

TEACHING PORTFOLIO STATEMENT¹
2014
HELTASA AND CHE
NATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD APPLICATION
CATEGORY: LEADER IN THE FIELD OF LEARNING AND TEACHING
Professor Sarojini Nadar (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Introduction

Among the various commitments within the South African Higher Education landscape at present three things stand out: continued and sustained calls for Africanisation and contextualisation of the curriculum; a commitment to supporting and developing research skills for postgraduate students in order to enable throughput; and thirdly carving a space for African institutions in the internationalisation of higher education. In this teaching portfolio statement, evidence of my intellectual leadership and commitment to all of the above, will be demonstrated through an overview of my pedagogical praxis within three leadership contexts: (a) a university school/department context where I have been heading up an interdisciplinary programme called Gender and Religion at the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal since 2006; (b) a broader university context where I provided leadership for postgraduate students within the College of Humanities as a Dean of Research for two years (2012 and 2013) and (c) an international context where I served as the international coordinator of a network known by the acronym INATE (International Network in Advanced Theological Education), which in turn provided wider access to other entities such as the WCC Theological Education Desk, based in Geneva, Switzerland. The network spanned five continents and eight countries, and I served as the coordinator of the network from 2002 until 2005. In this statement, I will draw on the pedagogical experiences gained in each of the above positions to explicate the following:

1. Teaching philosophy and approach to education
2. Methods of teaching and supervision
3. Assessment of Student Work
4. Mentorship and Support of Postgraduate Students
5. Joint Research Projects
6. Scholarship & Publications on Teaching & Learning
7. National and International Impact of Teaching

Before I delve into the categories above it is important to contextualise my department and teaching context in greater depth. As already stated, the South African Higher Education

Summary of Teaching Context

Specific Teaching Context: Gender and Religion Programme within the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at UKZN. This is a postgraduate programme offering qualifications from Honours to PhD.

Seniority of applicant: Promoted to Full Professor in January 2014; Dean of Research in the College of Humanities in 2012 and 2013; Director of the Gender and Religion Programme since 2006.

Size of Classes: Between 2005 and 2008 taught courses in Ethics. These were large classes with numbers ranging from 200 to 400 registered students. However since 2008, I teach in undergraduate classes in Theology with numbers ranging to a maximum of about 20, and postgraduate from Honours (80-100) and Masters (10-15).

Teaching: Mostly at a postgraduate level, hence the small classes. A key component of teaching occurs at the level of supervision of postgraduate students at Masters and PhD levels.

Currently supervising 12 PhD students and 2 Masters students. Furthermore teaching occurs through facilitation of gender training workshops at a national and international level. These are detailed in the portfolio and CV (See Abridged and Unabridged CV Appendix A)

¹ The text boxes in this document are taken from verbatim student and peer evaluations which have been processed by the Quality Promotion and Assurance (QPA) unit of the University of KwaZulu Natal. See Appendices B and C for full texts.

landscape has been alive with calls for recontextualisation and Africanisation of the curriculum as democracy loomed in the early 90's. These calls were made within the context of the Education Development Programme (EDP) by the erstwhile University of Natal. Gerald West notes that "The EDP was designed to enable academic departments across the University to reconstruct their pedagogy in ways that would address and redress the disadvantages encoded into apartheid's Bantu Education system" (2009:74).

The erstwhile School of Theology at the University of Natal had embraced this call and had deliberately mainstreamed contextual and liberation theologies into the curriculum through an endeavour called "The Contextualisation of Theological Education Project" in 1991. A decade later, a colleague and I began to make calls for the "engendering" of this Africanised and contextualised curriculum. The idea was to have a specialised programme in gender but to also mainstream gender into the curriculum in general. We developed courses and templates for a specialised postgraduate programme from Honours to PhD, and we mainstreamed gender into the undergraduate programme. In 2008, I was appointed to a permanent teaching position as the director of this programme called Gender and Religion. In the latter part of this submission I will reflect critically on my teaching within this programme and how I have developed this programme over the years.

1. Teaching Philosophy and Approach to Education: Boundary Crossing

"Education is Not the Filling of a Pail, but the Lighting of a Fire"

The above quote, often attributed to the Irish poet, William Butler Yeats (1865-1939),² is a good description of my foundational belief in, and approach to education. This foundational belief has been challenged over the years within teaching fields namely Gender and Religion Studies, as I have come to realise that the inter-disciplinary nature of my teaching subjects as well as the context within which I teach, requires attention to *both* – the filling of the pail and the lighting of the fire, and that these are not as mutually exclusive as the quotation by Yeats nor the theorisation by some scholars might indicate. Hence I would modify the quote slightly to more accurately reflect my philosophy – "education is not [*just*] the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

What I have discovered over the years is that students who register for the Gender and Religion programme come with a pre-existing "fire blazing" to make the world a more gender-equitable place, but they lack the theoretical and the philosophical insights and vocabulary to articulate how such social transformation should occur. The "filling of the pail" with these skills is crucial, but this "filling" is not done within a vertical knowledge structure (Bernstein 1999) where the focus is only on cumulative knowledge. The knowledge is, and must of necessity, within an interdisciplinary programme be filtered through a horizontal knowledge structure that pays attention to both the knower and the knowledge (Maton 2010). This is possible within what Patricia Hill Collins terms an activist-intellectual paradigm (Hill-Collins 2013) which, I would assert, seeks to combine the lighting of the fire with the filling of the pail. I am aware that I may be transgressing the 'holy grail' of pedagogical and knowledge paradigms, but an activist-intellectual approach within an interdisciplinary program certainly crosses paradigmatic boundaries!

My teaching philosophy therefore is based on a range of critical pedagogical and knowledge production theorists [bell hooks (2003, 2009), Karl Maton (2000,2010) , Paulo Freire (1973) and

² Its origins unfortunately cannot be verified even through the collected writings of Yeats. I stumbled upon it on a desk of a colleague in India.

Patricia Hill-Collins (2000,2013)]. Emanating from these pedagogical theories is my own approach to teaching – what I term a *contextual feminist pedagogy*.

