



Core Curriculum Supplement

Academic Unit / Office CLASS/MCL/JWST

Catalog Year of Implementation 2018-2019

Course (Prefix / Number) JWST / 3371

Course Title Women in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Core Proposal Request

Add to Core Curriculum

Revise course already in Core Curriculum

	Current Core Categorization (New additions: select N/A for this column)	Proposed Categorization for Upcoming Core
Foundational Component Area (required)	N/A (Not currently a Core course)	Language, Philosophy Culture (40)
Component Area Option (optional)	N/A (No Component Area Option)	Writing in the Disciplines (81)
Category Listing: Single or Double?	N/A (Not currently a Core course)	List under BOTH Foundational and Area Option.

Core Proposal Rationale - Please provide a rationale for including, or continuing to include, this course in the UH Core Curriculum:

This course as it exists satisfies the requirements of the WID. Including it in the core curriculum will allow students to use this course toward satisfying the WID requirement. It may also increase course enrollment.

Core Objectives (see [THECB Core objectives](#))

Critical Thinking

Teamwork

Communication

Social Responsibility

Empirical & Quantitative Skills

Personal Responsibility

Please explain how the Core Objectives selected above will be met:

Critical Thinking: Students gain experience reading and evaluating primary sources (biblical material) as well as secondary sources (scholarly articles and midrashic interpretations). Students learn to make connections between readings.

Communication: Students speak to one another and the professor about what they have read and seen. They work together on group projects aimed at communicating how biblical women are represented in art, literature, movies, comics, and other forms of culture. All of these components aid in the development of oral communication skills. Students write regular response papers to class readings, and they complete midterm and final written papers on the character or story of their choice. These assignments aid in the development of written communication skills.

Teamwork: Students work together on group projects and other group activities, such as focused discussions on readings. Through activities such as collaborating to act out biblical texts or evaluate artistic representations of biblical women, students learn to cooperate and listen effectively to others.

Social Responsibility: Students gain competence in reading biblical materials and their interpretive afterlives. Through the participation of guest speakers representing the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths, they learn what texts and

characters have meant to communities of faith, which helps students understand the different ways in which religious communities relate to the Bible.

Personal Responsibility: Through class discussions, response papers, and midterm and final papers, students are encouraged to read biblical texts with women and women's concerns in mind. This encourages empathy for women and issues women faced in biblical texts as well as today, including rape, murder, warfare, and domestic violence.

When submitting this proposal form, please remember to attach a syllabus, learning objectives, and/or sample lesson(s).

Women in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

RELS 3371/JWST 3397

Dr. Caryn Tamber-Rosenau

Spring 2018

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11:30 a.m.

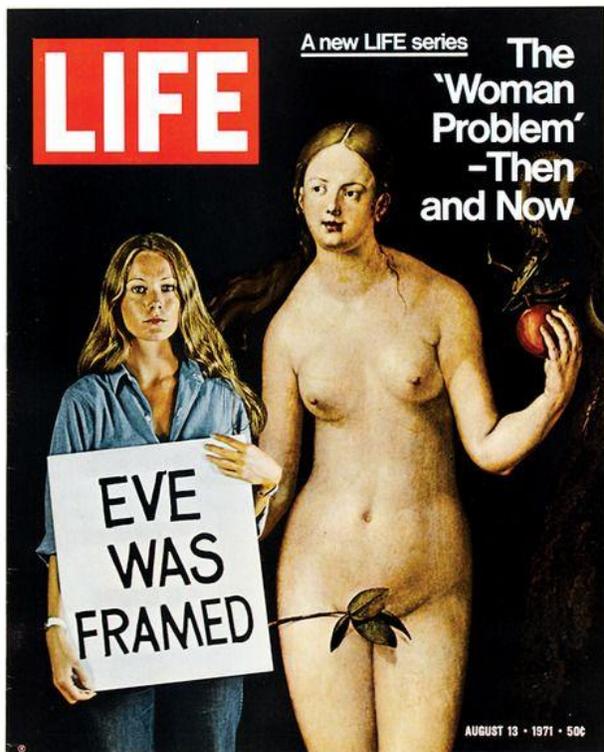
Social Work 219

Office: 446 Agnes Arnold Hall

E-mail: cmtamber@central.uh.edu

Phone: (713) 743-9341

Office hours: Wednesdays 3-4 p.m., Thursdays 1-2 p.m., or by appointment (Please do not hesitate to visit my office to discuss the course, questions you have, assignments, etc.)



