

9.

Pioneering gender awareness in the academe

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Title of practice or experience

St Scholastica's College Institute of Women's Studies: Pioneering gender awareness in the academe

1.2 Category of practice or experience and brief description

The integration of women's studies in the course offerings in the academe is now a common initiative of educational institutions. In the Philippines, the pioneer in this respect has been the St. Scholastica's College Institute of Women's Studies. This effort would have come to naught, however, if not for the vision of the College President and concurrently the Institute's Director, Sister Mary John Mananzan. Nursia, the home of the Institute, has come to mean home to the many scholars of the courses offered by the Institute, notably its Intercultural Course on Women and Society.

The establishment of the Institute was inspired by the growing women's movement in the Philippines in the **80s**. The personal involvement of Sister Mary John in the movement at the very start showed her the need to mainstream women's studies in the academe as she saw that this sector was lagging behind in gender-awareness efforts. Through a thoroughly participative process that lasted for almost four years, the Institute was established in 1988. Its main programs are:

- (a) Seminar and Training Program
- (b) Research and Publications Program
- (c) Resource Center Development Program
- (d) Radio Program
- (e) Women, Ecology and Wholeness Farm

One of its direct contributions to women's empowerment in Asia and the Pacific is the scholarships it provides women from these regions to undertake

the three-month Intercultural Course on Women and Society.

At the outset, the Institute ventured into publishing because of its realization that there is a dearth of material on women by Filipinos and on women by women. Its resource center has now become a haven for students, especially in Metro Manila, who want to study women's issues.

1.3 Name of person or institution responsible for the practice or experience

St. Scholastica's College Institute of Women's Studies

1.4 Name and position of key or relevant persons or officials involved

Sr. Mary John Mananzan, President, St. Scholastica's College and Director, Institute of Women's Studies

1.5 Details of institution

- (a) Address: Institute of Women's Studies, 931 Estrada Street, Malate Manila, Philippines
- (b) Telephone: ++ (63) (2) 522 3551
- (c) E-Mail: nursia@snap.portalinc.com

1.6 Name of person and/or institution conducting the research

Ms Victoria T. Corpuz, Executive Director, Tebtebba Foundation, Inc. (Indigenous Peoples' International Center for Policy Research and Education)

1.7 Details of research person/institution

- (a) Address: Rm. 3B Agpaoa Compound, 111 Upper General Luna Road, 2600 Baguio City, Philippines
- (b) Telephone: ++ (63) (74) 444 7703
- (c) Fax: ++ (63) (74) 443 9459
- (d) E-Mail: tebtebba@skyinet.net

2. THE PROBLEM OR SITUATION BEING ADDRESSED BY THE PRACTICE/INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCE

The increasingly vigorous people's movement in the Philippines in the 70s saw the effort of women activists to find their space in the movement.

MAKIBAKA (Malayang Kilusan ng Kababaihang Makabayan) was founded in 1970. Because of the declaration of Martial Law in 1972, it went underground, like other progressive organizations. As activists regained ground in the latter part of the decade, many women's organizations either emerged for the first time, like the SAMAKANA, Center for Women's Resources (CWR) and PILIPINA, or re-emerged, like KaBaPa. The Aquino assassination in 1983 spurred further the women's movement opposed to the Marcos regime and saw WOMB (Women for the Ouster of Marcos and Boycott), WATCH and others marching in the streets representing the women's voice.

Filipino women, especially those involved simultaneously in the movement opposed to the Marcos regime and in the broader people's movement for social transformation, were now looking for a Third World perspective on women's liberation.

The CWR took the initiative in 1984 to convene a consultation among women's organizations, women's desks of NGOs and women activists to discuss a common women's orientation in the Third World. An important resolution of that consultation was the founding of a nationwide federation of women's organizations which became known as GABRIELA.

Sr. Mary John Mananzan had been involved in the foundation of PILIPINA and Center for Women's Resources and eventually became the chairperson of GABRIELA. She was at the same time Dean of College of St. Scholastica's College. Since she had been conducting women's awareness seminars in the different organizations she was involved in, she felt that the academe was definitely lagging behind, including St. Scholastica's College which, ironically, is a women's college. She found it urgent that the 400 women that graduated annually from the college should be given the opportunity of a basic women's orientation.

