

Reading Women in Greco-Roman Judaism and Christianity

RELG 313: Topics in Biblical Studies 1

Instructors:

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Office hours: by appointment

May 2014

11:05–1:25 Mondays to Thursdays

Burnside 1B23

Course Overview:

This course is called "Reading" Women because most of the historical evidence for Early Jewish and Early Christian women is literary. Using texts like Susanna, Judith, 2 Maccabees, Q, Acts, Philo, The Gospel of Mary, the Talmud, and more, we will try to uncover what can be known about women of Jewish/Christian antiquity, with a focus on the special problems that arise from attempting to make socio-historical claims from literary evidence ... especially when that literary evidence was not produced by or for the social group being studied.

The first part of the course will deal with historical methods and approaches, particularly those tailored to the unique problems of ancient women's history and the problems of moving from literary text to socio-historical reality. The second part of the course will examine ancient primary readings and give us a chance to test our own interpretive skills by applying the various methods described in the first section of the course.

Required Texts:

All readings will be available online through MyCourses.

Please refer to the Assignment schedule for a list of readings and assignments.

Registration Dates: Mar 04, 2014 to May 07, 2014 (CRN: 454)

Grading:

- *Participation:* 9% (4% attendance / 5% enthusiastic preparation/participation in discussion)
- *Six “pop” quizzes* related to readings and lectures: 30% (5% each). It is important to attend every class, as these six quizzes will not be announced in advance and can take place at any time during any class. **Make-up quizzes will not be offered.**
- *Mid-term exam:* 21%. A mid-term study guide will be made available before the mid-term exam.
- *Final paper:* 35% The final paper is an opportunity to apply some of the methods learned during the course in an original analysis of one or two primary sources (i.e. ancient literature/artefacts) covered in class. (Please obtain permission from an instructor if you wish to use an ancient text not covered on the syllabus.) The paper must be 4 to 5 pages long (12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins), and, in addition to the ancient sources, it must engage with at least 2 secondary sources (i.e. scholarly articles and books).
- *Abstract and Bibliography for Final Paper:* 5%, to be handed in at the end of the Writing Workshop.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: *Before submitting work in your courses, you must understand the meaning and consequences of **plagiarism** and **cheating**, which are serious academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.*

For more information, see www.mcgill.ca/integrity. You may also consult Fair Play, the student guide to academic integrity available at www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest. There you will also find links to instructional tutorials and strategies to prevent cheating.

The possession or use of unauthorized materials in any test or examination constitutes cheating. You can find the Code in the Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities or at www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/publications.

NOTE on TECHNOLOGY USAGE: *Please employ technology appropriately. Let's foster an environment of focus and respect for fellow learners and limit the use of smart-phones, tablets, and laptops to activities that pertain to the course.*

LANGUAGE POLICIES:

*In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, you have the right to hand in assignments in either **English** or **French** in this course.*

Students are expected to use Canadian spelling and strongly encouraged to employ gender-neutral language.

*Excellent writing is essential to a good mark in this course. You can find more information about help with academic writing at the **McGill Writing Centre**:*

*McLennan-Redpath Library
Redpath Main, Room #02
3459 McTavish Street
Montreal, Quebec H3A 0C9
Telephone: 514-398-7109
Website: www.mcgill.ca/mwc/
Email: mwc@mcgill.ca*

If you need to improve your written English, you may want to take an intensive course in English as a second language through the School of Continuing Studies at www.mcgill.ca/conted/langprg and the French Language Centre at www.mcgill.ca/flc, and in the publications Programs, Courses and University Regulations> Faculties & Schools> Summer Studies and Programs, Courses and University Regulations> Faculties & Schools> School of Continuing Studies.

ACCOMMODATING DIFFERENT LEARNING NEEDS:

If you have a permanent or temporary learning obstacle in your path to excellence in our course, do not hesitate to seek help at MyAccess. From their website: “MyAccess will be the unit which offers you support if you feel that difficulties and impairments are hindering your academic performance while at McGill or if you require assistance with access. You should contact us regardless of whether the difficulties you are experiencing are permanent or temporary, and we provide assistance to both undergraduate and graduate students. The assistance offered at MyAccess targets a wide variety of situations, from medical diagnoses to mental health issues and anxiety disorders, and also includes long term support to accompany students with Learning Disabilities, ADD or ADHD, Asperger’s and autism. You should contact MyAccess even if you are being followed by a medical, mental health or counselling unit, as MyAccess will be able to guide you in reducing the impact your diagnosis may have on your performance, attendance, or learning... The first step is to contact our office at (514) 398 6009 or to email disabilities.students@mcgill.ca and an adviser will be able to meet you, either face to face or virtually, to explain how our office functions, describe what services are available to you, and refer you to other resources if necessary.”

If you need to arrange special examination facilities, consult the Coordinator of MyAccess. For more information, visit: www.mcgill.ca/osd

Note: Registering with MyAccess and/or letting your instructors know about an obstacle “after the fact” (e.g. after failing an exam) is a situation you are strongly encouraged to avoid! Please plan ahead and be proactive and we will be far better situated to help you do your best.