

Mary Baldwin College
Fall 2008
Religion 101 B
Hebrew Scriptures - The Tanakh: The Women of the Hebrew Bible
Tuesday-Thursday 9:25-10:40
Instructor: Rabbi Joe Blair
Updated: 09-01-2008

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the historical, cultural, legal, and literary background of the Hebrew Scriptures (Jewish Bible, Tanakh, or Hebrew Scriptures). Using the historical-critical method of biblical studies, the student will approach biblical texts from the perspectives of history, thought, and the faith of ancient Israel, from Creation to the period following the destruction of the first Temple leading to the destruction of the second Temple. The student will be exposed to some alternative interpretations offered by scholars, with a particular focus on the roles and actions of women in the text and in Israelite thought and society. (3 Credits)

Course Objectives:

The student will learn to read and interpret the Hebrew Scriptures independently, in light of their cultural and historical context, using the tools discussed, free of post-biblical interpretations. Specifically, by using literary and historical analysis, the student will learn to identify the structure, argument, design, and content of the text, and how each impacts on the intended message of the text.

The course will examine selected texts in each of the three major sections of the Hebrew Scripture – Torah, Prophets, and Writings – as well as selected material from other sources that bear upon the texts. Questions that will be examined include:

- How this writing depicts G-d, how it depicts women, how those portrayals change as we move from one writing to another, what are the common elements or themes as we move in time period and location, and how these themes interact.
- How this writing relates to or describes the human condition: are people seen as good or evil, free or constrained, heroic or pathetic, angelic or demonic.
- How the roles of men and women are viewed and defined; are women seen as equals or in a subservient role, what moral valence is ascribed to women, and how are they treated in the larger surrounding societies and in Israelite society.
- What social ideals are supported and what obstacles are seen as preventing their realization.
- What religious practices are advocated and/or discouraged.
- How spirituality is defined and practiced in the texts, and beyond.
- Are there any specifically feminine religious or spiritual practices noted.
- Are there changes in the views or concepts incorporated as the narrative unfolds.
- Who are the heroic figures in the writings: what personal qualities are viewed as admirable or despicable, which are included in the writings. Do heroic qualities differ for men and women.
- How do the personal qualities included in the writings compare to those held out in present day views.
- What values are held out as to be emulated in the writings.

Students will be asked to examine their own beliefs and values in relation to those directly supported by the text(s), and encouraged to defend the views they find most persuasive. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers in this regard, so long as the answer is drawn solely from the texts we are studying, and an attempt is made to filter out other thought and belief patterns and systems, particularly any post-biblical (non-rabbinic, and later than the canonization of the Tanakh) systems of thought or interpretation.

Language:

The primary texts will be read in translation (English). No knowledge of Hebrew is assumed or required for this course. Other materials will be in English.

Course Requirements:

The student will write two (2) 5 page papers (approximately 2500 words each), one focused on the contents of the Torah (the five books of Moses), and one focused on the contents of the books of the Prophets, each examining a critical issue in scriptural interpretation, the topics to be selected by the student in consultation with and subject to approval by the instructor.

The student may also choose to write a number of 3 page papers (approximately 1500 words each), to be selected from among the suggested extra credit topics on this syllabus.

There will be an open-book final essay examination (the student will choose and answer three topic prompts among multiple options offered), demonstrating the student's overall grasp of the issues covered in the course; this final will be cumulative, but will certainly include a focus on the Writings section (the third segment) of the Tanakh (Hebrew scriptures). No specific length is set, but it is expected that the student will demonstrate familiarity with the text and display some original thought in each essay, which is unlikely to be accomplished in anything less than a page (approximately 350-500 words).

There will also be a brief self-evaluation of the student's background and current knowledge, a copy to be filled in at the beginning of the course, and then again at the end, for comparison purposes. Extra credit papers will be worth up to 15 points each, with a total of 45 points that will count towards the cumulative final grade. The student will also have an opportunity to take advantage of up to three (3) extra credit activities which will be worth up to 5 points each, for a possible additional 15 points towards the grade.

Evaluation:

Grading will be determined by the total of points earned, which is made up of points accumulated less points deducted, as follows. It is quite possible (and very likely if all work is done on time and meeting standard expectations) to accumulate in excess of 100 points, assuring an "A" grade. A perfect performance on all required work (2 papers, final exam, and attendance/participation) will earn 110 points. By completing all three Extra Credit papers, and attending all three Extra Credit events, it is possible to accumulate up to 170 points total! As you can see, the primary goal of this course is that

the student will learn: in doing so the student will receive an appropriate grade based on the effort made and results demonstrated.