In the first semester of 1985, she invited members of GABRIELA and PILIPINA, as well as some of the women faculty members of St. Scholastica's College, to a weekend seminar to create a syllabus for an Introductory Course for Women's Studies. After three days of enthusiastic and intensive discussion, the group came up with a syllabus and each one committed herself to study a topic she was assigned to lecture on. A dry run was conducted the following month where each lecturer presented her paper to the group for critique and suggestions.

In the second semester of 1985, a pilot class of juniors majoring in psychology was chosen. Since the lecturers wanted to listen to each other, each session had 18 teachers and 16 students! At the end of the semester an evaluation was made among the students and teachers. The evaluation was overwhelmingly positive although some recommendations were made regarding the content and methodology of the course.

According to a student, the content was not only a content course, but a perspective course, that is, it gave the students another perspective in looking at reality. Other students found the course needed an organizational component and this paved the way for a women's organization in campus called S-KAIBA.

Such a positive evaluation of the course eventually led to the decision to make it a requirement for graduation from St. Scholastica's College.

The course developed into a Women's Studies Program that later on became the Institute of Women's Studies, founded on the following goals:

- (a) to awaken a consciousness to and provide an understanding of the woman question through a strategy of formal (institutional) and non-institutional alternative education;
- (b) to engage in research and study on gender issues, and projects that uphold the cause of women; and
- (c) to conduct outreach programs that serve women outside the formal educational institution.

(Women's Studies in the Philippines: An Assessment of the Impact of WSAP in Promoting the Gender Perspective, Sylvia H. Guerrero, et al., UCWS UP and WSAP, Quezon City, 1996)

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE/INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCE AND ITS MAIN FEATURES

Designing/initiating the project

Organizational location

The success of the Introductory Course for Women's Studies launched the Women's Studies Program of the College Department of St. Scholastica's College. The College Department was the logical locus of the project because a certain maturity is essential for undertaking Women's Studies. Besides, the originator of the idea was the Dean of College. The Women's Studies Program was at first directly under this office. Since the methodology of the introductory course was mainly team teaching, faculty members were "borrowed" from the different departments, namely the Theology, Sociology and History Departments.

After two years, the Women's Studies Program offered a cognate course on Women's Studies. It consisted of more specific courses such as Women in Politics, Women in Literature, Gender Issues in Development, etc., and anyone who finished 18 units (six courses) was given a minor or cognate certificate in Women's Studies.

Interestingly, the first recipients of the cognate certificate were the initial lecturers of the pilot class. It should be noted that at this time there were no doctoral, masters or bachelor's programs in Women's Studies in the country, which proved to be a blessing in disguise, because the first teachers of Women's Studies had to be the women activists themselves. This is important because in many First World countries, there is a dichotomy and sometimes even conflict between the women academics in Women's Studies programs in universities and the women activists. In the Philippines, those who teach Women's Studies in schools also happen to be women activists directly involved in the women's movement.

When the Women's Studies Program started to branch out into outreach programs for women in the communities, it became necessary to create a separate entity. In 1988, the St. Scholastica's Institute of Women's Studies Foundation was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. In 1990, it obtained its own physical center, the Nursia building, and became administratively and financially autonomous, although as an institute, it still falls under the jurisdiction of the President of St. Scholastica's College, who is a member of its Board of Trustees.

Description of the courses

At present, the courses offered by the Institute may be classified into credit and non-credit courses. There is a common **pool** of resources for both programs and a cognate certificate is granted by the College to the participants of one particular program, the three-month Intercultural Women's Studies Course given by the Institute.

Credit courses

The credit courses are the following:

(a) Introduction to Women's Studies (3 units)

The Introductory Course for Women's Studies attempts to give the students a fairly comprehensive view of women's issues. It evokes in the students an interest in gender issues in the context of the socioeconomic, political and cultural conditions of Philippine society. It uses a combination of creative and participative methodologies which includes lectures, workshops, exposure programs, research papers, case studies, role-playing, film **book**, article analysis, etc.

(b) Cognate Course on Women's Studies (18 units) (Please refer to Annex A for details of subjects)

This consists of four core subjects and two electives that are credited three units each. A Certificate in Women's Studies is awarded on completion of the course.

