



**Course Syllabus
FALL 2013**

**WOMEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
OLDT 0610**

**SEPTEMBER 10 TO DECEMBER 3, 2013
TUESDAYS, 1:00 – 3:50 PM**

INSTRUCTOR: DR. REBECCA G. S. IDESTROM

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 4:15 – 5:00 PM, Thursdays, 10:45-11:45 AM, by appointment

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

What did it mean to be a woman during Old Testament times? In order to gain theological insight into the Bible's portrayal of women, we will examine key Old Testament passages against the background of ancient Israelite society. Contemporary issues surrounding the significance of these texts will be discussed, including feminist interpretations.

PRE-REQUISITES:

Required:

Biblical Interpretation: Interpreting and Applying the Biblical Text (BIBL 0501)

Recommended:

Old Testament Theology and History (OLDT 0511)

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Through this course, the student will learn the following:

A. Knowledge and Understanding

1. to demonstrate a knowledge of the Old Testament texts which relate to women.
2. to be able to identify the various roles of women in Ancient Israelite society.
3. to be able to engage in biblical exegesis which takes seriously the many dimensions of interpreting biblical texts (historical and cultural background, modern historical critical issues, narrative artistry, the role of readers, theological themes, canonical context, history of interpretation).
4. to be familiar with the variety of interpretive approaches taken to biblical texts about women, examining various feminist interpretations in particular, in order to assess their strengths and weaknesses.
5. to develop one's own perspective on interpreting biblical materials about women as it relates to broader issues concerning faith, God, truth, the Church, and the world.
6. to discover theological truths and practical lessons, which can be gleaned from the experiences of the women in the Old Testament, and consider how these may be meaningfully applied to our own context and experiences today.

B. Discipline-specific Skills

1. to learn how to interpret the stories of women in the Old Testament in light of major biblical themes within the biblical canon.
2. to be able to use the available academic resources effectively for doing Bible study, biblical exegesis, and sermon preparation on women in the Bible.

C. Transferable Skills

1. to foster the ability to read biblical texts carefully, paying close attention to detail.
2. to learn self-disciplined study habits and the ability to meet fixed deadlines as set out by the course outline.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.
ISBN: 0-664-22660-4

All other required readings are on Reserve in the Library

B. RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Kroeger, Catherine Clark and Mary J. Evans, eds. *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002. ISBN: 0-8308-1437-X

Meyers, Carol, ed. *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 2000.

Newsom, Carol A., Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Revised and Updated. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The following written assignments will help foster the skills of critical analysis and reflection.

1. Major Research Paper: due November 5, 2013 (50 % of final grade)

The paper may be either exegetical or thematic, e.g. the paper may deal in depth with a specific Scriptural passage dealing with a woman/women or look at a theme directly related to the course. The student may also design a Bible study course or a series of sermons related to women in the Old Testament. The paper should be about 12–15 pages in length (3000–3750 words) double-spaced, plus bibliography.

2. Journal Reflections on Required Readings: due October 1 and December 3, 2013 (40 % of the final grade)

Every week the student will explore a new topic. The student will read and take notes on the assigned readings from the Bible, the articles (on reserve in the library), and the textbook. In their reflection and response, the student will succinctly summarize the main thesis or theme, and critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the views and arguments presented. They will also include a personal response to the readings and to particular issues or questions raised (see questions listed below with the assigned readings). The purpose of this assignment is for the student to be exposed to a variety of perspectives on women in the Old Testament, to reflect, dialogue and interact with the readings, and to give a personal, thoughtful response to the issues raised by the readings and the Scriptures. Each week the student will sign a sheet, indicating whether they have read the required readings from the assigned section for the journal according to the course schedule below. The written response to the questions, however, will be due in two parts, the first three reflections due on October 3 and the rest of the reflections on the last day of class, December 5. These reflections are to be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date. If handed in after class, it will be considered late. The written response for each assigned section of the journal should be two pages in length (double spaced). In some cases, the response may be given in three pages, but more than three pages for each section will not be accepted.

3. Class Participation (10 % of the final grade)

Part of education is learning to critically and fairly evaluate what one reads and to be able to formulate an informed opinion or response which demonstrates careful thought. The readings assigned in this course will challenge the students' thinking and they will need to respond to them both critically and biblically. Part of the learning process will also take place within class discussion. Therefore, it is expected that the student will read all of the required readings prior to coming to the scheduled class so that they can participate in the discussion in class. Since part of the evaluation includes class participation, it is essential that the student regularly and faithfully attends class and comes prepared to participate meaningfully in the discussion of the readings and course content. At the end of the course, the student will evaluate their own class participation, by judging their own commitment to learning in the course as expressed in their engagement with the material through the readings, class discussion and individual thinking about the issues and texts.

