[W]hen a Library expels a book of mine and leaves an unexpurgated Bible lying around where unprotected youth and age can get hold of it, the deep unconscious irony of it delights me... (Mark Twain, Letter to Mrs. F. G. Whitmore, Feb. 7, 1907)

JUDA 136/HINE 104

SEX IN THE BIBLE

Instructor:

Prof. William H. C. Propp. Office: 4012 Humanities and Social Sciences (H&SS) Building, Muir campus. Email: wpropp@ucsd.edu. Office phone (only during office hours): 858-534-6187. Office hours: Monday 3-5 pm or by appointment.

Course aim:

To explore ancient Israelite attitudes toward human sexuality through close reading of selected biblical texts. Also considered will be later developments in Judaism and Christianity. Topics include hetero-, homo- and transsexuality, androgyny, puberty, chastity, celibacy, modesty, monogamy, polygamy, (in)fertility, adultery, bastardy, impotency, sodomy, pornography, bestiality, voyeurism, exhibitionism, nudism, transvestitism, onanism, orgasm, phallic symbolism, menstruation, genital mutilation, masturbation, procreation, ejaculation, castration, prostitution, miscegenation, rape, incest, bondage, nymphomania, divine sex, the Oedipus Complex, coitus interruptus (a.k.a. the withdrawal method), dildos, aphrodisiacs and groping.

Required/recommended readings:

1. The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NOAB). (If you already own a Bible and prefer to use it, make sure it's an accurate, reputable translation—definitely not the New International Version popular among American Protestants or any of several orthodox Jewish versions that incorporate traditional rabbinic interpretation and legend into the translation. Note: you will still be required to read the NOAB supplementary essays through course reserves; also note that, depending upon whether your Bible is published for Jews or Christians, citations in the syllabus may be off by a verse or two.)
2. E-reserves and other on-line materials; library e-reserves code wp136
3. Various course materials to be distributed in class

Field Trip:

On April 26, a bus will take those of us wishing to attend to the California Science Center Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition. (Highly recommended) See:

UCSD will cover the cost of transportation and admission!

Lecture Event

On May 21 at 5:00 pm, the co-curator of the CSS exhibit, Prof. Risa Levitt Kohn of San Diego State University, will give a lecture entitled “Jewish and Christian Origins as Revealed by the Dead Sea Scrolls” at the UCSD Faculty Club (Required unless excused by me).

Course assignments/evaluation:

1. Two 6-10-page essays (ca. 1800-3000 words), each 35% of final grade. Pick a biblical passage or a set of passages dealing some aspect of human sexuality. (This may be one we have studied; if you pick another you must get my approval.) Summarize it briefly, read some commentaries in the library, analyze any details or ambiguities pertinent to your theme; then place the story/law/poem in its broader anthropological/psychological/sociological/literary/biblical context. With my approval you may also write about the later interpretation(s) of your passages. Requires citations (format up to you) and a bibliography. These papers are due on class 16 (5/4) and at the final (6/12). You must submit, along with a paper copy of your final draft, a marked-up paper copy of your penultimate draft, so I can track your rewriting process.

N.B.: If you come to office hours, I will help you with your paper.

2. A final exam (20%). You will be asked to identify biblical characters we have met and comment briefly on passages discussed in class.

3. Class participation/pop quizzes/oral presentation (10%). There will be six pop quizzes; they should be quite easy, providing you’ve done the reading before class. If you take all six, only the top five scores count. During the last week, you will be asked to make a 5-10-minute oral presentation of an item in the news (or from fiction) and compare it to a biblical passage about sex. Frequent participation throughout the quarter will also add points to this component of your grade.

1. Introduction – why give this course? why take this course? 3/30

   Reading for next class:

   Spencer A. Rathus, Jeffrey S. Nevid, Lois Fichner-Rathus, Human Sexuality in a World of Diversity (Allyn and Bacon, 2002), 2-35

2. Nature and Culture - what is sexuality? 4/1

   Reading for next class:


3. **Homo-, hetero-, trans- and asexuality 4/3**

Reading for next class:

*NOAB* pp. 2185-2193

4. **What is (and isn’t) the “Bible”? 4/6**

Reading for next class:

*NOAB* pp. 2221-2226, 3-6 (pp. 2227-2234 optional)

5. **What was (and wasn’t) the Bible? 4/8**

Reading for next class:

Genesis chaps. 1-3; Deuteronomy 1:38-39; 2 Samuel 14:12-20; 19:34-37; Isaiah 7:11-17


6. **The Big Bang and carnal knowledge 4/10**

Reading for next class:

Bruce L. Gerig, "Homosexuality in Ancient Egypt."  
http://epistle.us/hbarticles/ancientegypt1.html

Ibid., “Homosexuality in the Ancient Near East, Beyond Egypt”  
http://epistle.us/hbarticles/neareast.html

http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704197

Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus (Beacon Press, 1994), 81-97

7. Friendship, transsexuality, homosexuality and hospitality 4/13

Reading for next class:


Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel (McGraw Hill, 1965), 7-8, 24-38, 53-55


8. Monogamy, concubinage and the perils of polygamy 4/15

Reading for next class:


9. This lesson is brought to you by the letter “A” 4/17

Reading for next class:


10. The “trophy wife” 4/20

Reading for next class:

Leviticus 19:29; chap. 21; Deuteronomy 23:17-18; Joshua chap. 2; Judges 11:1-2; 1 Kings 3:16-28; 22:29-38, 45-46; Proverbs 6:20-35; chap. 7; 29:3; Isaiah chap. 23; Joel 3:1-3 (Jewish Bibles Joel 4:1-3)
[http://bhporter.com/Porter%20PDF%20Files/Harlot%20as%20Heroine..pdf](http://bhporter.com/Porter%20PDF%20Files/Harlot%20as%20Heroine..pdf)


