

Course Syllabus: Women in the Biblical Tradition

Dr Hanna Tervanotko

Mondays and Thursday 13:30-14:20

BSB 120

Contact information:

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Course work (requirements)

1. **Active participation in the classes and tutorials** (including preparation) (15%)
2. **Course assignments**
 - 3 mini papers, ca. 800 words (each 15% x 3 = 45%) and a final paper of ca. 1000 words (30%)
3. **10 Quizzes** (10%)

Short description: The role and status of women in antiquity is still debated. In this course we will analyze the portrayal of women in Biblical literature taking into consideration some material artifacts. We will read how women are depicted in different genres of literature, and what the ancient authors tell about women. In addition, we will explore some key theories of the feminist and gender studies and their application to the Biblical studies. What factors may have influenced the ways in which the ancient authors portrayed women? By analyzing the portrayal of women and gender in antiquity the course will also provide conceptual tools to engage in contemporary debates concerning them.

Course objectives:

- students get an overview of how gender and women are present in ancient Jewish and Christian texts and traditions;
- students get conceptual tools to analyze women and other figures that appear in the margins of Biblical traditions;
- students learn to distinguish between primary and secondary sources and get insights how all sources do not answer contemporary questions;
- students comprehend that already in antiquity gender was interpreted in various ways, different groups held different understandings on the role and function of women;
- students get instruments to participate contemporary debates that concern gender roles and equality.

Course material:

- Access to an English translation of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament and Apocrypha (preferably NRSV). In addition, we will consult the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pseudepigraphic writings. All sources can be accessed via internet or distributed course materials.
- A selection of articles available via Avenue course platform.

Date	Topic	Requirements
7.9.	Welcome and Introduction	
11.9.	Material and Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Ridge, “When Women Interpret Bible” in <i>Women’s Bible Commentary</i>, 1-13 • Christopher Rollston in Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-rollston/the-marginalization-of-women-biblical-value-we-dont-like-to-talk-about_b_1833648.html
14.9.	Wives and Mothers – Eve, the first mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 2-3 • Carol Meyers, “Eve in Eden: Genesis 2-3” chapter 2 in <i>Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context</i>, 59-81.
18.9.	Wives and Mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 12-36 (50) • Judges 4-5 • J. Cheryl Exum: “Mother in Israel: A Familiar Figure Reconsidered” http://www.interpretingscripturecorrectly.com/classic-mother-in-israel-exum/
21.9.	Marriage and Intermarriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keturah (Gen 25:1-4) • Zipporah (Exod 2:11-23; 4:8-31; 18; Num 12:1) • Joseph’s wife (Gen 41:45, 50-52) • Batsheba (2 Sam 11-12) • Salomon’s foreign wives (1 Kings 11:1-6) • Legislation on beautiful captive woman (Deut 21:10-14) • Prohibitions against intermarriage (e.g., Num 25:7-13; Deut 7:3; Mal 2:11; Ezra 9:1-2, 10:10-11; Neh 10:31) • Sarah Sheckman, “What do we know about marriage in ancient Israel?” • Tracy Lemos, “Intermarriage” • Tracy Lemos, “Weddings and Marriage Traditions in Ancient Israel”
25.9.	Slaves and Concubines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hagar (Gen 16, 21) • Levite concubine (Judges 19-20) • Rizpah (2 Sam 3:1, 6-7; 21:1-6; 2 Samuel 7-14) • What about Ruth? • Phyllis Trible, <i>Texts of Terror</i> (Hagar 9-29, Judges, 65-87) • Samantha Joo, “Counter-Narratives: Rizpah and the ‘Comfort Women’ Statue” at http://shiloh-project.group.shef.ac.uk/?p=1633

