

COLLEGE OF THE HUMANITIES  
RELIGION PROGRAM: RELI 4850B/5850W

Sex and the Bible

**Instructor:** Shawna Dolansky

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**Office hours:** 2a61 PA, Wed 11:30am – 1:30pm

**Phone:** 520-2600 ex.1954 \*no vm messages\*

**Seminar:** Wed 8:35am-11:25am, Paterson 2a46

Through reading primary texts, ideas about sexuality in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament are explored to understand sex in the ancient context, and to trace the history of interpretation leading to current attitudes about sex in contemporary Western culture.

Evaluation

1. Weekly reading responses (2 pages) 8 weeks @ 5% = 40%
2. Active & constructive weekly seminar participation, initiative, and leadership = 10%
3. \*Presentation (see course outline below for dates; sign up on first-come first-served basis) =10%
4. Paper Proposal (outlining proposed research and investigative questions in 1 page) due Feb 11=5%
5. Annotated Bibliography for Final Paper (due Mar 18; 2 pages; minimum 8 references) =5%
5. In-class presentation of research paper work-in-progress (10 minutes, April 8) =10%
6. Final Paper (10-12 or 18-20\* pages, due Apr 17) =20%

***A note on attendance:***

The seminar format depends on student preparedness and attendance. More than 2 absences over the course of the semester will result in a grade of F for the course. (Note: leaving after the break, or arriving to class at the break, count as absences from class.)

***A few notes on written work:***

Late reflection papers or term papers will not be accepted.

Late proposals or annotated bibliographies will be assessed a penalty of 1% (out of 5% total) per day.

Proposals or bibliographies more than 4 days late will receive a grade of zero: however if they are not handed in at all, your final paper will not be accepted.

Please review the note on plagiarism on the “Regulations” page at the end of this course outline.

**\*5850 Students**

As students receiving graduate level credit for this course, your class presentations and final papers will be expected to be longer, more detailed, and more extensively researched than those receiving undergraduate credit.

## Schedule

### **Jan 7            The Bible's Sex in Context**

Before class read:

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/tools/bible-basics/how-do-biblical-scholars-read-the-hebrew-bible.aspx>

Shawna Dolansky, "On Women's Bibles and the Bible's Women: Feminism in Biblical Scholarship" (on CULearn)

Susan Ackerman, chapter 1 in *When Heroes Love: The Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David* (on CULearn)

### **Jan 14            Women in the Hebrew Bible & the Ancient Near East**

READ:

Julia M. Asher-Greve, "Decisive Sex, Essential Gender," *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East*, pp. 11-26

Virginia Burrus, "Mapping as Metamorphosis," in *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourse*, ed. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, pp. 1-10

Stephanie L. Budin, "Fertility and Gender in the Ancient Near East," in *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World*, Routledge.

Presentation: Hennie Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East*, pp. 168-191 (marriage, divorce, adultery)

### **Jan 21            Sexual narratives**

READ:

Genesis 6 through 38

Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 187-198

Ilona N. Rashkow, *Taboo or not Taboo: Sexuality and Family in the Hebrew Bible*, 15- 42

David Biale, *Eros and the Jews*, 1-32

Presentation: Susan Ackerman "‘I Have Hired You with My Son’s Mandrakes’: Women’s Reproductive Magic in Ancient Israel" in *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World* (Routledge 2014)

Presentation: Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Virginitiy in the Bible" in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, eds. Matthews, Levinson, and Frymer-Kensky

### **Jan 28            Sex Laws, Consent, Adultery, and Slavery**

READ:

Exod 21; Deut 22-23; Judg 19; 2 Samuel 11-13

Friedman & Dolansky, *The Bible Now*, ch. 3

Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Law and Philosophy: The Case of Sex in the Bible," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Alice Bach

Presentation: David P. Wright, "'She Shall Not Go Free as Male Slaves Do': Developing Views About Slavery and Gender in the Laws of the Hebrew Bible," in *Beyond Slavery: Overcoming Its Religious and Sexual Legacies*, ed. Bernadette J. Brooten, 125-142.