Contextual Feminist Pedagogy

I define a contextual feminist pedagogy as a pedagogy that is rooted in a critical awareness of the ways in which knowledge is co-opted by patriarchy in terms of production and transfer as well as content and form. A contextual feminist pedagogy seeks to deconstruct such patriarchal forms of knowledge while building new knowledge for the purpose of creating a more equitable society. Because the pedagogy is contextual, there is recognition of a diversity of feminist approaches, and hence the content and the form of teaching are firmly within the African context. This contextual feminist pedagogical approach will be evident not only in *what* I teach (content) but *how* I teach (form). Such an approach is undergirded by three key principles: a democratic classroom; social constructionism and what I term “an education for advocacy” paradigm.

Principle #1: Democratic Classroom

Creating a collaborative learning environment, a democratic classroom, is a distinct feature of feminist pedagogy. The role of the feminist teacher is to allow all voices in the classroom to be heard—and to encourage rather than silence discussion even, and particularly, where divergence of opinion may begin to emerge. Indeed, during the course of my teaching, many robust debates ensue within the class, particularly between male and female students who tend to take sides. While one has to deal sensitively with emotions raised about critical issues, the atmosphere of academic debate is the intention, not a residual effect.

“Was superb and she made everyone talk and contribute. She could not at any moment say you are wrong completely but said in a polite manner that one could not feel offended.”

Student: THEO716/816:2011

Appendix B1

“I have seen Professor Nadar present papers at international conferences and receive a standing ovation. I have seen her put the same energy in her class presentations and evoke scholarly debates among students... She manages to get even the shy students to contribute in the class discussions... This is not only because she teaches feminist theology which is emotive but mostly because of her teaching philosophy which is based on creating a democratic atmosphere in class in order to promote an education system that is dialogical.”

Prof. Isabel Phiri, Honorary Professor UKZN

Appendix C1

This atmosphere, I believe, is an excellent outcome because it creates an environment of what Barbara Du Bois calls “passionate scholarship” (1983:112). Teachers who use contextual feminist pedagogy utilise mutual and shared learning as the basis of knowledge creation rather than the traditional ‘top-down’ approach or what Paulo Freire characteristically calls the “banking” method of education, where knowledge is considered “a gift bestowed by those who consider

themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (1972:46). My main method of knowledge production and transference is therefore inductive in nature, and I believe in the co-production of knowledge, which leads me to the second principle of my teaching praxis – namely – social constructionism.

Principle #2: Social Constructionism

A second principle undergirding contextual feminist pedagogical practice is a social constructionist approach to knowledge. In other words I consciously understand and convey that:

...human experience, including perception, is mediated historically, culturally and linguistically. That is, what we perceive and experience is never a direct reflection of environmental conditions but must be understood as a specific reading of these conditions. This does not mean that we can never really know anything; rather it suggests that there are 'knowledges' rather than 'knowledge' (Willig 2001:7)

The need to teach students that all knowledge is socially constructed is nowhere more relevant than in my teaching discipline of Religion and Gender. This is particularly so, because as Reed Bouley argues: "Students' religious imaginations are intertwined with their sociocultural imaginations, so that the status quo is often perceived as being divinely ordered" (Reed Bouley 2012: 178).

Steve de Gruchy names this challenge as:

...the 'epistemological privilege of the ordained,' namely that because pastors and theologians assume that they have access to divinely inspired knowledge in a holy book, they simply 'know' things. Yet a whole list of contemporary issues would suggest that this is not the case, and that the church has much to learn by first listening to the wisdom that comes from others: abortion, capital punishment, school discipline, same-sex relationships, domestic violence, rape, climate change, food security, safe water, condoms, crime, legalising prostitution, and the like (De Gruchy 2009:128).

"Distinguishing between what the biblical text says and what it is made to say by those who interpret it was very helpful"

Student: THEO735/835: 2011

APPENDIX B2

The content and process in feminist pedagogy is markedly different from the traditional classroom. Whereas in the traditional classroom, teaching begins with theory and proceeds to practice, in a feminist classroom, teaching begins with actual experience with the ultimate aim being to unravel the theory out of this. Beginning with experience is what enables students to recognise the socially constructed nature of the world.

Principle #3: Education for Advocacy

At the heart of contextual feminist pedagogical practice is the commitment to social transformation, as a result of education. As Kathleen Weiler confirms:

Like Freirean pedagogy, feminist pedagogy is based on assumptions of the power of consciousness raising, the existence of oppression and the possibility of ending it, and the desire for social transformation (1995:28).

Accordingly, consciousness-raising is a central goal in each of the classes I teach and is built directly into the modules I teach. See for example **Appendix D** (Course Outline BIST220) which details the service learning undergraduate module called "Critical Tools for Biblical Study" which requires students to participate in communities and record their experiences of knowledge production and transfer. In an attempt to develop a theoretical account of structural possibilities for service learning, Amanda Hlengwa has argued that "discipline structures impact on whether a discipline enables or constrains infusion [of service learning into curricula]" (Hlengwa 2010:2). The horizontal nature of my interdisciplinary field enables such service learning to occur. This service learning is intricately bound to notions of liberative pedagogy.

According to the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire, such a liberative pedagogy

...makes oppression and its causes, objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation. And in the struggle this pedagogy will be made and remade (Freire 1972:25).

Hence the goal of my particular teaching is always that of advocacy—how to raise the consciousness of students to understand the individual biases and prejudices each bring to their interpretation and analysis, *as well as* how to enable them to use their knowledge to effect change in the communities from whence they come.

“The transition from theory to praxis has been ignited through knowledge provision, skills and tools for the noble cause”

Student: THEO 716/816: 2011

APPENDIX B1

“I have acquired the necessary skills to translate and engage academic knowledge for the purpose of social transformation”

Student: THEO 735/835: 2011

APPENDIX B2

This key principle is in line with the vision of the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa which declares that higher education must be “a diverse, dynamic and sustainable system that responds to *transformational, social and economic development needs.*”³

2. Methods of Teaching and Supervision: Contextual, Communal and Challenging

In the section below, I will reflect on my methods of teaching and supervision and will draw evidence from 2010 to 2013. In 2010 and 2011 I was involved with more module teaching and in 2012 and 2013 due to my tenure as a Dean of Research, my teaching involved supervision. I believe that supervision is teaching, and I build this philosophy into my supervision methods which involves stimulating higher-order thinking. The details of the teaching done are based on the tables which the university generates as part of monitoring and evaluating teaching, which I have reproduced below. In line with my contextual feminist pedagogical teaching philosophy, my methods are contextual, communal and challenging in both content and form, as will be evidenced below.

