

*“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”*

<b>Course</b>	<b>WOMEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT</b> OLDT 0610 1S
<b>Date and Time</b>	SEPTEMBER 12 – DECEMBER 5, 2024 THURSDAYS, 8:15 – 11:05 AM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>DR. REBECCA G. S. IDESTROM</b> Telephone/voice mail: (416) 226-6620 Ext. 6771 Email: <a href="mailto:ridestrom@tyndale.ca">ridestrom@tyndale.ca</a>
<b>Class Information</b>	The classes will be livestreamed on Thursdays, 8:15–11:05 AM on Zoom.  Students may participate in live-streamed office hours: Thursdays, 11:15 AM-12:00 PM or at a separate time by appointment.
<b>Course Material</b>	Access course material at <a href="https://classes.tyndale.ca">classes.tyndale.ca</a> or other services at <a href="#">Tyndale One</a> . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

What did it mean to be a woman during Old Testament times? In order to gain theological insight into the Bible’s portrayal of women, we will examine key Old Testament passages against the background of ancient Israelite society. Contemporary issues surrounding the significance of these texts will be discussed, including feminist interpretations.

### *PRE-REQUISITES:*

**Required:** *Biblical Interpretation (BIBL 0501)*

**Recommended:** *Old Testament Theology and History (OLDT 0511)*

## II. LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

### A. Knowledge and Understanding

1. identify the Old Testament texts which relate to women.
2. describe the various roles of women in Ancient Israelite society.
3. engage in biblical exegesis which takes seriously the many dimensions of interpreting biblical texts (historical and cultural background, modern historical critical issues, narrative artistry, the role of readers, theological themes, canonical context, history of interpretation).
4. describe the variety of interpretive approaches taken to biblical texts about women, examining various feminist interpretations in particular, in order to assess their strengths and weaknesses.
5. develop one's own perspective on interpreting biblical materials about women as it relates to broader issues concerning faith, God, truth, the Church, and the world.
6. discover theological truths and practical lessons, which can be gleaned from the experiences of the women in the Old Testament, and consider how these may be meaningfully appropriated to our own context and experiences today.

### B. Discipline-specific Skills

1. learn how to interpret the stories of women in the Old Testament in light of major biblical themes within the biblical canon.
2. use the available academic resources effectively for doing Bible study, biblical exegesis, and sermon preparation on women in the Bible.

### C. Transferable Skills

1. foster the ability to read biblical texts carefully, paying close attention to detail.
2. learn self-disciplined study habits and the ability to meet fixed deadlines as set out by the course outline.

## III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. REQUIRED READING

Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. ISBN: 9780664226602

All other required readings are found on the course page on [classes.tyndale.ca](https://classes.tyndale.ca).

Tyndale recommends the STEP Bible <https://www.stepbible.org/> – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the Library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

## **B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS**

Kroeger, Catherine Clark and Mary J. Evans, eds. *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.

Meyers, Carol, ed. *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 2000.

Newsom, Carol A., Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds. *The Women’s Bible Commentary*. Revised and Updated. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012.

## **C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM REQUIREMENTS**

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
  - Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
  - Well-lit and quiet room
  - Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
  - Full name displayed on Zoom for attendance purposes
  - Download Zoom application ([www.Zoom.us/download](http://www.Zoom.us/download))
  - A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building\*
- \*exceptions with permission from professor

## **D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS**

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at [classes.tyndale.ca](http://classes.tyndale.ca).

## **E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

The following written assignments will help foster the skills of critical analysis and reflection.

### **1. Major Research Paper: due November 7, 2024 (50 % of final grade)**

The paper may be either exegetical or thematic, e.g. the paper may deal in depth with a specific Scriptural passage dealing with a woman/women or look at a theme directly related to the course. The student may also design a Bible study course related to women in the Old Testament. The paper should be about 12–15 pages in length (approx. 3600–4500 words) double-spaced, plus bibliography (a minimum of seven academic sources).

