RELIGIOUS STUDIES 373: WOMEN AND THE BIBLE  
SPRING 2017
Instructor: Dr. Kirkegaard

Section 1, Schedule Number 22889  
Monday and Wednesday  11:00-11:50  
Arts and Letters 105  
Course Webpage: blackboard.sdsu.edu  
(either enter SDSU Red ID and your password  
select RELS 373 Women and the Bible from "My Courses")
e-mail: bkirkega@mail.sdsu.edu  
Office Hours:  Arts and Letters 664; Mondays 10:00-11:00 and 12:00-1:45

Course Description: This course offers an introduction to the Bible within an academic setting. The Bible is  
arguably the single most influential text on the development of Western culture. Until recent times, the Bible formed  
the common cultural background that was drawn upon in literature, art and philosophy. Study of the Bible provides  
an essential background for all liberal arts studies, opening a rich world of stories and allusions within other works.  
The Bible is also the defining sacred scripture of two of the world’s major religious traditions and important to  
several more. As sacred scripture, the Bible continues to shape the lives of much of the world’s population. Basic  
knowledge of the Bible helps to make sense of the complex world in which we live. Within academic study, the  
Bible has also been at the center of the development of critical approaches to the analyses of texts and traditions.  
Study of the Bible presents an excellent opportunity for learning and applying a range of critical approaches that are  
essential to many of the other academic disciplines.

In the Biblical texts, women play vital roles that are all too often overshadowed by their male counterparts. Women  
in the Biblical stories are wives and mothers, heroines and villains. They are renowned for their great beauty and all  
too often the subject of violence. Women are admired as the source of all life and feared as sources of temptation  
and pollution. The Bible incorporates ambivalent attitudes towards women that have in turn profoundly shaped the  
development of attitudes towards women in western culture. Long recognized for its importance in inspiring  
attitudes towards women, the topic of Biblical interpretation remains an ongoing focus of the women's movement  
and feminist scholarship. In recent decades, feminist scholarship has drawn from a wide array of critical approaches  
to create one of the most vital sub-fields of Biblical scholarship. In this class on Women and the Bible, you will be  
invited into close study of the women in the Biblical texts and the scholarship that has sought to understand them.

General Education:  
This course fulfills one of nine courses that you will take in General Education Foundations. Foundations courses  
cultivate skills in reading, writing, research, communication, computation, information literacy, and use of  
technology. They furthermore introduce you to basic concepts, theories and approaches in a variety of disciplines in  
order to provide the intellectual breadth necessary to help you integrate the more specialized knowledge gathered in  
your major area of study into a broader world picture.

This course is one of four Foundations courses that you will take in the area of Humanities and Fine Arts. Upon  
completion of this area of Foundations, you will be able to: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the  
humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe  
various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) identify  
issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex  
problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

Learning Outcomes:  
1. Students demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of content and context for Women and the Bible including  
major figures, events, and complex themes through quizzes, midterm and final examinations.
2. Students *discover, analyze* and *interpret* Biblical texts and scholarly articles with a diversity of critical approaches through journal writing and class discussion.

3. Students *integrate* and *synthesize* their study of complex problems and questions with attention to the personal and global relevance in their final reflection.

**An Important Caution:** This class is NOT a religiously oriented “Bible Study.” It is, however, an academic study of the topic of women within two of the major world scriptures that are deeply important to many people of faith – including fellow students. Please treat the texts and topics with respect even as you question and explore them within an academic environment. For some students this will raise a range of questions of faith and identity. Some of these questions will be of general interest to the class, but given the diversity of perspectives many will not. Please feel free to raise questions throughout the course of the semester, but do not be surprised if I suggest that it is a topic better discussed after class or during office hours, or within your own faith setting.

**Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and accommodations based upon disability cannot be made until you provide an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services.

**Success in a Hybrid Class:** A Hybrid class includes both traditional classroom meetings and structure and required on-line components. For the on-line elements you will need the following:

- A computer - PC or Macintosh- with a stable Internet connection. Higher speed Internet connections (cable modem, DSL) are strongly recommended.
- Basic computer skills
- A reliable email address that will not change from the beginning until the end of the semester.
- A "technology back-up" plan. Students should plan out an alternative location to do assignments and quizzes in the event their computer or Internet connection is not working!

Students are also required to:

- Make use of the online course materials available via Blackboard.
- Participate in asynchronous online activities – for this class these include mini lectures and short quizzes.
- Complete readings and assignments by the dates indicated on the syllabus.
- Check email on a regular basis.

**Academic Honesty:** The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. These activities will not be tolerated in this class. Become familiar with the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by Student Affairs.

Examples of Plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
- Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
- Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
- Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

If you have questions on what is plagiarism, please consult the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html) and this helpful guide from the Library: (http://infodome.sdsu.edu/infolit/exploratorium/Standard_5/plagiarism.pdf)
Grading:

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(in class and on-line)

The quizzes (15%) will test your comprehension of material from the on-line mini-lectures, your knowledge gained from class, and your understanding of your Biblical and electronic readings. Only the best 8 out of 12 on-line quizzes will count towards your grade. Because the lowest 4 quizzes will be dropped, you may only take each quiz once and no allowances will be made for technical difficulties. The Midterm (15%) and Final (20%) will be comprised of objective questions. These examinations will test your mastery of essential information and your ability to explore complex themes within the topic of Women and the Bible. Additional details for the Midterm and Final will be discussed in class several weeks before the exams. The Journal (25%) will chronicle your observations and application of critical methods as you read the Bible throughout the semester. The Journal will be your opportunity to express your thoughts and detail your own Biblical exploration. The Journal is also an opportunity to engage in close textual analysis, as informed by your reading and by class lectures, and to apply specific types of Biblical Criticism. The Journal will also include short entries of notes or reactions to your Electronic Readings for each week. The Electronic Readings are comprised of a range of scholarly treatments of our topics and your entries will demonstrate your careful reading of and clear engagement with the material. The Journals will be exchanged for peer-review twice during the semester. The peer-review is part of your grade for the journal and is required. The journal will be collected at the end of the semester to be graded. For more detail on what is expected in the Journal please see the Journal Guide on blackboard. You will also write a Reflection (10%) that is due at the end of the semester. The Reflection is a sustained and formal essay integrating what you have learned over the course of the semester and its personal and global relevance. The Reflection Guide on blackboard will give you more detail on what to expect. Participation will be measured on the basis of the value of the contributions you make to the class and especially to discussions. Discussions are a major part of this class and I strongly encourage you to participate. You can, of course, only contribute meaningfully to in-class discussion if you attend class regularly and prepare for class discussion. Attendance at class meetings and preparation of the reading assignments, therefore, ARE REQUIRED. Arrive to class on-time and remain the length of the class or you will not receive credit for attending that day. You will also be required to write one 400 word Class Summary during the semester and to post this summary to blackboard. Instruction for writing the summary is available on blackboard. The class summary comprises part of your total participation grade.

A number of extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester. Each opportunity will be worth up to ½ of a point on your final grade with a maximum of 2 points earned in extra credit for the semester. To earn the extra credit you must attend one of the approved opportunities and write a short 250-300 word essay. A list of extra credit opportunities will be posted on blackboard and I will inform you as additional opportunities arise.

In your written work and in your classroom involvement (both in person and on-line) you will be expected to adhere to "acceptable standards of conduct" as discussed on the web page for the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/). Turn OFF cell phones and pagers while in class. As a general rule, extensions on journal due dates will not be granted. PLAN AHEAD.

Required Readings:

1. Bible – Preferred translation is the *New Oxford Annotated Bible (NOAB) with the Apocrypha*. Please bring your Bible to class as we will be referring to it frequently. Make sure you have it with you on Mondays for discussion.
2. Electronic Readings (links on blackboard)

Electronic Readings: To cut down on your costs, required readings throughout the semester will be provided as internet links and pdfs. These Electronic Readings will provide a range of scholarly treatment of the Biblical texts and the topic of Women and the Bible. These readings ARE REQUIRED and will be tested on the quizzes, midterm and final exams. You will also be writing in your journals as you read the Electronic Readings. You can access the Electronic Readings by following the links on the Blackboard site under Course Documents. These readings are marked ER in the calendar below. In many cases below I have offered some additional commentary to help guide your reading.

Contacting me:
I will try to respond within 24-48 hours to emails. For quick questions, the turnaround time may be much shorter. If I do not, for any reason, respond within 48 hours please feel free to email a second time (It is rare, but occasionally I can miss an email if I get a lot all at once). For more complex questions you may wish to come to office hours where we can discuss topics at greater length. I am also typically available a few minutes before and after class to answer quick questions.

I look forward to getting to know you over the semester!

Calendar of Readings and Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, make sure that you complete the readings from the Bible by MONDAY of each week and the readings from the Electronic Readings by WEDNESDAY. You will be expected to have read the Bible readings for Monday each week in preparation for classroom discussion. Likewise, you will need to complete the Electronic Readings by Wednesday for classroom discussion. The on-line quizzes test knowledge of the material covered during the previous week including the Electronic Readings, Bible readings and class lecture as well as the assigned mini-lectures that prepare you for the next week's material.

1/18  Introduction
Over the weekend: mini lectures 1A, 1B and 2 (Listen to the mini lectures over the weekend. There is NO Quiz this first weekend).
Over the weekend read (both are available on blackboard and appear as the first two entries in Course Documents):
"Inclusive Language Lectionary" from Weaving the Visions, pp. 163-169

1/23 and 1/25  Week Two  Created in the Image of…
For Monday -- Biblical Reading: Genesis 1-4
For Wednesday the following Electronic Readings (on Blackboard – Course Documents):
Elizabeth Cady Stanton et. al, The Woman's Bible, foreword and pp. 5-33.
(recommended but not required) Cullen Murphy, The Word According to Eve, foreword and pp. 1-37.

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 3 and 4 and QUIZ 1

1/30 and 2/1  Week Three  "Be Fruitful and Multiply"
For Monday Read the following Biblical texts (organized by person/story):
Eve (re-read Genesis 1-4)
Noah's Wife and the daughters of Eve: Genesis 6-9
Lot's Daughters: Genesis 19:1-28
Song of Hannah: 1 Samuel 1 and 2

For Wednesday read the following Electronic Readings: Lilith Readings; Eve and Hannah from Women in Scripture; 1 and 2 Samuel in Women's Bible Commentary

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 5 and 6 and Quiz 2

2/6 and 2/8  **Week Four**  The Ideal Wife and Mother?

For Monday Read the following Biblical stories:
Sarah (and Hagar): Genesis 11:29-12:20; Genesis 16-18; Genesis 20-23:2
Rebecca: Genesis 24; 25; 27
Rachel and Leah: Genesis 29-31 and Genesis 35
Zipporah: Exodus 2:15-3:1; 4:18-26; 18:1-12
Michal: 1 Samuel 18:6-30; 1 Samuel 19:11-18; 2 Samuel 6:14-23 also 1 Samuel 25 (Abigail's Story)
Proverbs: 31
Miriam (the Ideal Sister?): Exodus 1-2:10; Exodus 15:20-21; Numbers 12 (leprosy story); Numbers 20:1-2

For Wednesday Read the following Electronic Readings: Women's Bible Commentary - Ideal Wife as well as the Betrothal Type Scene article by Fuchs. The Dictionary entries on the Ideal Wife (in 2 parts) are not required but I wanted to make them available in case you were interested.

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 7 and 8 and Quiz 3

2/13 and 2/15  **Week Five**  Women and Sexuality

Read the following for Monday:
Tamar: Genesis 38
Potiphar's Wife: Genesis 39
Rahab: Joshua 2
Bathsheba: 2 Samuel 11 and 12; 1 Kings 1 and 2
The Song of Songs


2/15 (Wednesday) Peer Review 1 of your Journals (in class)

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 9 and 10 and Quiz 4

2/20 and 2/22  **Week Six**  Women and Violence

Read the following for Monday:
Lot's Daughters (also Lot's wife): Genesis 19: 1-28
The Levite's Concubine: Judges 19-21 (esp. 19)
Dinah: Genesis 34
Tamar (David's Daughter): 2 Samuel 13
Jephthah's Daughter: Judges 11
Jael (Deborah in story as well): Judges 4 and 5
Judith: Judith
For Wednesday read the following Electronic Readings:

- Eroticism and Death in the Tale of Jael; Women and Violence in Judges 21; Otherness and Domestication in the Book of Judith; Women and Violence – Women's Bible Commentary; "Judith" from Women's Bible Commentary; and Women and Violence from Dictionary of Women.

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 11 and 12 and Quiz 5.

2/27 and 3/1

**Week Seven**

Women and Pollution

Read the following for Monday:

- Delilah: Judges 16
- Jezebel: 1 Kings 21 and 22; 2 Kings 9; check 1 Kings 16 and 18-19:3
- Solomon's Wives: 1 Kings 11; also 1 Kings 10 for wealth (Queen of Sheba)
- Leviticus: 12, 15, 18

For Wednesday read the following Electronic Readings: Please start with the Leviticus reading from Women's Bible Commentary. Also read as much as you can from the Women as Pollution collection of readings from the Women's Bible Dictionary... you will find a series of short treatments of the women we looked at on Monday as well as another sustained treatment of Leviticus.

Women's Bible Commentary, "Leviticus," pp. 42-48; Women and Pollution – Dictionary of Women;

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 13 and 14 and Quiz 6.

3/6 and 3/8

**Week Eight**

Women as Heroines

3/6 Women as Heroines
- Esther (national heroine): 1-2
- Ruth (devotion to her mother-in-law): Ruth

3/8 NO CLASS – Peer Review 2 (outside of class)

No Mini lectures or on-line Quiz this week.

No Journal this week.

3/13 and 3/15

**Week Nine**

Introduction to Women and the New Testament

3/13: **MIDTERM EXAM**


Electronic Readings: TBA

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 15 and 16 and Quiz 7.

3/20 and 3/22

**Week Ten**

The Virgin Mary – Women and Creation/Redemption

Mary the mother of Jesus: Start with reading about Mary in Mark (think carefully about what is and is not said about her in this Gospel). Then read the two different birth stories in Luke and Matthew and follow up with looking at the treatments of her elsewhere in the Synoptic Gospels using especially the Gospel parallels. Then look at the beginning of the Gospel of John and how he chooses to tell the "birth story" of sorts of Jesus and how Mary appears in this Gospel. Finally, finish up with reading about the brief treatment of Mary in the book of Acts.
Mark 3 (esp. 31-35); Mark 6:1-6
Luke 1 and 2 (includes story of Elizabeth); 4:16-30 (use Gospel Parallels); 8:19-21
Matthew 1 and 2; 12:46-50; 13:53-58
John 1 (John's "birth"/creation story); 2:1-11; 19:25-27
Acts 1:13-14
Proto Gospel of James (Protoevangelion of James) – feel free to use any of the translations. I might recommend either the M.R. James or Bernhard translations but they all are workable.
http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/infancyjames.html

You will find the link for the Gospel parallel website below. Please experiment with using the parallels. If you click on the little book icons as you scroll down in one of the Gospels, it will line up the corresponding sections in the other Gospels that have a parallel. The 5 Gospel version includes the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas which we may talk about more later in the semester. For your purposes, click on one of the treatments of Mary from your readings and look to see whether there are any parallels (if there are not, that is actually hugely important to think about as well!). If there are parallels, click on the little books and line up the parallels. You should then be able to see some interesting details in the treatment. Your observations and questions may also have you wanting to read these stories in their larger context… please feel free to read what comes before and after these passages.

http://sites.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis/

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 17 and 18 and Quiz 8

3/27 and 3/29 SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

4/3 and 4/5 Week Eleven Mary Magdalene

Bible Readings for Monday: First read Luke 8:1-3; then read in all four of the Gospels from the Crucifixion through the Women at the Tomb. I recommend using the Gospel Parallels - http://sites.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis/meta-4g.htm
If you use the parallels, the passages are labeled with the headers – the crucifixion, Jesus’ death, the Burial of Jesus, and the Women at the Tomb. (If you find the passage in any one of the parallels, you can then click the little colored books and it will line up the others).

Hopefully, reading the whole of the final scenes will offer useful context for the smaller sections interspersed throughout with Mary Magdalene and her place in the midst of the dramatic events.

Then read the passages later connected with Mary Magdalene – of the woman caught in adultery and Mary of Bethany (John 8:2-11 and Luke 7:36-50).

And finally, read the short prayer of Anselm to Mary Magdalene for a richer sense of the attachment to her and understanding of her in later western Christianity.
Prayer to Mary Magdalene:

Electronic readings: Please start with the Gospel of Mary (one of the main non-canonical texts). Then read the summary articles from Smithsonian both on Mary Magdalene generally and more specifically on the new papyri and "wife of Jesus" topic. Finally, read the Women's Bible Commentary entries that will go through the cross/resurrection scenes in Mark, Luke and John.

I have also included the Cullen Murphy piece "Venus in Sackcloth". This is an excellent essay but closely overlaps with the summary article from Smithsonian. I would say read either of the two - or both if you feel truly enterprising.
4/10 and 4/12  Week Twelve  Women in the Gospel Stories

Bible Readings for Women in the Gospels:

Healings:
Simon's Mother-in-law: Mark 1:29-34
Daughter of Jairus: Mark 5:21-24 and 35-43
Women with the issue of blood: Mark 5:24-43
Syro-Phoenician Woman: Mark 7:24-30

Herodias and her daughter: Mark 6:14-29

Widow's Offering: Mark 12:41-44

Samaritan Woman: John 4:1-42
Woman Caught in Adultery: John 7:53-8:11
Sermon on the Mount (adultery and divorce): Matthew 5:27-32, see also 19:2-12
Woman with Seven Husbands: Matthew 22:23-33 (Levirate marriage in Deut. 25:5)
Wife of Pilate: Matthew 27:19
Parable of the Ten Virgins/Bridesmaids: Matthew 25:1-13

Electronic Readings: Gospel readings from the Women's Bible Commentary (read at least 2 of them)

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 21 and 22 and Quiz 10

4/17 and 4/19  Week Thirteen  Paul's Women – Women and Early Christian Communities

Please read the following Bible readings for this week. Some of the Acts readings are more sustained but many of these readings will be very brief. You may wish to read more of the surrounding texts for additional context. Keep both the form of the writing and what you would expect of women in mind as you encounter women in these readings. Once you have completed the Bible readings, please also read the electronic reading Women in New Testament times (if you have not already done so). It will offer useful perspective on women in the period to help you make sense of these passages.

Bible readings: Acts: 5:14; Acts 5:1-11 (Ananias and Sapphira); 8:27 (the Candace); 9:36-43 (Raising of Tabitha); 12:12-17 (Rhoda at the Gate); 16:11-40 (Women at Philippi); 17 (whole chapter including Damaris); and 18:1-28 (Priscilla and Aquila).
Acts 21 and prophecy.

Romans: 7:1-6 (analog about marriage); 8:18-25 (labor pains); 16:1-16 (closing – place of named women including Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, mother of Rufus, Julia and the sister of Nereus).

1 Corinthians: 7:1-40 (sex and spirituality); 1 Cor. 16:19

Galatians 3:28 (neither male nor female); 4:19 (Paul as mother); 4:21-31 (Allegory of Sarah and Hagar)

Philippians 4:2-3 (Euodia and Syntyche) and 10-20

Electronic Readings for Women and Paul (description, links are on blackboard):
These readings include two collections from the Dictionary of Women in the Bible separated into a grouping of named and unnamed women. As is always the case with scanning these there are a lot of extra pages - it scans both
sides and then splits them. So don't be surprised if you see entries that are not relevant... the next page certainly will be!

I should also note that there is a LOT here. Please read what you can of it. I debated whether to give you a more synthetic treatment but chose instead to reinforce the richness and complexity of the detail upon which all of the larger arguments are built. These entries should give you a much fuller sense of how feminist Biblical scholars work with these women scattered throughout Pauline material.

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 23 and 24 and Quiz 11

4/24 and 4/26   **Week Fourteen**  Women in their Place? – Women in the Early Church

For Monday, please read the following passages dealing with what are often called "Household Codes": Ephesians 5:22-6:5; Colossians 3:18-4:1; 1 Peter 2:13-3:9; then read all of 1 Timothy and finally (and very importantly!) Acts of Paul and Thecla

For Wednesday, please read: Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.asp and Tertullian, On the Veiling of Virgins

Over the weekend: Mini lectures 25 and 26 and Quiz 12

**Journal due in class on 4/26**

5/1 and 5/3   **Week Fifteen**  Conclusions (Legacies and Perspective) – Non canonical, later interpretation

Electronic Readings: TBA

**Final Reflection due in class on 5/3**

5/8   FINAL EXAM, Monday 10:30-12:30