

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

Hebrew 2704 ~ Autumn 2016

Women in the Bible and Beyond

Meeting Time/Location

Instructor:

Office Hours:

Office:

Email:

From Eve to Deborah and from Rebecca to Delilah, this course examines the cultural images and legal status of women during biblical times and beyond. How have writers and readers found new meanings in these characters and narratives from biblical times to the present day? Why do so many people, from religious scholars to artists to contemporary feminists, keep coming back to women like Rachel, Miriam, and Ruth?

Tracing the many re-readings and re-writings of biblical and rabbinic texts over the centuries, we will consider diverse representations and interpretations of these ancient women in history, art, literature, feminism, and religious studies. We will begin with the Hebrew Bible, but we will also analyze a wide variety of texts and visual images from ancient to modern times.

GOALS

- ❖ To analyze the representations of women in the Hebrew Bible, covering a wide spectrum of biblical narratives and characters.
- ❖ To examine the historical and legal status of women in ancient Israel, and the ways in which that status is reflected in the Hebrew Bible.
- ❖ To trace ancient, early modern and modern rewritings and reinterpretations of biblical women in theology, art, music and literature.
- ❖ To enable students to pursue their own interests in history, literature, art, literary criticism, feminism, and religious studies, as they relate to the images and interpretations of Biblical women.

This course fulfills a General Education breadth requirement, with the following goals and learning outcomes:

Literature

Goals: Students evaluate significant text in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; and critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students analyze, interpret, and critique significant literary works.

2. Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students appraise and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures.

By focusing on biblical and post-biblical narratives about women, students will become familiar with the Hebrew Bible and will analyze the ways in which this foundational text has been interpreted, rewritten and challenged in a variety of cultures, genres and historical time periods.

Note: This class will look at the Bible, and by extension, God and religious belief, from different perspectives. Depending on your background, you may find some of the ideas that we discuss offensive, naïve, sacrilegious, or subversive. This class does not seek to change your personal beliefs, but to expose you to a variety of approaches to reading and interpreting the Bible and to help you understand different beliefs and interpretive practices. Please come to class with an open mind and a willingness to discuss different perspectives in a respectful way.

TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS:

The following book will be used in this course, and can be found at local bookstores or online:

1. Bible.

Most versions are acceptable, but it is important to have a print version (not an online text) that you can bring to class every day. Some examples of common Bibles that are fine to use: Revised English, New English, [New] Jerusalem, New International, [New] Jewish Publication Society, New American, [New] Revised Standard, New American Standard, [New] King James). If you do not own a Bible, you can find copies at used book stores or online.

Other assigned readings will be made available on Carmen. Please make sure that you have access to this class on Carmen and let me know *immediately* if you have trouble accessing the course website. Readings must be completed by the day that they are assigned (ie, read the “Hebrew/Israelite Literature” before coming to class on August 26th). Please be sure to bring the Bible and **hard copies** of other assigned readings to class, because we will be referring to and quoting from the text.

REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, Participation & Preparation (15%)

- Complete the assigned reading *before* class. Make sure to pace yourself – don’t leave everything to the night before or the day of class because you’ll have too much to process effectively. Use the questions posted on Carmen to help guide your reading.
- Participate in class discussions. This course revolves around class lectures and discussions, including significant material not necessarily included in the readings. Come to class prepared to be an active participant: ready to talk about the readings, to consider different viewpoints and to ask questions. You will be graded on how you engage the material and other students, not how much you know about the subject. Not everyone feels comfortable participating in class, but if it’s difficult for you to speak up

in discussions, try to show your interest and preparation by asking questions, taking an active role in group work, and speaking to me outside of class.

- Take part in in-class assignments. There will be both individual and group assignments during class sessions.
- How can you do well on this portion of your grade? Attend class and keep up with the assigned readings and keep the reading questions (posted weekly on Carmen) in mind as you read. Jot down notes or brainstorm responses to those questions *even before* you come to class. This will also help you prepare for the final exam at the end of the semester.

Papers (30%)

- **Two papers** will be assigned over the course of the semester. The first is due **September 21st**, the second on **November 16th**. Each paper will be 1200-1300 words long (approximately 4-5 double-spaced pages).
- Papers will ask you to analyze specific moments in a text, compare different texts and in general, to relate ideas from different class sessions. There will be no outside research expected for these papers.
- Paper topics will be distributed 10 days before papers are due, and must be submitted electronically via the Carmen dropbox before class on the due date.
- Late papers will lose 3 points/day (A → A- → B+).
- You may rewrite any paper turned in on time that receives a grade lower than B. The final paper grade will be an average of the original and rewritten paper grades.