Presentation: Carolyn Pressler, "Wives and Daughters, Bond and Free: Views of Women in the Slave Laws of Exodus 21:2-11" in *Gender and Law in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, eds. Matthews, Levinson, and Frymer-Kensky

#### **Feb 4 Pornography?**

READ:

Song of Songs; Hos 1-3; Ezek 16, 23; Jer 4, 13, 15, 20, 22, 31

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/related-articles/gender-and-class-in-the-song-of-songs.aspx>

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/passages/related-articles/sex-in-the-song-of-songs.aspx>

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/passages/main-articles/love-as-strong-as-death.aspx>

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/passages/related-articles/love-in-the-song-of-songs.aspx>

David Carr, "Gender and the Shaping of Desire in the Song of Songs and Its Interpretation"

Athalya Brenner, "Pornoprophetics Re-visited: Some Additional Reflections"

E. Clewlow "Pornoprophetics evaluated: an investigation into the application of pornographic theory to biblical texts"

Presentation: Stephanie Budin, "Sacred Prostitution in the First Person" in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World* eds. Faraone and McClure

Presentation: Jan William Tarlin, "Utopia and Pornography in Ezekiel: Violence, Hope, and the Shattered Male Subject" in *Reading Bibles Writing Bodies: Identity and The Book* (eds. T. K. Beal and D. M Gunn)

Grad Presentation: Gerlinde Baumann, *Love and Violence: Marriage as Metaphor for the Relationship Between YHWH and Israel in the Prophetic Books*

#### **Feb 11 Homosexuality**

*Paper proposal due beginning of class*

READ:

Lev 18 & 20; 1 Sam 18-20; 2 Sam 1

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/passages/related-articles/sexual-purity-in-leviticus.aspx>

Friedman & Dolansky, *The Bible Now* ch 1

Susan Ackerman, *When Heroes Love*, ch 7 (165-199)

Grad Presentation: Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism*

#### **Feb 18 – READING WEEK**

## **Feb 25 Femmes Fatales**

READ: Judges 4-5, 13-16; Ruth; Judith; Esther

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/people/related-articles/femmes-fatales-in-the-bible.aspx>

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/people/related-articles/sexual-harassment-in-the-book-of-ruth.aspx>

Anchor Bible Dictionary: "Jezebel"

Presentation: Susan Niditch, "Eroticism and Death in the Tale of Jael," *Women in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Alice Bach

Presentation: Amy-Jill Levine, "Sacrifice and Salvation: Otherness and Domestication in the Book of Judith," *Women in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Alice Bach

Presentation: Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, "The Problem of the Body for the People of the Book," *Women in the HB*, 53- 73

Presentation: Gina Hens-Piazza, "Terrorization, Sexualization, Maternalizing: Women's Bodies on Trial," in *Pregnant Passion: Gender, Sex, and Violence in the Bible*, ed. Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, 163-177.

## **Mar 4 Gender, Body, and Sexuality in the Pre-Christian Mediterranean World**

READ:

Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* - preface and ch. 1

Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* - Introduction

Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* - ch 1

Presentation: Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses* pp. 203-220 (biblical attitudes toward sex and gender change under Hellenism)

Presentation: Daniel Boyarin, "Gender" (ch 6 in Mark Taylor's *Critical Terms for Religions Studies*)

Grad Presentation: Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture*

## **Mar 11 Women and Gender in the Jesus Movement**

READ:

Matthew 1-2, 27-28; Mark 5, 15-16; Luke 1-3, 10:38-42, 24; John 2, 4, 11:1-12:8, 19-20

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/tools/bible-basics/in-what-ways-is-the-new-testament-a-religious-text.aspx>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/women.html>

Presentation: Karen King, "'Jesus said to them, 'My wife . . .': A New Coptic Papyrus Fragment" *Harvard Theological Review*, 107 (2): 131-159.