These are core subjects:

- (i) The Development of Women's Thoughts and Feminism
- (ii) Gender Issues in Development
- (iii) Women and Religion
- (iv) Current Issues on Women

Two electives are chosen from the following:

- (i) Women and Literature
- (ii) Women in Philippine History
- (iii) Women in the Arts
- (iv) Feminist Research
- (v) Women and Politics

(c) M.A. in Religious Studies, Major in Feminist Theology (Please refer to Annex B for description of subjects)

In consortium with the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies, the Institute of Women's Studies has launched a three-year MA program on Feminist Theology. Fourteen participants enrolled in this course would have graduated in 1996.

(d) M.A. in Humanities, Major in Women's Studies

This course was first offered in 1997. It requires 36 units of the academic subject, 200 practical hours, a written comprehensive and a thesis defense.

Non-credit courses

(a) Intercultural Course on Women and Society (International participants, 3 months) (Please refer to Annex C for description of subjects)

The Intercultural Course on Women and Society is a three-month study program that aims to assemble multicultural groups of women who will share ideas and experiences regarding the issues and concerns of women in their society. Fifteen to eighteen women from the Third World are given full or partial scholarships for airfare, board and lodging and tuition fees.

The course consists of the following modules:

- (i) Current Issues of Women in Different Countries
- (ii) Feminist Theories and Analysis of the Woman Question
- (iii) Gender Issues in Development
- (iv) Women and Religion
- (v) Women and Culture
- (vi) Feminist Education and Creative Pedagogy
- (vii) Feminist Research
- (viii) Violence Against Women and Feminist Counseling
- (ix) Women and Organizing
- (x) Feminist Agenda and Action Planning

(b) Trainers' Training

This one-month intensive course for facilitators of seminars on women offers content courses on the different aspects of Women's Studies as well as pedagogical and facilitative skills in imparting knowledge in the context of an alternative education for women. A minimum of fifteen Filipino trainers are given full scholarships which cover travel, tuition fees, and board and lodging. The modules are similar to the Intercultural Course's but are presented in a shorter form and are focused on the Philippine situation.

(c) Towards a Gender-Fair Education

This is a three-day course which caters especially for teachers and students to help them analyze sexism in education with regard to the system as a whole, structures, policies, educational materials, medium of instruction and practices. It also provides strategies for ensuring that education is gender-fair.

(d) Basic Women's Orientation

This is a two-and-a-half-day course for women in the basic sectors, such as women peasants, workers and urban poor. It is a conscientization course geared toward awakening the participants' awareness of their situation, understanding the socializing forces that form their consciousness and helping them to strive towards self- and mutual-empowerment.

The resource persons for the courses are drawn from among the faculty of the school, women activists and professionals, as well as representatives of women from the basic sectors. Team teaching is often employed. For longer courses such as the **three-month Intercultural Course** and the **one-month Trainers' Training**, a process facilitator coordinates the modules and sees to the continuity of the process. The seminar grid is usually prepared by the training coordinator and the Director of the Institute. Whenever feasible, the resource persons are invited to a preliminary meeting to show the flow of the course and how their particular modules fit into the logic of the program.

Curricular mainstreaming strategies

The focus on gender is actually the outcome of a process of social orientation which the College had been undergoing since 1975. At that time, the school was undergoing a re-orientation toward social awareness and social responsibility. Conscientization seminars were given to faculty, students, staff and administration. The curriculum was revised according to the newly formulated vision-mission.

Innovative methodologies were created and co- and extra-curricular activities were re-focused. In 1985, there was no strong opposition to the introduction of the gender issue since the whole academic community was already geared toward innovation and social transformation. It was simply necessary to show how this issue is a constitutive dimension of social transformation, since one cannot talk of total human liberation or social transformation if half of the population remains oppressed and discriminated against. Minor opposition from some individual faculty members was not a real obstacle to the project. Gender-sensitivity seminars were given to interested faculty members while the S-KAIBA provided the students opportunities for consciousness-raising as well as concrete actions in coordination with women's groups outside the school.

Obtaining institutional commitment and financial support

Initial institutional support

At the start, when the project was merely a Women's Studies Program, the item for the program was included in the budget of the College Department. The Dean of College negotiated with the President of the College to the effect that this item would remain in the budget for 10 years or until the Institute of Women's Studies could get its own funding, whichever came first. During this time, office space, facilities and office materials as well as equipment were borrowed from the school, even for outreach seminars.

