

The College of the Humanities

RELI 3841: Topics in Religion: ADAM & EVE AND THEIR INTERPRETERS**Instructor:** Shawna Dolansky**Office hours:** Tu/Th 1:15-2:15pm Paterson 2a60**Lectures:** Thur 8:35-11:25am, Canal Building 2014**E-mail:** Shawna.Dolansky@carleton.ca**Office Phone:** 520-2600 ext. 7029

A distinguishing feature of Western religious traditions is their use of scripture. Other religions often make use of sacred texts, but Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all appeal to their holy books as ultimate authorities, as the voice of God.

We will discuss the origins of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in their respective historical contexts, with a focus on the creation and development of sacred scriptures. This will serve as background in exploring the ongoing dialogues that Jewish, Christian and Muslim theologians and thinkers have with the text from their beginnings through to the present day. Understanding this ongoing exegesis and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur'an is our primary goal. We will consider the social and political applications of religious principles interpreted from these texts and applied within societies that organize themselves on the basis of scripture.

The questions in which we are particularly interested are: (1) how, when, and why do texts become "sacred," and what does that mean? (2) how much influence do sacred texts have in determining cultural values and ideals, and how much does context (historical, social, cultural, political) influence the reading and interpretation of sacred texts? We will use the story of Adam and Eve as our ongoing case study in exploring the role religion plays in defining and shaping human identity. The opening chapters of the Hebrew Bible have been interpreted and reinterpreted, not only by New Testament authors and in the Qur'an, but in exegeses by Jewish, Christian, and Muslim authors throughout history. Primarily, Genesis 1-3 have served to legitimize and enforce gender and other social hierarchies, although we will find that the story of the first man and woman has also been used to challenge those hierarchies and argue for egalitarianism.

NOTE: As with any course that pursues the academic study of religion, we examine all texts and contexts from a **secular, scholarly perspective**. The nature of the material is theological, but our task as scholars is to view it academically, to discuss it without being attached to any particular theological interpretation, and yet to respect the fact that the theological interpretations and the beliefs they entail are of great importance to adherents of each of these three religious traditions.

EVALUATION:

1. Four 2-page papers 10% each = 40% total (see below)
2. Final (take-home) exam = 30%
3. Class participation = 20%
4. Group presentation Dec 7 = 10%

Papers:

You will write four short reading responses throughout the semester. They will be typed, double-spaced, two pages long, and stapled. They will be your own reflections on the readings and lecture material, and you will not do any research in order to write them.

Plagiarism is illegal, and can carry with it a penalty of failing the course. Do your own work: do not use another's material as if it were your own.

Required Reading:

1. *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender*, eds. Kvam, Scheering and Ziegler (available at the bookstore)
2. Online selections as noted below, including articles posted to CuLearn
3. Selections from the Bible @ biblegateway.com (choose NRSV translation)

SCHEDULE:

- Sept 7 Introduction to the Course & the Hebrew Bible**
- Overview of course syllabus
 - Introduction to the Bible and historical-critical scholarship

- Sept 14 Creation**
- READ - Bible: Gen 1-4
Eve & Adam: General Introduction
Dolansky: "The Multiple Meanings of Myths"
Optional: <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/did-god-write-the-bible/>

- Sept 21 Adam & Eve, Women & Men in Ancient Israel**
- Bible: Genesis 12-38; Proverbs 31
Eve & Adam chapter 1
Dolansky: "The Fall of Eve"; Stern: "Pagan Yahwism"
no class today: view video online instead, details TBA

**First reflection paper due on CuLearn dropbox by 4pm Sept 22 – answer the following questions:*

To what extent can we determine the original context of the story? What might it have meant then? (Why) Does it matter? How does understanding the original context of the story, and biblical scholarship such as you've read so far (Trible, Dolansky, Stern) and heard in class lectures, impact your reading of the story?

- Sept 28 Second Temple Judaism**
- <http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/timeline-gallery/s/second-temple-judaism> (interactive timeline)
<http://bibleodyssey.org/people/related-articles/emergence-of-judaism>
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ancient-jewish-religion-and-culture/>
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ancient-jewish-texts/>
Eve & Adam chapter 2

- Oct 5 Rise of the Rabbis**
- <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/about-talmud/>
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/women-in-rabbinic-literature/>
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/medieval-jewish-attitudes-toward-women/>
E&A ch 3

**Second reflection paper due in hard copy, beginning of class – answer the following question:*

What are the changes in perspectives on Eden evident in the Rabbinic interpretations from those of post-biblical Judaism, and what do they tell us about Rabbinic Judaism?