2a) Module Teaching (since 2010)

Module Teaching 2010

³ See the mission, vision and values section of the Council for Higher Education website <http://www.che.ac.za/about/missionvision/> accessed on 20 March 2013

MODULE TEACHING

MODULE name	cp	Module code	Module at UG level 1,2,3,4; Hons, Masters	If module teaching is shared-% you teach	Contact teaching time in hours(a)	Preparation Time¹ [0-2hr per hour of contact] (b)	No. of Students per module	Assessment / consultation per student² [0-3hr per student](c)	Total per module (a)+(b)+(c)
1. Critical Tools for Biblical Studies	16	BIST 220	UG, 2	30	15	30	10	30	75
2. Method and Theory in Religion and Theology	16	RELG702	Hons	25	4	8	29	87	99
3. Issues of Masculinity and Gender	16	THEO736	Hons	25	6	12	7	21	39
4. Issues of Masculinity and Gender	16	THEO836	Masters	25	8	16	7	21	45
5. Proposal Writing	16	THEO8RA	Masters	25	8	16	20	60	84
TOTAL for Module Teaching (1) :									342

MODULE TEACHING

MODULE name	cp	Module code	Module at UG level 1,2,3,4; Hons, Masters	If module teaching is shared- % you teach	Contact teaching time in hours(a)	Preparation Time ⁴ [0-2hr per hour of contact] (b)	No. of Students per module	Assessment/consultation per student ⁵ [0-3hr per student](c)	Total per module (a)+(b)+(c)
1. Method and Theory in Religion and Theology	16	RELG 702	Hons	100	26	52	25	75	153
2. Theology in the African Context	16	THEO 705	Hons	25	6	12	6	18	36
3. African Women's Theologies	16	THEO 716	Hons	50	12	24	8	24	60
4. Biblical Hermeneutics- Women and Gender	16	THEO 735	Hons	100	26	52	6	18	96
5. Advanced Theology in the African Context	32	THEO 805	Masters	33,3	12	24	4	12	48
6. Contemporary Issues in Christianity	16	THEO 816	Masters	50	21	42	8	24	87

The methods which I primarily use are seminars; small-group work which involves narrative, anecdotes and even drama as well as directive and intensive teaching.

Seminars

In line with my feminist pedagogical commitment to the creation of a democratic classroom, I prefer seminars to lectures as a teaching method, as seminars allow for more interactive learning to occur. Here I provide input through PowerPoint presentations, but elicit dialogue through the use of pictures, DVD's; blogs and cartoons which accompany my PowerPoint presentations. Refer to **Appendix E** for an example of a PowerPoint used in my teaching in the course "Issues of Masculinity and Gender" (THEO736/836). The students watched a DVD (**Appendix F**) of "The Mighty Men's Conference" which was the case study under consideration, and they also logged onto live blogs providing commentary on the Mighty Men's Conference. So the seminars were equally inductive and deductive (provision of input as well as encouragement of student participation).

"Our classes were more seminars so as to encourage our participation in class..."

" [The] seminar system approach helped to deepen the themes of the course."

Students: THEO 716/816: 2011

APPENDIX B1

Small Group Work: Use of Narrative, Anecdotes and Drama

“Participation was encouraged
through small group discussions”

Student: RELG702/2010

Appendix B3

Decades of feminist pedagogical practice, have shown how and why narratives work so well in “the feminist classroom” (hooks 1989:50) and in feminist discourse.⁴ It is because feminist pedagogy engages students “in a learning process that makes the world “more real than less real” (hooks 1989:51). One of my methods of teaching has been small group work which encourages peer learning. In these groups I provide students with real narratives and case studies to work with and we together derive the theory out of their reflections. As hooks shows:

The feminist classroom—is and should be a place where there is a sense of struggle, where there is visible acknowledgment of the union of theory and practice, where we work together as teachers and students to overcome the estrangement and alienation that have become so much the norm in the contemporary university...In my classrooms, we work to dispel the notion that our experience is not a ‘real world’ experience (1989:51).

Narratives and anecdotes also work in bigger classes as I reflected on in a publication (Nadar 2009a:137)

A few years back I taught a course on Gender, Religion, and Ethics to a first-year class at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In explaining the term gender, I employed an oft-used anecdote that exposes the ways in which gender stereotyping nurtures our biases. The story goes like this. A father and son are traveling in a car. They meet with an accident and unfortunately, the father is killed immediately in the crash, while the son is rushed to a hospital where it is deemed that he needs emergency surgery. The surgeon who has to operate on the boy walks into the operating room, sees the boy, and exclaims, “Goodness, this is my son!” My question to the class of almost four hundred students is how is this possible? Only about twenty students know the answer—the surgeon is, of course, the mother. This revelation creates quite a flurry of conversation in class, but then I lead the students into a discussion of why the students couldn’t imagine the possibility of the surgeon being the mother. Most then agree that it was because we are socialized to think of certain jobs or careers being associated with women or men. The class even gives examples of careers they thought were for men only—engineers, priests, truck drivers, and so on.

While we were going through the exercise, I realized that there were three male students sitting at the front of the class who were clearly uncomfortable with the direction the conversation was taking. Eventually, one put his hand up and announced that notwithstanding all the things we were talking about regarding gender construction, the question that remained for him was that if there were statistically more male doctors than female doctors, then did that not prove that men have a higher intellectual capacity to be medical doctors than women? I replied that I was not sure if his statistics were true to begin, but I decided to share with him some statistics of my own. At the time, in our university, almost 90 percent of full professors were white and male. My question to him and the class was is this because white people have a higher intellectual capacity than black people and black women, in particular, to be professors? A hush came over the class and the three students who happened to be black quickly

⁴ See for example, Deats and Lenker (1994); Harraway (1988), Kenway and Modra (1993).

changed tack and began to explain how apartheid had actively prevented black people from gaining access to equal education and other opportunities in South Africa. We then engaged in a discussion about how women also were actively prevented from pursuing their own interests through systemized and even naturalized patriarchy (Nadar 2009a:137-138).

