

Women in the Bible

First Year Seminar, Howard 308
Drake University, Fall 2019

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.

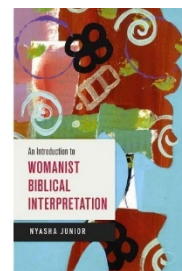
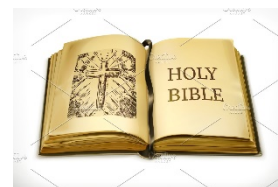
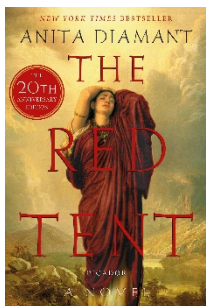
No prior knowledge of Jewish and Christian canonical texts is assumed.

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: women19



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 a bibliography. I have put three books on reserve in the library as resources. 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 25 (rough draft), final Sept. 30
3. Mid-term exam—Oct. 9 (two essays)
4. Research Paper (7-8 pages) rough draft DUE Dec.4, Final draft due Dec.11
5. Women in Worship synthesis paper (3-4 pages) due Nov. 18
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 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), 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. 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/

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	85 points (10 for rough draft)
Women in worship paper	40 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 26 Introducing the Course, overview, women in the ancient world

Wednesday, August 28 –Feminism, Womanism, and the bible

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

Journal 1 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, September 2—Labor Day, no class

Wednesday, September 4 – Methods (5 streams)

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

Journal 2 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, September 9 – Applying the Methods

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

**see our library e-reserves page for examples

Wednesday, September 11 –Library, Room 201

Journal 3 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, September 16 – Waves of Feminism and Eve

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

2. Genesis 3

Wednesday, September 18 – Sarah, Hagar, and Lot's Daughters

Reading: 1. Genesis 16: 1-16

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

Journal 4 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, September 23 –Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, Bilhah

Reading: 1. Genesis 24, Genesis 25:19-34, Genesis 29

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

Wednesday, September 25– peer writing conference and Dinah

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, September 30– Methods paper due

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

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

Wednesday, October 2 -- The Women in Joshua and Judges [Rahab, Deborah, Jephthah's daughter, Delilah]

Reading: Joshua 2; Judges 4, 11, 16

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

Journal 6 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, October 7– Writing Conferences

Wednesday, October 9– mid-term exam and writing conferences—**midterm due at 1:45pm**

Monday, October 14— **Fall Break** (No class)

Wednesday, October 16-- The Women in 1 and 2 Samuel [Hannah, Michal, Abigail, Bathsheba]

Reading: 1.1 Samuel 1, 18-19, 25; 2 Samuel 11
2. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation*, 39-53 (chapter 3)

Journal 7 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, October 21— Ruth and Esther

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

Wednesday, October 23— Women in the Pauline Letters and Introduction to the NT

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"

Journal 8 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, October 28— Women in the Deutero-Pauline Texts

Reading: 1. Colossians 3:18-4:1; Ephesians 5:21-6:9; 1 Timothy 2:9-15
2. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation* pages 57-75 (chapter 4)

Wednesday, October 30— 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
2. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation* pages 76-94 (chapter 5)

Journal 9 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, November 4— church visit (driver waiver)

Wednesday, November 6— Women in the Gospel of Matthew (Mary-- mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene)

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

Journal 10 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, November 11– visit to the synagogue (DRIVER WAIVER)

Wednesday, November 13—Women in the Lukan Material (Mary, Mary and Martha, widow, Jesus' supporters, Lydia)

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

Women in worship paper due

Monday, November 18--Women in the Gospel of John (Mary—Jesus' mother, the Samaritan woman, the women caught in adultery, Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene)
John 2:1-12, 4, 7: 53-8:11, 11, 20:1-18

2. *Womanist Biblical Interpretation* pages 95-121 (chapter 6)

Wednesday, November 20– Women in the Early Church and discussion of final paper

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

Journal 11 due Sunday, 11pm

Monday, November 25--library session

Thanksgiving Recess

Monday, December 2 – 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 4— peer review and writing conferences

Rough Draft of final paper due

Journal 12 due Sunday, 11pm

Final Research Paper Due—Wednesday, December 11 (noon)