesis 1:26-28 & Genesis 2:5-24*: Created as Male and Female

- 31 October: **A THEOLOGY OF FEMININITY**
Reading: St. John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988), 8, 10-16, 23-25.
What can we learn from Scripture?
 - *Matthew 22:23-32*: Resurrected as Men and Women
 - *Genesis 1:26-28 & Genesis 2:5-24*: Created as Male and Female

- 7 November: **THE POSSIBILITY OF MISOGYNISTIC AND MISANDRIST PASSAGES:**
What can we learn from Scripture?
 - *Genesis 3:14-19*: A Call to Love
 - *Ephesians 5:21-33*: Mutual Subjection
 - *1 Corinthians 11:2-16*: The Liturgy

- 14 November: **FEMINISM AND MASCULINISM THROUGHOUT THE AGES:**
Reading: Pernoud, Régine, *Those Terrible Middle Ages: Debunking the Myths* (Ignatius, 2020).
What can we learn from Tradition?
 - *Early Church-Middle Ages*: Flourishing of Women and Men
 - *Dante (Italy)*: Masculine Receptivity
 - *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Mexico)*: Feminism and Misogyny
 - *Indian Saints (India)*: Gender in Pluriculturalism

- 21 November: **GENDER IN OTHER RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS**
What do we share and what don't we share with other believers?
 - Judaism
 - Islam
 - Hinduism

- 28 November: **CONTEMPORARY FEMINISM:**
Reading: Judith Butler, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire,” in *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 2006), 1-46.
How have we arrived at our contemporary situation?
 - *Enlightenment:* The Return to Greece
 - *Waves of Feminism:* The contemporary response to the Enlightenment

- 5 December: **GENDER IDEOLOGY:**
How can we address current trends and concerns?
 - *Gender Ideology:* Meeting the Protagonists

- 12 December: **COMMUNICATION ON GENDER**
Reading: Mark A. Yarhouse, “Gender Identity, Gender Dysphoria and Appreciating Complexity,” in *Understanding gender dysphoria: navigating transgender issues in a changing culture* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2015), 13-28.
How can we responds to concerns within and outside of the Church?
 - *Current concerns:* Meeting science, parents, and the de-trans movement

- 9 January: **COMMUNICATION ON GENDER II**
How can we responds to concerns within and outside of the Church?
 - *Current concerns:* Meeting science, parents, and the de-trans movement

- 16 January: **VIDEO PRESENTATIONS**

V. HELPFUL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Prudence, “Integral Sex Complementarity and the Theology of Communion,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 17.4 (Winter 1990): 523-544.
- Allen, Prudence, *The Concept of Woman, Volume I: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 BC – AD 1250* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1985); *Volume II: The Early Humanist Reformation, 1250-1500* (2002); and *Vol III: The Search for Communion of Persons, 1500-2015* (2016).
- Benedict XVI, « *In the Beginning* » (Eerdmans, 1995).
- Brancatisano, Marta, *Considerazioni sull’Antropologia Duale* (Roma : EDUSC, 2015).
- Browder, Sue Ellen, *Subverted. How I Helped the Sexual Revolution Hijack the Women’s Movement* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015).
- *de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1969).
- *Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 2006).
- *Butler, Judith, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” in *Performing Feminisms. Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, Sue-Ellen Case (ed.), (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 270-282.

