Course Description

This course examines the characters and stories of selected women as recounted in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament. In an effort to expose students to multiple ways of reading and thinking about scripture, this course engages with a variety of methodological approaches while seeking to draw attention to the theological, historical, and cultural significance of selected Biblical women and their stories.

Course Objectives

1. to become familiar with selected Biblical texts;
2. to become familiar with the basic methodological approaches of Biblical criticism;
3. to think critically about women’s place within the Biblical tradition

Course Requirements

1. completion of assigned reading and active class participation (30%);
2. midterm exam (30%);
3. final essay paper (40%)
   - topic to be decided in consultation with professor
   - due at the beginning of class, November 25

Course Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the SLU bookstore:


Remaining readings are contained in the coursepack, which is available for purchase at the SLU bookstore, or have been put on e-reserve. There are also two copies of the coursepack available on reserve at Pius. In an effort to reduce the cost of the coursepack, I have not included those readings accessible online, but have instead indicated the relevant url or directed you to locate the reading through the SLU e-Journal portal.

Statement of Academic Integrity

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without proper citation, taking a test or doing an assignment for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the consent of the instructor all constitute academic misconduct and will be met with appropriate sanctions. Possible sanctions for violation of academic integrity may include, but are not limited to, assignment of a
failing grade in a course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the university. Students should review the College of Arts and Sciences policy on Academic Honesty, which can be accessed online at http://www.slu.edu/college/AS under “Quicklinks for Students.”

Grading Criteria

**A range = Superior, exceptional, outstanding.** The assignment demonstrates critical, informed, and creative theological inquiry that reflects superior understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student demonstrates depth of insight beyond what is normally expected. Carefully nuanced reasoning and writing, free from material, structural and grammatical error are presupposed in this grade.

**B range = Good.** The assignment demonstrates ready command of full range of concepts and shows some critical, informed, and creative inquiry that reflects above average understanding of essential theological/historical concepts. This means the student has produced an assignment that is free from material, structural and grammatical errors.

**C range = Acceptable.** The assignment demonstrates satisfactory ability to describe overall picture and essential concepts. This means the student has completed the assignment in a manner involving no significant errors. Material may not be free from structural and grammatical errors. Nuanced reasoning is not demonstrated.

**D range = Below average.** The assignment demonstrates reasoning that is neither carefully nuanced nor coherently presented; writing is insufficient in depth of insight and/or use of texts; presentation is not free from material error in structure, spelling and grammar. This means that the student failed to respond adequately to the assignment and its intentions.

**F = Unsatisfactory.** In one or more of the following ways the student: 1) failed to turn in the assignment; 2) did not respond to the assignment as given; 3) submitted work so thoroughly flawed as to indicate that the student did not make a serious effort, 4) was involved in plagiarism or cheating.

**Academic Assistance**

Students who may require academic accommodation for a disability in order to meet the requirements of this course (as outlined in this syllabus) should contact the Office of Disabilities Services. Please telephone the office at 977-2930 or visit Room 131 in the Academic Resources Center located at 3840 Lindell Blvd. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.
Course Outline

Please refer to The New Oxford Annotated Bible for all assigned scriptural readings. Please remember to bring your New Oxford Annotated Bible to every class (even to those for which a Biblical text has not been assigned). I have aimed to assign an average of 100 pages of weekly reading. Some weeks the number of assigned pages will be more, some weeks less, so please plan accordingly. I encourage you to read the assigned secondary source readings with your Bible in hand so that you can refer readily to the scriptural passages under discussion.

8/26: Introduction

8/28: No Class (Mass of the Holy Spirit)

9/2: Introduction to Biblical Criticism

9/4: Eve I
    Genesis 1-3
    Augustine, The Literal Meaning of Genesis (from Eve & Adam (1999))
    • available on e-reserve
    Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae (from Eve & Adam (1999))
    • available on e-reserve
    Christine de Pizan, “Letter of the God of Love” (from Eve & Adam (1999))
    • available on e-reserve

9/9: Eve II
    Phyllis Trible, “A Love Story Gone Awry” (from God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality (1978))

9/11: Eve III
    Genesis 4-5

9/16: Sarah and Hagar
    Genesis 16-18:15, 21:1-21
    Phyllis Trible, “Hagar: the Desolation of Rejection” (from Texts of Terror (1984))
    Jo Ann Hackett, “Rehabilitating Hagar: Fragments of an Epic Pattern” (from Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel (1989))

