

HB 575³ Women in the Hebrew Bible (on campus)
Phillips Theological Seminary
Spring 2017
Syllabus

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Pre-requisites: HB500 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, PC 500 Interpretation Matters, or an equivalent.

Description: This course is designed as a survey of the Hebrew Bible from the perspective of the female characters in the stories. Unlike most traditional survey courses, in which primary attention is given to the male characters, this course will focus on the women in Israel's faith stories. Students will seek to uncover what can be known about these important women, including: personalities, actions, and faithfulness. This search will be difficult at times because the dominant voices of both the canonical process and biblical interpretation have attempted to divert our attention from the matriarchs of the faith. Where the biblical text and other sources of information (e.g., archeology, extra-biblical materials, etc.) fail, we will use imagination to fill in the gaping holes left in these women's stories. Once more familiarity with these female characters has been gained, the course will discover ways in which these women and their stories may be introduced and integrated into the life of the community of faith (e.g., sermons, bible studies, pastoral care, etc.).

Class Sessions: The class will meet for 2 weekends [2/16-18/2017 & 3/30-4/1/2017]. Students are expected to do assignments ahead of, and between, the two weekends. Class sessions will be held at these times for both weekends: Thursdays – 2:30-6:30 pm; Fridays – 8:30 am-5 pm; and Saturdays – 8:30 am-5 pm.

Approach: This is an upper level seminar course; therefore, a foundational knowledge of the Hebrew Bible will be assumed (i.e., historical/cultural background, literary genres, exegetical methods, etc.). The class sessions will entail both lecture by the professor and class discussions. Some days, students will provide the primary leadership for the class. Regardless of who is teaching, all members of the class will be attentive to that person. Class discussions will be open, honest, and respectful; all opinions will be respected and derogatory language toward another person will not be tolerated. [Behavior or attitudes that are disrespectful of another person, professor or student, will result in significant lowering of the offender's grade.] All participants will covenant together to agree to disagree without hostility.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes: At the end of the course, students will:

1. Know the major female characters of the Hebrew Bible and be able to identify their role and importance in the faith stories.
2. Be more familiar with some of the "minor" female characters of the Hebrew Bible and their roles and importance in the faith stories.
3. Have a better appreciation for the obstacles encountered in studying the women of the Hebrew Bible and will be able to think creatively and critically about how to address these issues.
4. Be able to practically apply their knowledge of women in the Hebrew Bible within a contemporary context context (e.g., speech, counseling, sermon, bible study, etc.).
5. For Exegesis Students: Demonstrate a basic understanding of exegetical methods and be able to apply 3 of them to a chosen text about a woman/women in the Hebrew Bible.

Required textbooks: In addition to the books listed below, there will be required readings taken from other sources. These will be available on the course Moodle site. Students are required to bring a bible to each class. The *Jewish Study Bible* (or another Tanak translation) and the New Revised Standard Version are the two approved translations. Students wishing to use another translation must get approval from the professor. Bracketed information indicates how the textbook will be identified in the Course Schedule.

Brenner, Athalya. *I am . . . Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004. ISBN 9780800636654. [*I am*]

Davison, Lisa. *Preaching the Women of the Bible*. St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2006. ISBN 0827229909. [PWB]

Meyers, Carol. *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. NYC, NY: Oxford, 2013. ISBN 0199734623. [Meyers]

Newsome, Carol, Sharon Ringe, & J. Lapsley, eds. *Women's Bible Commentary*. 3rd Revised Edition. Louisville, KY: WJK Press, 2012. ISBN 066423707X. [WBC]

Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984. ISBN 9780800615376. [ToT]

Recommended text: No required reading assignments will come from these books. They are not included in the Course Schedule but are intended as supplemental reading.

Meyers, Carol, et al, eds. *Women in Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. ISBN 0802849628.

