

SYLLABUS

RE520: ISSUES—PROPHETIC PIONEERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Fall 2006
Wednesdays
2:30-5:30 p.m.—Bishops Hall 304

Mary Elizabeth Moore
Sybrina Atwater
Jeremy Posadas

The purpose of this class is to explore religious education history, issues, and visions through life story, contextual analysis, and educational theories, practices, and cultural “products.” The subjects of the class are people who have pioneered in religious education within the past century, with particular attention to a group of three women who are still living and can tell us their stories. The subjects will include some educators who are widely known, and others who are known within their more particular circles of life and work. The purpose is to discover issues and visions that arise on the margins of religious education discourse and practice, as well as those that arise in the center of notoriety and influence. The *telos* of the course, taken as a whole, is to analyze the past for the sake of proposing the future.

The value of a person’s life work is difficult to discern, much less to evaluate or to become a source of wisdom, especially if we reflect upon that work from the limited perspectives of our own experience or the dominant religious and educational theories of the day. Oral history provides a way to listen to another closely, to analyze that person’s life and work in relation to a larger context, and to draw out insights for theory and practice. Oral history thus contributes to knowledge, for the complexities and nuances of a scholar’s life work are more adequately understood within the textures of that person’s life history, central values, and social-religious-intellectual contexts. These assumptions reveal why multi-dimensional research is critical to the study of religious texts, whether biblical texts or lives, events, and literary texts of history. Even so, the actual role of human lives in the making of history, and the role of oral history in the making of historical texts, is yet to be fully explored. As this work emerges, new insights will surely be brought to light. For example, some recent work suggests that oral history was a factor in the composition of early Christian history and gospel accounts of Jesus. One exemplar of that work, Samuel Byrskog, describes the early Christian informants as “living sources of the past,” and he attempts what he names as “autopsy as a means of inquiry into the past.”¹

To fulfill the aims of this course, the class will engage in exploration and experimentation. This will involve several kinds of research: reading biographies and works of selected pioneers, conducting oral histories, analyzing life stories and life work, and constructing new visions for religious education. The course, thus, includes the study of materials by and about historical figures in religious education, plus the analysis of videotapes and transcripts of oral histories. It also includes the study and implementation

¹ Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History—History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 48; cf. 48-91.

of oral history method—reading about the method, preparing for the logistical and ethical practice of oral history, conducting interviews, and analyzing the fruits of this oral history research for its illumination of the future of religious education.

Funding for conducting the oral histories is provided by the Oral History Project of Women in Theology and Ministry, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, through the generosity of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Religion and Theology. The rubric of the grant is: “Teaching through Oral History: Composing a Life—Women Changing the Church and Society.” Whereas we will not focus only on women in this course, the class’s three oral history interviews will be conducted with women. We will do this not only to meet the terms of the grant, but more importantly to discern wisdom as it emerges from those whose work is often less known and valued by the larger academic community. Both the course and the grant are attempts to uncover wisdom from sources and in ways that are not yet mainstream within theology and ministry studies.

Texts:

Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 1998, 1992.

Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds. *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Myles Horton, *The Long Haul: An Autobiography*, eds. Judith Kohl & Herbert R. Kohl. New York: Teachers College, 1998.

Elaine J. Lawless. *Holy Women, Wholly Women: Sharing Ministries through Life Stories and Reciprocal Ethnography*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1994.

Mary Elizabeth Moore, ed. *Women Pioneers: Book of Readings for RE 520 Prophetic Pioneers in Religious Education*, 2004.

Donald A. Ritchie. *Doing Oral History*. New York: Oxford University, 2003.

Diane Tickton Schuster. *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning: Adult Jewish Learning in Theory and Practice*. New York: UAHC, 2003.

Howard Thurman, *With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman*. Harcourt, 1981. (7 copies)

Alan Wieder. *Voices from Capetown Classrooms: Oral Histories of Teachers Who Fought Apartheid*, New York: Peter Lang, 1991.

Auxiliary Texts: (5 each)

Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*, transl. Patrick Clarke. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

Myles Horton and Paulo Freire. *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*, eds., Brenda Bell, John Gaventa, and John Peters. Philadelphia: Temple University, 1990.

Elaine J. Lawless. *Women Escaping Violence: Empowerment through Narrative*. Columbia: University of Missouri, 2001.