### **2. Journal Reflections on Required Readings: due December 5, 2024 (40 % of the final grade)**

Every week the student will explore a new topic. The student will read and take notes on the assigned readings from the Bible, the articles (posted on the Moodle course page), and the textbook. In their reflection and response, the student will succinctly summarize the main thesis or theme, and critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the views and arguments presented. They will also include a personal response to the readings and to particular issues or questions raised (see questions listed below with the assigned readings). The purpose of this assignment is for the student to be exposed to a variety of perspectives on women in the Old Testament, to reflect, dialogue and interact with the readings, and to give a personal, thoughtful response to the issues raised by the readings and the Scriptures. Each week the student will sign a sheet, indicating whether they have read the required readings from the assigned section for the journal according to the course schedule below. The written response to the questions, however, will be due on the last day of class. The written response for each assigned section of the journal should be about two pages in length (double spaced). In some cases, the response may be given in three pages, but more than three pages for each section will not be accepted.

### **3. Class Participation (10 % of the final grade)**

Part of education is learning to critically and fairly evaluate what one reads and to be able to formulate an informed opinion or response which demonstrates careful thought. The readings assigned in this course will challenge the students' thinking and they will need to respond to them both critically and biblically. Part of the learning process will also take place within class discussion. Therefore, it is expected that the student will read all of the required readings prior to coming to the scheduled class so that they can participate in the discussion in class. Since part of the evaluation includes class participation, it is essential that the student regularly and faithfully attends class and comes prepared to participate meaningfully in the discussion of the readings and course content. The students' participation will be graded based on the following: (a) frequency and appropriateness of their contributions; (b) evidence that they have

completed and understood the assigned readings; (c) depths of insight and synthesis of the week's learning.

#### **4. Optional Drama: (grade value will be negotiated).**

Instead of doing one of the weekly readings and journal reflections you may do a drama. Either as an individual or in groups, you may choose a text to dramatize in class. Possibilities include monologues, dramatization of narratives (e.g. stories from Genesis, Exodus 1, Ruth), difficult texts about women (the suspected adulteress in Num 5:11–31, the rite of the spurned widow in Deut 25:5–10), or texts using female images for women (Lamentations, Ezekiel, Hosea). This exercise will help the student reflect upon and personally enter into the experiences, challenges, and issues faced by women in ancient Israel. Opportunities to discuss and respond to the drama in class will be given.

#### **F. EQUITY OF ACCESS**

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

#### **G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Major Research Paper	50 %
Journal Reflections on Required Readings	40 %
Class Participation	10 %
Total Grade	100 %

#### **H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK**

1. Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

**Accuracy** (a fair and accurate presentation of scholarly judgment on the issues) – Is what I say correct? Is it valid? Have I understood the topic or question?

**Critical Analysis** – Have I understood the main issues? Have I done sufficient research on the topic? Does my paper show critical reflection, interaction and dialogue with the biblical text and with authors writing on the subject?

**Organization** – Does my paper follow a clear outline? Does my paper have a thesis statement? Is there a clear progression and development of an idea or an argument in the paper? Does my argument have a meaningful order?

**Clarity** – Does what I say make sense? Will others clearly understand what I am seeking to express?

**Good Grammar and Writing** – Is my paper clean of spelling mistakes? Is the text punctuated correctly? Does the sentence structure consistently adhere to basic rules of good grammar? Do I use inclusive language?

**Well Documented** (thorough) – Is my work complete? Does my bibliography reflect sufficient research? Have I fully and accurately documented where I have relied upon the work of others? Have I provided complete information about my research sources? Will others be able to locate these sources on the strength of my documentation? Do my footnotes and bibliography follow the proper citation style required?

## 2. Matters of Style

You should submit written work in a style consistent with either the model outlined in [The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies](#) (P. H. Alexander, et al, eds. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014) or the Chicago Manual of Style Online. (Footnotes are preferred). For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the Chicago Manual of Style or reference the [tip sheet, “Citing Sources in Theology”](#).