Course description: This course discusses female characters and voices in the Hebrew Bible (sometimes referred to as the Old Testament), the places in the Bible where we would expect to hear women's voices but only hear those of men, and about interpretation of the Bible by female and feminist/womanist/gender-critical scholars. From Eve to Esther and beyond, we will read closely biblical texts featuring female characters, and we will sample scholars' and artists' interpretations of those characters and their stories. In addition, we will discuss the afterlives of biblical women in literature, art, music, advertising, and more. Students will work together to come up with creative ways to teach others about the afterlives of biblical women. We will predominantly focus on the texts themselves, but where appropriate we will delve into the historical circumstances of real Israelite women.

Course goals:

- Be able to speak and write knowledgeably about women in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament;
- Understand the ancient context of the Bible, especially as it relates to women and gender;
- Explore how scholars, artists, and religious leaders have treated female characters from the Bible;
- Get a feel for women's, feminist, womanist, and gender-critical biblical interpretation;
- Gain critical-thinking skills through learning to read and evaluate scholarly articles.

Required books:

An edition of the Bible with Apocrypha. I recommend this study Bible because it contains helpful footnotes, essays, and maps, but any straightforward translation is fine:
Coogan, Michael D. et al., eds. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version* (4th edition). New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent*. New York: Picador, 2007. (20th anniversary edition)

Course requirements and policies:

1. Attendance is required at all sessions. If you must miss class, please *let me know in advance* if at all possible; it will be your responsibility to make up work that you have missed.
2. This class is discussion- and participation-based. Therefore, except in cases of serious extenuating circumstances, students missing more than one-quarter of the total number of class sessions will be ineligible for a passing grade in the course.
3. Class participation is important and counts significantly toward your grade! Please come to class prepared to contribute to class discussions. You are expected to do the assigned readings for every class, share insights or ask questions, and thus contribute to the class discussions.
4. It is impossible to pay attention and participate if you are on Facebook or Twitter, so please refrain from using your computer, tablet, or phone during class time for any non-class-related purpose. I strongly encourage you to use paper and pen to take notes.
5. Bring your Bible and assigned readings to class each session.
6. For most class sessions, you will be asked to read/listen to/watch a) a chapter or section from the Bible and b) an interpretation of the biblical material. This may be a scholarly article or *midrash*. Please prepare for each class as follows:
 - a. Read the biblical text. Even if you have read it before, read it again with an eye toward the women in the text. Note three questions or observations you have about the text, paying special attention to the questions offered by Exum, Stone, and Gafney. We will start each class by discussing your questions and observations.
 - b. Read/listen to/watch the interpretive material. How does the article, song, or poem affect your understanding of the biblical text? Does it answer any of your questions? Do you agree with the author's interpretation?
7. In between class sessions, I will occasionally need to communicate important information to the class via e-mail. It is your responsibility to check your university e-mail regularly.
8. Students will pair up to research and deliver a short (10-15 minutes) presentation. The presentations will relate to cultural portrayals of biblical women. Each pair will deliver its presentation on the day on which we discuss their assigned biblical woman. Assignments will be given and discussed on January 23.
9. Over the course of the semester, students will write three short (2-3 pages) response papers to course readings. Prompts will be distributed one week before the due date for each assignment. Each student may elect to replace one response paper of her or his choosing with an alternative type of response such as a poem, song, video, or painting. If

you elect to do an alternative assignment, please get your plan approved by Prof. Tamber-Rosenau no less than two days before the assignment is due.

10. Students will complete a midterm paper (4-5 pages) answering the following questions: which biblical story or character that we have covered so far do you find most problematic? What about this character or story disturbs you? Have biblical scholars writing on this topic dealt with your concerns? Do they do it satisfactorily, in your opinion? A detailed prompt will be distributed in class two weeks before the due date.
11. Students will complete a final project of about 8 pages, which may be a traditional research paper, an in-depth study of one biblical text (exegesis), a comparative review of three books on a single topic, or an extended *midrash*.

Grading:

Attendance and participation: 20%
Group presentation: 10%
Response papers: 30%
Midterm project: 15%
Final project: 25%

Grading will be on the following scale. Please note that the highest *final course grade* the University permits is A.

97-100: A+	77-79: C+
93-96: A	73-76: C
90-92: A-	70-72: C-
87-89: B+	67-69: D+
83-86: B	63-66: D
80-82: B-	60-62: D-
	<60: F

Academic integrity:

Students at the University of Houston are required to adhere to the university's academic honesty policy, which you can find here: <http://www.uh.edu/provost/academic-affairs/policy-guidelines/honesty-policy/> If you are unsure how the honesty policy applies to a given assignment in this course, please ask me. I have a zero-tolerance policy towards any type of academic dishonesty and will refer all violations to the department hearing officer.

CAPS Statement:

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the

“Let's Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.

http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html

Special accommodations for students with disabilities:

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, the University of Houston strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. Students seeking accommodation in this course should contact the instructor after obtaining the appropriate documentation through the UH Center for Students with Disabilities.

Course Schedule:

Week 1

Tuesday, January 16: NO CLASS: WEATHER

Thursday, January 18: Introductions and syllabus review

Read: Sharon H. Ringe, “When Women Interpret the Bible”

Week 2

Tuesday, January 23: Approaching the text: an introduction to gender-related methods in biblical studies

Read: J. Cheryl Exum, “Whose Interests Are Being Served?”

Ken Stone, “Unmanning Abimelech”

Wilda C. Gafney, “Introduction” to *Womanist Midrash*

Thursday, January 25: Eve

Read: Genesis 1-3

Phyllis Trible, “Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread” and “Not a Jot, Not a Tittle: Genesis 2-3 After Twenty Years”

Listen: Imaginary Worlds: “The Canon”

Hand out and discuss: Response paper #1 prompt

Week 3

Tuesday, January 30: Eve

Read: Anne W. Stewart, “Eve and Her Interpreters”

Google and share: “Eve” and “advertising”; bring one image of an Eve ad to show and discuss

Start reading: Anita Diamant, *The Red Tent*

Thursday, February 1: The Mothers: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah

Read: Genesis 12, 15-18, and 20-31

Read and listen: Lyrics, song, and introductory essay for Alicia Jo Rabins, “Rachel and Leah: Being Sisters”

Due: Response paper #1

Week 4

Tuesday, February 6: The Forgotten Mothers: Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah

Read: Wilda C. Gafney, “The Torah of Enslaved Women”

Hand out and discuss: Response paper #2 prompt

Thursday, February 8: Motherhood, Fertility, and Barrenness in the Hebrew Bible

Read: Candida Moss and Joel Baden, “The Matriarchs as Models” from *Reconceiving Infertility: Biblical Perspectives on Procreation and Childlessness*

Week 5

Tuesday, February 13: Dinah

Read: Genesis 34

Yael Shemesh, “Rape Is Rape Is Rape: The Story of Dinah and Shechem”

Finish reading: *The Red Tent*

Due: Response paper #2

Thursday, February 15: Tamar

Read: Genesis 38

Nobuko Morimura, “The Story of Tamar: A Feminist Interpretation of Genesis 38”

