Tentative Syllabus

WOMEN IN JUDAISM RELS U294-001 and 002
Loyola University New Orleans Fall 2010

MW 3:30-4:45
MW 4:55-6:10

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Office Hours: MW 2-3pm
T 3pm-4pm or by appointment
(I will hold regular office hours, but please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions or concerns about the course. The present schedule and/or readings are liable to be amended as is necessary.)

Course Description:

In this course we will look at ways in which women have (been) understood and experienced Judaism from the biblical period through the present. We will discuss women's traditional and religious roles, status and work; the many ways in which Jewish women have understood their identity and saw themselves; as well as recent feminist efforts to reevaluate and transform contemporary Jewish life. Additionally, we will watch movies that should help us visualize roles and lives, as well as attempt to cook Kosher!

Course Outcomes:

- Students will be able to discuss the transformation of women’s lives and roles in Judaism.
- Students will gain insight into the complexities of women’s life in Judaism through the ages.
- Students will understand the roles, practices, rituals and views of Jewish women.
- Students will have a broader understanding of how another religious tradition views and situates woman as well as how women situate themselves in the different religious traditions throughout history.

Goal of the Class:

- Our primary goal is to build an understanding of the role, status and views of women in Judaism. Towards this end students will gain a command of various historical and religious data that concern the lives and religious practices of women.
- A secondary goal is to develop a critical awareness about the role, status, views of women in Judaism in order to help us understand better overall the different views of religious traditions and women following them.

Goals of the Department
I. Students should have a basic literacy in World Religions
   A. They should be able to identify key religious terms, ideas, and institutions.
   B. They should be able to locate sacred sites and geographic movements in the history of these religions.
   C. They should be able to generate a timeline of major religious events in World Religions
   D. They should be able to compare fundamental teachings and central doctrines in these religions.
II. They should be able to read and interpret religious texts; and they should be able to read and understand the writings of major thinkers in the various religious traditions.
   A. They should recognize important literary genres, literary styles, and religious motifs.
   B. They should understand the principles of reading texts critically.
   C. They should be able to interpret the texts and writings of major religious figures.
   D. They should be able to compare intellectual positions of major thinkers and the ideas expressed in their texts.
III. They should be able to trace the historical development of beliefs and practices.
   A. They should be able to trace the development of concepts on the nature of God.
   B. They should understand the formation process for canons of sacred literature, both among World Religions and Christianity.
   C. They should be able to chart the emergence and development of liturgies, rituals, and systems of religious thought.
IV. They should have an understanding of Faith and Tradition in religious faiths.
   A. They should be able to cite components of faith and tradition in the various religions.
   B. They should have critical insight into the systematic aspects of both faith and tradition in the various religions.
   C. They should understand the internal complexities within various religious traditions.
V. They should have an understanding of ethics, moral theology, and concepts of justice.
   A. They should have a basic knowledge of Catholic social teaching.
   B. They should understand modes of ethical reasoning.
   C. They should be able to apply ethical principles to contemporary situations.

Women in Judaism addresses goal A of category I and goals B,C,D, of category II. It addresses all the departmental goals in category III and IV with regard to women. It also addresses goal C of category V.

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended:**
Course Requirements:

Standards of Academic honesty and integrity as stated in the Student Faculty handbook apply to all papers and exams submitted in the class!!! Punishments for dishonesty are a failing grade! NO Excuses!!!

1. Students will be responsible for two exams (25% each): a midterm and a final. The midterm is in week Nine; the final is in Final’s week. I reserve the right to give quizzes if I see it necessary.

- What am I expected to know in the exam?
  - You are not expected to familiarize yourself with every detail in the readings, but those which come up in class or are the subject of particular emphasis are fair game. To prepare for the exams you should make yourself familiar with the most crucial events, names, and places for the first section of each exam. In this section, you will ‘identify’ the relevant person, place or event in as much detail as possible. The second section will concern short essay questions, mostly of a matter of fact on the theories, concepts and religious traditions that we discuss throughout the course. The third section of the exam will require longer, essay length, responses to questions about our daily readings. This section will be more theoretical, and ask you to synthesize issues, compare arguments and utilize your knowledge of the readings in order to make an argument.

- What happens if you miss the exam?
  - If problems arise due to illness or other tragedies and you cannot make it to the exam, you need to have a doctor’s note in order to qualify for a makeup exam.

- What happens if you do bad on these exams?
  - For those who are not satisfied with their grades received for the exams, there is a possibility of writing a research paper for a better grade. The length, topic, better grade possibility and deadline for the research paper should be individually discussed with the instructor.