Outside funding was obtained for outreach programs like the basic women's orientation for women peasants, urban poor and workers. The Inter-Institutional Consortium (IIC) to which St. Scholastica's College belonged also included in its budget gender-fair training seminars as well as women teachers' exposure programs for the five member schools.

Financial and administrative autonomy

After three years, the Institute obtained funding for some of its projects from a foreign funding agency based in the Philippines. As agreed upon, the item for Women's Studies in the budget of the College Department was removed.

In 1989, the Institute began its three-month Intercultural Course. This brought up the need for the Institute's own seminar house, because it was quite difficult to reserve seminar houses for three months every year. The President of the College made an agreement with the Director of the Institute of Women's Studies, who was simultaneously the Dean of College, that the school would provide for half of the funding of a seminar building if the Director could come up with the other half. At this time, the Director was sending out quarterly circular letters to friends of the Institute. One of these letters reached a funding agency in Austria. The head of this agency wrote to the Institute Director expressing interest in its projects and requested her to give the details of the building plan.

This funding agency eventually contributed half of the building cost for the construction of the home of the Institute of Women's Studies, Nursia, in December 1990. The building has offices and a library on the first story; a kitchen, dining room and conference room on the second story, and dormitories on the third story.

A representative of a funding agency in Germany came to visit the Institute in 1991, just at the time when the Intercultural Course was going on. He was quite impressed with the course and suggested to the Director of the Institute that a three-year comprehensive project proposal for the Institute be made. This was subsequently approved and at present, the Institute is in the last year of the second triennial subsidy provided by this agency.

Ensuring financial viability

The Director of the Institute is aware that although funding for projects can be sourced on a continuous basis, there is a possibility that funding for staff salaries may dry up. So, an endowment fund was created right from the foundation of the Institute where all unspecified donations to the Institute were placed and put in the care of a portfolio manager. The purpose of this endowment fund is to give a sense of security to the Institute staff that their salaries are assured. At present, just the interest earned on the fund is enough to provide for the salaries of the staff.

To ensure a healthy financial portfolio, the Institute has a diversified scheme. It undertakes short-term projects outside its comprehensive project proposal and funds are sourced elsewhere. Meanwhile, the Institute is also earning from the board and lodging fees that it receives for the duration of the courses as well as from the sale of its books. All these proceeds augment the endowment fund and will guarantee financial viability in the future, independent of funding agencies.

Current status of the Institute of Women's Studies

Current programs

The Institute of Women's Studies at present offers the following programs:

(a) Curricular Program

It consists of the credited courses: Introduction to Women's Studies and Course in Feminist Theology offered by the Institute in consortium with the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies. It also recently (1997) launched an M.A. in Humanities Major in Women's Studies.

(b) Seminar and Training Program

Provides for alternative education on a wide range of topics for women both locally and internationally. The main courses offered are the Intercultural Course on Women and Society, two five-week Trainers' Training in Feminism and Education Work with Women Courses, four short-term Gender-Fair Education Seminars, six Basic Women's Orientation for Grassroots Women, four short-term courses on various topics and special courses like Ecofeminism.

(c) Research and Publications Program

It provides information and materials on women's issues in the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific region through the publication of books, research, and other printed materials like references, literary works and critiques, and monographs on women and by women. It has also been a venue for feminist expression by being an alternative publishing house for women writers and artists. The Babaylan Women's Collective, set up in 1990 after a group of women writers and artists shared experiences on the difficulties of getting women's works published, serves as a resource and talent pool for women's writings. Undergraduate theses, masteral and doctoral dissertations, and joint research ventures with other women's organizations are also undertaken (**IWS Publications Brochure**). To date, it has published 17 books which are locally and internationally marketed, one of which won the National Book Award for 1992. It also publishes a semi-annual *Asia-Pacific Women's Studies Journal*, and has put out a packet of printed cards featuring Filipino feminist artists.

(d) Resource Center Development Program

The IWS Resource Center boasts of a wide collection of women's books, vertical files on women's issues, and audio-visual materials. It provides the public access to these resources. Its current special features are a collection of documents on women and Philippine history and its special collection on women and world religions.