Through the use of this narrative, I was able to explicate all the key terms I wanted to such as social constructionism, gender, patriarchy, and androcentricism etc. It was a far more creative and lasting form of learning than the traditional rote learning or the provision of a glossary of terms.

Carolissen *et al* (2011:165) conclude similarly on the use of narrative in a curriculum project across the Universities of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape:

The value of emotion, biographies and human connectedness that bell hooks emphasises as central to creating a pedagogy of hope was demonstrated by the teaching process and creative media used by guest speakers. Whether speakers used their own narratives or those of others as reflected in film, video installations or poetry, they displayed a vulnerability, humility and a consciousness of the power of relationality in teaching and learning. It is precisely this that made the classroom a place where trust could allow risk-taking and in so doing the classroom became a potentially transformative space for students and educators where they could engage in dialogue about intensely political issues through their lived experiences. (Carolissen et al 2011: 165).

Teaching Aids

I believe that good methods of teaching must be accompanied by well-organised teaching tools and aids. The following are some of the teaching aids which I use:

1. **Detailed Module Outlines** which contain course expectations (see **Appendix D1** for an undergraduate co-taught module outline and **Appendix D2** for an example of a postgraduate module outline taught by myself)
2. **Course Readers** which are given to students in advance. Students are deeply appreciative of this.

“[The readings were] appropriate to the module and helpful to the Masters and PHD research”
Student: THEO735/835:2011
APPENDIX B2

In addition, for Honours and Masters students, I aim to link my module teaching in the classroom to the research process and students are often able to

make the link between the module teaching and the research process and write-up of the dissertation, even though the classroom teaching is more content based. I also use my own research as a basis for my teaching.

3. **PowerPoint Presentations** (Students are provided with hard copies of the presentation).

“The outline and objectives of the module were clear and detailed.”
“Very detailed, clear and systematic.”

Students: THEO 735/835:2011

APPENDIX B2

“[Readings] appropriate and very well organised (in book form) 😊”

Student: RELG702/2010

APPENDIX B3

“ While in Oslo, we also invited her to teach a class on African Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics, and my colleague and I witnessed how her research came alive in the classroom too. “

Prof. Jone Salamonsen

University of Oslo, Norway

Peer Evaluation: **APPENDIX C7**

“She is always well-prepared and uses a Power Point presentation to lead the students through the theme of the lecture. She is a lively and interesting lecturer and draws the students into discussion of the theme with questions which help them expand their understanding of the subject.”

Prof. Susan Rakoczy
St. Joseph’s Theological Institute, South Africa

As already mentioned, while my method of teaching is facilitative, I feel it is important to provide the students with input with which to engage. For this purpose I have found PowerPoint to be a very useful tool. I try to make the PowerPoint’s as interesting as possible and often put in controversial and challenging pictures on the PowerPoint’s to stimulate discussion. (See Appendices

E1 and E2 for examples of PowerPoint presentations used in class).

2b) Postgraduate Supervision

The following are lists of my postgraduate supervision since 2010:

SUPERVISION

2010

POSTGRAD SUPERVISION

Name of Student	Reg No	UG level 4/ Hons/ M Coursework/ Full thesis M/PhD	cp	Year of student Registration eg 2 nd	Sole Supervisor/ Main or co-Supervisor in shared supervision	Supervision time ³
1. Beatrice Okyere-Manu	203505595	PhD	384	3	CO	90
2. Albert Bangirana	211545145	Hons	32	1	Sole	23
3. Jonathan Kangwa	210516772	Hons	32	1	Sole	23
4. Ayalkibet Berhanu	209530141	Hons	32	1	Sole	23
5. Phumzile Zondi	962112606	Hons	32	1	Sole	23
6. Lindiwe Mkasi	9701364	Masters Coursework	128	1	CO	45
7. Susan Valiquette	210554194	Full Masters	192	1	Sole	68
8. Jessica Richard	206508128	Full Masters	192	1	Sole	68
9. Trudy Rose	208516033	PhD	384	3	Sole	90
10. Elizabeth Getman	20512632	PhD	384	2	Sole	90
11. Stella Kasirye	206526449	PhD	384	1	Sole	90
12. Kennedy Owino	208516810	PhD	384	1	Sole	90
13. Cheryl Dibeela	201507131	PhD	384	1	CO	90
14. Rose Materu	205505632	PhD	384	1	CO	90
15. Lydia Mwaniki	982207204	PhD	384	1	CO	90
16. Jennette Sprong	200000211	PhD	384	1	Sole	90
17. Rubeena Partab	8318974	PhD	384	2	Sole	90
18. Rosinah Gabaitse	208529129	PhD	384	1	CO	90
TOTAL for Supervision (2):						1263

TOTAL Module (1)+TOTAL Supervision (2) =1605 _____ (45% Teaching= 810 hours)

SUPERVISION 2011

POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

Name of Student	Reg No	UG level 4/ Hons/ M Coursework/ Full thesis M/PhD	cp	Year of student Registration eg 2 nd	Sole Supervisor/ Main or co-Supervisor in shared supervision	Supervision time ⁶
1. Mutale Kaunda	211523936	Hons	32	1	sole	23
2. Salvadore Macule	210554310	Hons	32	1	sole	23
3. Alice Fabian	208504202	Hons	32	1	sole	23
4. Phumzile Zondi	962112606	Full Masters	192	1	sole	68
5. Susan Valiquette	210554194	Full Masters	192	2	sole	68
6. Albert Bangirana	211545145	Coursework Masters	128	1	sole	45
7. Jonathan Kangwa	210516772	Coursework Masters	128	1	sole	45
8. Ayalkibet Berhanu	209530141	Coursework Masters	128	1	sole	45
9. Jennette Sprong	20000211	PhD	384	2	sole	90
10. Rubeena Partab	8318974	PhD	384	3	sole	90
11. Kennedy Owino	208516033	PhD	384	2	co	90
12. Trudy Rose	208516033	PhD	384	3	sole	90
13. Rosinah Gabaitse	208529129	PhD	384	2	co	90
14. Elizabeth Getman	20512632	PhD	384	3	sole	90
TOTAL for Supervision (2)						811