Assessments/Assignments: The requirements of the course are listed below, along with their respective values for the final course grade. All students are expected to turn in

assignments on (or before) the dates they are due. Late assignments will not be accepted, unless prior permission has been granted by the professor. Such extensions will only be approved for emergency situations. **In addition to these, every student is expected to come to class prepared and participate in class discussions & activities. Failure to do this will result in the lowering of student's course grade.**

1. Response Paper: Students will write a 5-7 page (typed) paper in response to Brenner's *I Am*. In the paper, the students will answer the following questions: What is the author's purpose for the book and her methodology? How well does the author fulfill her purpose? What are the positive aspects of her method? What are the drawbacks? How do you think Brenner's approach would be received in your ministry context? Choose one of the female characters given voice in the book. If you were interviewing her, what other questions would you ask? What might she say to your community? The Response Paper account for 20% of the final grade and is due at 2:30 pm [Central] on Feb 16, 2017.
2. Class Presentation: Students will be divided into small groups, and each group will be responsible for leading part of a class session on one of a selected group of women from the Hebrew Bible. The group will be responsible for teaching the class about their particular female character. These presentations will be evaluated on content, presentation, creativity, and time management. More information will be provided on Moodle. Class presentations will be given either on Mar 31st or Apr 1st, 2017, as determined by the professor. The presentation will account for 20% of the final grade.
3. Contemporary Application: Every student will choose one from the following options to compose: a Sermon based on a female biblical character; a Worship Service celebrating the women of the Hebrew Bible; an account of a Pastoral Care Situation in which the story of a Hebrew Bible woman is used; an Educational Experience/Lecture, or some other application approved by the professor based on one or more women in the Hebrew Bible. Instructions for this assignment can be found on the Moodle site, under "Assignments" in the document entitled "Contemporary Application Instructions". The application will account for 25% of the final grade and is due by 5:00 pm [Central] Apr 30, 2017.
4. Exegesis Paper: Students will choose a text that deals with a female character(s) in the Hebrew Bible and write a 15-20 page exegesis paper on that passage. Further instructions will be given in class by the professor. Papers are due to the professor no later than **5 pm [Central] on May 12, 2017.** {For students planning to graduate in May 2017, this assignment is due no later than 5 pm [Central] May 5, 2017.} **Late papers will not be accepted.** *This is the paper you should include in your Student Portfolio.* The exegesis paper will account for 35% of the final grade.

Grades: Letter grades will be determined based on the following scale.

"A" range = 90-100	A+ = 98-100	A = 94-97	A- = 90-93
"B" range = 80-89	B+ = 87-89	B = 84-86	B- = 80-83
"C" range = 70-79	C+ = 77-79	C = 74-76	C- = 70-73
"D" range = 60-69	D+ = 67-69	D = 64-66	D- = 60-63
"F" = 59 and below			



Please let me know right away if you are having difficulties of any sort (academic or otherwise) that are interfering with your work in class. It is much easier to work out difficulties early on than it is to deal with weeks of fuzzy understanding, accumulated missed assignments, missed classes, etc.

Academic Honesty: Integrity is a basic principle of academic work. All students are required to be familiar with the PTS policies regarding "Academic Misconduct". Dishonesty in student work (including, but not limited to: cheating and plagiarism) will not be tolerated in this course. Students who are found guilty of academic misconduct will receive at least a grade of "F" on the assignment in question and have a letter sent to the Dean explaining the situation. Other, more serious consequences are possible as described in the Student Handbook (www.ptstulsa.edu).

Attendance: "At PTS, class attendance and engaged participation are very important. Every member of the faculty and student community is, in fact, both teacher and learner. Therefore, a class absence means more than merely a missed delivery of educational content. It also means the irrecoverable loss of a unique dialogical 'learning-through-teaching' opportunity for oneself and others. In view of this understanding, PTS has an established Attendance Policy that states: Any student who misses 20% or more of the class contact hours for a course, for any reason, cannot pass or successfully audit that course. The intention of the policy is not to be punitive, but to recognize that students should retake courses for credit if they miss a significant number of the class contact hours" (PTS Student Handbook).