Responsibilities:

Students are asked to fulfill the following responsibilities as we proceed through this semester:

- (1) **Full reading and participation:** This is a class that expects much of the students, both for your own learning and for the learning of the entire community. Further, the expectations are high because the results of our work will be included in the archives of the Pitts Theology Library. The Oral History Project—funded in Phases Two and Three by The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion—is in three phases. Phase One involved gathering oral histories through presentations and interviews sponsored by the Women in Theology and Ministry Program, 2000-2002. The present Phase Two is “Teaching through Oral History: Composing a Life—Women Changing the Church and Society.” *You* are part of the learning process of this phase, as well as the collecting process. All of the interviews and materials gathered by our class will be gathered into archival form for Pitts Library. Archivists there will eventually catalogue these as part of the permanent collection. This means that your work in this class—reading and understanding texts and archival material, conducting oral history interviews, and analyzing the interviews and works of the interviewees—will be critical for your personal and communal learning, and also for posterity.

In addition to the oral histories themselves, all of the reading and special assignments of the class are intended to build toward maximal learning for all of us and toward the best possible oral histories that we can do in the framework of a single class. For this reason, please plan to talk with Mary Elizabeth Moore about missed classes, so that you can have an individual discussion of the readings and other assignments for that class.

- (2) **Portrait Paper:** The first paper—“*Portrait Paper*”—describes and analyzes the contribution of a prophetic pioneer in religious education. This person may be one whose biography and work we have read or another person whom you identify. This paper will be 5-7 pages in length (typed, double-spaced), and shall

include: (1) a description of the person's life, context, and religious education work; (2) a critical evaluation of the person's contributions; and (3) your own projections for religious education based on the person's influence. Your research may include library research (works by and about the subject of your study); interviewing if possible and appropriate, and review of any oral histories that you are able to access on-line; in the Center for Ecumenical and Multicultural Education (CEME, located in Religious Education Office, 310 Bishops Hall), or in local libraries. The CEME has videotaped interviews with Olivia Pearl Stokes (work focused on building global and ecumenical bridges); Iris Cully (work focused on the Bible, children, and spirituality); Randolph Crump Miller (influenced by philosophy of religion and process theology); Campbell Wyckoff (particularly influential on curriculum theory); Paul Irwin (focused on youth, youth ministry, and the arts); and others. Your portrait paper is due on **October 5**, on which day we will discuss the papers in class. Please **bring 5 copies** with you—one for each member of a small group, and one for the teachers.

- (3) **Study of, preparation for, and implementation of oral histories:** You will be asked to study the methods of oral history, and to plan and implement the details of the class's oral history collections. Details of this responsibility are outlined in the class schedule. The preparation will involve reading, group preparation, a group methods paper (described below in # 4), and your being certified for human sciences research by the Institutional Review Board. The certification is due on **October 12** (explained in the schedule for that day).
- (4) **Methods Paper:** The second paper—“*Methods Paper*”—is done with your planning team, and it outlines the purposes, procedures, and background that your team has developed for the oral history of a religious educator. This educator will be pre-selected by the instructor, but the groundwork and preparation for the interview will be conducted by your team. The paper (7-8 typed, double-spaced pages) needs to include: (1) **introduction to the life** of your interviewee; (2) **introduction to her life work**; (3) **description of the purposes** of your oral history study of this person; and (4) **description of the procedures** you will follow and the questions you will ask. You will have some time to work on this paper in class on October 19 and 26 and November 2; however, you will need to organize with your group for people to work outside of class as well. [Note: You may organize your outside work as individual assignments and/or total group meetings.] **The methods paper is due in penultimate draft on November 2, and in final draft on November 9.**

Note regarding the Methods Paper: Some of the interview protocol is prescribed by the Wabash grant. You will need to build upon these givens and make selections and modifications as you see fit for your particular purposes. The semi-structured interview is defined in the grant protocol as quoted below. Please remember, however, that the Oral History team will conduct further interviews with the three women in other venues. This means that you need not cover all of the protocol topics in your class interviews. The protocol reads as follows:

Semi-structured Interviews will begin with asking the women one question, “Tell us some of the most significant moments in your life and work.” Particular questions will include:

- What are some of the most significant events in your life journey? Why have these particular events been significant?
- Who have been some of the most significant people, communities, and places in your life? Why?
- How would you describe your ministry and changes in your ministry over time? How has your ministry been shaped by your life experiences and distinctive personality? How has your ministry, in turn, shaped you as a person?
- As you look back on your life thus far, what do you see as the most important contributions you have made? Why do these stand out as important?
- What crises have you faced in your personal life and ministry?
- What crises have your churches and other communities faced?
- What have been major moments of struggle for you? These might include moments of losing faith, disrupted relationships, self-doubts or public upheaval.