TOTAL Module (1)+TOTAL Supervision (2) = 1426 _____ (45% Teaching = 810 hours)

University of KwaZulu-Natal

TEACHING WORKLOAD PROFILE TEMPLATE

SCHOOL: Religion, Philosophy and Classics NAME OF STAFF: Prof Sarojini Nadar Rank: Ass Professor Year: 2012

POSTGRAD SUPERVISION

Name of Student	Reg No	UG level 4/ Hons/ M Coursework/ Full thesis M/PhD	cp	Year of student Registration eg 2 nd	Sole Supervisor/ Main or co-Supervisor in shared supervision	Supervision time ⁷
1. Lilly Phiri	211513491	Hons	32	1	Sole	23
2. Phumzile Zondi	962112606	Full Masters	192	2	Sole	68
3. Susan Valiquette	210554194	Full Masters	192	3	Sole	68
4. Lindiwe Mkasi	9701364	Coursework Masters	128	3	CO	45
5. Elna Boesak	212504418	Full Masters	192	1	Sole	68
6. Salvador Macule	210554310	Coursework Masters	128	1	Sole	45
7. Mutale Kaunda	211523936	Coursework Masters	128	1	Sole	45
8. Alice Fabian	208504202	Full Masters	192	1	Sole	68
9. Rosinah Gabaitse	208529129	PhD	384	3	CO	90
10. Elizabeth Getman	20512632	PhD	384	4	Sole	90
11. Trudy Rose	208516033	PhD	384	5	CO	90
12. Stella Kasirye	206526449	PhD	384	3	Sole	90
13. Kennedy Owino	208516810	PhD	384	3	Sole	90
14. Cynthia Webstock	209539924	PhD	384	1	Sole	90
15. Albert Bangirana	211545145	PhD	384	1	Sole	90
16. Jonathan Kangwa	210516772	PhD	384	1	Sole	90
17. Sonene Nyawo	202500007	PhD	384	1	Sole	90
TOTAL for Supervision (2)						1240

TOTAL Module (1) + TOTAL Supervision (2) = 1240 _____ (45% Teaching = 810 hours)

In line with my belief about creating a “community of practice”, my role in postgraduate supervision occurs on *individual* as well as *group* levels:

“The manner in which she works through the drafts was instrumental in developing and sharpening our writing skills, as she sat with each of us individually and worked through the work which we presented to her. The process of simultaneously reading through the draft together, correcting it, highlighting areas which need attention and making suggestions of where improvements could be made was far more helpful than receiving a document back which had simply been edited with track changes.”

MASTERS STUDENT

Individual Supervision – My supervision of individual students occurs primarily within the Gender and Religion programme which I coordinated up until 2012. My supervisory role is built on the principles of feminist engagement which I subscribe to. As with my teaching style in the classroom, which is dialogical, my students and I often have a conversation around their work, and while I am directive I am also engaging.

Before I meet with a student I insist on having something written to work with. From my side, I try to provide as timeous feedback as possible (usually within two weeks, but much quicker as we get toward submission time). However, I have to admit that the principle of prompt supervision feedback, which I adhere to, was really challenged by the management and administrative tasks that the position of Dean for Research demanded, as the accompanying

“This was a breath of fresh air for me. Prof Nadar would work through the night to read through my chapters and provide feedback as soon as was humanly possible.”

MASTERS/PHD STUDENT - 2012

APPENDIX B4

adjacent text-box reveals. Nevertheless, I always communicate with the student so that s/he is fully apprised of the situation, and I always make up for the time lost. In addition to providing written feedback I also find that sitting with students and reading through drafts together (a very communal way of working, and typical of African feminist working paradigms), is extremely helpful and helps expedite the process.

“There were also times that she would not respond in time and I knew she was busy as she had just taken up a new position as dean of research in humanities.”

MASTERS/PHD STUDENT - 2012

APPENDIX B4

I use the written feedback as a basis for face-to-face consultations. (See [Appendix G](#) for an example of written feedback and comments on postgraduate work). Furthermore, I aim to provide directed feedback to my students especially at Masters level, and this is why 6 of the 9 Masters students who completed after 2010 graduated in the minimum time of 1 year.

Group Supervision – This involves organising “work in progress” student seminars for the Gender and Religion Programme so that students can receive feedback from both their peers and their professors. (See [Appendix H](#) for a programme of a “work in progress from 2010).

“My supervisor organized “work in progress seminars” from formulating a research topic to the completion of the project, where we (students under her supervision) had to present our work at whatever level our work was. These seminars helped enhance my passion for the work as I would interact with other students and other lecturers too and engage constructive discussions concerning my work. The comments received during such seminars were so beneficial, useful and made it easy to go back and work on the dissertation with passion.”

MASTERS/PHD STUDENT - 2012

APPENDIX B4

3. Assessment of Student Work

“The assessment challenged me to apply the theory to the case study, which was good.”

Student: RELG 702/2010

APPENDIX B3

Because one of my main aims in teaching is to develop critical thought; the ability of students to *apply* their knowledge rather than regurgitate what they have rote

learned is something that I aim for in my assessment of student work. Hence, most of my assessments wish to assess high-order thinking which reflects all levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Feminist pedagogy is also concerned with the development of critical thinking. Therefore, my assessments are both formative and summative.

I do not believe that one can test a student on something that one has not set out to teach them, and I certainly do not believe in setting traps for students. This is why at postgraduate level; I prefer to give the students term papers instead of exams, as a form of summative assessment. (See [Appendix D3](#) for term paper questions contained in the module outline for the course THEO716/816). In addition to this I also want to develop the students' ability to write, and so I build into the process of writing their papers, a proposal writing and draft stage before I receive their final papers for evaluation, which counts for formative assessment ([See Appendix D3](#)).

Her approach to teaching is theoretically grounded. Reflective practice, a democratic orientation, expert knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are markers of her professionalism in the classroom.