Other Policies: All written work should follow Turabian formatting. Assignments may NOT be faxed to the seminary. Students are required to use "Just Language" (see "Just Language Covenant" in Moodle) for all written work. **Out of respect for the class, all cell phones must be turned-off during the session. In emergency situations, phones may be left on vibrate, but students must notify the professor before class.**

Course Schedule: The professor reserves the right to alter this schedule if student and time needs necessitate such a change. This includes, but is not limited to: adding/deleting reading assignments, rearranging topics, and changing due dates for assignments. Due dates will only be changed, if it is to the student's benefit.

Date

2/16 p.m.

Topic(s)

Intro to the Topic
Survey of Material

Assignments

WBC pp 1-26 & 354-364
PWB "Intro", Chs 1-2

	Obstacles Encountered Women in the ANE Women in the Hebrew Bible	"In the Household & Beyond" "A Heifer From Thy Stable" "Feminist Anti-Judaism" "Engendering Syro-Palestinian Archeology" Meyers Chs 1-3 & 7
2/17 a.m.	Women of the Primeval Stories: Eve, Lilith, Human Daughters, Naamah	<i>WBC</i> "Genesis" ¹ "The Patriarchal Stamp of Scrip" "The Literary Characterization" "Gender, Class & Social-Scientific" "Murder They Wrote" Meyers Chs 4-6
2/17 p.m.	The Matriarchs: Hagar & Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel & Leah, Bilhah & Zilpah, Tamar, & Dinah, etc.	<i>ToT</i> "Intro" & Ch 1 "Terrible Silence/Eternal Silence" "Wrong Woman Righted" "Patriarchal Family Relationships" "Black & Jewish Women – Hagar" "Reading Rape in the HB" Meyers Ch 8
2/18 a.m.	Women of the Exodus: Liberators Shiphrah & Puah Jochebed, Bityah, Zipporah, Miriam, Z-Sisters, etc.	<i>WBC</i> – relevant sections <i>PWB</i> Chs 3-4; <i>I am</i> [all] "You Shall Let Every Daughter" "The Hebrew Women Are Not" "Why is Miriam Among"
2/18 p.m.	Women & Israelite Law Women of Josh/Judg: Triumph & Tragedy Rahab, Achsah, Deborah, Jael, Bat, Levite's Concubine, etc.	<i>WBC</i> – relevant sections <i>PWB</i> Ch 5; <i>ToT</i> Chs 3-4 "Law & Philosophy: The Case" "The Strange Case of the Sotah" Meyers Ch 9
3/30 p.m.	Women of the Early Monarchy: Hannah, Rizpah, Michal, Abigail, Bathsheba, Tamar, Queen of Sheba, etc.	<i>WBC</i> – rel. sections; <i>ToT</i> Ch 2 "The Politics of the Royal Harem" "Rapes of Women/Wars of Men" "Adultery in the House of David" "The Wise Women of 2 Sam" "She Came to Test Him"

¹ For the remainder of the Course Schedule, students are required to read the relevant sections of *WBC* (i.e., commentary on the relevant biblical book and the supporting materials).

3/31 a.m.	Women of the Late Monarchy/Exile/Beyond: Jezebel, Athalia, Huldah, etc.	<i>WBC</i> – relevant sections Bach pp 21-32 <i>PWB</i> Chs 6-8 "The Queen Mother & the Cult" "Negotiating the Frame" "Forms of Violence" "What Will Ye See"
3/31 p.m.	Women as Main Characters: Groups: TBA	<i>WBC</i> – relevant sections "Returning Home" "A Son is Born to Naomi" "Reading Esther"
4/1 a.m.	Women as Main Characters: Groups: TBA	<i>WBC</i> – relevant sections "Tradition & Convention" "Heartless Bimbo or Role Model" "The Accused: Susanna"
4/1 p.m.	Telling Their Stories/Telling Our Stories	<i>PWB</i> Ch 13 Meyers Ch 10 & "Epilogue" "Prov 31:10-31 in a S African" "Translation Matters"