

## Gender and the Hebrew Bible

REL 3291.03A1, JST 3930.1C27, WST 3930.093D, Fall 2014  
M 8 (3:00-3:50) AND 134 / W 8-9 (3:00-3:50; 4:05-4:55) AND 101

Professor: Robert Kawashima  
office hours: Mon 11:40-12:40; Fri 11:40-12:40; or by appointment  
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### Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the modern, critical study of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), as well as other ancient works, emphasizing in particular the analysis and interpretation of gender and sexuality in the ancient world. Specifically, we will engage in careful and informed readings of a range of biblical texts (narrative, law, wisdom literature), in order to investigate a series of questions regarding the mutual constitution of male and female in the literary traditions of ancient Israel. What happens to the goddess in monotheism? How does biblical narrative imaginatively realize the lives of women and men. What ideal roles are constructed and assigned to each? How are their bodies and sexualities conceptualized and legislated by biblical law? Comparative evidence from classical Greece and the ancient Near East will help bring the specificity of the biblical traditions into clearer focus. Selected secondary readings will introduce students to some of the theoretical issues involved in the study of gender and sexuality, of ancient literature in general, and of biblical literature in particular. No previous coursework on the Bible is required.

### Required Texts:

*HarperCollins Study Bible* — or other approved translation

Stephanie Dalley, trans., *Myths from Mesopotamia*

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

Hesiod, *Theogony, Works and Days*, trans. M. L. West

**additional** secondary readings, course materials, and information will be made available through **Sakai** at e-Learning Support Services: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

Accommodations for students with disabilities: students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

### Course Requirements:

#### **Attendance is mandatory**

Participation (10%)

2 Written Exercises (3 pages) – (30%)

2 Exams – (60%)

Make-up exams must be approved by instructor beforehand, or justified afterward by providing appropriate documentation (medical, etc.).

Grade scale:

	87–89 = B+	77–79 = C+	67–69 = D+	below 60 = E
93–100 = A	83–86 = B	73–76 = C	63–66 = D	
90–92 = A-	80–82 = B-	70–72 = C-	60–62 = D-	

Schedule:

Week 1

8/25 **Introduction:** syllabus; general background

8/27 **Gender and Creation:** Dalley, Epic of Creation; Genesis 1; Frymer-Kensky, In the Wake of the Goddesses, chs 5, 8 and 13

Week 2

9/1 **Labor Day (no class)**

9/3 **The Death of the Goddesses:** Hesiod, Theogony; Homeric Hymn, “To Demeter”; Dalley, Descent of Ishtar; Frymer-Kensky, Wake, chs 1, 2 and 7

Week 3

9/8 **The Origins of Gender:** Genesis 1-3; Hesiod, Theogony (pp 18-21) and Works and Days (pp 37-42); Frymer-Kensky, Wake, ch 19

9/10 **Women and the Origins of Culture:** Genesis 2-11; Dalley, Gilgamesh (pp 50-60); Hesiod, Theogony (pp 18-21) and Works and Days (pp 37-42); Frymer-Kensky, Wake, chs 4 and 10

Week 4

9/15 **Heroism:** Dalley, Gilgamesh (pp 61-77); Baal; Judges 1-5; Genesis 14; Frymer-Kensky, Wake, ch 6

9/17 **Purity and Pollution:** Leviticus 12-16; Frymer-Kensky, “Pollution, Purification, and Purgation in Biblical Israel”; Frymer-Kensky, Wake, ch 17

Week 5

9/22 **Gender and Law (Legals Status and Property Rights):** Numbers 27, 30, 36

9/24 **Gender and Law (Marriage, Divorce, Adultery):** Numbers 5; Deuteronomy 22; Genesis 19, 34; 2 Samuel 13-14

Week 6

9/29 **Gender and Law (Levirate Marriage):** Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Genesis 38; Ruth

10/1 **Women in the Cult:** Leviticus 8-10, 21; Numbers 6; Bird, “The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus”

Week 7

10/6 **Gender and Authority:** traditional) 1 Kings 2, 10, 21; Esther 1  
charismatic) Exodus 15; Numbers 6, 12; Judges 4; 2 Kings 22:14-20; 2 Samuel 14

10/8 **Domestic Violence:** Lot’s daughters (Genesis 19); Isaac (Genesis 22); Jephthah’s daughter (Judges 6-12); The Levite’s concubine (Judges 19-21; Genesis 19); 1 Samuel 11; **1st WRITTEN EXERCISE due in class**

Week 8

- 10/13 **Domesticity:** Genesis 12-50, esp 12, 15, 17-18; Dalley, Gilgamesh (pp 77-120); Frymer-Kensky, Wake, chs 3 and 11  
10/15 **EXAM 1** (8/27 to 10/8)

Week 9

- 10/20 **Husbands and Wives:** Sarah and Hagar (Genesis 16, 21); Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29-30); Sarah & Pharaoh (Genesis 12); Sarah & Abimelech (Genesis 20); Rebekah & Abimelech (Genesis 26)  
10/22 **Motherhood:** Sarah (Genesis 18, 20-21); Rebekah (Genesis 25); Samson's mother (Judges 13); Hannah (1 Samuel 1-2); Lot's daughters (Genesis 19)

Week 10

- 10/27 **Stereotypes:** Samson and Delilah (Judges 13-16); Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39); Ezekiel 16; Joshua 23; Solomon's Wives (1 Kings 3, 8-12); Jezebel (1 Kings 16:29-22:40); Frymer-Kensky, Wake, ch 12  
10/29 **Wisdom Literature:** Psalm 1; Proverbs 1-9, 31; Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom"; Frymer-Kensky, Wake, ch 16

Week 11

- 11/3 **Israel, Wife of God:** Exodus 32; Numbers 25, 31; Hosea 1-4; Ezekiel 16  
11/5 **Greek "Homosexuality":** Plato, *Symposium* (excerpts); Halperin, "Two Views of Greek Love"

Week 12

- 11/10 **Greek "Homosexuality":** Plato, *Symposium* (excerpts)  
11/12 **Sexual Taboos:** Genesis 19; Leviticus 18-20; Deuteronomy 24, 27; Boyarin, "Are There Any Jews in 'The History of Sexuality?'"

Week 13

- 11/17 **"Just Friends?":** Gilgamesh; 1 Samuel 16-20, 31; 2 Samuel 1; Halperin, "Heroes and their Pals"  
11/19 **Politics and Gender:** 1-2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2; **2nd WRITTEN EXERCISE due in class**

Week 14

- 11/24 **Class canceled (due to conference)**  
11/26 **Thanksgiving (no class)**

Week 15

- 12/1 **Politics and Gender:** 1-2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2  
12/3 **Ruth & Esther**

Week 16

- 12/8 **Esther**  
12/10 **EXAM 2** (from 10/13 to 12/8)