Dr. Nyna Amin
Recipient of the 2012 UKZN
Distinguished Teachers Award
Peer Evaluation: [Appendix C3](#)

A creative form of assessment is a principle of feminist pedagogy. See for example [Appendix D4](#) which contains the course outline for the Honours/Masters module: Theory and Method. In this course I required students to write a sermon (creative expression) undergirded by the theories they had learned. This is in line with feminist ways of teaching – not only is it creative in delivery but in assessment too. However, creativity in assessment has its limits as I quickly discovered! The assignments

submitted were of a very poor quality, with many students who really struggled to apply academic knowledge to what was essentially a “popular” assignment (See [Appendix I1](#)). It was for this reason that I did not prescribe the same assignment the following year.

When marking assignments I mark electronically as this gives me more room for comments, and I also use a marking band schedule so that the students can see exactly why they received the mark they did ([See Appendix I2](#) for an example of a marked essay with the marking bands).

When I do use examinations as a form of summative assessment, I ensure that my exam questions are very detailed (see [Appendix J](#) for a copy of the exam for the course BIST220). I use extensive quotes and detail exactly what I would like the students to write about. In fact my colleagues have often complained that my questions ‘use up too many trees’!

In addition to the assessments which I provide for my own undergraduate and postgraduate teaching modules, I also provide summative assessments externally. [As these reviews and examination reports are confidential I am unable to reproduce them here, but can share them with permission if need be.](#)

- Reviewing proposals and writing detailed reports at both Faculty (outside my discipline) and school level.
- Being internal examiner for UKZN and external examiner for Universities of Cape Town, South Africa, and Malawi.
- Being a coordinating examiner for the school and in my position as Dean for Research I had to ratify all coordinating reports at Masters and PhD levels in the College of Humanities.

4. Mentorship and Support of Postgraduate Students

In 2012, I, together with my colleague, Isabel Phiri, introduced writing workshops for postgraduate students to enable them to publish their research. The full details of these workshops are provided in [Appendices C1 and B5](#). Below an excerpt from a student's reflection best describes my practice of mentoring type of teaching:

Prof. Nadar's style of teaching is engaging and enabling. Within each step of the workshop, there was a teaching on a particular subject, which could be responded to. These areas included a thorough analysis and teaching of what an abstract is and what it must include, the structure of the article and how to isolate what information to include and focus on, among other things. After each teaching, the participating students put what they had learnt into practice, so for example; after the workshop on abstracts, each student wrote the abstract for the article which they intended to write. These drafts were then projected, one at a time, onto a big screen, and were edited and critiqued by the entire group. This process was incredibly helpful – both when it was our article being reviewed as well as when we were looking at another's – as we learnt to look more objectively at our own work. Common mistakes were highlighted and we were shown how to recognise what it was that we should be aware of or what we were aiming for within our articles. This process was then repeated a number of times with the body of the articles themselves. Another benefit from this approach was the introduction to the peer review system which the journal's editors utilise, as well as offering many of us students who haven't published before, the confidence to submit our articles.

The entire workshop was an interactive experience under the facilitation of Prof. Nadar. Any contributions and queries were welcome, and were responded to. Prof. Nadar's professionalism, insight, guidance and encouraging nature allowed for the discussion to move freely, yet productively. Her breadth and depth of knowledge across all the disciplines meant that she was able to provide constructive criticism and give helpful suggestions to each of the students – despite their vast array of interests and subject matter. Prof. Nadar also drew in other experts who are outside of the field of theology to offer different insight and give helpful suggestions during the workshop. This provided refreshing perspectives and useful research suggestions ([Masters Student: Alice Fabian – Appendix B5](#)).

Full details of students who have published under my mentorship appear in my CV, but I cite a few examples here:

1. **Elizabeth Getman** and Sarojini Nadar. 2013. Natality and Motherism: Embodiment within a Praxis of Spiritual Leadership. *Journal for the Study of Religion*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2013 pgs 59-73.
2. **Mutale Kaunda** and Sarasvathie Reddy. 2013. Pedagogies of Subservience? A Feminist Exploration of the Institution of Imbusa among the Bemba, *Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa* Vol. 19 No. 2. Special Issue (Nov 2013) pgs 119-139
3. **Phumzile Zondi-Mabizela**. 2010. "Seducer, Victim or Agent? A Gendered Reading of Bathsheba's Story (2 Samuel 11:1-27) in the Context of HIV and AIDS." *Journal of Constructive Theology: Gender and Religion in Africa*. Issue 16.1. Pages 48-63

4. **Albert Bangirana** and Sarasvathie Reddy. 2013. Sexuality, Students and Surveillance: Catholic Moral Teachings on HIV within a Higher Education Context. *Journal of Gender and Religion in Africa* Vol. 19 No. 2. Special Issue (Nov 2013), pages 87 – 104

In addition to supporting students through teaching, I also help to support students through scholarship programmes. In 2012, I was able to secure funding from the Church of Sweden and SIDA (Swedish Development Aid) to support a group of 10 Masters students in a pilot programme within the Gender and Religion Programme at the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics (See **Appendix C7**). The first cohort of these students graduated in 2013, and we expect an annual cohort of 10 students graduating until 2017.

5. Joint Research Projects

In 2013 an application for a research project called “Exploring Throughput and ‘Academicity’ through a Trans-disciplinary Masters Programme in Gender, Religion and Health” was submitted to the UKZN Teaching and Learning Office. A summarised version of the successful proposal appears in **Appendix K** but below are the stated objectives of the research project which aims to reflect on the supervision:

1. To identify and explicate the pedagogical underpinnings of a trans-disciplinary cohort model of supervision for Masters students within the context of the Gender, Religion and Health programme, across two universities (UKZN and Stellenbosch University).
2. To determine the nature of the relationship between the trans-disciplinary cohort model of supervision and minimum completion rates of proposals and completed dissertations within the Gender, Religion and Health programme (UKZN and Stellenbosch University).
3. To explore to what extent a trans-disciplinary cohort model of supervision produces scholarly independent and critical researchers within and across all the disciplines (Gender, Religion and Health).
4. To explicate how the Gender, Religion and Health Masters cohort model of supervision can enable further theorisation on trans-disciplinary communities of practice and the development of critical and independent researchers, through the lenses of “academicity.”

