

**Brescia University College**  
**Religious Studies 22216F**

**Fall 2011**

**Women and the Bible**

**Time:** Monday: 4:30 - 5:30  
Wednesday: 3:30 - 5:30

**Location:** Room 304

**Course Director:** Dr. Theresa O'Donovan  
**Phone Number:** 432-8353 (ext: 28243)  
**e-mail:** todonova@uwo.ca

**Office:** 177  
**Office Hours:** Mon. 12:30 - 1:30;  
Wed. 12:30 - 1:30; Thurs. 11:30 - 12:30  
(or by appointment)

**Course Description:**

The Bible has been both a source for oppression for women and a resource for courage and commitment. How is this so? This course addresses that question through its survey of the portrayal of women in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. We examine, for example, the stories of creation and fall in Genesis, female protagonists, stereotypical representations of women and their roles, the women around Jesus, Paul's views on women, and the multi-faceted use of female imagery. We consider also the way that the Bible has been used historically to define and often confine women, and how contemporary theologians, writers and artists have reinterpreted biblical stories.

Prerequisite: A 1020-level Religious Studies Course, or Women's Studies 1020E, or permission of the Department. 3 hours. 0.5 course.

**Course Requirements:**

1. Participation	10%
2. Two Response Papers	15%
3. Response Paper & Class Animation	15%
4. Creative Project and Presentation	25%
5. Final Exam	35%

**Required Texts:**

- Ogden Bellis, Alice. *Helpmates, Harlots and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible*, Second Edition. Louisville: Westminster/JohnKnox Press, 2007
- Any recent scholarly edition of the bible, such as The New American Bible, The New English Bible, The New Revised Standard Version, The New Jerusalem Bible. A link to an on-line New Revised Standard Version can be found on WebCT.
- Religious Studies 2216F Course Pack
- Online Readings (WebCT)

## Description of Requirements:

### **Participation (10%)**

The course is set up as a forum for discussion and interaction among us. It assumes a collaborative, participatory model of learning, whereby we all contribute to each other's understanding of the material under consideration.

Evaluation of your participation will be based on your attendance at class; frequency and clarity of your oral contributions (i.e., are you making an effort to contribute to class discussions? Is it evident that you have prepared for class?); and knowledge of the reading material and your ability to grasp its central themes (i.e., how carefully and critically did you read?).

### **Response Papers (15%)**

These two papers are 3-4 page responses to assigned readings. While you must include a brief summary, your reflection must also show your **interaction** with the readings. Such interaction may include questions or challenges raised by the author and/or your own questions and challenges arising from the readings. Focus on one reading, and use other readings, class discussions, and your own experience to put that reading into perspective.

A typical response will follow this pattern:

- ▶ A summary of the reading you chose. What is the main point of the reading? What evidence or argument does the author offer to support it?
- ▶ Some analysis of how other readings and class discussions relate to your central reading.
- ▶ What is your understanding of the issue? What new things did you learn? What questions or issues were raised for you by the readings?
- ▶ Concluding remarks

1 <sup>st</sup> paper due on or before Sept. 28 <sup>th</sup> .
2 <sup>nd</sup> paper due on or before Nov. 2 <sup>nd</sup> .

### **Response Paper & Class Animation (15%)**

This assignment requires the writing of a response paper to a particular reading, as described above, and leading a class discussion on that reading (approximately 20 minutes). The purpose is to highlight significant aspects of the reading and facilitate further thinking and discussion about it among class participants. Please sign-up for a reading in consultation with the Instructor early in the course. Feel free to approach this task creatively, as in including an activity related to the topic.

Leading the discussion does not simply entail a reading of your response paper and posing questions to classmates. Please give a general overview of the content of the article you have chosen, then provide the class copies of a page on which you have summarized 4 or 5 significant issues addressed in the article. These will constitute the points to be discussed. It will help focus the discussion if you provide some direct quotations from the article.

Due on date of reading selected.
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### **Creative Project and Presentation (25%)**

This assignment is designed to encourage you to become involved in the course material in an imaginative way. Having analyzed and reflected upon any character or theme presented in the course, provide your own creative expression of it in relationship to your own personal experience or to the issues confronting women today. You may choose as a form of expression just about anything which strikes your imagination (poetry, diaries – such as one “belonging” to one of the women studied – short stories, paintings, photographs, film, dance, music, needlework etc.) but your work must clearly reflect analysis, integration, and creativity. Include as part of your assignment a four to six page explication of it, including, as appropriate, your assignment’s relationship to the course material, your reasons for choosing this particular subject and form of expression, the meaning of any symbols you have incorporated, etc.

### **Final Exam (35%)**

Short answers and essays.

The use of electronic devices is not permitted at the final exam.

## **Instructional Objectives:**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

- ▶ Identify a variety of Biblical texts that have women as a focus.
- ▶ Discuss the various ways in which these texts have been interpreted: traditional perspectives, literary analysis; liberation perspectives, etc.
- ▶ Identify major critical issues in the interpretation of biblical literature relating to women.
- ▶ Explore questions and challenges posed by contemporary scholarship in the areas of biblical studies and gender roles.
- ▶ Analyse and explain the ambivalence toward women in Jewish and Christian teaching.
- ▶ Assess the importance of the recovery of women's presence and status in biblical texts.
- ▶ Respond creatively and imaginatively to biblical issues.

## **General Expectations:**

**1. Deadlines:** Deadlines are firm, and must be met. Absence from class on the day work is due does not constitute an extension. Any extension must be negotiated with the instructor prior to the due date. Any work submitted after the due date for which you have not followed this procedure may be penalized at five (5) percent per day.

It is particularly important that presentation dates are honoured. Failure to present on the specified date will be penalized by not less than 35%.

A medical accommodation for work valued at less than 10% of your total grade can be established with your instructor. For all other cases, please refer to Western's policy regarding "Medical Accommodation Policy," available at <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> .

**2. Academic Integrity:** One operative assumption of this course, as with all university courses, is that all work you submit for marking will be **your** work. You must **properly cite all the sources** from which you gather your ideas and phrasing, and not only the directly quoted material.

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar, available at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Plagiarism may be penalized with a failing grade in the assignment and an offence record that will be held in the Dean's office.

**3) Academic Style:** There are a number of acceptable styles of documentation: Chicago, MLA and APA. The MLA (Modern Language Association) style is preferred for this course.

**4) Inclusive Language:** Please use non-sexist, non-discriminatory language in your writing. Language that reinforces sexism, racism, ethnic bias, homophobia, or other forms of prejudice and discrimination should not be used. Some general points: In English, there is a tradition of using male terms to refer to the whole human population: "man," "mankind," "he," and "his" are often employed in the generic sense. Since these terms refer also to exclusively male populations, using the same term for the two different meanings is ambiguous. Be specific: if you mean all people, males and females, say so. Instead of man/mankind, use humanity, human beings, human race, people, person(s), individual(s), men and women, women and men.

**5) A Respectful Learning Environment:** A respectful learning environment is a collective responsibility. We will listen to each other with openness and consideration, respecting individual differences and honouring each person's right to hold her or his own beliefs. This does not preclude discussion and/or disagreement, but does call for a considerate sharing of opinions and ideas.

**6) Grading:** Grading will be based on the extent and quality of research; on the imagination and critical judgment shown in papers, presentation and on the exam.

- A Outstanding: Beyond a thorough grasp of required texts and lectures, shows ability to relate material to life and to other subject areas and to form a personal synthesis; shows good critical judgment in area; very good oral and written expression.
- B Superior/Good: Accurate grasp of required texts and lectures; shows critical judgment, good speaking and writing skills.
- C Satisfactory: Adequate grasp of required texts and lectures in essentials.
- D Unsatisfactory/Poor

## BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

### 1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

If supporting documentation is from a family physician, Hospital Urgent Care Centre or Emergency Department, or a walk-in clinic a UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required**. To download an SMC go to <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> and follow the link under "Medical Documentation". Documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial visit. If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations document-ation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** considered adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2011/pg117.html>.

### 2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, [www.registrar.uwo.ca](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca), for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

### **3. ABSENCES**

**Short Absences:** If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

**Extended Absences:** If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

### **4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

#### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

### **Computer-marked Tests/exams:**

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

## **5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS**

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

## **6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES**

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

## **7. SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at [http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar\\_services/index.html](http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar_services/index.html).

The University of Western Ontario Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm>

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Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.

## September

Mon.			Wed.		
	Topic and Readings	Class Animation		Topic and Readings	Class Animation
Sept. 12	<b>Introduction</b>		Sept. 14	<b>Introduction</b>  • Ch. 1, <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i>  • O'Donovan, "Doing it Differently" (WebCT)	
Sept. 19	<b>Eve: Mother of all the Living</b>  • Genesis 1-3  • Ch. 2, <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i>  • Comments on Genesis - Elizabeth Cady Stanton (WebCT)  • Harrison, "A Meditation on Eve" (WebCT)		Sept. 21	<b>Eve (continued)</b>  <b>The Matriarchs: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah</b>  • Genesis 12; 16; 17:15-18:15; 24; 27-30; 34  • Ch. 3, <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i>  • Blythe, "A Feminist Re-Reading of Dinah's Voicelessness in Genesis 34" (WebCT)	Blythe, "Terrible Silence"

<p>Sept. 26</p>	<p><b>Women and Moses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exodus 1-2:10; Numbers 12</li> <li>• Ch. 4, <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i></li> <li>• Ochs, “Miriam’s Way” (WebCT)</li> </ul>	<p>Ochs, “Miriam’s Way”</p>	<p>Sept. 28</p>	<p><b>Treacherous (?) Women: Rahab, Jael &amp; Delilah</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua 2; Judges 4:1-22; Judges 13-16</li> <li>• <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i>, pp. 98-102; 106-108; 109-113</li> <li>• Smith, “Samson and Delilah: A Parable of Power” (WebCT)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Response paper due</u></b></p>	<p>Smith, “Samson and Delilah”</p>
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**October**

<p>Oct. 3</p>	<p><b>Treacherous (?) Women: Jezebel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Kings 16:31; 1 Kings 18; 1 Kings 19; 1 Kings 21; 2 Kings 9:30-37</li> <li>• <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i>, pp. 143-147</li> </ul>		<p>Oct. 5</p>	<p><b>Women and Violence: Hagar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genesis 16; 21:1-21</li> <li>• <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i>, pp. 62-66</li> <li>• Bailey, “Black and Jewish Women Consider Hagar” (WebCT)</li> </ul>	<p>Bailey, Hagar</p>
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Oct. 10	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thanksgiving</b></p>		Oct. 12	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Women and Violence: Jephthah's Daughter, the Anonymous Concubine</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judges 11; Judges 19-21</li> <li>• <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i>, pp. 113-122.</li> <li>• Renita Weems, "A Crying Shame" (CP)</li> <li>• Yani Yoo, "Han-Laden Women: Korean "Comfort Women and Women in Judges 19-21." (WebCT)</li> </ul>	<p>Weems, "A Crying Shame" (Jephthah's Daughter)</p> <p>Yoo, "Han-Laden Women"</p>
Oct. 17	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Love and Wisdom: Song of Songs &amp; Wisdom Literature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Song of Songs; Proverbs 1, 2, 8, 9</li> <li>• Ch. 9, <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i></li> <li>• Dant, "Growing up with Solomon's Song"</li> </ul>		Oct. 19	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Subversive Women: Ruth and Esther</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruth; Esther</li> <li>• <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i>, pp. 183-195</li> </ul> <p>Brenner, "From Ruth to the Global Woman" (WebCT)</p>	<p>Brenner, "From Ruth to the Global Woman"</p>

<p>Oct. 24</p>	<p><b>Old Testament: Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ch. 11, <i>Helpmates, Harlots, Heroes</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New Testament: Introduction</b></p>		<p>Oct. 26</p>	<p><b>The Gospel According to Mark</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark 5:21-43; 10:1-12; 14:3-9; 15:40-16:20;</li> <li>• Marie Sabin, “Women Transformed” (WebCT)</li> <li>• Anne Thurston, “Remembering Women” (CP)</li> </ul>	<p>Sabin, “Women Transformed”</p>
<p>Oct. 31</p>	<p><b>The Gospels of Luke and John</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luke 1:26-56; 7:1-17; 8:40-56; 10:38-42; John 2; 4:1-42; 8:1-11; 11:1-44; 20:1-18</li> <li>• Bonnie Thurston, “Women in Luke; Women in John” (CP)</li> </ul>				

**November / December**

			Nov. 2	<p align="center"><b>The Gospels of Luke and John</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiorenza, “A Feminist Critical Interpretation for Liberation: Martha and Mary” (WebCT)</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b><u>Response paper due</u></b></p>	Fiorenza, Martha and Mary
Nov. 7	<p align="center"><b>Jesus and the Marys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carroll, “Who Was Mary Magdalene?” (WebCT)</li> </ul>		Nov. 9	<p align="center"><b>Jesus and the Marys</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Santor, “Mary: The Mother of Jesus” (CP)</li> </ul>	Santor, Mary
Nov. 14	<p align="center"><b>Women and Paul</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Romans 16:1-16; 1 Corinthians 7; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 1 Corinthians 14:26-35; Galatians 3:23-29</li> <li>• Polaski, “Paul and Real Women” (WebCT)</li> </ul>		Nov. 16	<p align="center"><b>Women and Paul</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deutero-Pauline:</i> Colossians 3:18- 4:1, Ephesians 5:21-6:9; 1 Tim 2:8-15; 1 Tim 5:3-16; 1 Peter 2:18-3:8</li> <li>• From Jesus to Christ: “The Roles for Women” (WebCT)</li> </ul>	“The Roles for Women”

Nov. 21	<b>Women in Non-Canonical Texts</b>  • The Gospel According to Mary (WebCT)  • The Acts of Paul and Thecla (WebCT)	• Presentations	Nov. 23	<b>Uses and Abuses of Scripture</b>  • Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Preface to The Woman’s Bible” (WebCT)  • Carol Fontaine, “The Abusive Bible: On the Use of Feminist Method in Pastoral Contexts” (CP)  • “The Bible as A Source of Empowerment for Women” (CP)	Fontaine, “The Abusive Bible”  • Presentations
Nov. 28	<b>Contemporary Artists and Writers</b>	• Presentations	Nov. 30	<b>Contemporary Artists and Writers</b>	• Presentations
Dec. 5	<b>Wrap up and Review</b>	• Presentations	Dec. 7	<b>Wrap up and Review</b>	