Written work ought to be free of spelling mistakes, punctuated correctly, and adhere to basic rules of grammar. It is expected that written work will be submitted in a clear, straight-forward style of academic prose (cf. the guidelines in Strunk and White, [Elements of Style](#)). Written work ought to betray clear organization, argument and coherent thought. The use of inclusive language is expected.

The title page for all written work ought to include the following:

The title of the paper, name of the course, name of the professor, date of submission, and your name.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

### **Research Ethics**

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Office ([aa@tyndale.ca](mailto:aa@tyndale.ca)) before proceeding.

### 3. Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

In all work, you are obliged to pay careful attention to matters of intellectual property, honesty and integrity. Plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs and will not be tolerated in any form whatsoever. Plagiarism, by definition, is the use of the work of another person without proper acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following: copying a sentence or part of a sentence from a book or article without using quotation marks and citing the source; rephrasing another person's words without giving credit for the idea that you have borrowed by citing the source; copying the work of someone else and handing it in as your own. It is assumed that each assignment required for this course will be written independently. Please note that plagiarism in any form on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "F" for the assignment with no opportunity for resubmission.

In this course the student is not allowed to use artificial intelligence programs to research and write their papers. This will be considered plagiarism.

### 4. Late Assignments

The assumption is, of course, that all written work will be submitted on and before the corresponding due dates. Should this not occur, the following policy shall govern the evaluation of your work. For every week late, the grade will be reduced by 5 %, a half a letter grade (i.e. one week late: 82 % A- becomes 77 % B+; two weeks late, 82 % becomes 72 % B-, etc.). Please

note that the deduction is accumulated weekly, not daily, and so a student will receive the same penalty whether the assignment is one or six days late.

Extensions will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, the hospitalization of yourself or a member of your immediate family, or an illness for which you require treatment by a physician. Reference to heavy workload, other assignments, professional or ministry obligations, or holidays do not constitute legitimate grounds for an extension.

Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the professor explaining the reason why the extension is needed. Such requests need to be submitted prior to the due date.

All assignments must be handed in by the last day of exams (December 13, 2024). No assignments will be accepted after that date, unless the student has a valid reason for an extension. In that case, the student must apply for an extension to the Registrar and not to the professor.

## 5. Submission of Written Work

Students are required to retain a copy of all assignments (hard copy or electronic version). The assignment needs to be uploaded to the classes Moodle page before midnight on the due date. Graded assignments will be emailed back to the student.

## I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.



#### IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sept 12	Introductory Issues: Images of Women and Challenges of Interpretation
Sept 19	Women in Ancient Israelite Society
Sept 26	Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3
Oct 3	Women of Genesis
Oct 10	Women of Exodus
Oct 17	Women in Old Testament Law
Oct 24	NO CLASS: Reading Days
Oct 31	Women in Joshua and Judges
Nov 7	The Book of Ruth
Nov 14	Women in Samuel and Kings
Nov 21	Women in the Prophets
Nov 28	Women in the Writings: Esther
Dec 5	Women in the Writings: Proverbs, Song of Songs

**NOTE:** There are no classes during the Reading Days, October 22–25, 2024.

**Sept 12: Introductory Issues: Images of Women and Challenges of Interpretation** (No Required Reading)

**Sept 19: Women in Ancient Israelite Society: An introduction**

Read and critically reflect on the following articles/chapters in preparation for the class. What are your initial impressions of the roles of women in Israelite society? How do the readings help you understand the lives of women in Ancient Israelite society? What were the challenges for women? How are they similar and/or different from challenges of women today?

Carol Meyers, “Archaeology—A Window to the Lives of Israelite Women,” in *Torah*, eds. Irmtraud Fischer and Mercedes Navarro Puerto with Andrea Taschl-Erber, *The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 61–108.

Grace I. Emmerson, “Women in ancient Israel,” in R. E. Clements, ed., *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 371–394.