Point Accumulation:

Papers (2), 5 pages each, up to 25 points each

Final exam (1), up to 45 points

Participation/Attendance, up to 15 points based on performance in class and attendance

Optional Papers, 3 pages each, up to 15 points each

Optional Extra Credit events, 3, up to 5 points each

Point Deductions:

Use of Inappropriate references or resources, up to a maximum of 100 points

Attendance & Participation, up to a maximum of 25 points

(There are approximately 25 class sessions.)

Each absence, lateness, or early dismissal, will cause a point to be deducted.

The schedule of point deductions will be:

Reason	Points Deducted
Number of Absences, Latenesses, Early Dismissals	1
Lack of participation/Inattentiveness in class	1

NOTA BENE: One major reason for point deduction on papers submitted will be the use of inappropriate references or resources in preparation of papers. This is a course in the Tanakh or HEBREW SCRIPTURES and the world in which they were formed: at that time in history, **neither Christianity nor Islam existed**. A goal of this course is for you to learn to read this text in its own light, in the context of the historic period and the thought patterns in which it was formed. Retrojecting other concepts, beliefs, and faiths prevents this goal from being achieved.

Consequently, the student is urged NOT to use texts, articles, materials, books, or resources that are not based solely on the Hebrew Scriptures. In particular, the use of Christian-based or Islamic-based materials which re-interpret and change the meaning of the text in light of their own belief systems will be cause for **significant downgrading** of papers submitted, with the reduction ranging from 25-100% of the total point value, depending on the severity of the inappropriate insertion, in the instructor's opinion. This particularly applies to so-called 'messianic Jewish' or 'Christian-Jewish' (both oxymoronic terms) sources and websites and materials (which are definitely NOT Jewish, rely almost entirely on a Christian reading of text, often tend to be deceptive, or at best, vague about their sources, and are generally invalid for any academic purpose whatsoever).

In addition, please **do NOT use Wikipedia** or treat it as a legitimate source for academic purposes: because of its nature, it is subject to many errors, and to insertion of material that is not accurate or correct, which will not necessarily be caught and changed. You will then be chancing that you have based your papers on false or incorrect information and thought, which may lead to downgrading.

I hope it does not need to be stated because it is completely understood that plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Plagiarism in your papers will be cause for that paper automatically to receive zero points; the offending student will be dismissed from the class with a failing grade, and the infraction will be reported for appropriate discipline by the school authorities.

Optional/Extra/Makeup Work to amass additional points:
Extra Credit assignments (optional), maximum of 60 points
Based on:

- Extra Credit Papers (3), 3 pages, up to 15 points each
- Extra Credit Activities (3), up to 5 points each

The grading scale will be:

CUMULATED TOTAL POINTS	GRADE
92-100	A
90-91	A-
88-89	B+
82-87	B
80-81	B-
78-79	C+
72-77	C
70-71	C-
68-69	D+
62-67	D
60-61	D-
0-59	F

Grades will be determined not by the student's beliefs or views, but by the demonstrated evidence of mastery of the material discussed in the texts and class presentations, and meeting the stated goals of the course. Some weight will be given to clarity of thought and expression. Although writing style, grammar, and spelling are not the focus of this course, a paper that is difficult to read or understand will necessarily receive a lesser grade.

An 'A' represents outstanding mastery of the issues presented in the course and clear presentation of ideas; 'B' represents solid basic mastery and presentation; 'C' represents some deficits in mastery or presentation; 'D' represents significant deficits; and 'F' represents a failure to accomplish the basic goals of the course in that assignment.

You are expected to complete the assigned readings in advance of class, and to **actively participate** in class discussion. Failure to attend and to participate will lead to deduction of points as noted. This course is designed with the assumption that students will attend and learn from the lecture and discussion in class; consequently, absences will reduce the attendance and participation portion of your grade. If desired, you may see the instructor for information on possible assignments to make up work or for extra credit.

The Honor Code is assumed; any violation will be dealt with appropriately.

Required Reading List:

- T: The TaNaKH: The Hebrew...., Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 2002 ed. or later., pb., 2039 pp. (the Study version is recommended).
- TC: The Gifts of the Jews, Thomas Cahill, pb., 291 pp.

Optional Supplemental Reading:

- EF: Five Books of Miriam: A Woman's Commentary on the Torah, Ellen Frankel, pb., 354 pp.

