

## Women in the Bible

First Year Seminar, Meredith 106  
Drake University, Fall 2018

**Professor :** Dr. Trisha Wheelock

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Office Hours: before and after class and by appointment

## Course Description

This class will explore the depiction of women in biblical literature and in social and cultural contexts of both ancient Israel and the Mediterranean world. We will consider the roles women play within biblical narratives, the presentations of femininity and feminine in biblical traditions, and the legal/ethical precepts related to the status of women. We will read both biblical texts and secondary literature. In addition, we will reflect on the influence of these texts on the lives of women and men in the synagogue and church and evaluate their significance for life in the twenty-first century.

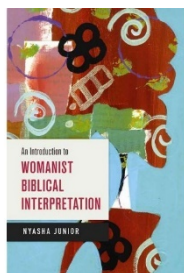
No prior knowledge of Jewish and Christian canonical texts is assumed.

## Goals

1. Gain familiarity with biblical texts concerning women in their social and cultural contexts
2. Explore and use the tools and methods of biblical interpretation
3. Reflect how biblical women both operated within and challenged the expectations placed on them
4. Increase cultural awareness and evaluate how biblical texts concerning women impact contemporary synagogue and church life by visiting places of worship
5. Develop and improve critical thinking, reading, information literacy, and writing skills

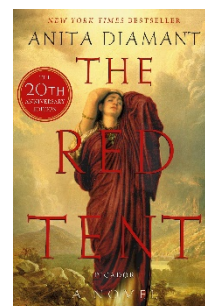
## Texts

1. a Bible. You must bring a bible to class everyday
2. *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant



3. *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation* by Nyasha Junior

4. supplemental texts on e-reserves and Blackboard--password: women18



## Course

**Requirements**—check Blackboard for handouts

1. With a partner or alone, make two formal class presentations of approximately 20 minutes - one from the Hebrew Bible and one from the New Testament. Create a Powerpoint or Prezi and submit an outline and bibliography. I have put three books on reserve in the library as a resource to get started. Use *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes* for your Hebrew Bible presentation. See *Women in the New Testament* or *A Feminist Introduction to Paul* for your New Testament presentation.



2. Methods and exegetical paper (4-5 pages) DUE Sept 26 (rough draft), final Oct. 1
3. Mid-term exam—Oct. 15 (two essays)
4. Research Paper (7-8 pages) rough draft DUE Dec. 5, Final draft due Dec. 12
5. Women in Worship and Interview synthesis paper (3-4 pages) due Nov. 14
6. With a partner, lead informal class discussion on *The Red Tent*. This does not require a visual presentation but should include a summary of the reading and three discussion questions (submitted on BB).
7. Weekly journals. Students will submit a journal each week (except midterm and finals week) by Sunday at 11pm via Blackboard. The journal should be 200-250 words and relate to the week's readings, class discussions, and conversations. Show me you're doing the reading and critically thinking about the class. We'll use these short pieces as starting blocks for the longer assignments. Most weeks I'll provide you with a specific prompt.

Please submit your assignments on Blackboard. I will provide feedback, post grades, and list other material on Blackboard.

### **Participation and Academic Honesty**

Your participation in this class is indispensable. Therefore, your instructor will assign you a grade (up to 25 points) for class participation, based on your attendance at, preparation for, and participation in class lectures and discussions. After two absences, students will lose 5 participation points for each subsequent absence. I expect and want you to attend every class.

**\*\*Please turn off your cell phones unless otherwise instructed.** Be present and participate in class discussion.

**\*\* Unless the professor gives specific written instructions otherwise, all work evaluated for a grade is expected and assumed to be your own. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty will receive a zero for the specific assignment and may receive an “F” for the course.**

Drake’s statement on academic integrity can be found on our website:

<http://www.drake.edu/catalog/undergrad/14-15/geninfo/academicregulations/#AcademicIntegrity>

*Our graduates will have the skills and experiences to thrive in a complex, diverse, and evolving world. They will be: 1) Proficient in their fields, 2) Data-driven, strategic problem solvers, 3) Effective communicators, 4) Ethical stewards, and 5) Global and multicultural citizens.*

## **Disability Services**

Any student who has a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, learning, or attentional disability that may affect the student’s ability to complete assigned course work should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Michelle Laughlin ([Michelle.Laughlin@drake.edu](mailto:Michelle.Laughlin@drake.edu)), who will review the concerns and decide with the student what accommodations are necessary.

### ***Student Services:***

*The Coordinator for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion’s primary role is to act as a resource for students who have been subjected to interpersonal [gender] violence including sexual assault/harassment, dating/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, and stalking and will advocate on behalf of the student victim’s requests if services are voluntarily initiated. The coordinator can explain how to initiate a complaint within the university and through criminal/civil processes, assist with referrals to a confidential crisis advocate and/or counselor and appropriate medical or legal professionals. The coordinator must report “known” student campus assaults to the Dean of Students and/or Title IX Coordinator, but the complainant still has rights to participate or withdraw from the university process. Other services include providing crisis intervention (safety plan, crisis counseling, rights information), and assistance in academic and housing accommodations as needed. To contact the coordinator, Alysa Mozak, call 515-271-4141 or email [alysa.mozak@drake.edu](mailto:alysa.mozak@drake.edu). The Violence Intervention Partner (V.I.P.) program through this office provides peer-based 24/7 confidential advocacy services. To access a V.I.P. advocate call or text 515-512-2972. For more information about these services visit [www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/](http://www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/)*

## **Course Grading**

Point Values for Course Activities:

Formal bible presentations (two)	80 points (40 for each)
Midterm exam	60 points
Methods paper (and rough draft)	50 points
Class Participation	25 points
Research Paper	75 points
Women in worship paper	50 points
12 Weekly journals	60 points (five points for each)
<i>Red Tent</i> discussion and summary	25 points

**TOTAL      425 Points**

In accordance with Drake grading policies, I will use a + and – system.