Read also the Introduction (pp. 1–5) in the textbook by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

*Recommended Further Reading (Always Optional):*

Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Carol Meyers, "Women in Ancient Israel," in eds. Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton, *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 396–402.

Athalya Brenner, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (The Biblical Seminar; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985).

Jennie R. Ebeling, *Women's Lives in Biblical Times* (London: T & T International, 2010).

Mercedes L. García Bachmann, *Women at Work in the Deuteronomistic History* (International Voices in Biblical Studies 4; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013).

Carol L. Meyers, "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, Expanded Edition with Apocrypha, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster/Knox Press, 1998), 251–259.

**Sept 26: Man and Woman in Genesis 1–3**

Read Genesis 1–3. Write a personal reflection on your pre-understanding of what these chapters say about women, their purpose and role. Ponder on the question of who or what has informed your understanding of these texts. What questions do these texts raise for you about women? Read the following three articles/chapters and reflect further on what these texts mean? Write your response to and evaluation of the readings. Did they give you new insight into the biblical text? What are some of the critical exegetical and interpretive issues relating to women in Genesis 1–3?

Amanda W. Benckhuysen, "Interpreting Eve," in *The Gospel according to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation*, by Amanda W. Benckhuysen (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 7–22.

Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing God in Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41 (1973): 30–48.

Richard S. Hess, "Equality With and Without Innocence: Genesis 1–3," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (eds. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 79–95.

*Recommended Further Reading (Always Optional):*

If you want to read further, you can look at Phyllis Trible's chapter: "A Love Story Gone Awry," in *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* by Phyllis Trible (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 72–143.

Amanda W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel according to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019).

Aída Besancon Spencer, "Equal in Eden: Foundation for Ministry and Marriage," in *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985), 17–42.

Mary J. Evans, *Woman in the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 11–21.

Christiana de Groot, "Genesis," in *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* (Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 1–27.

Alice Mathews, "The Birth of Patriarchy," in *Gender Roles and the People of God: Rethinking What We Were Taught About Men and Women in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 35–48.

### **Oct 3: Women of Genesis**

Read and reflect upon the characters of Sarah and Hagar as they are presented in Genesis 16:1–16, 18:9–15, 21:1–21. Read and reflect on Rachel and Leah and their struggles in Genesis 29–30. Write down your initial impressions and questions before reading the following two articles/chapters. How do the assigned readings illumine the biblical stories? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each reading? After reading them, what questions do you now have? What can we learn from these four biblical women that is relevant for us today?

Read chapter one (pp. 7–25), "Sarah and Hagar: Power and Privileges," by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Read "Complicated sisterhood: A generous reading of Leah and Rachel's story," by Christine Jones, *Review and Expositor* 115/4 (2018): 565–571.

#### *Recommended Further Reading:*

Phyllis Trible, "Hagar: The Desolation of Rejection," in *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 9–35.

"Leah and Rachel" by Grace Aguilar (pp. 343–361) in *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on Women in Genesis*, edited by Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006).

Pamela Tamarkin Reis, "Hagar Requited," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 87 (March 2000): 75–109.

Paul Edward Hughes, "Seeing Hagar Seeing God," *Didaskalia* 8/2 (Spring 1997): 43–59.

Sharon Pace Jeanson, *The Women of Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphar's Wife* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

Mignon R. Jacobs, *Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

Mignon R. Jacobs, "Quest for Power in the Family Domain: Rachel and Leah (Genesis 29–30)," in *Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 157–175.

Alice Ogden Bellis, *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 70–79.

Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir, eds., *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on the Women of Genesis* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006).

### **Oct 10: Women of Exodus**

Read Exodus 1:8–2:10; 15:20–21. What role do the various women play in this narrative? Read Cheryl Exum, Jacqueline Lapsley, and Carmen Imes' articles on these texts. What different methodologies, questions or insights do these writers bring to the task of interpreting the Exodus story? Do you read the biblical narrative differently after reading these articles, why or why not?