(e) Center for Women's Wholeness – Women and Ecology Wholeness Farm

This new program aims at an integrated approach to women's spiritual corporeality. Its main features are monthly women's celebrations, alternative retreats for different groups of women, courses in Zen, yoga, Qi Gong and paneurythmic dance, lectures on spirituality, etc. Recently it acquired 1.2 hectares of land in Mendez, Cavite which has a seminar house and a bio-diverse farm featuring organic farming and alternative sources of energy: biogas, windmill and solar lighting. Its main activity is holding Women and Ecology seminars.

(f) Women's Radio Program – *Tinig ng Nursia*, Women's Studies on the air

A weekly one-hour program on Women's Studies is aired from 9am to 12pm every Sunday on DWSS-K-Love. It aims to reach women who cannot come to the Institute or to St. Scholastica's College. It follows a course syllabus and has four anchorpersons who take turns to host the program. Visitors are also invited for live interviews.

(g) Nursia Seminar House

It not only houses the staff of the Institute and accommodates the courses offered by the Institute but also serves as an accessible venue for seminars of other women's groups, consultations, meetings, symposia, panel discussions, book launchings and exhibits.

(h) IWS Scholarship Program

This is an outreach program for needy and deserving women students. It provides for tuition fees and, in some cases, living allowances for women who cannot otherwise afford to go to college. At present, the program is supporting 23 college students.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTITUTION RESPONSIBLE AND ITS ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

The Institute is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of 10 women, all well-respected in their fields of specialization. Its Director is Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB, who is also the President of St. Scholastica's College. The Institute maintains nine full-time staff members and a number of consultants.

It is a founding member of the Women's Studies Association of the Philippines (WSAP), "currently the only national network of teachers promoting the gender perspective in the Philippine education system" .

5. PROBLEMS OR OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED AND HOW THEY WERE OVERCOME

In the Institute's experience, there has not been any serious obstacle to the mainstreaming of Women's Studies. However, in another setting, obstacles would be very likely to occur. The main obstacle is the lack of gender sensitivity on the part of the administrators who are the decision-makers in any institution. It is good if ideas originate from below, but when one is working in an institution, unless one can convince the policy-makers and those who have the final say of the importance of Women's Studies, mainstreaming will be difficult.

Funding is, of course, important in order to have a rich, varied and significant program. However, this is not an insurmountable obstacle. Funding agencies are on the lookout for worthwhile projects and as long as one has creative projects in mind, and is committed to accurate reporting, this should not be a problem.

Another issue in mainstreaming is the question of whether to have an autonomous Women's Department or to develop the women's perspective for all the subjects. Sr. Mary John Mananzan always held the position that there is no need to choose between the two approaches. One should have a Women's Studies Program as well as develop the women's perspective in all the other subjects. The latter, of course, necessitates that the department heads be gender-sensitive and convinced of the necessity of developing the women's perspective in their respective subjects.

6. EFFECTS OF THE PRACTICE/INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCE

The experience of the Institute of Women's Studies has shown that the educational strategy is one of the most crucial and most indispensable aspects of the women's movement. Unless the majority of women become aware of their disadvantaged situation, unless they are empowered to assert their rights and to struggle together for societal change, no amount of legislation or affirmative action can bring about a lasting transformation.

The Institute's experience has also shown how consciousness-raising can bring about a great change in the lives of women and how these women can influence many others in turn. In its 10 years of existence, 4,000 students have graduated from the College Department who have experienced a change in consciousness. Some of these graduates have become mothers and hopefully are rearing and will rear their children in a non-sexist way. The Trainers' Training has about 150 graduates and the Intercultural Course about 90 gradu-

ates. These are women who are themselves involved in training, and their sharing (in a special reunion-evaluation conference held in 1994, for representatives of the first four batches of graduates) revealed the extensiveness of their reach, which encompassed not only the Philippines but other different countries of the Asia-Pacific region as well. For example, when Sr. Mary John Mananzan visited a graduate in Madras, India, she found out that the graduate had translated all the Institute's modules into Tamil. Moreover, the graduate introduced Sr. Mary John to the 20 women whom she had trained to give basic women's orientation in the villages of Madras.

7. SUITABILITY AND POSSIBILITY FOR UPSCALING

The Institute has embarked on an enrichment program. It submitted its Comprehensive Project Proposal for the three-year period 1996-1999 to continue with its main programs, namely the Center for Women's Wholeness and the radio program. It likewise submitted a proposal for another subsidized Course on MS in Feminist Theology which was scheduled to run from April 1997 to October 1998.