### 11. The “oldest profession” 4/22

Reading for next class:

Genesis chap. 24; 29:1-20; chap. 38; Exodus chap. 2; Ruth (whole book)


### 12. Single woman desperately seeking husband, or, How to land your man 4/24

Reading for next class:


[http://jot.sagepub.com/content/20/67/87.full.pdf+html](http://jot.sagepub.com/content/20/67/87.full.pdf+html)


### 13. Rape - a matter between men 4/27

Reading for next class:


http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/1568533962580991

Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God’s Phallus* (Beacon Press, 1994), 128-134

ADD NEXT TIME: PROPP/EILBERG-SCHWARTZ ON KID IN MILK

14. **Good breeding vs. inbreeding, or, My sister, my bride 4/29**

Reading for next class:


Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism* (Indiana University Press, 1990), 177-194


(Optional: Propp, “Physics for Prophets – An Ancient Israelite Delivers a TED Talk” http://www.bibleinterp.com/PDFs/Propp4.pdf is a lighter presentation of ideas from the previous reading, developing the nuclear power plant analogy to its logical conclusion--and beyond!)

15. **The “yuck factor” - sexuality and purity 5/1**

Reading for next class:


Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism* (Indiana University Press, 1990), 115-140

Simon B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Scholars Press, 1997), 1-5, 148, 181-196

http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb07779


Greek mythology - http://www.theoi.com/Titan/Pasiphae.html

http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/bdodge/scaffold/gg/zeuslover.html (just Io, Ganymede and Callisto)
http://www.pantheon.org/articles/l/leda.html

Hittite Laws §§ 187-200
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/1650nesilim.asp


16. **Fun with animals 5/4**

Reading for next class:


The Book of Enoch chaps. 6-10

http://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepig/enoch/ENOCH_1.HTM


17. **More fun with gods and angels 5/6**

Reading for next class:

1 Kings 4:32-33 (Christian editions) or 5:12-13 (Jewish editions); Song of Songs (whole book)


18. **Their bodies their selves, or, Flirtation and wet dreams 5/8**

Reading for next class:

Exodus 4:24-26; Judges chaps. 4-5


MAY 11 NO CLASS
19. **Love ya, Mom 5/13**

Reading for next class:

Exodus chaps. 2-4 and 17; Psalm 45

Simon B. Parker, *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Scholars Press, 1997), 49-62, 205-214

[http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb07779](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=acls;idno=heb07779)


20. **If you search long and hard enough, they’re everywhere - “Freudian” symbols in the Bible 5/15**

Reading for next class:

Genesis chap. 4; Deuteronomy 22:5; Judges chaps. 13-16; 1 Samuel 2:1-8; chaps. 9-20, 24, 26; 2 Samuel 1:17-27 (pay attention to sexual symbolism in reference to the masculinity of Samson, Saul, Jonathan and David); 2 Kings 6:26-30


21. **Butch and femme: biblical gender-bending 5/18**

Reading for next class:


[http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/156853393x00421](http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/156853393x00421)


22. **You want us to cut off the ends of our what?! 5/20**

Reading for next class:


http://books.google.com/books?id=V9QrPMN1C4EC&pg=PA110&lpg=PA110&dq=eunuchs+in+ancient+near+east&source=bl&ots=zgkv2ijwpq&sig=LcZ9_3pQzrPxl2tSMGQMPyIZGu4&hl=en&sa=X&ei=TlqUU8OTBMPPoATXioDoAw&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=eunuchs%20in%20ancient%20near%20east&f=false

Kathryn M. Ringrose, “Eunuchs in Historical Perspective,” History Compass 5 (207): 495-506


23. **All of it?! or, High Anxiety 5/22**

Reading for next class:

Esther (whole book)

24. **Impotence and farce, or, Esther: a biblical sitcom 5/27**

Reading for next class:

Deuteronomy 16:21; Judges 6:25; 1 Kings 15:13; 16:33; 18:19; 2 Kings 17:16

William G. Dever, Did God Have a Wife? (Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 209-236 ADD PAGES ON KUNTILLET AJRUD

Exodus 34:11-16; Numbers chap. 25; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; 1 Kings 11:1-13; Hosea chaps. 1-3; Jeremiah chaps. 2-3, Ezekiel chaps. 16 and 23

Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, God’s Phallus (Beacon Press, 1994), 97-109


Renita Weems, Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 58-64, 96-98

25. **God’s wife (?) and God’s gay lover (?!), or, Worship vs. whoreship 5/29**

Reading for next class:
26. Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven: sex in the Christian tradition 6/1

Reading for next class:


David Biale, Eros and the Jews (University of California Press, 1997), chap. 2

http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft2489n812&brand=ucpress

27. It’s not just a good idea, it’s the law: sexuality in rabbinic Judaism 6/3

Reading for next class:

David Biale, Eros and the Jews (University of California Press, 1997), chap. 5

http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft2489n812&brand=ucpress

28. Kabbalistic sex – don’t try this at home; summation 6/5

FINAL EXAM Friday, June 12, 3-6 pm.

Additional Bibliography (Bible)

Susan Ackerman, When Heroes Love – the Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David (Columbia University Press, 2005)

Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, Gender, Power, & Promise – The Subject of the Bible’s First Story (Abingdon Press, 1993)

Esther Fuchs, Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000)

John Kaltner, Steven McKenzie and Joel Kilpatrick, The Uncensored Bible: the Naughty and Bawdy Bits of the Good Book (HarperOne, 2008)


Susanne Scholz, Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible (Fortress, 2010)
Additional Bibliography (sex)


J. H. Geer & W. T. O'Donohue (Eds.), *Theories of Human Sexuality* (pp.335-362). New York: Plenum Press.

