

GODDESS TRADITIONS MS 601

Winter 1999

Christine Downing

The course will examine a variety of approaches to the study of goddess traditions in Paleolithic and Neolithic Old Europe, in polytheistic ancient near eastern cultures, and in Greece and India

Assignments

Session 1 THE PREHISTORIC GODDESS

Book to purchase:

Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*. San Francisco: Harper, 1991.

Photocopied Materials:

J.J. Bachofen, "Introduction to *Mother Right*," *Myth, Religion, and Mother-Right*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 69-120

Carol Christ, "Why Women Need the Goddess," *The Politics of Women's Spirituality*. Ed. Charlene Spretnak. Anchor Books: 1982, pp. 71-84.

Adrienne Rich, "Prepatriarchal Female/Goddess Images." *The Politics of Women's Spirituality*. Ed. Charlene Spretnak. Anchor Books: 1982, pp. 32-38.

Ruby Rohrlich, "Prehistoric Puzzles." *Women's Review of Books*. Wellesley College. June 1990, Vol 7:9

Sally Binford, "Are Goddesses and Matriarchies Merely Figments of Feminist Imagination?," *The Politics of Women's Spirituality*. Ed. Charlene Spretnak. Anchor Books: 1982, pp. 541-549..

Christine Downing, "Masks of the Goddess," *Paths to the Power of Myth*. Ed. Daniel C Noel. New York: Crossroad, 1990. pp. 97-107.

Supplementary Reading:

Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Mary Zeiss Stange, *Woman the Hunter*. Boston, Beacon, 1997.

Joan Marler, ed., *From the Realm of the Ancestors*. Manchester CT: Knowledge, Ideas, & Trends, 1997.

Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

Session 2 GODDESSES IN POLYTHEISTIC ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CULTURES

Book to purchase:

Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna*. New York: Harper, 1983.

Photocopied Materials

Christine Downing, "Beginning at the Beginning," *Anima* 14:1, 1987, pp. 21-38.

Christine Downing, "The Subliminal Presence of the Hebrew Goddess." (Unpublished lecture)

Supplementary Reading:

Merlin Stone, *When God Was A Woman*. New York: Dial, 1976.

Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990.
William Irwin Thompson, *The Time Falling Bodies Take to Light*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1981.
Sylvia Perera, *Descent to the Goddess*. Toronto: Inner City, 1981.
Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Session 3 GODDESSES OF GREECE AND INDIA

Books to purchase:

Christine Downing, *The Goddess*. New York: Continuum, 1996.
David Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

Photocopied Materials:

Rita Gross, "Hindu Female Deities." *The Book of the Goddess*.
Ed. Carl Olson. New York: Crossroad, 1985, pp. 217-230.

Supplementary Reading:

Christine Downing, *Gods In Our Midst..* New York: Crossroad, 1993.

Course Requirement and Evaluation: A well-written 10-15 page paper focussing on a particular goddess or discussing the differences between goddesses in matristic and in patriarchal religious traditions.(or a topic of your design discussed with the instructor on campus or by e-mail (crsrvr@pacificrim.net.) . The completed paper is due postmarked on or before _____

Papers should be mailed to: Christine Downing, HC 1 Box 167, Eastsound WA 98245
Please do not send by certified or express mail unless you clearly designate recipient's signature is not required.