Presentation: Anne McGuire, "Women, Gender, and Gnosis in Gnostic Texts and Traditions in *Women and Christian Origins*, ed. R.S. Kraemer and M.R. D'Angelo (Oxford University Press, 1999)

Grad Presentation: Jennifer Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity*

**Mar 18            Sex, Desire, and Pollution: Paul and 1 Corinthians**

READ:

1 Corinthians (all); Romans 16; Galatians 3; Philippians 4; Philemon

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/people/main-articles/paul.aspx>

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/passages/main-articles/love-passage.aspx>

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/places/related-articles/church-at-corinth.aspx>

Ch 10 in *Women and Christian Origins*, ed. R.S. Kraemer and M.R. D'Angelo (Oxford University Press, 1999)

Presentation: Ch 9 in *Women and Christian Origins*, ed. R.S. Kraemer and M.R. D'Angelo (Oxford University Press, 1999)

Presentation: Gail Corrington Streete, "Women as Sources of Redemption and Knowledge in Early Christian Tradition," in Kraemer, *Women and Christian Origins*, ch. 14

Grad Presentation: Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body*

**Mar 25            Homosexuality in the New Testament**

READ:

Dale B. Martin, chapters 3 and 6 in *Sex and the Single Savior* (Westminster/John Knox, 2006)

Bernadette Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism*, 314-36

Presentation: Dale B. Martin, "Heterosexism and the Interpretation of Romans 1:18-32," *Biblical Interpretation* 3 (1995): 332-55

Grad Presentation: Dale B. Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior*

Grad Presentation: Bernadette Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism*

**Apr 1            Conclusions**

*Presentations of Works-in-Progress*

## Further potential references for projects/presentations:

Gnosticism: (primary texts available online)

Karen King, "Sophia and Christ in the *Apocryphon of John*," *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, 158-76.

*Apocryphon of John*

*The Reality of the Rulers (Hypostasis of the Archons)*

Mary Magdalene and the "Gnostic Mary"

*The Gospel of Philip*

*The Gospel according to Mary*

*The Pistis Sophia*

Range of Early Christian Views on Marriage & Sex

Clement, *On Marriage (Stromateis, III)*

Epiphanius, *Panarion*

Justin the Gnostic, *The Book Baruch*

Jorunn Jacobson Buckley, "Transcendence and Sexuality in *The Book Baruch*," *Female Fault and Fulfilment in Gnosticism*, 3-19.

Jorunn Jacobson Buckley, "Libertines or Not: Fruit, Bread, Semen, and Other Bodily Fluids in Gnosticism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994): 15-31.

Sex & Slavery

J. Albert Harrill, "The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy: A Case History in the Hermeneutical Tension between Biblical Interpretation and Christian Moral Debate." *Religion and American Culture* 10 (2000): 149-86.

Sex & Apocalypse

Mark 13; 1 Thessalonians 4; Revelation

Catherine Keller, "Ms. Calculating the Endtimes: Additions and Conversation," in *A Feminist Companion to the Apocalypse of John*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (T.&T. Clark, 2009), 205-27

Tina Pippin, *Death and Desire: The Rhetoric of Gender in the Apocalypse of John* (Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 45-68

Other fun stuff to read:

About Lilith in early Judaism and Christianity <http://jewishchristianlit.com//Topics/Lilith/>

Coptic Spell for a Man to Obtain a Male Lover <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/copticspell.asp>

Shaye J.D. Cohen, *Why Aren't Jewish Women Circumcised: Gender and Covenant in Judaism*

Resource pages for primary texts in biblical and related studies:

<http://torreys.org/bible/>

<http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/ancient/asbook06.asp#index>

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) (online Bible – choose NRSV translation)

# REGULATIONS COMMON TO 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.

## PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- 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;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

## GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

## WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 8, 2014**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2015**.

## REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me 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. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 7, 2014** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2015** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/](http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/)

## PETITIONS TO DEFER

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a **FINAL** assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply a deferral of examination/assignment.

If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

## ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Library