(5) **Final paper:** Write a final paper *focused on your visions for religious education, as influenced by the prophetic pioneers we have studied* (14-16 typed, double-spaced pages). Building on the semester’s work, including the library research and oral histories, describe what you have learned – particularly what you have learned from the pioneers about human existence, Christian vocation, and religious education – and how that shapes your vision. Your methods paper can be incorporated into this final paper, or you can present a modification of that paper, including the four (1-4) elements described above for inclusion in that paper. To that initial work, please add sections of analysis, interpretation, and constructive engagement to this final paper: (5) **analyze** the dominant themes, purpose, and contributions of this person’s (persons’) life work in relation to her social-religious-intellectual contexts; (6) **evaluate** her primary contributions, and her particular contributions in relation to human existence, Christian vocation, and religious education; (7) draw from this analysis and evaluation to **construct** a vision of religious education that is compelling for your vocation and the vocation of your community, taking account of the contexts in which you live and to which you are called. Note: this paper can be focused on the pioneer whom you interviewed, or upon multiple pioneers. You can make your choice based on what best informs *your* vision for the future.

(6) **Presentation:** Your presentation on December 7 is to be a lively portrayal of your work (5-7 minutes) – *a creative distillation of your central insights*, which anticipates the more thoroughly detailed work of your final paper. The purpose is to distill your own thinking and contribute wisdom to the class as we close the semester together. The focus of your presentation is to be the last three sections of your final paper – analysis, interpretation, and visioning – with emphasis on

your visioning. The presentation is not a rough draft of your paper, however. The papers are not due until December 14, but the class presentation will help you move toward the paper, while also sharing your wisdom with the class. We ask that you give your colleagues a thoughtful and creative distillation of your central insights. Please share also how those insights are informed and deepened by the prophetic pioneers we studied this semester – either one pioneer or a consortium of them. You may focus on: the person your group interviewed, all three of our class’s interviewees, the person on whom you focused your portrait paper, and/or other pioneers whom we studied this semester. Whatever your focus, please do the following:

- (a) **Analyze:** Give in-depth attention to the pioneers' lives and work. Analyze the dominant themes, purpose, and contributions of the persons' life work in relation to their social-religious-intellectual contexts (# 5 for paper).
- (b) **Evaluate and interpret:** Evaluate the persons' primary contributions, as well as contributions to deepened understandings of human existence, Christian vocation, and religious education (# 6 for paper).
- (c) **Envision:** Offer a constructive vision of religious education. The vision will hopefully be compelling for your vocation and the vocation of your community, taking account of the contexts in which you live and to which you are called (# 7 for paper).

Grading Scale:

Portrait Paper	20%
Methods Paper	20%
Oral History Interview	10%
Final Paper & Presentation	40%
Participation	10% (can also influence final grades on the borderline)

Class Schedule:

September 7 **INTRODUCTION:**

- “Talk Story”—Reflecting on the history of our personal commitments to and perspectives on religious education
- Surveying the history of religious education
- Surveying possibilities in oral history—purposes, rationale, and jumping into the deep waters of oral history approaches to the study of prophetic pioneers.

September 14 **DISCOVERING EDUCATIONAL WISDOM THROUGH ORAL HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY:** Study of selected prophetic pioneers

and their contributions to religious education, in relation to their life stories and social-religious-intellectual contexts.

PAULO FREIRE

Reading: Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Read this text, with the following questions in mind:

- (1) How does this text address you? What inspires, informs, inhibits, and/or transforms you in the reading? (This is a more personal, existential question than the others.)
- (2) What were the central educational commitments of Freire, and how were these shaped by and influences on his life journey and contextual realities? [This two-part question is primarily descriptive (first part) and analytic (second part).]
- (3) How do you evaluate Freire's contribution in light of this analysis? (This question and the next are more interpretive.)
- (4) What do you learn from Freire about human existence, Christian vocation, and religious education theory and practice?
- (5) What visions of religious education are stirred for you by this study? (This is a playful and visionary question.)