**Course Policy**

This Women in the Bible course is being taught in a liberal arts context and is part of the First Year Seminar curriculum at Drake. You do not have to share a particular faith commitment to do well in this class; our purpose is education not indoctrination. Thus, we will present various responsible viewpoints on critical issues. You are not expected to agree with any one view; rather, you should demonstrate that you understand the issues involved and the various options discussed in class. While facts and historical data are important in this class, more important is the task of equipping yourself to become interested and informed readers.

The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus at any time during the semester.

**Course Calendar**

**Monday, August 27** Introducing the Course, overview, women in the ancient world

**Wednesday, August 29** –Feminism, Womanism, and the bible

Reading: 1. Junior, *Womanist Biblical Interpretation*, (Introduction pages xi-xxv)

see handout

**Journal 1 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, September 3—Labor Day, no class**

**Wednesday, September 5** – Methods (5 streams)

Reading: 1. E-reserves book chapter—“Feminist Exegetical Hermeneutics,” 36-62

See handout

**Journal 2 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, September 10** – Applying the Methods

Reading: *The Red Tent*, chapters 1 and 2 (pages 1-49)

\*\*see our library e-reserves page for examples

**Wednesday, September 12** –Library

**Journal 3 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, September 17** – Waves of Feminism and Eve

Reading: 1. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation*, 3-18 (chapter 1)

2. Genesis 3

**Wednesday, September 19** – Feminist Forerunners and Sarah, Hagar, and Lot's Daughters

Reading: 1. Genesis 16: 1-16

2. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation*, 19-38 (chapter 2)

3. *The Red Tent*, pages 51-103 (chapter 3 and part 2 chapters 1 and 2)

**Journal 4 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, September 24** – Womanist Forerunners and Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, Bilhah, and Dinah

Reading: 1. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation*, 39-53

2. Genesis 24, Genesis 25:19-34, Genesis 29

3. *The Red Tent*, pages 105-166 (chapters 3, 4, 5)

**Wednesday, September 26**– peer review and writing conference

Reading: *The Red Tent*, pages 167-232 (chapter 6, part 3 chapter 1)

ROUGH DRAFT of methods paper due

**Journal 5 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, October 1**– **Methods paper due**

Reading: *The Red Tent*, pages 233-278 (chapters 2 and 3)

2. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation* pages 57-75 (chapter 4)

**Wednesday, October 3** -- The Women in Joshua and Judges [Rahab, Deborah, Jephthah's daughter, Delilah, the Levite's woman]

Reading: Joshua 2; Judges 4, 11, 15-16, 19

2. *The Red Tent*, pages 279-321 (chapters 4 and 5)

**Journal 6 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, October 8**– Writing Conferences

**Wednesday, October 10**– mid-term exam

**Monday, October 15**— **Fall Break** (No class)

**Wednesday, October 17**-- The Women in 1 and 2 Samuel [Hannah, Michal, Abigail, Bathsheba]

Reading: 1. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation* pages 76-94 (chapter 5)

2. 1 Samuel 1, 18-19, 25; 2 Samuel 11-13

**Journal 7 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, October 22**— Ruth and Esther

Reading: Ruth 1-4 and Esther 1-2, 8-10

**Wednesday, October 24**— Introduction to the New Testament

Reading: 1. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation* pages 95-121 (chapter 6)

**Journal 8 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, October 29**— Women in the Gospel of Mark (perspectives of Weaver and Dreyer)

Reading: Mark 3:31-34, 5:24-34, 6:14-29, 7:24-31, 16:1-8

**Wednesday, October 31**— visit to the synagogue (DRIVER WAIVER)

**Journal 9 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, November 5**— Women in the Gospels of Matthew and John (the Samaritan woman, Mary-- mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene)

Reading: Matthew 1:18-25, 15: 21-28, 20:20-28

John 2:1-12, 4, 7: 53-8:11, 11, 20:1-18

**Wednesday, November 7**— church visit

**Journal 10 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, November 12**– Women in the Lukan Material (Mary, Mary and Martha, Lydia)

Reading: 1. Luke 2: 1-20, 10:38-42, 7:11-17, 8:1-3, Acts 16:11-16

**Wednesday, November 14**— Paul, the 1<sup>st</sup> century, and Women in the Early Church

Reading: *Womanist Biblical Interpretation* pages 122-131 (conclusion)

**Women in worship paper due**

**Journal 11 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, November 19**--Women in the Pauline Letters

Reading: Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 11:1-20, 14:34-36; Philippians 4:1-2; Romans 16:1-6  
2. Sandra Hack Polaski chapter on Blackboard—"Paul and His World"

**Thanksgiving Recess**

**Monday, November 26**– Women in the Deutero-Pauline Texts

Reading: 1. Colossians 3:18-4:1; Ephesians 5:21-6:9; 1Timothy 2:9-15

**Wednesday, November 28**— library session

**Journal 12 due Sunday, 11pm**

**Monday, December 3** – The Gospel of Mary

Reading: e-reserves—Gospel of Mary (this is an article by expert Karen King)

2. Blackboard—Gospel of Mary (this is the actual text of the gospel)

**Wednesday, December 5**— peer review and writing conferences

**Rough Draft of final paper due**

**Final Research Paper Due—Wednesday, December 12 (noon)**