J. Cheryl Exum, "'You Shall Let Every Daughter Live': A Study of Exodus 1:8-2:10," *Semeia* 28 (1983): 63–82.

Jacqueline E. Lapsley, "Saving Women: Transgressive Values of Deliverance in Exodus 1–4," in *Whispering the Word: Hearing Women's Stories in the Old Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 69–88.

Carmen Joy Imes, "Can I Get a Witness? Miriam's Song in the Literary Design of Exodus," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 33/4 (2023): 427–440.

#### *Recommended Further Reading:*

Carmen Joy Imes, "Freedom Fighters of the Exodus," in Celina Durgin and Dru Johnson, eds., *The Biblical World of Gender: The Daily Lives of Ancient Women and Men* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022), 39–45.

Renita Weems, "The Hebrew Women Are Not Like the Egyptian Women: The Ideology of Race, Gender and Sexual Reproduction in Exodus 1," *Semeia* 59 (1992): 25–34 (for an African-American perspective on the text).

Cresy John, et al, "An Asian Feminist Perspective: The Exodus Story (Exodus 1.8-22, 2.1-10)," in R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 267–279 (for an Asian perspective on the text).

J. Cheryl Exum, "Second Thoughts About Secondary Characters: Women in Exodus 1.8-2.10," in Athalya Brenner, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Exodus-Deuteronomy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 75-87.

### **Oct 17: Women in Old Testament Law**

Read Susan M Pigott, "Leviticus" (pp. 50-69) in *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* (Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002); Lisa Chisholm-Smith, "Menstruation," (pp. 62-63) in *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*.

Read the chapter by Phyllis Bird, "The Place of Women in the Israelite Cultus," in Patrick D. Miller, Jr., Paul D. Hanson, S. Dean McBride, eds, *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 397-419.

Read Deuteronomy 22:13-29 and then Sandra L. Richter, "Does God Really Command Women to Marry Their Rapists? A Study of Deuteronomical Law," in Celina Durgin and Dru Johnson, eds., *The Biblical World of Gender: The Daily Lives of Ancient Women and Men* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022), 99-111.

Reflect critically upon the readings. What do you learn about the place of women within the Law. What questions or comments do you have on the issue of women in OT Law?

#### *Recommended Further Reading:*

Carol Meyers, "Women's Religious Life in Ancient Israel," in *The Woman's Bible Commentary*, Revised and Updated, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012), 354-361.

Read Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Numbers," in *The Woman's Bible Commentary*, Revised and Updated, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012), 79-87.

Ronald W. Pierce, "From the Old Testament Law to New Testament Gospel," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (eds. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 96-109.

### **Oct 24: NO CLASS: READING DAYS**

### **Oct 31: Women in Judges**

Read and reflect upon the characters of Deborah and Jael as presented in Judges 4-5. What roles do these women play in Israelite history? Consider this question in light of the larger context of Joshua and Judges. What is your personal view of women playing an active part in war and is it affected by this story?

Read and write a short response to the article by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, “Deborah, Jael, and Sisera’s Mother: Reading the Scriptures in Cross-Cultural Context,” in Jane Dempsey Douglass and James F. Kay, eds., *Women, Gender, and Christian Community* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 13–22.

Read also Rebecca G. S. Idestrom, “Deborah: A Role Model for Christian Public Ministry,” in *Women, Ministry, and the Gospel: Exploring New Paradigms* (eds. Mark Husbands and Timothy Larsen; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press Academic, 2007), 17–31. However, for this essay, do NOT write any response to it in your journal. You simply need to report that you have read it.

Read also Judges 13–16, 19–21, paying special attention to the female characters in the stories. Read the following articles by Tribble and Jones-Warsaw. Reflect critically upon the readings. What methods of interpretation are being used? How do they illumine the text? What insights do you find helpful in interpreting these texts? What questions arise from your study of these texts?