Hand out and discuss: midterm paper assignment

Week 6

Tuesday, February 20: Miriam, Yocheved, Shifra, Puah, Pharaoh’s Daughter, and Zipporah

Read: Exodus 1-4, 15, Numbers 12, 20:1

Read and listen: Lyrics, song, and introductory essay for Alicia Jo Rabins, “Snow/Scorpions and Spiders”

Thursday, February 22: Rituals and laws pertaining to women

Read: Leviticus 15, Numbers 5:11-31, Deuteronomy 22

Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "The Strange Case of the Suspected Sotah"

Week 7

Tuesday, February 27: Cozbi, The Daughters of Zelophahad

Read: Numbers 25, 27, 36

Wilda C. Gafney, "Cozbi Bat Tzur" and "Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah, The Daughters of Zelophahad"

Thursday, March 1: Rahab, Deborah, Jael

Read: Joshua 2, Judges 4-5

Susan Niditch, "Eroticism and Death in the Tale of Jael"

Due: Midterm paper

Week 8

Tuesday, March 6: Jephthah's Daughter and the Levite's Concubine

Read: Judges 11, Judges 19

Lyrae van Clief-Stefanon: "The Daughter and the Concubine from the Nineteenth Chapter of Judges Consider and Speak Their Minds"

Thursday, March 8: Delilah

Read: Judges 16

Lori Rowlett, "Violent Femmes and S/M: Queering Samson and Delilah"

SPRING BREAK

Week 9

Tuesday, March 20: Bathsheba

Read: 2 Samuel 11-12, 1 Kings 1

Deryn Guest, "Looking Lesbian at the Bathing Bathsheba"

De'Anna Daniels, "Bathsheba" from *Lady Parts: The Bible and the Vagina Monologues*

Hand out and discuss: Final project prompt

Thursday, March 22: Royal Women

Read: 2 Samuel 13

Wilda C. Gafney, "Dominated by David"

Week 10

Tuesday, March 27: Jezebel and Athaliah

Read: 1 Kings 16:30-34, 18-19, 21, 2 Kings 9, 11

Josey Bridges Snyder, "Jezebel and Her Interpreters"

Thursday, March 29: Goddesses in Israel? (Yes!)

Read: Jeremiah 44

Susan Ackerman, "And the Women Knead Dough: The Worship of the Queen of Heaven in 6th Century Judah"

Week 11

Tuesday, April 3: Women in the prophetic books

Read: Hosea 1-2

Julia O'Brien, "The Challenge of Feminist Criticism of the Prophets"

Hand out and discuss: Response paper #3 prompt

Thursday, April 5: Women in the prophetic books

Read: Ezekiel 16 and 23

Bryan Bibb, "There's No Sex in Your Violence"

Meredith Brown, "God's Wife" in *Lady Parts: The Bible and the Vagina Monologues*

Week 12

Tuesday, April 10: Song of Songs

Read: Song of Songs 1-8

Donald Polaski, "What Will Ye See in the Shulammitte?"

Hand in: Response paper #3

Thursday, April 12: Wisdom

Read: Proverbs 1-9, 31

Susan Ellman, "A Husband of Valor"

Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, "The Good Wife: Who *Is* a Worthy Woman?"

Week 13

Tuesday, April 17: Ruth

Read: Ruth 1-4

Gale Yee, "She Stood in Tears Amid the Alien Corn": Ruth, the Perpetual Foreigner and Model Minority

Thursday, April 19: Esther

Read: Esther 1-10

Sidnie Ann White, "Esther: A Feminine Model for Jewish Diaspora"

Week 14

Tuesday, April 24: Judith and Susanna

Read: Judith 8-16 and Susanna 1

Caryn Tamber-Rosenau, "Biblical Bathing Beauties and the Manipulation of the Male Gaze: What Judith Can Tell Us about Bathsheba and Susanna"

Thursday, April 26: Wrap-up and discussion of final projects

Read: Phyllis Trible, "If the Bible's So Patriarchal, How Come I Love It?"