For a number of years, I have met with Prof. Nadar, both in Sweden and in Southern Africa, and during the past two years we have been working together on the planning and – successful – fundraising of a Pilot Program on Gender, Religion and Health which we have together just effected at UKZN and three other academic institutions in South Africa, Tanzania and Ethiopia during 2012 and 2013. This Pilot Program contains a Masters Course project (funding for 10 Masters students at UKZN and SUN) and a research project (for which Prof. Nadar will be the principal investigator). The overall budget for the Pilot Program is SEK15 million (ZAR 20,543,010), of which SEK3 million (ZAR4, 108, 602) is allocated to the UKZN.

Rev Herman Hallonsten
Programme Officer Health, Gender and Theology
Church of Sweden International Department

The first paper emanating from this research will be presented at the 8th Annual Teaching and Learning Conference at UKZN in September 2014. Below is the abstract:

“Flourishing Guinea Pigs:” Exploring Intersectionality and Interdisciplinarity in a Master’s Program on Gender, Religion and Health at two South African Universities

Recognising the role of higher education and postgraduate studies in addressing social challenges; the Church of Sweden (CoS) in 2013, piloted a Masters programme in the area of gender, religion and health at two universities in South Africa – the Universities of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and Stellenbosch University (SUN). This article describes the inception of the CoS Pilot programme, discusses how the objectives of the program were interpreted and implemented, and finally analyses to what extent the research produced by the students as reflected in their final dissertations reflect and push the boundaries of the intersectionality, interdisciplinarity and “education for advocacy” framing of the Gender, Religion and Health Programme. The article draws on the COS concept notes, course outlines developed for the core modules as well as a select sample of the final dissertations from the class of 2013. Drawing on feminist and Freirian pedagogical principles, the article concludes that the intersectionality and interdisciplinarity that is required of the gender, religion and health program posed the greatest challenge for Masters level students in both institutions. The authors posit that addressing this challenge will require :1) greater pedagogical reflection on how to develop these research skills; 2) a shift from an inter-disciplinary framework to a trans-disciplinary one and 3) a clearer understanding of what it means to be working within an “education for advocacy” paradigm.

6. Scholarship and Publication in the Area of Teaching and Learning

I have 3 chapters in internationally published books and 10 peer-reviewed journal articles related to teaching and learning. The publications are detailed in my CV (Appendix A). I have been involved in reflective practice of teaching through conference presentation, research and publication for a number of years now. I will detail these below.

Firstly, as the international coordinator of the International Network in Advanced Theological Education (INATE) for four years, one of my job requirements was to develop contextual theological curricula in the 8 institutions which belonged to the network. In 2005, I coordinated and organised a conference with the theme: “Contextual Theology in ‘Gendered Colour’: Doing Theology in the Global Village” in Budapest, Hungary. I presented a paper on a key-note panel entitled: “Contextual Theology in ‘Gendered Colour’: International Theological Institutions Doing Theology in the Global Village”. The reflections from this were published as a chapter in a book entitled: “Contextuality and Inter-Contextuality in Theological Education: an African Perspective” in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives--Regional Surveys--Ecumenical trends*. Edited by Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshva Raja (eds.), 2010, Regnum Books: Great Britain.

Secondly, I am invited to give papers at international conferences on my experience of theological education in Africa. For example, I was invited as a theological educator to participate in the “Theological Education in Africa and the Middle East section” of the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Porto Alagre, Brazil. There I presented a paper entitled “Theological Education in Africa and the Challenge of Globalisation.” This paper was subsequently published as “Contextual Theological Education in Africa and the Challenge of Globalization” in an ISI accredited journal, *Ecumenical Review* Vol. 59, no.2-3, April/July: 235-241.

Thirdly, I am committed to developing feminist theological pedagogy in Africa. In this regard, I was the lead-editor of a special double volume of essays in the *Journal of Constructive Theology: Gender, Religion and Theology in Africa* (2009 14.2/15.) with the theme: “Feminist Theological Pedagogy in Africa.” This special issue documented the experiences of lecturers who taught on the module, Theory and Method using a gendered narrative as a case study. What emerged in the course of teaching this module was that both the gendered nature of the case study and the method of using a narrative to teach resulted in each lecturer using principles of feminist pedagogy in their teaching, whether wittingly or unwittingly. This volume of essays is still used as a key resource in developing the current module (See [Appendix L](#) for the full issue of the journal).

“Prof Nadar coordinated an interdisciplinary course for Honours and Masters students called “Theory and Method in Religion and Theology... [She] developed a format which we still use today... This methodology is described in a special issue of the *Journal of Constructive Theology* edited by Prof Nadar.”

Much of my current scholarship on teaching and learning is based on action research – a cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting) where the process involves “both ‘engineering’ particular forms of learning and systematically studying those forms of learning within the context defined by the means of supporting them...” (Cobb et al 2003:9). I was able to “engineer” a trans-disciplinary model of cohort supervision in the College of Humanities and I have been subsequently studying these forms of learning. The “engineering” required a great deal of conceptualising and organising as it was for the first time that such an initiative was being organised across the College in a trans-disciplinary context. These workshops were so highly acclaimed that in 2013 we introduced the 2nd year PhD Cohort as well as a new Masters Cohort. A paper detailing this process was presented at the 2013 Annual UKZN Teaching and Learning Conference and is currently being prepared for publication – See [Appendix M](#).

“ It is fair to say that Professor Nadar is the driving force behind this expanded initiative. But her contribution has not only encompassed organizational and managerial expertise (the whole process runs like clockwork) but extends to the teaching/supervision itself. She is the cohort leader in teaching as well as in organization. She is the linchpin of the plenary discussion sessions, giving short and penetrating insight to the various student presentations..”

Prof. Donal McCracken
Peer Evaluation
APPENDIX C5

7. National and International Impact of Teaching

The UKZN Strategic Plan Document states that teaching and research must be linked to community engagement. Through my teaching I have engaged with communities both nationally and internationally.