Phyllis Tribble, “An Unnamed Woman: The Extravagance of Violence,” in *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 65-91.

Koala Jones-Warsaw, “Toward a Womanist Hermeneutic: A Reading of Judges 19-21,” in Athalya Brenner, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Judges* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 172-186.

#### *Recommended Further Reading:*

Marion Ann Taylor and Christiana de Groot, eds., *Women of War, Women of Woe: Joshua and Judges through the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century Female Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

### **Nov 7: The Book of Ruth**

Read the book of Ruth and write down your impressions of the characters of Ruth and Naomi. What aspects of the story speak to you personally? What do we learn about God, human relationships, the treatment of the outsider/foreigner, etc from the story?

Read and reflect critically on the chapter by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, “Ruth and Naomi,” the chapter by Eunny P. Lee, “Women’s Doings in Ruth: A Feminist Biblical Theology of Providence,” (pp. 31–43), and the chapter by Judith Kates, “Ruth and *Shavuot*” pp. 187–198 from the book *Reading Ruth*.

Read chapter two (pp. 27-48), “Ruth and Naomi: Economic Survival and Family Values,” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Eunny P. Lee, “Women’s Doings in Ruth: A Feminist Biblical Theology of Providence,” in *After Exegesis: A Feminist Biblical Theology*, eds., Patricia K. Tull and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015), 31–43.

Judith A. Kates, “Women at the Center: Ruth and *Shavuot*,” in J. A. Kates and G. T. Reimer, eds., *Reading Ruth: Contemporary Women Reclaim a Sacred Story* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994), 187-198. This book presents a group of Jewish women’s reflections on the story of Ruth and Naomi.

*Recommended Further Reading:*

Phyllis Trible, “A Human Comedy,” in *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 166-199.

Leila Leah Bronner, “The Regime of Modesty: Ruth and the Rabbinic Construction of the Feminine Ideal,” in *From Eve to Esther: Rabbinic Reconstructions of Biblical Women* (Gender and the Biblical Tradition; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 61-81. (This chapter gives examples of rabbinic interpretation of the book of Ruth).

Marion Ann Taylor, *Ruth, Esther: The Story of God Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020).

**Nov 14: Women in Samuel and Kings**

The narratives of Samuel and Kings recount stories of both well-known, often royal, women as well as more obscure, often unnamed women. But each woman plays an important role in the narrative. Read the following Scripture passages and essays and then write your reflections on them.

Read chapter four (pp. 69–90), “Michal, Abigail, and Bathsheba: In the Eye of the Beholder,” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Reflect on the three wives of David and what we can learn from them.

Read the following biblical narratives and readings about four women (not from the royal court) from this time period: Hannah, the Widow of Zarephath, the Unnamed Widow, and the Wise Woman of Abel Beth Maacah.

First read and reflect on the story of Hannah as found in 1 Samuel 1:1–2:11, 18–21. What do you learn about Hannah and God in the story?

Second, carefully read 1 Kings 17:1–24 and 2 Kings 4:1–7 and reflect upon the character and faith of the widow of Zarephath and the unnamed widow.

Then read the following chapter, “The Faith of Two Unnamed Women,” in Judette A. Gallares, *Images of Faith: Spirituality of Women in the Old Testament* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 133–156.

What do you learn from the stories of these women?

Third, read 2 Samuel 20:14–22 and Robin Gallaher Branch, “The Wise Woman of Abel Beth Maacah: Wisdom in a Time of Crisis,” in *Jeroboam’s Wife: The Enduring Contributions of Old Testament’s Least-Known Women* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009), 63–82.

What do you learn about wisdom from this unnamed woman known to be wise?

#### *Recommended Further Reading:*

Read the commentary of “Samuel” by Jo Ann Hackett in *The Woman’s Bible Commentary*, Revised and Updated, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012), 150–163.

Alice Ogden Bellis, “The Women of 1 and 2 Kings,” in *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women’s Stories in the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 160–176.