Project (25%)

- Over the course of the quarter, each student will give a short (8 minute) presentation on a biblical figure and later rewriting or interpretation of their own choosing.
- Within one week of the presentation, students must submit an argumentative paper (1200-1300 words) related to the presentation.
- The project grade will be a combination of the presentation grade (45%) and the paper grade (55%).
- More information about the project will be provided in class.

Final Exam (25%)

- The final exam will be given at the end of the quarter during the university scheduled time, **Thursday, December 15, 12-1:45pm**. It will include short questions as well as longer essay questions, and will cover material from the entire semester.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Attendance, Participation, Preparation	15%
Papers	30%
Project	25%
Final Exam	30%

Grading scale: A (93-100) A- (90-92) B+ (87-89) B (83-86) B- (80-82) C+ (77-79) C (73-76) C- (70-72) D+ (67-69) D (60-66) E (below 60)

CLASS POLICIES

Absences: To do well in this class, you need to be present and awake. Since things do come up (illness, family issues, other commitments), you may be absent two times without penalty. After those two absences, each additional unexcused absence will lower your overall grade, up to 5% per unexcused absence. This could potentially have a major effect on your grade – in fact, you could fail the class for missing too many classes.

- After 2 absences, please let me know by **email** if you need to miss class, preferably ahead of time. If you are ill for a significant period of time, or have other reasons that prevent you from attending class, please let me know as soon as possible. I will decide the grade penalty (up to 5% per absence) that will apply.
- 3-4 late arrivals or early departures (without explanation) will count as an absence.
- Sleeping through class lectures or discussion will be treated like late arrival/early departure, which means that 3-4 occurrences will count as an absence.
- You are responsible for all material that you miss in class, including films, film clips, lectures, discussions and assignments. Make sure you have the contact information (email, phone number) for one or two other students in class so that you can get the information that you need. **Do not email me to find out what you missed, please contact another student in the class.**

In Class: Please do not read newspapers, email, websites, text messages, etc. during class. **No phone or computers are allowed during class without special arrangement.** Using a phone in any way during class, and especially during film screenings, will result in an automatic 0 for that session's Attendance and Participation grade. If you need to communicate with someone, step outside of the room for a minute and return when you're done.

Class Cancellations: If an emergency arises and I need to cancel class, I will send an email to the class, and ask that a sign be posted on the door. Please try to check your email before class in case anything comes up, especially if the weather is bad.

Fairness and Honesty: I expect students to complete all assignments with fairness and honesty. Plagiarism – the representation of someone else's words or ideas as one's own – is a very serious offense, and will result in serious consequences. By plagiarism, I mean failing to acknowledge someone else's work or ideas (word for word or paraphrasing), as well as cheating on quizzes and tests. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever

committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf)

This is not to say that you cannot use other people's ideas, just that you must **acknowledge** your sources (orally or with footnotes) and try to **build** on those ideas (agree, disagree, modify, give your own examples). One good reference is OSU's "Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity" (<http://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html>). Please come and talk to me if you have any questions about this.

OSU has made Turnitin, a learning tool and plagiarism prevention system, available to instructors. For this class, you will submit your papers to Turnitin from Carmen. When grading your work, I will interpret the originality report, following Section A of OSU's Code of Conduct (plagiarism) as appropriate. For more information about Turnitin, please see Dropbox: the Turnitin Suite (for students): <https://odee.osu.edu/resourcecenter/carmen/dropbox-turnitin-suite-students>. Note that submitted papers become part of the OSU database.

Writing Center: The Writing Center (www.cstw.osu.edu) is a great (free!) resource on campus for helping improve your writing skills and work on specific assignments. You can set up an appointment or drop in at certain times for one-on-one help with your writing.

Contact Me: Please come talk to me over the course of the quarter if you have any problems or concerns, but also if you have questions or anything else that you'd like to talk about. It's great to have the opportunity to get to know you outside of class. Office hours are a good time to catch me, but you can also email me to set up an appointment to talk.

For quick questions or concerns, email (brenner.108@osu.edu) is the best way to reach me. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours.

DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://ods.osu.edu/>