High Schools

In 2013, I was invited to Hilton College to address the Grade 11’s and 12’s on research methodology. The pedagogical skills required in a high school are certainly different from that in a higher education context. Nevertheless, my engagement with the students was appreciated by the Director of Academics who reflected on my presentation in a letter of gratitude (See [Appendix N1](#)). I was also invited to speak at the Inanda Seminary launch of a book “A World of Their Own: A History of South African Women’s Education.” by Harvard historian Megan Healy-Clancy Again – it was important here to inspire the girls and to “translate” some of my feminist discourse for them to understand, while doing a review of the book (See [Appendix N2](#)).

Local University

At my own university, my critical reflections on my teaching practice as was submitted in a teaching portfolio for promotion in 2010 was so highly regarded by the panel that I was asked to share my experience of compiling the portfolio with the wider erstwhile Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences. (See **Appendix O** for the full presentation).

National Media

My teaching has also had impact within the media. In 2010, my class on masculinities and religion drew the attention of the national media who came to film one of the classes. This was eventually aired on SABC2 Spiritual Revival in the *Issues of Faith* Series. (**Appendix P**).

Popular International Education Initiatives

In 2007 I developed an entire module reading the Old Testament in contexts of HIV&AIDS. This curricula was aimed at a certificate and diploma level, and much unlearning of my “ivory-tower” academic language had to occur before I could develop the curricula for this distance learning module (**Appendix Q**).

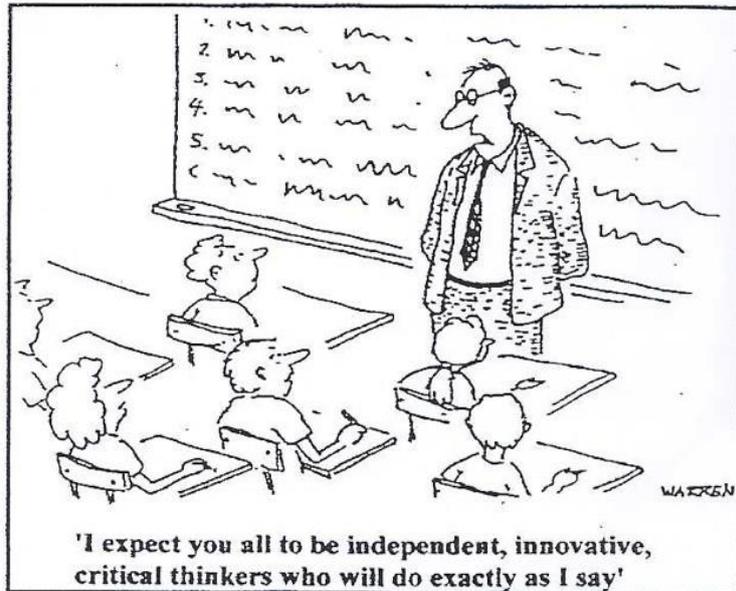
All the testimonials in **Appendix T** show that not only am I invited to share my teaching in other parts of the world (**Appendix T1**) through guest teaching, but my books are prescribed in many courses internationally (**Appendix T2**), and I am also invited to train people for community teaching (**Appendix T3**).

My research in the area of African feminist biblical hermeneutics (the science of interpretation) as well as liberation hermeneutics led to my developing an existing model of community engagement, known as Contextual Bible Studies (CBS) for transformation. These CBS’s have been taken up both nationally and internationally, and I am invited to facilitate these workshops and to “train the trainers.”

Conclusion

The methodology she promotes commonly known as Contextual Bible Study (CBS) is now widely used throughout Sub-Saharan Africa to educate churches and theological institutions about the linkage between sexual- and gender-based-violence and the HIV and AIDS pandemic. As a result churches in the Global North are beginning to take note of this effective, empowering and socially transforming methodology of engaging sacred texts, cultures and religions in the context of sexual violence and the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

The Reverend Dr. Nyambura Njoroge
Programme Executive of Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in
Africa (EHAIA)
Geneva, Switzerland
Appendix T3



Unlike the cartoon above, my philosophy and approach to education is undergirded by a *genuine* commitment to developing independent, innovative and critical thinkers – even those who will disagree with me (as often happens orally as opposed to in the evaluations). I practice this philosophy in my module teaching, my assessment as well as my postgraduate supervision. The contextual feminist pedagogical approach which is underpinned by the principles of a democratic classroom, social constructionism as well as “education for advocacy,” permeates each and every aspect of my teaching, from delivery to assessment. I trust that this has been evident in this teaching portfolio.

Works Consulted

De Gruchy, Steve. 2009. “Kerina As Both Citizen And Christian: Teaching Pastors Why The Gospel Needs The Law In Our Public Life” *Journal for Constructive Theology*, 14/1 and 15/2 (2008/2009) 125-138

Dozier, Verna J. 1991. *The Dream of God: A call to return*. Church Publishing, Incorporated: New York

Du Bois, Barbara. 1983. *Passionate Scholarship: Notes On Values, Knowing, and Method in Feminist Social Science*. Pages 105-116

Freire, Paulo. 1972. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. London: Penguin.

Legge, Marilyn, J. 1996. “Contextualisation” in Russell L and Shannon Clarkson (eds). *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 56-57.

Lieblich, Amia, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach and Tamar Zilber. 1998. *Narrative Research: Reading, Analysis and Interpretation*. Applied Social Research Methods Series Vol. 47. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Macklin, Ruth. 1999. *Against Relativism: Cultural Diversity and the Search for Ethical Universals in Medicine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mbiti, J S. 1975. *An Introduction to African Traditional Religion*. London: Heinemann,

Nadar, Sarojini. 2009. "The Feminist Teacher: Pedagogy Of The Oppressed Woman? *Journal of Constructive Theology*, 14/1 and 15/2: 37-56

Nadar, Sarojini. 2010 "Contextuality and Inter-Contextuality in Theological Education: an African Perspective" in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives--Regional Surveys--Ecumenical trends*. Edited by Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshva Raja (eds.), 2010, Regnum Books, Oxford: Great Britain;

Phiri Isabel and Sarojini Nadar. 2011. "'The Personal is Political': Faith and Religion in a Public University." *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 14 (Faith, Religion and the Public University). 2011, 81-94

Jennifer Reed-Bouley. 2012. Antiracist Theological Education as a Site of Struggle for Justice. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 28.1, 178 - 189.