

Encountering Our Women Saints

2022 - 2023

Wednesdays, 4:00-4:30pm

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I. Rationale:

How many female Orthodox Saints can you name? Do you know their stories? Women's stories tend to be different from the lives of male Saints, as they aren't priests or bishops or famous theologians. We'll take some time to get to know a different woman Saint every week, exploring her story and seeing intersections with our own lives.

II. Course Aims and Outcomes:

A. Aims

This course aims to acquaint students with the lives of various female Saints, both impacting their own personal spiritual journeys and filling in some information on the various periods of church history.

B. Specific Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- Be familiar with the lives of several female Saints.
- Be able to talk about the ways in which these historical stories can influence their own lives today.
- Have produced several short reflections on these Saints.

III. Format and Procedures:

Students will be provided with a short (usually 500-1000 word) reading on the life of a specific woman Saint, followed by questions or prompts for reflection.

Students are expected to read the text, and to type up a short reflection (3-10 sentences) from the prompt. These will be turned in electronically by the beginning of class that week, Wednesday at 4pm.

The class will discuss the week's reading, and all students are expected to participate in the conversation. The instructor will call on them by name if needed to encourage participation.

Students are expected to:

- Be ready to begin promptly at 4pm
- Turn in weekly written reflections before class begins
- Participate in class discussion
 - Each student should speak up at least once per discussion
 - Students should always show respect for others and their ideas, refraining from outbursts, interruptions, insults and the like.

IV. My Assumptions:

Every one of us is a unique human being, made in the image of God. He has made us all different, with a unique combination of interests and strengths, circumstances and struggles. Likewise, our great cloud of witnesses, the Saints, are each unique, and one can find every sort of person among them. I hope to introduce students to new Saints they've never met, as well as fleshing out and bringing to life those Saints whose names they may have already heard but whose stories they did not fully know. In particular, I hope to offer a diversity of Saints, with different backgrounds, lifestyles, circumstances and strengths, to illustrate the fascinating diversity of God's Saints.

V. Course Requirements:

1. Prerequisites: None.
2. Class attendance and participation policy: Students are expected to read the material before class, and to arrive ready to begin discussion at 4pm. All students are expected to participate at least once in every class period.
3. Course readings:
 - (a) Required text(s): to be provided in PDF format by instructor

VI. Expectations for Parents:

- Set aside a calm, quiet, distraction-free space for your child(ren) to work every day.
- Ensure virtual learning equipment is available and charged.
- Establish routines and expectations and a basic schedule for completing classwork.
- Help students 'own' their learning.
- Check Edmodo for communications from teachers and help students print off resources that are provided.
- Stay abreast of teacher feedback in the form of grades or other messages.

- Communicate with teachers regularly via email or Edmodo regarding any questions or issues that arise.
- If your child is having trouble completing work, email teachers to schedule a time for an online meeting.

VII. Grading Procedures:

Grades will be weighted on the following scale:

- 4 - Exceeds expectations
- 3 - Meets expectations
- 2 - Below expectations
- 1 - Significantly below expectations

Evaluations will be based on:

- Participation in classroom discussion, with emphasis on quality over quantity
- Completion of written assignments
- Personal improvement

Late reflection assignments will be accepted for up to 3 days, and up to 7 days following any excused absence.

VIII. Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.

You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in the readings and in class discussion with other students. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve one student having possession of a copy of all or part of work done by someone else, in any form (e.g. email, Word doc, Box file, Google sheet, or a hard copy). Assignments that have been previously submitted in another course may not be submitted for this course.

Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

IX. Tentative Course Schedule

This schedule may change to accommodate guest presenters and/or student needs. All readings will be found in our class PDF text, and the only assignments are to write a short weekly reflection based on the prompt at the end of the reading.

The course will be divided into the following Units:

1. Orientation & Introduction
2. Our First Example: *The Life of Mary, the Most Holy Theotokos*
3. Those Who Refuse Marriage
(*St. Justina, St. Marina, St. Barbara, St. Euphrosyne, Marina the Monk*)
5. Equal-to-the-Apostles
(*St. Mary Magdalene, St. Photini, St. Nino, St. Helena*)
6. The Empress
(*Empress Theodora, Empress Pulcheria, Empress Irene*)
7. "Women's Work"
(*Sts. Mary and Martha, The Holy Myrrhbearers, Mother Maria of Paris*)
8. Ascetics
(*St. Thecla, the Desert Mothers*)
9. Fools-for-Christ
(*St. Xenia of Petersburg, St. Isidora, St. Pelagia of Diveyevo*)
10. Conclusion

The Saints listed for each unit are examples of the types of Saints we'll study; the list is subject to change and guaranteed to grow.