4. Optional Drama: (grade value will be negotiated).

Instead of doing one of the weekly readings and journal reflections you may do a drama. Either as an individual or in groups, you may choose a text to dramatize in class. Possibilities include monologues, dramatization of narratives (e.g. stories from Genesis, Exodus 1, Ruth), difficult texts about women (the suspected adulteress in Num 5:11-31, the rite of the spurned widow in Deut 25:5-10), or texts using female images for women (Lamentations, Ezekiel, Hosea). This exercise will help the student reflect upon and personally enter into the experiences, challenges, and issues faced by women in ancient Israel. Opportunities to discuss and respond to the drama in class will be given.

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

1. Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

Accuracy (a fair and accurate presentation of scholarly judgment on the issues) – Is what I say correct? Is it valid? Have I understood the topic or question?

Critical Analysis – Have I understood the main issues? Have I done sufficient research on the topic? Does my paper show critical reflection, interaction and dialogue with the biblical text and with authors writing on the subject?

Organization – Does my paper follow a clear outline? Does my paper have a thesis statement? Is there a clear progression and development of an idea or an argument in the paper? Does my argument have a meaningful order?

Clarity – Does what I say make sense? Will others clearly understand what I am seeking to express?

Good Grammar and Writing – Is my paper clean of spelling mistakes? Is the text punctuated correctly? Does the sentence structure consistently adhere to basic rules of good grammar? Do I use inclusive language?

Well Documented (thorough) – Is my work complete? Does my bibliography reflect sufficient research? Have I fully and accurately documented where I have relied upon

the work of others? Have I provided complete information about my research sources? Will others be able to locate these sources on the strength of my documentation?

2. Matters of Style

You should submit written work in a style consistent with the model outlined either in [*The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*](#) (P. H. Alexander, et al, eds. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999) or the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#). For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.46 to 10.51 and 14.253 to 14.254. Written work ought to be free of spelling mistakes, punctuated correctly, and adhere to basic rules of grammar. It is expected that written work will be submitted in a clear, straight-forward style of academic prose (cf. the guidelines in Strunk and White, [Elements of Style](#)). Written work ought to betray clear organization, argument and coherent thought. The use of inclusive language is expected.

3. Plagiarism and Honesty

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

In all work, you are obliged to pay careful attention to matters of intellectual property, honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs and will not be tolerated in any form whatsoever. Plagiarism, by definition, is the use of the work of another person without proper acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following: copying a sentence or part of a sentence from a book or article without using quotation marks and citing the source; rephrasing another person's words without giving credit for the idea that you have borrowed by citing the source; copying the work of someone else and handing it in as your own. It is assumed that each assignment required for this course will be written independently. Please note that plagiarism in any form on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "F" for the assignment with no opportunity for resubmission.

4. Title Page and Documentation

The title page for all written work ought to include the following:

The title of the paper, name of the course, name of the professor, date of submission, and your name (if you have a Tyndale Campus mailbox, this must also appear on the title page).

Ensure that you have accurately and fully documented sources used in your paper (footnotes are preferred, endnotes or, in the case of a review, parenthetical references may be used). Documentation and notes should be consistent with the model provided in [*The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*](#), or the [*Chicago Manual of Style Online*](#).

5. Late Assignments

The assumption is, of course, that all written work will be submitted on and before the corresponding due dates. Should this not occur, the following policy shall govern the evaluation of your work. For every week late, the grade will be reduced by 5 %, a half a letter grade (e.g. one week late: 82 % A- becomes 77 % B+; two weeks late, 82 % becomes 72 % B-, etc.). Please note that the deduction is accumulated weekly, not daily, and so a student will receive the same penalty whether the assignment is one or six days late.

Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to a heavy work load, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations, or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing using the Tyndale Extension Forms, explaining the reason why the extension is needed. Such requests need to be submitted prior to the due date.

All assignments must be handed in by the last day of exams. No assignments will be accepted after that date (Friday, December 13, 2013), unless the student has a valid reason for an extension. In that case, the student must apply for an extension to the Registrar and not to the professor.

6. Criteria for the Evaluation of Written Work

Your work will be evaluated on whether you answered the specific questions given and whether you followed the general guidelines for submitting written work. For example, the evaluation of your inductive study will be based on whether you followed the specific instructions for doing an inductive study.