It has received funding for Women and Ecology seminars, seven of which were held in 1999 and six were planned for the year 2000. A project proposal for a twenty-day Woman and Ecology Seminar from Asian Women has been submitted to the Japan Foundation.

A new program was submitted at the request of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) which was a five-week Women's Studies and Exposure Cruise that was scheduled to run for three years from 1997-1999. From 1996-1999, the Institute hoped to develop another program that it has already initiated, namely Gender Issues for Men.

Upscaling may also be in terms of increasing enrolment, facilities and faculty. This can be done as long as resources are available. At the moment, the Institute is concentrating on program enrichment.

8. SIGNIFICANCE FOR (AND IMPACT ON) POLICY-MAKING

In the light of its experience, the Institute would like to offer the following suggestions for the development of Women and Gender Studies in Philippine schools:

- (a) Target top school officials, presidents and deans for gender-sensitivity seminars.

- (b) Initiate regular and systematic training of Women's Studies teachers.
- (c) Create a core group of committed faculty members in each educational institution that will pursue the mainstreaming of Women's Studies.
- (d) Produce interesting instructional materials for all levels: elementary, high school, college.
- (e) Create a high profile through national and regional (Asian) Women's Studies conferences.

9. POSSIBILITY AND SCOPE OF TRANSFERRING TO OTHER COMMUNITIES OR COUNTRIES

Replication of the program may be more feasible for those in the education sector who have a degree of influence in the formulation of the education programs and policies of institutions and governments. In the Philippines, a number of colleges and universities have developed their own gender or women's programs. The adaptation of the education modules at the grassroots level has been shown by the Madras women to be possible.

References

1. Guerrero, Sylvia H., *et al.*, (1996) *Women's Studies in the Philippines: An Assessment of the Impact of WSAP in Promoting the Gender Perspective*, UCWS UP and WSAP, Quezon City.
2. Institute of Women's Studies, *Intercultural Course on Women and Society* brochure.
3. Institute of Women's Studies, *The Institute of Women's Studies Publications* brochure.

ANNEX A**Description of course offerings in Certificate in Women's Studies*****Cognate Course on Women's Studies (18 units)***

This consists of four core subjects and two electives that are credited with three units each. A Certificate in Women's Studies is awarded on completion of the course.

The core subjects are the following:

(a) The Development of Women's Thoughts and Feminism

Historical development of the woman question and the women's movement (local and global). Discussion of sexism and patriarchy as well as the socializing forces that form women's consciousness.

(b) Gender Issues in Development

Women's role in different economic systems. Critique of development models. The effect of changing technology on women. Decision-making and appropriate technology from women's viewpoint.

(c) Women and Religion

Liberating and oppressive aspects of religious concepts, structures and practice, particularly in Christianity. Alternative agenda in the Church and feminist theology.

(d) Current Issues on Women

In-depth analysis of women's issues in the Philippines such as discrimination and inequality, violence against women, different forms of trafficking of women, as well as the specific sectoral problems of women workers, peasants, urban poor and professionals.

Two electives are chosen from the following:

(i) Women and Literature

Survey and analysis of the images of women as presented by prominent authors in literature.

(ii) Women in Philippine History

Role of women during the different periods of Philippine history starting from pre-colonial society.

(iii) Women in the Arts

Critique of the objectification and commodification of women in the arts and media, i.e., advertisements, pornographic movies, etc. Discussion of alternative gender-sensitive arts and media.

(iv) Feminist Research

Principles and methods of research from a feminist perspective.

(v) Women and Politics

Discussion of the involvement of women in politics, beginning from the efforts of the suffragettes to the participation of women in the legal and the underground struggles in the Philippines.

ANNEX B**Description of course offerings for Masters of Arts in Religious Studies, Major in Feminist Theology**

The curriculum for the MA in Religious Studies, Major in Feminist Theology includes the following subjects:

(a) PH 201 – Feminist Theories (3 units)

An analysis of women's reality. The origins of gender oppression as part of the overarching social system called patriarchy. The woman question seen from different theoretical standpoints: liberational, traditional Marxist, radical, socialist, Third World and ecological feminism.

(b) PH 205 – Women in Asian Religious/Philosophical Traditions (3 units)

An exploration into the role, status and image of women in Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism. An examination of contemporary efforts and movements to overcome the negative impact of these religious and cultural traditions on women.