2. Presentation and class participation is 25% of final grade. Students are expected participation in discussion from the readings in group work and to give one presentation of 40 min in groups over the course of the semester. The subject and date of the presentations will be set during the first week of the semester from a given list.

- The presentation
  - must include the systematic analysis and introduction of the topic of the week of student presentations. The issues introduced in the presentation should be based on the assigned
student presentation readings for the week but should also include other extra, freely chosen materials. The presenting group must include all members in the presentation, as one grade will be given for all in the group. The presentation should discuss and raise questions central to the given topic. Each group should consult the instructor before the presentation takes place and should ask for approval of the content.

- What is required as class participation?
  - a. Class Preparation: The student is required to have a thorough knowledge of the week’s readings and assignments, and should bring the current readings and assignments to class. The student’s preparation for the class' activities is a key indicator for the assessment of his or her performance.
  - b. Class Participation: Each student is expected to speak in class in order to demonstrate his or her comprehension of the material. The degree of preparation will largely determine your ability to intelligently participate in our discussions, and to be an asset to your classmates in group work. Each Wednesday, we will reflect upon the readings through the questions you have submitted the day before. Your answer should be developed to a level where you will feel comfortable, if asked, to articulate your opinion on the subject in front of the class.

3. Attendance and weekly questions and a weekly 1 page paper (25%) are expected.

- Class attendance
  - There is an attendance policy in this class. Students who miss more than 3 classes prior to the midterm, their grade will be automatically dropped by 1. Students who miss more than 6 classes without a doctor’s note during the course of the semester will be given a 2.5 grade less. Arrivals more than five minutes past the start of the class will count as an absence, just as early departures. In order for a missed class to be considered pardoned, the missing a class must be accompanied by note from the health center, or similar form of verification; exceptions may be made in circumstances deemed to be exceptional by the instructor. Those with disabilities must request accommodation from the instructor.
  - Papers/questions:

You will require preparing weekly questions and a weekly page summary of the week readings in order to assist your preparation for class discussion. You will be required once each week to write a page summary about the secondary readings, and to prepare an additional study question. These two assignments will assure that you are prepared for class activities, and will give you the confidence to raise and respond to the issues that will come up during our discussions. The weekly papers are not graded, but lack of them will affect the grade negatively. The style of the papers is open: can be a summery, reflection or a presentation of an academic argument. The topic of the weekly papers can be anything from the week’s subject matters. I will write comments on the weekly papers that will guide you in your next papers and will tell you how and where you need to improve your writing skills. Papers are due by every Monday Noon in my drop box the Religion Department office. Papers are not accepted any other way: NO
Email! Questions are due Tuesday 5pm on the online drop box! Questions submitted later or not via the Blackboard drop box (the University's web-based courseware interface) are not accepted! Missed papers and missed questions affect the grade negatively! There is no makeup possibility for missed papers or missed questions!!!

- **What is a short summary?**
  - The short summary ‘objectively’ outlines the major features of each reading, and explains the author’s ‘project’ and arguments in clear and precise language.
  - The statement, written in the form of a thesis statement or paragraph in *your own words and without judgment of its content*, will provide all of the information that is necessary in order to get to the heart of the author’s discussion. This essential skill, to provide a fair representation of a view that is not your own, is the basis for balanced analysis and judgment, and demonstrates that your work fulfills expectations of an advanced course in religion.
  - This assignment answers the following questions: What is his or her argument? What would he or she like for us to understand from his or her discussion? Why did the author write this work? What do we need to assume in order to understand his or her discussion?.

- **What is a good question?**
  - A good question allows discussion and debate on the basis of evidence drawn from the readings or from other evidence that is verifiable by all concerned.
  - A good question may have a “yes” or “no” answer, but requires argument and discussion why or how a particular opinion is correct.
  - For example, the following are *not* good questions: “Who is the pope?” or “Did God create the world in six days?” – we are not interested in questions of fact, but more sophisticated questions that will aid our understanding of the authors, such as: “What is the pope’s view about the role of religion in public affairs? How does he come to this view?” or “How do Intelligent Design authors attempt to balance the Biblical story of creation with science? Why do they think this argument is convincing?” We are interested in questions of “why” and “how,” and to think analytically about the story or idea being told in our readings. In sum, try to apply the “theory” of the day to the “evidence” found in our readings.