- Oct 12 Early Christianity and the New Testament**
- Matthew 1-7; 10; 19; 22-23; Gal 1-3; Rom 1-3
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/roles.html>
E&A ch 4 to p. 117

- Oct 19 Other Christianities, and the Church Fathers**
- <http://www.gnosis.org/genesis.html>
<http://www.gnosis.org/library/marygosp.htm>
http://www.gnosis.org/library/thomas_poxy.htm
"How St. Augustine Invented Sex" – the New Yorker (on CuLearn)
E&A rest of ch 4

no class today: view videos online instead, details TBA

**Third reflection paper due on CuLearn dropbox by 4pm Oct 20 – answer the following question:*

As we've seen, interpretations of Adam and Eve develop in a mutual interaction between text and context, and new interpretations draw on aspects of older ones that are compatible with the worldview that the new interpretations want to foster. How do both "egalitarian" and "hierarchical" Christian readings reflect the variety of contexts in which early Christianity developed; and in this light, what's the best explanation for the triumph of hierarchical readings in what becomes mainstream Christian thought? You can have 3 pages for this one; don't forget to refer directly to the primary texts to show you've read, understood, and synthesized the material.

Oct 26 **FALL BREAK**

Nov 2 **Islam and the Qur'an**

E&A 156-203

<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t243/e275>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/02/arts/scholars-are-quietly-offering-new-theories-of-the-koran.html>

Nov 9 **Medieval Interpretations**

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/medieval-jewish-attitudes-toward-women/>

<https://www.bl.uk/the-middle-ages/articles/women-in-medieval-society>

<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t243/e370>

E & A 203-248

Nov 16 **The Protestant Reformation & Milton's Paradise Lost**

E & A ch. 6

**Fourth reflection paper due, beginning of class – question TBA*

Nov 23 **Modernity and the American Context: Gender, Slavery and Human Rights**

E&A 305-340

Nov 30 **Equality?**

E & A 340-370

Dec 7 **Gender in Contemporary Monotheisms**

E&A ch 8 – divided

The class will be divided into 3 groups, each of which will focus on the representative writings of one of the 3 monotheisms in chapter 8. Each group will also do some outside research to contextualize the writings in the chapter – see me for suggestions. Each group will have 45 minutes to present an overview of 20th century interpretations of Adam and Eve in their group's researched tradition – allotted time includes any class questions or discussion that arises. Each student will be marked on your individual contribution to the class presentation and discussion.

Dec 22 Take-Home Exam Due in CuLearn dropbox by 10pm

This will take the form of a 9-10 page essay response to a question focused on the Appendix in *Eve & Adam* but requiring cumulative course knowledge to properly answer. Question will be distributed on the last day of class.



University Regulations for All Humanities Courses

Copies of Written Work Submitted

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the internet. More information can be found on <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/#AIatCU>.

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at

613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion is below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

[Grading System Chart](#)

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Statement on Class Conduct

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and

preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and **in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due.**

The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

Deferred Exams

Students who do not write/attend a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply to write a deferred examination.

1. be made in writing to the Registrar's Office **no later than three working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination;** and
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and in cases of illness by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [forms and fees page](#).

The granting of a deferral also requires that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course according to the evaluation scheme established in the Course Outline, excluding the final examination for which deferral privileges are requested. Reasons for denial of a deferral may include, among other conditions, a failure to (i) achieve a minimum score in the course before the final examination; (ii) attend a minimum number of classes; (iii) successfully complete a specific task (e.g. term paper, critical report, group project, computer or other assignment); (iv) complete laboratory work; (v) successfully complete one or more midterms; or (vi) meet other reasonable conditions of successful performance.

More information can be found [in the calendar](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to: [Registrar's Office](#)

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA.

NEW FALL 2017: WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term. Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Dates can be found here: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

Department Contact Information

College of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for RELI Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

Registrar's Office 300 Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

Student Resources on Campus

[CUKnowHow Website](#)