Presentation: Read a brief selection from one of Freire's publications (auxiliary readings). Prepare to work with a group in dramatizing this selection for the rest of the class. The presentations themselves will be prepared during class time. The two auxiliary readings are: Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*; OR Horton and Freire, *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*.

September 21 **MYLES HORTON**

Reading: Myles Horton, *The Long Haul: An Autobiography*. Read this autobiography, asking the five questions (above) and making notes for class discussion. These are not notes to submit, but notes for reference as the class discusses the larger text. (We will also continue the Freire analysis in class on this day.)

September 28 **WOMEN PIONEERS**

Reading: Mary Elizabeth Moore, ed., *Women Pioneers: Book of Readings*. Read the book in its entirety, and respond to the five questions that we are using throughout the semester, both for the book as a whole and for three biographies that you choose to read in more depth (both meditatively and analytically).

- (1) How do these biographies address you? What inspires, informs, inhibits, and/or transforms you in the reading?
- (2) What were the central educational commitments of these women—analyzed distinctively and as a group? How were these *shaped by* and *influences on* their life journeys and contextual realities?

- (3) How do you evaluate the women's contributions in light of your analysis?
- (4) What do you learn from these women about human existence, Christian vocation, and religious education theory and practice?
- (5) What visions of religious education are stirred for you by this study?

October 5

HOWARD THURMAN

Reading: Thurman, *With Head and Heart: The Autobiography of Howard Thurman*. Howard Thurman was not known primarily as an educator, but he was indeed a teacher throughout his life. Read this book for insights into the person of Thurman, as well as insights into religious education, as exemplified and inferred by his life and religious practice.

Discussion of Portrait Papers. The description of this paper is in the "Responsibilities" section of the syllabus (above). Please bring 5 copies of your paper to class on this day, as we will discuss the papers during the class session. The class discussion will focus largely on discovering educational wisdom from the subjects of your papers and from your own analyses and interpretations.

October 12

THE ART OF ORAL HISTORY: METHODS AND PREPARATION

Reading: Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*

Introduction—Read in entirety (pp. 11-18)

Chapter 1- An Oral History of Our Time—Read in entirety (pp. 19-46)

Chapter 2- Setting Up an Oral History Project—Read sections on Equipment, Processing, and Legal Concerns (pp. 57-79). Skim the final section on Archiving and the Internet (pp. 79-83)

Chapter 3- Conducting Interviews—Read in entirety (pp. 84-109)

Chapter 4- Using Oral History in Research and Writing—Read Oral Evidence section (pp. 117-128)

Chapter 5- Videotaping Oral History—Read in entirety (21 pages)

Chapter 6- Presenting Oral History in Archives and Libraries—Skip.

Chapter 7- Teaching Oral History—Skim introduction and Oral History in Elem. and Sec. Schools (188-206) and Institutional Review Boards (215-221)

Chapter 8- Presenting Oral History—Skim in its entirety.

Note: Total pages of reading=116; pages for skimming=61.

Preparation for Oral Histories: By this date, go onto the Emory University Institutional Review Board website, and take the exam that is offered there. This exam is required of all faculty, staff and students of Emory University who are involved in research with human subjects. The purpose and value of the material and the testing process are explained on the website; the values will also become clear to you as you study the materials. You will need to take the following modules: Introduction, 1-6, 17, and EUSOM. Upon your completion, please present to Sybrina Atwater the verification that IRB e-mails you.

[Note: A more detailed explanation is appended to this syllabus. You will

see that the modules may be studied online or printed for your study. Further, they may be taken and re-taken until you feel that you have learned the material well and have received the requisite score. The address is: <http://www.emory.edu/IRB> or irb@emory.edu.]