#### **Nov 21: Women in the Prophets**

Read first the book of Hosea, making brief notes about the images of women in the prophetic book. How do these images of women affect you?

Read Kerren E. Morrell and Catherine Clark Kroeger, “Hosea” (pp. 432–442) in *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary* (Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002).

Reflect critically upon the issue of the images of women in the prophet Hosea based upon your readings.

Read chapter five (pp. 91–115), “Gomer: Who Betrayed Whom?” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

How does the story and experience of Gomer and Hosea impact you and your understanding of God and his relationship with his people?



Read “Desert Spring, Dead Dog Waterhole, Disappointment Creek: Is the God of the Book of Jeremiah Bad for Women?” by Jill Firth, (pp. 148–168) in *Grounded in the Body, in Time and Place, in Scripture: Papers by Australian Women Scholars in the Evangelical Tradition*, edited by Jill Firth and Denise Cooper-Clarke (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021).  
How does this reading help you understand Jeremiah’s use of female imagery in the book of Jeremiah?

*Recommended Further Reading:*

Wilda C. Gafney, “Female Prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures,” in *Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 76-117.

Julie Ann Hilton, “Isaiah,” in *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary* (Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 352–369.

Marion Ann Taylor, “Ezekiel,” in *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary* (Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 396–421.

**Nov 28: Women in the Writings**

Quickly read through the book of Esther, giving attention to the question of who is the hero or heroine in the story? Read and critically comment on the following two readings. How do the readings illuminate your understanding of the story of Vashti, Esther and Mordecai?

Chapter three (pp. 49–67), “Vashti and Esther: Models of Resistance,” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Sidnie Ann White, “Esther: A Feminine Model for Jewish Diaspora,” in Peggy L. Day, ed., *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 161–177.

*Recommended Further Reading:*

Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, “More than Just a Pretty Face: Critical, Rabbinical, and Feminist Perspectives on Esther,” in *Far More Precious than Jewels: Perspectives on Biblical Women* (Gender and the Biblical Tradition: Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 164-193.

Marion Ann Taylor, *Ruth, Esther: The Story of God Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020).

**Dec 5: Women in the Writings: Part Two**

Read Proverbs 1–9, and 31, noting the images of women in this book. Read also the Song of Songs, and note how the woman is depicted in this book.

Read chapter six (pp. 117–134) “The Good Wife: Who Is a Worthy Woman?” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

Read the chapter by Phyllis Trible, “Love’s Lyrics Redeemed,” *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* by Phyllis Trible (Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 144–165. How do these readings inform your understanding of the images of women in these two biblical books?

*Recommended Further Reading:*

Claudia V. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Bible and Literature Series 11; Sheffield: Almond/JSOT Press, 1985).

Carol A. Newsom, “Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs 1–9,” in Peggy L. Day, ed., *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 142–160.

**For the conclusion to your journal:**

Pick any two women from the Old Testament and write a prayer for each, as if you were that woman (e.g. a prayer of Sarah, Leah, Hannah, Bathsheba, Gomer, etc.). Try to put yourself in their shoes and imagine what they would pray, based on what you know about them from the biblical account.

**V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

Besides the above articles, books, and recommended readings, the textbook provides an excellent resource for bibliography in this field of study.

See also the Bibliographies found in the recommended textbooks:

Durgin, Celina, and Dru Johnson, eds. *The Biblical World of Gender: The Daily Lives of Ancient Women and Men*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2022.

Kroeger, Catherine Clark and Mary J. Evans, eds. *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.

McCarthy, Suzanne. *Valiant or Virtuous? Gender Bias in Bible Translation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019.

Meyers, Carol, ed. *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 2000.

Newsom, Carol A., Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, eds. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Revised and Updated. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2012.

Schottroff, Luise, and Marie-Theres Wacker, eds. *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

Helpful Websites:

<https://www.stepbible.org/>

<http://dailydoseofhebrew.com/>

<http://dailydoseofgreek.com/>