28.9.	Daughters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal context: Daughters of Job (Job 1:1-2; 42:14-15) • Zelophehad's daughters (Num 27) • Incest: Lot's daughters (Gen 19) • Léonie J. Archer, "Early Years: The Life of the Girl while a Minor" in <i>Her Price is beyond Rubies</i>, 17-42.
2.10.	Sisters and siblings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miriam texts (Exod 15:20; Num 12; 26:59; 1 Chr 5:29; Micah 6:4) • Women in genealogies (Num 26 and 1 Chr) • Dinah (Gen 34) and Tamar (2 Sam 13) • Amy Kalmanofsky, "Ideal and Dangerous Sisters of the Bible," in <i>Dangerous sisters of the Hebrew Bible</i>, available: http://www.augsburgfortress.org/media/downloads/9781451469950Intro.pdf • Sara Kipfer, "Love Turns into Hate: The Rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13:1-22) in Baroque Art" https://www.sbl-site.org/publications/article.aspx?ArticleId=800
5.10.	More Foreign Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rahab (Joshua 2, 6) • Pharaoh's Daughter (Exod 2) • Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10) • Athalya Brenner, "Foreign Women," in <i>The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative</i>, 115-122 • Carol L. Fontaine, "Queen of Sheba," https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/queen-of-sheba-bible • Diana Edelman, "Women of Salomon" https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/women-of-solomon-bible • Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "Immigrants and Foreigners in Bible," https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/immigrants-and-foreigners-in-the-bible
9.- 13.10.		Mid-term Recess – Enjoy!
16.10.	Women and Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy 12-26 • Tikvah Frymer-Kensky, "Patriarchal Family Relationships and Near Eastern Law," <i>Biblical Archaeologist</i> Fall, 1981, 209-214, https://wit-resources.s3.amazonaws.com/Patriarchal-Family-Relationships-and-Near-Eastern-Law.pdf • Pamela Barmash, "International Law" • Angelika Engelman, "Deuteronomy: Rights and Justice for Women in the Law," in <i>Feminist Biblical Interpretation</i>, 84-99
19.10.	Women's Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King Lemuel's mother (Prv 31:1) • Tobit 1:1-8 • Esther (Est 9:29, 32) • James L. Greshaw, "The Missing Voice," in <i>Education in Ancient Israel</i>, 187-205 • Archer, <i>Her Price is beyond Rubies</i>, 69-101

23.10.	Women and Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannah in the temple (1 Sam 1:2-2:21) • Witch of Endor (1 Sam 28:3-25) • Carol Meyers, <i>Rediscovering Eve</i>, 147-170
26.10.	Women and Prophecy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miriam (Exod 15:20-21; Num 12:1-15; Micah 6:4) • Deborah (Judg 4-5) • Huldah (2 Kings 22) • Noadiah (Neh 6:14) • Isaiah's wife (Isa 8:1-4) • Carol Meyers, <i>Rediscovering Eve</i>, 171-179 • Hugh Williamson, "Prophetesses in the Hebrew Bible", in <i>Prophets and Prophecy in Ancient Israel</i>, 65-80
30.10.	Women leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deborah and Miriam (see above) • Prisca (1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16: 3-5; 2 Tim 4:19) • Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2), also other women in Rom 16 • Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3) • Lydia (Acts 16) • Aviva Cayam, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/leadership-and-authority • Mika Ahuvia, http://thetorah.com/jewish-queens-from-the-story-of-esther-to-the-history-of-shelamzion/ • Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Reading Real Women through the Undisputed Letters of Paul," in <i>Women and Christian Origins</i>, 199-220
2.11.	Working Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture (Prv 31:16; Josh 15:16-19; cf. Ruth working in the field) • Mill (Exod 11:5; Matt 24:41) • Shepherding (Gen 29:9; Exod 2:16) • Midwives (Exod 1:15) • Nurses (Gen 35:8; Exod 2:7; 2 Sam 4:4; 1 Kings 1:4) • Professional mourners (Jer 9:17) • Servants (Acts 12:13) • Tentmaking (Acts 18:3) • Commercial tasks (Acts 16:14) • Lynn Cohick, <i>Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life</i>, section on Women's Work, 225-256.
6.11.	Female heroines in literary genre of "novella"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esther • Judith • Klara Butting, "Esther: About Resistance against Anti-Semitism and Sexism," 207-220 • Claudia Rakel, "Judith: About a Beauty Who Is Not What She Pretends to Be," 515-530
9.11.	Qumran and Women - Archeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the video on YouTube "Introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls" • Leon Levy Library introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls
13.11.	Qumran and Women - Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hanna Tervanotko, "Em in the DSS" • Eileen Schuller and Cecilia Wassen, "Women, Daily Lives," in DSSE 2:981-984