9/18: Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah
    Genesis 24-30
    Naomi Steinberg, “The Rebekah Cycle: Monogamy” (from Kinship and Marriage in Genesis (1993))

9/23: Dinah I
    Genesis 34
    Meir Sternberg, “Delicate Balance in the Rape of Dinah” (from The Poetics of Biblical Narrative (1985))

9/25: Dinah II
    • available online through SLU e-Journal portal:
      http://hy2ju6vj2n.search.serialssolutions.com/
Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent* (Part I) (We will begin discussion of *The Red Tent* next week)

9/30: The Red Tent I  
Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent* (Part II)

10/2: The Red Tent II  
Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent* (Part III)

10/7: Ruth and Naomi  
Book of Ruth (entire)  
Phyllis Trible, “A Human Comedy” (from *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (1978))  
Danna Nolan Fewell and David Gunn, “A son is born to Naomi!”: Literary Allusions and Interpretation in the Book of Ruth” (from *Women in the Hebrew Bible* (1998))

10/9: Proverbs  
Proverbs 1-9  
Carol A. Newsome, “Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: a Study of Proverbs 1-9” (from *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (1989))  
Bernhard Lang, “Wisdom as a Goddess” (from *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs* (1986))

10/14: Book of Judith  
Book of Judith (entire)  
André Lacocque, “Judith” (from *The Feminine Unconventional* (1990))

10/16: MIDTERM

10/21: Fall Break

10/23: The Lukan Infancy Narrative  
Luke 1-2  

10/28: The Matthean Infancy Narrative  
Matthew 1  
Jane Schaberg, “Matthew’s Account of Jesus’ Origin” (from *The Illegitimacy of Jesus* (1987))  
• available on e-reserve

10/30: Mary in the Protoevangelium of James  
Protoevangelium of James  
• available online at: [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf08.vii.iv.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf08.vii.iv.html)  
Maurice Hamington, “Catholic Sexual Morality and the Blessed Virgin Mary” (from *Hail Mary?* (1995))

11/4: Mary Magdalene I  
Susan Haskins, “De Unica Magdalena” (from *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (1993))

11/6: Mary Magdalene II  
Susan Haskins, “Much Malign’d Magdalen” (from *Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor* (1993))

11/11: The Second Eve  
Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (3.22)  
• available online at: [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.xxiii.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.xxiii.html)  
Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* (100)  
• available online at: [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.viii.iv.c.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.viii.iv.c.html)

11/13: Martha and Mary
Luke 10:38-42
Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Arachne—Weaving the Word” (from But She Said (1992))

11/18: Women’s Leadership in the Early Church I: The Letters of Paul
Romans 16
Karen Jo Torjesen, “Preachers, Pastors, Prophets, and Patrons” (from When Women Were Priests (1993))
Luise Schotroff, “How Justified is the Feminist Critique of Paul?” (from Let the Oppressed Go Free (1993))

11/20: Women’s Leadership in the Early Church II: The Letters of Paul
1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 1 Timothy 2:9-15
  • available online at: http://www.djmoophoto.com/articles/1Tim2.pdf
David M. Scholer, “1 Timothy 2.9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church’s Ministry” (from A Feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles (2003))

11/25: Mary beyond the Text: The Virgin of Guadalupe
FINAL ESSAYS DUE
  • available online through SLU e-Journal portal: http://hy2ju6vj2n.search.serialssolutions.com/
F. Gonzalez-Crussi, “The Anatomy of a Virgin” (from Goddess of the Americas (1996))
  • available on e-reserve
Sandra Cisneros, “Guadalupe the Sex Goddess” (from Goddess of the Americas (1996))
  • available on e-reserve
Guillermo Gómez-Peña, “The Two Guadalupes” (from Goddess of the Americas (1996))
  • available on e-reserve

11/27: Thanksgiving Break

12/2: The Virgin Revisioned: Contemporary Theological Interpretations of Mary
  • available online at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatic_n_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html
  • available online through SLU e-Journal portal: http://hy2ju6vj2n.search.serialssolutions.com/

12/4: Discussion of and Response to Final Essays

12/12: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe