

Women in Scripture

STMA 593-01

Monday 5:45 -8:35 PM / HUNT 110

Instructor: Leticia Guardiola-Sáenz

Office hours: By appointment

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DESCRIPTION

As a predominantly Christian culture, the Western world internalized from the beginning the patriarchal female stereotypes from the Bible as the typical models for how women were expected to behave in society. Although throughout the centuries there have always been brave women and men who have defied the stereotypes, and the participation of women in society has dramatically changed in the last century, many of the old stereotypes still remain as givens in popular culture. Fortunately, in the last five decades, such stereotypes have been more systematically challenged by the work of women scholars within Biblical Studies who have been critically deconstructing and re-interpreting the characterization of women in the Bible, de-patriarchalizing biblical interpretations.

As a text that not only reflects hi/story but was written to make hi/story and create the collective identity of the people of God, both Jewish and Christians, the Bible offers an array of complex representations that have been crucial in the process of identity formation of Israel and the “new” Israel. Using a postcolonial/feminist hermeneutics of suspicion, we will analyze in this course the construction of women in Scripture to understand the role that such characterizations played not only in the formation of an ancient nation, but how they have shaped the social values and ethical codes of our present culture.

We will study a selection of women characters from Scripture, paying attention to the cultural context from where they emerged, to understand how they respond to the androcentric interests of their time, particularly to the process of formation of a collective identity of the nation. After dismantling the patriarchal constructions of women, and using a hermeneutics of creative

imagination we will explore ways in which the stories of the victimized women-characters can be reconstructed to promote and engender a world of peace and justice for all.

This is an advanced level course that requires familiarity with the biblical text and presupposes exegetical experience from the participants. As part of its hermeneutical foundations, this course also surveys some of the major interpretive methods in biblical criticism, especially those of postcolonial and feminist hermeneutics that will help us in the process of re-reading and appropriating the women stories from Scripture.

This course operates under a policy of inclusiveness and mutual respect. All readers read subjectively. Therefore all interpretations of biblical texts, whether historical, theological, literary or of any other sort are partial, non-universal interpretations and should be entertained as such.

The instructional methodologies of the course will include lecturing, discussion, group dynamics, and individual writing.

OBJECTIVES

- Equip students with a wider understanding of women representations in Scripture—and the role of such representations in shaping the culture in general and Christian communities in particular—to promote inclusive readings of the biblical text.
- Foster creativity for the renewing of the church and society through innovative expressions and interpretations of women characters and their stories in the Scripture, as a way of empowering the leadership of women in the church and the world.
- Encourage students to enact God’s ways of justice and love in the world by promoting and inclusive community that is modeled in the interstices of Scripture that have escaped patriarchal and androcentric interests and can be recovered to promote interdependency.

REQUIREMENTS

- A. A culturally-positioned-paper (2000-2300 words) on a postcolonial, feminist reading of the biblical representation of Esther or Judith, including a brief creative reconstruction of the character, promoting interdependency and a just world. Use a minimum of two academic sources (2 articles). Follow the rubric at the end of the syllabus when organizing your paper. Due date: October 24. Come prepared to discuss your findings in class on that day. (20%)
- B. A culturally-positioned-paper (3000-3300 words) on a postcolonial, feminist reading of the biblical representation of a woman from the canonical gospels or from the Pauline corpus, including a creative reconstruction of the female character in question and a brief pastoral, ministerial reflection or application, promoting interdependency and a just world. Use a minimum of 4 academic sources (2 articles minimum and no more than 2 commentaries). Follow the rubric at the end of the syllabus when organizing your paper. Due date: December 3. (30%)
- C. Punctual attendance, attentiveness, well-informed participation, one weekly critical question on the assigned readings, due via email every Sunday by 9:00 pm, beginning on October 2nd, 2011, and a 15-minute office-appointment with the instructor during the week of October 17-22, 2011. (50%)

REQUIRED READING:

1. **Corley**, Kathleen E. *Women & the Historical Jesus: Feminist Myths of Christian Origins*. Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2002.
2. **McKinlay**, Judith E. *Reframing Her: Biblical Women in Postcolonial Focus*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004.
3. **Osiek**, Carolyn, M. Macdonald, et al. *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006.

4. **Winter**, Bruce W. *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearances of New Women and the Pauline Communities*. Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003.

5. Eleven electronic articles scheduled in the course calendar and uploaded to the GoogleDoc account email: **womeninscripture**
Password: **sophia-wisdom**

RECOMMENDED READING:

Kraemer, Ross Shepard and Mary Rose D'Angelo, editors. *Women & Christian origins*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Meyers, C., Craven, T., Kraemer, R.S. (eds). *Women in Scripture: A dictionary of named and unnamed women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical books, and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001.

Schüssler-Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her*. New York: Crossroad, 2000.

Grading Scale	
Superior performance:	
A	97.34 – 100
A-	94.59 – 97.33
B+	91.08 – 94.58
Good performance:	
B	88.57 – 91.07
B-	86.06 – 88.56
C+	82.55 – 86.05
Minimal performance:	
C	79.04 – 82.54
C-	75.53 – 79.03
D+	72.02 – 75.52
Poor performance:	
D	68.51 – 72.01
D-	65.00 – 68.50
Failing:	
F	00.00 – 64.99

COURSE CALENDAR

S.	Date	Topics, readings, assignments
1	Sep. 26	<p>1. INTRODUCTION: IDEOLOGICAL AND HERMENEUTICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal introductions – group dynamics and discussion • Syllabus: content, methods, class format, etc... • Framing the study of Women in Scripture • Ways of reading and key concepts
2	Oct. 3	<p>2. (WISDOM), EVE, SARAI AND HAGAR</p> <p>Discussion Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. McKinlay – chapters 1 & 7 2. Was the Ancestress of Israel in Danger? Did Pharaoh touch Sarai? (e-Article) <p>Background Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. McKinlay – chapter 2 4. Asherah, the West Semitic Goddess of Spinning and Weaving? (e-Article) <p>Biblical Texts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Gen 2—3; 4:1-2; 11:29—13:1; 16:1—18:15; 20:2—21:21; 23:1-2, 19; 24:36; 25:10, 12-16; 49:31
3	Oct. 10	<p>3. RAHAB AND RUTH</p> <p>Discussion Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. McKinlay – chapter 3 2. The Harlot as Heroine: Narrative Art and Social Presupposition in Three OT Texts (e-Art) 3. Your People, My People: An Exploration of Ethnicity in Ruth (e-Article) <p>Biblical Texts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Joshua 2; 6:16-25 5. Ruth
4	Oct. 17	<p>4. JEZEBEL</p> <p>Discussion Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. McKinlay – chapters 4 & 5 2. Jezebel Re-Vamped (e-Article) <p>Biblical Texts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. 1 Kings 16:31; 18—19; 21; 2 Kings 9; Rev 2:20-23
5	Oct. 24	<p>5. ESTHER AND JUDITH</p> <p>Discussion Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biblical Feminisms: Knowledge, Theory and Politics in the Study of Women in the Hebrew Bible (e-Article) <p>Biblical Texts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Esther 3. Judith <p style="text-align: right;">Assignment due: 1st paper (e-file)</p>

6	Oct. 31	<p>6. WOMEN AND THE HISTORICAL JESUS - 1</p> <p>Discussion Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corley – chapters 1 & 2 2. McKinlay – chapter 6 3. The Five Women in Matthew’s Genealogy (e-Article) <p>Background Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Corely – chapter 3
7	Nov. 7	<p>7. WOMEN AND THE HISTORICAL JESUS - 2</p> <p>Discussion Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corley – chapter 5 2. Osiek – chapters 3 & 4 3. Women in Luke-Acts: A Redactional View (e-Article) 4. Jesus and Ordinary Women in the Gospel of John: An African Perspective (e-Article) <p>Background Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Corley – chapter 4 6. Osiek – chapter 8
8	Nov. 14	<p>8. WOMEN IN PAUL’S CHURCHES</p> <p>Discussion Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Osiek – chapters 2 & 5 2. Winter – chapters 5 3. Paul and Real Women (e-Article) 4. Reading Real Women Through the Undisputed Letters of Paul (e-Article) <p>Background Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Osiek – chapters 1, 9, 10 6. Winter 1,2, (3 & 4)
9	Nov. 21	<p>9. WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC CHURCH</p> <p>Primary Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Osiek – chapters 6 & 7 2. Winter – chapters 6, 7, 8 <p>Background Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Winter – chapter 9 <p>Biblical Texts: 1 Timothy 2, 5; Titus 2</p> <p>NOTE – INSTRUCTOR @ SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE - ANNUAL MEETING (arriving at Sea-Tac @ 4:30 pm)</p>
10	Nov. 28	<p>10. DECOLONIZING WITH THE GODDESS / CONCLUSION</p> <p>Discussion Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. McKinlay – chapter 8, Conclusion, Postlude 2. Corley – Conclusion 3. Osiek – chapter 11 <p>Background Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Winter – chapter 9
		<p>Dec. 3 (by 11:59 pm) - FINAL PAPER DUE – PLEASE SUBMIT IT AS ELECTRONIC FILE guardiol@seattleu.edu</p>

STMA 593-01: WOMEN IN SCRIPTURE

Fall 2011

Seattle University – School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle, WA 98122

Student evaluation form

Name:	Final grade:
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Course Requirements:	value	student obtained
A. 1 st Paper on Esther/Judith	20%	
B. Participation in class	50%	
C. 2 nd Paper on Gospels/Paul	30%	
Final grade %	100%	

vg = very good g = good s = satisfactory us = unsatisfactory

Grading rubric for the final exegetical paper:	vg	g	s	us	comments
Programmatic introduction: start your paper with a brief but well organized introduction. Establish a clear course of action: by steps, sections, characters, topics, or whichever division or sequence you want to follow in the development of your paper.					
As part of the PI , clearly establish the thesis, purpose, or aim that you will be pursuing in your final paper.					
<p style="text-align: center;">Organization of ideas</p> <p>1. Develop your ideas fully: make sure you say what you want to say, do not leave gaps.</p> <p>2. Sequence of topics: follow a particular logic to organize the topics in the paper.</p> <p>3. Structure of paper: organize the content of the paper in a logical way (parts/sections, chronology, topics, characters, settings, etc.)</p>					
<p style="text-align: center;">Content of paper:</p> <p>1. Understanding of topic:</p> <p>2. Clear voice of the author:</p> <p>3. Interaction with the text</p> <p>4. Use of methodology</p>					
Political ramifications and /or Ministerial implications of the topic					
Conclusion or summary of major findings					
Use of quotes, sources, footnotes					
Bibliography – content and format					
General format & style					

Leticia Guardiola-Sáenz
Instructor