7. Submission of Written Work

Students are required to retain a copy of all assignments (hard copy or electronic version). If a student wishes to submit written work by mail, they must be mailed directed to the Professor, c/o Tyndale Seminary. Alternatively, work may be given directly to the Professor at the beginning of class on the due date. If the student does not have a Tyndale Campus mailbox and wishes to have all written work returned to them, they must submit written work with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise assignments will be returned in the student's campus mailbox. Unclaimed assignments are destroyed after six months.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Major Research Paper	50 %
Journal Reflections on Required Readings	40 %
Class Participation	10 %
Total Grade	100 %

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sept 10	Introductory Issues: Images of Women and Challenges of Interpretation
Sept 17	Women in Ancient Israelite Society
Sept 24	Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3
Oct 1	Women of Genesis
Oct 8	Women of Exodus
Oct 15	Women in Old Testament Law
Oct 22	Women in Joshua and Judges
Oct 29	NO CLASS: READING WEEK
Nov 5	The Book of Ruth
Nov 12	Women in Samuel and Kings
Nov 19	Women in the Prophets
Nov 26	Women in the Writings: Esther (guest lecturer)
Dec 3	Women in the Writings: Proverbs, Song of Songs

Sept 10: Introductory Issues: Images of Women and Challenges of Interpretation (No Required Reading)

Sept 17: Women in Ancient Israelite Society: An introduction

Read and critically reflect on the following articles/chapters in preparation for the class. What are your initial impressions of the roles of women in Israelite society? How do the

readings help you understand the lives of women in Ancient Israelite society? What were the challenges for women? How are they similar and/or different from challenges of women today?

Carol L. Meyers, "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, Expanded Edition with Apocrypha, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster/Knox Press, 1998), 251–259.
Grace I. Emerson, "Women in ancient Israel," in R. E. Clements, ed., *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 371–394.

Read also the Introduction (pp. 1-5) in the textbook by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Recommended Further Reading (Always Optional):

Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

Athalya Brenner, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (The Biblical Seminar; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985).

Jennie R. Ebeling, *Women's Lives in Biblical Times* (London: T & T International, 2010).

Mercedes L. García Bachmann, *Women at Work in the Deuteronomistic History* (International Voices in Biblical Studies 4; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

Sept 24: Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3

Read Genesis 1–3. Write a personal reflection on your pre-understanding of what these chapters say about women, their purpose and role. Ponder on the question of who or what has informed your understanding of these texts. What questions do these texts raise for you about women? Read the following articles/chapters and reflect further on what these texts mean? Write your response to and evaluation of the readings. Did they give you new insight into the biblical text? What are some of the critical exegetical and interpretive issues relating to women in Genesis 1–3?

Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing God in Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41 (1973): 30–48.

Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., "Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1–3," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (eds. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991), 95–112.

Richard S. Hess, "Equality With and Without Innocence: Genesis 1–3," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (eds. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 79–95.

Recommended Further Reading (Always Optional):

If you want to read further, you can look at Phyllis Trible's more recent work: "A Love Story Gone Awry," in *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* by Phyllis Trible (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 72–143.

Aída Besancon Spencer, "Equal in Eden: Foundation for Ministry and Marriage," in *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985), 17–42.

Mary J. Evans, *Woman in the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 11–21.

Christiana de Groot, "Genesis," (pp. 1–27) in *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* (Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002).

Oct 1: Women of Genesis

Read and reflect upon the characters of Sarah and Hagar as they are presented in Genesis 16:1-16, 18:9-15, 21:1-21. Read and reflect on Rachel and Leah and their struggles in Genesis 29–30. Write down your initial impressions and questions before reading the following articles/chapters. How do the assigned readings illumine the biblical stories? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each reading? After reading them, what questions do you now have? What can we learn from these four biblical women that is relevant for us today?

Pamela Tamarkin Reis, "Hagar Required," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 87 (March 2000): 75–109.

Read chapter one (pp. 7-25), "Sarah and Hagar: Power and Privileges," by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Mignon R. Jacobs, "Quest for Power in the Family Domain: Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29–30)," in *Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 157–175.

Recommended Further Reading:

Phyllis Trible, "Hagar: The Desolation of Rejection," in *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 9–35.

Paul Edward Hughes, "Seeing Hagar Seeing God," *Didaskalia* 8/2 (Spring 1997): 43-59.

Sharon Pace Jeanson, *The Women of Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphar's Wife* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

Mignon R. Jacobs, *Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 70–79.

Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir, eds., *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on the Women of Genesis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006).

Oct 8: Women of Exodus

Read Exodus 1:8-2:10. What role do the various women play in this narrative? Read Cheryl Exum's two articles on these texts and reflect upon the differences between them. Then read Jacqueline Lapsley's chapter. What different methodologies, questions or insights do these writers bring to the task of interpreting the Exodus story? Do you read the biblical narrative differently after reading these articles, why or why not?

J. Cheryl Exum, "'You Shall Let Every Daughter Live': A Study of Exodus 1:8-2:10," *Semeia* 28 (1983): 63-82, and "Second Thoughts About Secondary Characters: Women in Exodus 1.8-2.10," in Athalya Brenner, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Exodus-Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 75-87.

Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Saving Women: Transgressive Values of Deliverance in Exodus 1-4," in *Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 69-88.

Recommended Further Reading:

Renita Weems, "The Hebrew Women Are Not Like the Egyptian Women: The Ideology of Race, Gender and Sexual Reproduction in Exodus 1," *Semeia* 59 (1992): 25-34 (for an African-American perspective on the text).

Cresy John, et al, "An Asian Feminist Perspective: The Exodus Story (Exodus 1.8-22, 2.1-10)," in R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 267-279 (for an Asian perspective on the text).

Oct 15: Women in Old Testament Law

Read Susan M Pigott, "Leviticus" (pp. 50-69) in *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* (Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002); Lisa Chisholm-Smith, "Menstruation," (pp. 62-63) in *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*.

Read Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Numbers," in *The Woman's Bible Commentary*, Revised and Updated, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012), 79-87.

Read the chapter by Phyllis Bird, "The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus," in Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, S. Dean McBride, eds, *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 397-419.

Reflect critically upon the readings. What do you learn about the place of women within the Law. What questions or comments do you have on the issue of women in OT Law?

Oct 22: Women in Judges

Read and reflect upon the characters of Deborah and Jael as presented in Judges 4-5. What roles do these women play in Israelite history? Consider this question in light of

the larger context of Joshua and Judges. What is your personal view of women playing an active part in war and is it affected by this story?

Read and write a short response to the article by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, “Deborah, Jael, and Sisera’s Mother: Reading the Scriptures in Cross-Cultural Context,” in Jane Dempsey Douglass and James F. Kay, eds., *Women, Gender, and Christian Community* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 13–22.

Read also Rebecca G. S. Idestrom, “Deborah: A Role Model for Christian Public Ministry,” in *Women, Ministry, and the Gospel: Exploring New Paradigms* (eds. Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press Academic, 2007), 17–31. However, for this essay, do NOT write any response to it in your journal. You simply need to report that you have read it.

Read also Judges 13–16, 19–21, paying special attention to the female characters in the stories. Read the following articles by Tribble and Jones-Warsaw. Reflect critically upon the readings. What methods of interpretation are being used? How do they illumine the text? What insights do you find helpful in interpreting these texts? What questions arise from your study of these texts?

Phyllis Tribble, “An Unnamed Woman: The Extravagance of Violence,” in *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 65–91.

Koala Jones-Warsaw, “Toward a Womanist Hermeneutic: A Reading of Judges 19–21,” in Athalya Brenner, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Judges* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 172–186.

Oct 29: READING WEEK (No Required Reading)

Nov 5: The Book of Ruth

Read the book of Ruth and write down your impressions of the characters of Ruth and Naomi. What aspects of the story speak to you personally? What do we learn about God, human relationships, the treatment of the outsider/foreigner, etc from the story? Read and reflect critically on the chapter by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, “Ruth and Naomi,” and the chapter by Judith Kates, “Ruth and *Shavuot*” pp. 187–198 from the book *Reading Ruth*. For rabbinic interpretations of the book of Ruth, read Leila Bronner, “The Regime of Modesty: Ruth and the Rabbinic Construction of the Feminine Ideal,” pp. 61–86 in *From Eve to Esther*.

Read chapter two (pp. 27–48), “Ruth and Naomi: Economic Survival and Family Values,” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Judith A. Kates, “Women at the Center: Ruth and *Shavuot*,” in J. A. Kates and G. T. Reimer, *Reading Ruth: Contemporary Women Reclaim a Sacred Story* (New York:

Ballantine Books, 1994), 187-198. This book presents a group of Jewish women's reflections on the story of Ruth and Naomi.

Leila Leah Bronner, *From Eve to Esther: Rabbinic Reconstructions of Biblical Women* (Gender and the Biblical Tradition; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 61-81.