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannah M. Cotton “Teks” DSSE 2:984-987 • Maxine L. Grossman, “The World of Qumran in Gendered Perspective,” in <i>Women and the Bible: Early Jewish Writings</i>, 225-246.
16.11.	Women and Beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph (Gen 39) • David (1 Sam 16-17) • Absalom (2 Sam 14) • Sarah (Gen 12) • Rebecca (Gen 24; 26) • Rachel (Gen 29) • Tamar (2 Sam 13) • Abigail (1 Sam 25) • Abishaag (1 Kgs 1:1-4) • Esther (Est 2) • Daughters of Job (Job 42:13-15) • On wife’s beauty in general (Ben Sira 26:13-18; 36:21-26) • Susanna (Susanna 2, 31) • Judith (8:7; 10:7; 19, 23) • Sarah, Tobiah’s wife (Tobit 6:12) • Hanna Tervanotko, “Beautiful Men and Women” • Video: Susanna and the Elders (http://shiloh-project.group.shef.ac.uk/?p=1605)
20.11.		Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting: NO CLASS
23.11.	Women and Death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah (Gen 23:1-20) • Rachel (Gen 35:19-20; 48:7) • Rebecca and Leah (Gen 50:13) • Miriam (Num 20:1) • Gospels – the role of women when Jesus dies? (Matt 26:1-12; Mark 14:8; 16:1; Luke 23:54-56) • Archer, <i>Her Price is Beyond Rubies</i>, 250-267
27.11.	Unstable gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses (Num 11:11-15) • Isaiah (Isa 42:14) • Paul (1 Tess 2:7-8) • Jeremiah (Jer 4:31) • Female images of God (Deut 32:18; Isa 49:13-15; Hos 11:4, Psalms 22; 71) • J. Juliana M. Claassens, “God as Midwife” in <i>Mourner, Mother, Midwife: Reimagining God’s Presence in the Old testament</i>, 69-79.
30.11.	History of Research on Women in the Bible: Current Trends and Future Directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to the history of feminist Biblical studies: From Biblical Feminist Scholarship/ Kathleen M. O’Connor, “The Feminist Movements Meet the Old Testament,” • Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, “Communication as Communion: Elements in A Hermeneutic of Lo Cotidiano” 27-36 • Nyasha Junior, “Womanist Biblical Interpretation,” 37-46

4.12.		Summing up: Bible and women and gender? Questions? Instructions for the final paper
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COURSE POLICIES:

Cellular/smart phones, other handheld devices, and laptop computers

The use of cell/smart phones or other handheld devices will not be allowed in class, not even under the desk or cleverly tucked behind the seat in front of you! Disregarding this rule will result in a deduction of your grade for the course. Laptops are allowed for purposes of the class, but use for other purposes (e-mail, surfing the web, etc.) will also result in the lowering of your overall grade.

Academic integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. The academic credentials that you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is knowingly to act or fail to act in a way that results, or could result, in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and can be easily avoided by simply citing the source of your information whenever there is any doubt. Please be sure to do this – better safe than sorry!

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we may use a web-based service (turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically through Avenue, where it will be run through turnitin.com to check for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to turnitin.com must

still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to turnitin.com; however, the instructor will still assure (by other means) that standards of academic integrity have been upheld. To see the turnitin.com policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Academic accommodation of students with disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail at sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodationStudentsWithDisabilities.pdf>).

Modifications to this course

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check her/his McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

E-mail communication

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

McMaster Student Absence Form

The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a selfreporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report MEDICAL absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work (that is less than 25% of the course grade). Please note that this tool cannot be used during any final examination period. You may submit a maximum of ONE Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation. If you are absent for more than 3 days, exceed one request per term, are absent for a reason other than medical, or have missed work worth 25% or more of the final grade, you MUST visit your Faculty Office. You may be required to provide supporting documentation. This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.