(c) SC 201 – Biblical Research and Feminist Hermeneutics (3 units)

Mastery of the basic tools and methods of Biblical research from the feminist perspective. Basic overview of various methodologies of Biblical interpretation being employed today.

(d) SC 203 – Women in the Bible I (Old Testament) (3 units)

Rereading of familiar stories of women in the Old Testament to uncover aspects which reinforce women's inferior status in Church and society, and to discover hidden historical contributions of these women.

(e) TH 201 – Methods of Theological Research – Women Doing Theology (3 units)

Theological reflection based on women's reality and experience of oppression and discrimination. A survey and critique of major theological themes and their reformulation from the women's perspective.

V) TH 227 – Women in Church History (3 units)

Tracing patriarchal elements in the history of Western Christianity from the Patristic times to the present. A study of the forms of resistance in the lives of outstanding women in Church history.

(g) *TH 215 – Christology and Women (3 units)*

Overview of main Christological dogmas. Contemporary challenges to these dogmas arising from the women's movements, the impact of other world religions and the growing ecological consciousness in the Third World.

(h) *TH 21 – Feminist Ethics (3 units)*

Study of the ethical dilemmas facing Church and society in relation to women. Presentation of other solutions proposed by leading feminist ethicists. Discussion of their applicability to local contexts.

(i) *SC 203 – Women in the Bible II (New Testament)(3 units)*

Rereading of familiar stories of women in the New Testament to uncover aspects which reinforce women's inferior status in Church and society and to discover hidden historical contributions of these women.

(j) *TH 202 – Foundations of Religious Education (3 units)*

Study and critique of the prevailing theories and practice of religious education. Presentation of gender-fair religious pedagogy. Training in module-making, creative facilitation and alternative modes of communication of the Gospel.

(k) *TH 236 – Feminist Spirituality: Agenda for Renewal (3 units)*

Delineating the characteristics of the emerging feminist spirituality. Implications of this spirituality in the renewal of religious institutions of the Church and of society.

(l) *TH 299 – Thesis Presentation*

Each participant chooses a thesis topic when she enrolls for Methods of Biblical Research. She works on this under the guidance of a mentor of her choice approved by the dean. In this course, each participant presents and defends her thesis before a panel of faculty members and all the other students.

The course also includes a written comprehensive.

ANNEX C

Description of course offerings for Intercultural Course on Women and Society

The Intercultural Course consists of the following modules:

(a) Current Issues of Women in Different Countries

A presentation of the national political, economic and sociocultural situation as well as the women's conditions, initiatives and issues in the different countries where the participants come from.

(b) Feminist Theories

Theoretical analyses of the woman question and critiques of these. Includes an open discussion about female and male sexuality as related to the social, political and cultural dimensions of society.

(c) Gender Issues in Economic Development

A review of different economic models, the role of women in their societies' development efforts and a critique of prevailing development strategies and programs as they affect women. Also covers the attempts of women to participate in their countries' policy- and decision-making and in planning appropriate technology.

(d) Women and Religion

An analysis of the oppressive as well as liberating aspects of world religions concerning the woman question. Includes a survey of the agenda of renewal in Church structures, teachings and practices toward women's equality and empowerment.

(e) Women and Culture

A study of the different ways women are portrayed in the arts, literature and media, and how other cultural norms and traditions contribute to or counter the problem of women's oppression. Includes the impact of the dynamics of language on the women's situation.

f) Feminist Education and Creative Pedagogy

A critique of mainstream education philosophies and content, and a presentation of women's alternatives. Includes concepts of gender-fair education and feminist popular education, as well as the use of theater arts for creative facilitation.

(g) *Feminist Research*

A discussion on the principles and methods of research, with special attention given to the ethics of feminist research and to participatory or action research methods.

(h) *Violence Against Women and Feminist Counseling*

A discussion on the different types of violence experienced by women. Includes theories and myths surrounding violence against women to enhance participants' own counseling abilities and self-defense training.

(i) *Women and Organizing*

An examination of principles and methods of organizing women toward their empowerment. Includes lessons on more effective organizing and mobilization through the sharing of programs and campaigns of various women's groups and collectives.

(j) *Feminist Agenda and Action Planning*

The drafting of a feminist agenda and concrete plans by the participants based on lessons learnt from the previous input.