Recommended Further Reading:

Phyllis Trible, "A Human Comedy," in *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 166-199

Nov 12: Women in Samuel and Kings

The narratives of Samuel and Kings recount stories of both well-known, often royal, women as well as more obscure, often unnamed women. But each woman plays an important role in the narrative. Read the following Scripture passages and essays and then write your reflections on them.

Read chapter four (pp. 69-90), "Michal, Abigail, and Bathsheba: In the Eye of the Beholder," by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). Reflect on the three wives of David and what we can learn from them.

Read the following biblical narratives and readings about four women (not from the royal court) from this time period: Hannah, the Widow of Zarephath, the Unnamed Widow, and the Wise Woman of Abel Beth Maacah.

First read and reflect on the story of Hannah as found in 1 Samuel 1:1–2:11, 18–21. What do you learn about Hannah and God in the story?

Second, carefully read 1 Kings 17:1–24 and 2 Kings 4:1–7, and reflect upon the character and faith of the widow of Zarephath and the unnamed widow.

Then read the following chapter, "The Faith of Two Unnamed Women," in Judette A. Gallares, *Images of Faith: Spirituality of Women in the Old Testament* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 133–156.

What do you learn from the stories of these women?

Third, read 2 Samuel 20:14–22 and Robin Gallaher Branch, "The Wise Woman of Abel Beth Maacah: Wisdom in a Time of Crisis," in *Jeroboam's Wife: The Enduring Contributions of Old Testament's Least-Known Women* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 63–82.

What do you learn about wisdom from this unnamed woman known to be wise?

Recommended Further Reading:

Read the commentary of “Samuel” by Jo Ann Hackett in *The Woman’s Bible Commentary*, Revised and Updated, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012), 150-163. “The Women of 1 and 2 Kings,” by Alice Ogden Bellis, in *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women’s Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 160–176.

Nov 19: Women in the Prophets

Read first the book of Hosea, making brief notes about the images of women in the prophetic book. How do these images of women affect you?

Read Kerren E. Morrell and Catherine Clark Kroeger, “Hosea” (pp. 432–442) in *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary* (Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002); and read Julie Ann Hilton, “Isaiah” (pp.352–369) in *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*.

Reflect critically upon the issue of the images of women in the prophets based upon your readings.

Read chapter five (pp. 91-115), “Gomer: Who Betrayed Whom?” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

How does the story and experience of Gomer and Hosea impact you and your understanding of God and his relationship with his people?

Recommended Further Reading:

Wilda C. Gafney, “Female Prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures,” in *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 76-117.

Nov 26: Women in the Writings

Quickly read through the book of Esther, giving attention to the question of who is the hero or heroine in the story? Read and critically comment on the following three readings. How do the readings illuminate your understanding of the story of Vashti, Esther and Mordecai?

Chapter three (pp. 49-67), “Vashti and Esther: Models of Resistance,” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, “More than Just a Pretty Face: Critical, Rabbinical, and Feminist Perspectives on Esther,” in *Far More Precious than Jewels: Perspectives on Biblical Women* (Gender and the Biblical Tradition: Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 164-193.

Sidnie Ann White, “Esther: A Feminine Model for Jewish Diaspora,” in Peggy L. Day, ed., *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 161–177.

Dec 3: Women in the Writings: Part Two

Read Proverbs 1–9, and 31, noting the images of women in this book. Read also the Song of Songs, and note how the woman is depicted in this book.

Read chapter six (pp. 117-134) “The Good Wife: Who *Is* a Worthy Woman?” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Read the chapter by Phyllis Trible, “Love’s Lyrics Redeemed,” *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* by Phyllis Trible (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 144-165.

How do these readings inform your understanding of the images of women in these two biblical books?

Recommended Further Reading:

Claudia V. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Bible and Literature Series 11; Sheffield: Almond/JSOT Press, 1985).

Carol A. Newsom, “Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs 1–9,” in Peggy L. Day, ed., *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 142-160.

For the conclusion to your journal:

Pick any two women from the Old Testament and write a prayer for each, as if you were that woman (e.g. a prayer of Sarah, Leah, Hannah, Bathsheba, Gomer, etc). Try to put yourself in their shoes and imagine what they would pray, based on what you know about them from the biblical account.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Besides the above articles, books, and recommended readings, the textbook provides an excellent resource for bibliography in this field of study.

See also the bibliographies found in the recommended textbooks:

Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds. *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*; Carol Meyers, ed., *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, and Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds. *The Women’s Bible Commentary*. Revised and Updated.