- October 19 **THE ART OF RESPECTING AND LEARNING FROM ANOTHER**
Reading: (1) Elaine Lawless, *Holy Women: Wholly Women*
 Read pp. 57-83, 127-154, 201-241, 267-282, and at least five of the women's stories that are sprinkled through the book. Skim pp. 242-266.
 (2) Claire Bischoff and Mary Elizabeth Moore, "Cultivating a Spirit for Justice and Peace: Teaching through Oral History" (to be distributed).
Preparation for work with your group: Some time will be set aside in class on this day for groups to do preparatory work for your oral history interview. This will be more valuable if you do some advance preparations with which your group can work on this day.
- October 25 **Annual Women's Forum:** The Forum begins with lunch and a lecture on Wednesday, October 25, and concludes with a chapel service and lunch on Thursday, October 26. The Wednesday afternoon session (2:00-4:00 in Pitts Library) is an oral history interview with three women (part of the Oral History Project). You are encouraged to attend this if you are able.
- October 26 **HUMAN VALUES AND ORAL HISTORY: MAXIMIZING THE VALUES OF ORAL HISTORY METHODS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**
Readings: Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women's Words* and Alan Wieder's *Voices from Capetown Classrooms*. Read the introduction and two chapters of your choice in each of these books. The former focuses more on methodological values involved in oral history, and the latter on the contributions that can emerge from oral history.
Preparation for work with your group: You will have about thirty minutes on this day to continue your group preparation in class.
Oral History Interview: We will do a follow-up interview on this day with one of the oral historians whom we will have interviewed the day before. You will not need to do advance preparation for this interview, but will be part of the interview team in a more spontaneous way. Hopefully, some of you will have heard the first part of the interview the day before (Oct. 25), and this will serve as helpful preparation.
- November 2 **Readings of works by or about the woman whom your group will interview:**
 These readings will be selected by the group itself.
Readings: Diane Tickton Shuster, *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning*. Read the Introduction and three chapters of your choice. Read to discern the method, appreciate the stories, and glean insights for teaching and learning religion with adults.
Methods Paper penultimate draft due on this day. Please bring copies

for everyone in your small group, as well as two copies for the teaching team. Some class time will be set aside for groups to identify gaps and discuss final touches, and for you to submit the penultimate draft for feedback from the faculty. The faculty will send you feedback by e-mail on or before Saturday, November 4. This will give the group some time to polish the papers before the due date on November 9.

- November 9 **FINAL INTERVIEW PREPARATIONS**
Readings of works by or about the two women whom the other groups will interview (to be assigned later, based on the groups' selections).
Methods Paper due. You will be asked to present parts of your paper for the class on this day, and we will do planning for the two interview sessions on November 16 and 30.
- November 16 **INTERVIEW**
- November 23 **NO CLASS—Thanksgiving!**
- November 30 **INTERVIEW**
- December 7 **Presentations of Analyses and Visions**
- December 14 **Final Papers due**

APPENDIX: INSTRUCTIONS FOR IRB

Go to <http://www.emory.edu/IRB>

On the right hand side of the page, under the heading in red “New CITI Course Format,” click on the link where it is written “Click HERE for CITI program information.”

Then scroll down to where it is written “Go to <http://www.citiprogram.org> to register and log into the CITI Program” and click on this link to register for the modules.

When you get to the CITI page, you will need to register to receive a user name and password. On the registration form, choose “interviewer” for your role in human research. After submitting your registration information, choose Group 2 on the next page. You can then click on “Basic Course” to begin.

You can study the modules on-line or print them. The quizzes must be taken on-line. You may retake them until you have learned the material well and have received the requisite score. The site will keep track of the modules you have completed as well as your scores. You need to get 80% correct on the quizzes for the required modules.

You do not need to take all of the modules in one sitting. When you leave the site, be sure to log off. To continue your work on the modules, return to

<http://www.citiprogram.org>.

Below are the modules that you will need to take:

INTRO	Introduction
SHB01	History and Ethical Principles - SBR
SHB02	Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBR
SHB03	The Regulations and The Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR
SHB04	Assessing Risk in Social and Behavioral Sciences - SBR
SHB05	Informed Consent - SBR
SHB06	Privacy and Confidentiality - SBR
SHB17	Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects
EUSOM	Emory University

Please submit to Sybrina Atwater the verification of IRB completion, which the IRB will send you by e-mail.

Course Description:**RE520: ISSUES—PROPHETIC PIONEERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The course explores religious education history and visions through life story, contextual analysis, and the educational theories, practices, and cultural products of prophetic pioneers. The primary subjects of the course are religious education pioneers of the past century, including both famous and locally known pioneers. The primary method is oral history, which the class will study and implement in interviews with three contemporary pioneers. Oral history allows the class to discover the textures of scholars' life work, along with their central values and social-religious-intellectual contexts, thus to draw upon their work for envisioning the future of educational practice.