**Grade:**

Attendance and weekly questions-papers: 25%

Presentation and participation in discussion: 25%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

**Statement regarding disability services and accommodations:**
A student with a disability that qualifies for accommodations should contact Sarah Mead Smith, Director of Disability Services at 865-2990 (Academic Resource Center, Room
405, Monroe Hall). A student wishing to receive test accommodations (e.g., extended test time) should provide the instructor with an official Accommodation Form from Disability

Class Schedule:

**WEEK ONE: Introduction**

**Tue:** Introduction to the Class and to the Syllabus

**Thu:** **Lecture:** Woman’s history, images and some methodological concern

**Home Readings:** Handout

**Film:** Kadosh

**WEEK TWO: Woman in the Hebrew Bible I**

**Tue:** **Lecture:** Introduction to the images of the women in the Hebrew Bible

**Thu:** **Student Presentation:** David Biale: Eros and the Jews 1chapter

Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 1chapter

**Home Reading:** Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter 1; Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 15p, 242p

**Film:** Hester Street

**WEEK THREE: Woman in the Hebrew Bible II**

**Tue:** **Lecture:** Matriarchy, Patriarchy and Gender in the Hebrew Bible

**Thu:** **Student Presentation:** Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 2 chapter

**Home Reading:** Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 39p, 245p

**Films:** Marjorie Morningstar

**WEEK FOUR: Woman in the Hebrew Bible III**

**Tue:** **lecture:** Models of womanhood: Reading stories of the Hebrew Bible with a woman’s eye

**Thu:** **Student Presentation:** Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 3chapter
**Home Reading:** Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 89p, 250p
Blue Greenberg: On women and Judaism p 39;

**Films:** Private Benjamin

**WEEK FIVE: Rabbinic Culture and Women I**

**Tue:** Lecture: What Has It Meant to be a Jewish Woman?

**Thu:** **Student Presentation:** David Biale: Eros and the Jews 2 chapter
Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 4 chapter

**Home Reading:** Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter 2;
Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 103p, 253p
Blue Greenberg: On women and Judaism p105;

**Film:** Kissing Jessica Stein

**WEEK SIX: Rabbinic Culture and Jewish Women II**

**Tue:** Lecture: Women’s Rituals and Jewish Law: Menstruation, Education, Food and Prayer

**Thu:** **Student Presentation:** Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 5 chapter

**Home Reading:** Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter;
Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 117p, 258p

**Film:** The Way We Were

**WEEK SEVEN: Medieval Culture and Jewish Women I**

**Tue:** Lecture: Jewish Women in Medieval Society

**Thu:** **Student Presentation:** David Biale: Eros and the Jews: 3 and 4 chapter
Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 6 chapter

**Home Reading:** Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter 4;
Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 51p, 261p

**Film:** Song of the Sephardi

**WEEK EIGHT: Medieval Culture and Jewish Women II**

**Tue:** Lecture: Female Images in Jewish Mysticism
Thu: Student Presentation: David Biale: Eros and the Jews 5chapter
Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 7 chapter

Home Reading: Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter 5;
Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 59p, 73p, 265p

WEEK NINE: MIDTERM

WEEK TEN: Modern Culture and Jewish Women I

Tue: Lecture: Genders and Roles

Thu: Student Presentation: David Biale: Eros and the Jews: 6 chapter
Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 8 chapter

Home Reading: Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter 8;
Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 135p, 271p, 274p
Blue Greenberg: On women and Judaism p125 and p 147;

FILM: Trembling before G-d;

WEEK ELEVEN: Modern Culture and Jewish Women II

Tue: Lecture: Jewish Women and Work

Thu: Student Presentation: David Biale: Eros and the Jews: 7 chapter
Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 9chapter

Home Reading: Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter 11;
Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 159p, 279p
Blue Greenberg: On women and Judaism p 21 and p57;

FILM: Tahora/Purity

WEEK TWELF: Modern Culture and Jewish Women III

Tue: Lecture: Women's identity and religious obligations

Thu: Student Presentation: David Biale: Eros and the Jews: 8 chapter
Rachel Biale: Women and Jewish Law: 10chapter

Home Reading: Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter 15;
Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 183p, 282p
WEEK THIRTEEN: FEMINISM

Tue: The Struggle for Religious Equality

Thu: Student Presentation:

   Home Reading: Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 205p, 284p;
   Blue Greenberg: On women and Judaism p 3 and p157;

WEEK FOURTEEN: American Jewish Women

Tue: Lecture: From the Yiddishe Momme to the Jewish American Princess

Thu: Student Presentation: David Biale: Eros and the Jews: 9 chapter

   Home Reading: Judith Baskin ed.: Jewish Women in Historical Perspective: Chapter 14;
   Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, ed., Daughters of the King: 217p, 227p, 290p, 297p

WEEK FIFTEEN: REFLECTIONS AND COOKING KOSHER

Tue-Thu: kosher cooking lesson