- Colapinto, John, *As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised As a Girl* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2000).
- Ekeocha, Obianuju, *Target Africa. Ideological Neocolonialism in the Twenty-First Century* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018).
- *Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1 : An Introduction* (Vintage Reissue, 1990).
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- Freedman, Estelle B., *No Turning Back. The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002).
- Grabowski, John, *Unraveling Gender: The Battle Over Sexual Difference* (Tan Books, 2022).
- Heyer, Walt, *Trans Life Survivors* (Walt Heyer, 2018).
- Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias* (Paulist Press, 1990).
- John Paul II, *Man and Women He Created Them* (Pauline Books and Media, 2006).
- John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 1988.
- Marcel, Gabriel, "The Creative Vow as Essence of Fatherhood," in *Homo Viator – Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope* (New York : Harper, 1962).
- Martin, Francis, *The Feminist Question. Feminist Theology in the Light of Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994).
- Marion, Jean-Luc, "La ragione del dono," *Studia Patavina*, LV/1, 2008.
- Mayer, Lawrence S., and Paul R. McHugh, "Sexuality and Gender. Findings from the Biological, Psychological, and Social Sciences," *The New Atlantis* Special Report no. 50 (Fall 2016).
- Miller, Jennifer E., "Human Development: Work and Working Mothers," in *Human Development in Business. Values and Humanistic Management in the Encyclical Caritas in Veritate*, Domènec Melé and Claus Dierksmeier (eds.) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 237-253.
- Morel, Jennifer E. (ed.), *Gender in the Catholic Tradition Youth Study Guide* (Bangalore: ATC Publishers, 2021).
- Newman, Barbara, "Divine Power Made Perfect in Weakness," in *Medieval Religious Women, Volume Two, Peaceweavers*, Lillian Thomas Shank and John A. Nichols (eds.) (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications Inc., 1987), 103-122.
- Savage, Deborah, "The Genius of Man," in *Promise and Challenge. Catholic Women Reflect on Feminism, Complementarity, and the Church*, Mary Rice Hasson (ed.), (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2015), 129-153.
- Schumacher, Michele, *A Trinitarian Anthropology: Adrienne von Speyr & Hans Urs von Balthasar in Dialogue with Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014).
- Sen, Amartya, "More than 100 Million Women Are Missing," *The New York Review of Books* 37.20 (December 20, 1990).
- Shrier, Abigail, *Irreversible Damage. The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2020).
- Trueman, Carl R., *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self. Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2020).
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Ecclesial Documents:

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https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20190202_maschio-e-femmina_en.pdf
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World* (31 May 2004) :
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_en.html
- St. John Paul II, *Letter to Women* (29 June 1995) : https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii LET_29061995_women.html
- St. John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (15 August 1988):
https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_APL_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html
- St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Custos* (15 August 1989): https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_EXH_15081989_redemptoris-custos.html
- St. Paul VI, « Message to Women. Closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council » (8 December 1965) : https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_SPE_19651208_epilogo-concilio-donne.html
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, « Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body » (20 March 2023) :
<https://www.usccb.org/resources/Doctrinal%20Note%202023-03-20.pdf>

Theology, Philosophy, and the Church:

- Allen, Sr. Prudence, “Man-Woman Complementarity: The Catholic Inspiration,” in *Logos* 9:3 (Summer 2006): 87-108:
<http://www.laici.va/content/dam/laici/documenti/donna/filosofia/english/man-woman-complementary-the-catholic-inspiration.pdf>
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- Morel, Jennifer E., “Rediscovering our Feminist Roots: Feminism in the Catholic Tradition,” International Institute of Culture and Gender Studies Blog (January 20, 2021):
<https://www.cultureandgender.com/blog/rediscovering-our-feminist-roots>
- Prof. Morel’s Redeeming Gender sito internet: <https://www.redeeminggender.com/>
- « Obispo de Cádiz : denegación de un padrino de bautismo a un transexual, » en *Revista Ecclesia* (1 septembre 2015) : <https://www.revistaecclesia.com/obispo-de-cadiz-denegacion-de-un-padrino-de-bautismo-a-un-transexual/>
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Society for Evidence Based Gender Medicine: <https://segm.org/>

Yarhouse, Mark and Julia Sadusky, *Emerging Gender Identities. Understanding the Diverse Experiences of Today's Youth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BrazosPress, 2020).

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Dr. Yarhouse's work can also be found at the Sexual and Gender Identity Institute:

<https://www.wheaton.edu/academics/school-of-psychology-counseling-and-family-therapy/sexual-and-gender-identity-institute/resources/>

Popular websites and works on transitioning/detransitioning:

Daisy Chadra, "I'm detransitioning. (FTMTF),"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_KD46_Ophg

Daisy Chadra, "Being in a Relationship with Someone Detransitioning,"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WAWsOGPII8>

Heyer, Walt. Website that recounts stories and research of those who regret their transitions:

<https://sexchangeregret.com/>

Partners for Ethical Care. Resources and stories to aid in stopping the non-ethical treatment of children: <https://www.partnersforethicalcare.com/>

Person and Identity Project. Formation, resources, and pastoral orientation on the themes of faith, of 'gender,' and of sexual identity: <https://personandidentity.com/>

Post-Trans. Stories of female detransitioners: <https://post-trans.com/>

*Reilly-Cooper, Rebecca, "Sex and Gender. A Beginner's Guide.":

<https://sexandgenderintro.com/>

4th wave now. A community of people who question the medicalization of gender atypical youth: <https://4thwavenow.com/>

VI. COMMUNICATION

Whenever there is email communication between participants and the professor, the professor will respond to participant e-mails within forty-eight hours. Before sending an e-mail, please consult the syllabus.