Further [Optional] Reading/Resources:

- Listen to Her Voice: Women of the Hebrew Bible, Miki Raver, pb., 176 pp.
- Sarah, Marek Halter, pb., 288 pp.
- Sarah, Orson Scott Card, pb., 341 pp.
- Rebekah, Orson Scott Card, pb., 416 pp.
- Rachel And Leah, Orson Scott Card, pb., 368 pp.
- The Red Tent, Anita Diamant, pb., 336 pp.
- Dinah's Daughters: Gender and Judaism from the Hebrew Bible to Late Antiquity, Helena Zlotnick, pb., 248 pp.
- Zipporah, Wife of Moses, Marek Halter, pb., 288 pp.
- Women of the Bible: Rahab's Story: A Novel, Ann Burton, pb., 288 pp.
- Women of the Bible: Jael's Story: A Novel, Ann Burton, pb., 288 pp.
- The Song of Hannah, Eva Etzioni-Halevy, pb., 292 pp.
- Bad Girls of the Bible, Liz Curtis Higgs, pb., 256 pp.
- And many more available.

I often recommend the Encyclopedia Judaica as an excellent resource and starting place in any research you may need to do. If there is no copy in the library, it is available at Temple House of Israel as a reference book – it may not be removed, but you are welcome to use it, if you arrange to come when the building is open.

Contact Information:

My office hours are held at Temple House of Israel, 15 North Market Street, Staunton, VA 24401 (enter by the door facing the municipal parking lot and Beverly Street), 540-886-4091, on Mondays and Fridays, generally between 10 am and 3 pm, or evenings. ALL meetings are **by appointment only**.

You may leave a message on my MBC phone, which is 540-887-7200, x7082.

On Sundays and Thursdays, I may be reached by telephone at 540-434-2744.

There are message machines at each of these numbers and they are checked at least daily each business day.

I am not available from 4 pm Friday until Sunday morning, or on any Jewish Holiday (holidays run from sundown one day until after sundown the next).

Email: RabbiJoeB@Hotmail.com or jblair@mbc.edu. I can be reached by email readily: I check my hotmail account multiple times most days and my MBC account usually daily during the week (other than Jewish Holidays and the Sabbath, when I do not use the computer).

I am happy to respond to questions or concerns as they arise. PLEASE do not let a question or concern deter you from completing the work assigned: contact me as soon as you have any questions. I much prefer to answer a question, even if it seems silly or a small thing, even multiple times, than to have your grade affected by not understanding or not knowing something with which I could and would have helped you.

Turning in Work:

There are three ways to turn in your work.

1. You can submit work in person in class (by the end of the class period) as a hard copy (printed) on the day it is due.
2. You can deliver work to my office during office hours as a hard copy (printed) at Temple House of Israel (the address is 15 North Market Street, but you should enter through the glass door on the side of the building facing the municipal parking lot and West Beverly Street) by no later than 4 pm on the day it is due. Be sure to hand it to me directly – do not simply leave it, as there is no assurance I will find it and know it was turned in on time.
3. You may email your completed work to me by 5 pm on the day it is due. If you choose email, you must attach the document to the email, saved as a **Microsoft Word** file [document extensions of .doc or .docx] (unless your computer cannot process this format, in which case I can accept it as a Rich Text Format [RTF] file) [file extensions of .rtf], and you must also copy the text and paste it into the email body. Please do not send Works [file extensions of .wks], Corel [.wps], or Wordperfect [.wps] documents – I do not have the software to open them. Be sure to correctly address the message, and also include your own email address to receive a sent copy so that you will have proof that it was sent on time if the question arises.

Work is due by a given time. It is your responsibility to meet that schedule. All work will be considered late and will be downgraded if received after 5 pm on the day due, absent prior arrangements for an extension for a legitimate and acceptable reason. Because you know the due dates far in advance, there is little leeway provided. Please note: downgrading takes place cumulatively, on the following scale.

Work that is:	0-36 hours late (1½ days)	36-72 hours late (1½ -3 days)	72-108 hours late (3-4½ days)	109+ hours late (4½ + days)
Is Penalized	10% of the total points	An additional 20%	An additional 30%	An additional 40%
& Will lose	10% of the possible points	30% of the possible points	60% of the possible points	100% of the possible points
EXAMPLE: a 100 point paper would lose	10 points = 10% of 100 possible points	30 points = 10% + 20% of 100 possible points	60 points = 10% + 20% + 30% of 100 possible points	100 points = 10% + 20% + 30% + 40% of 100 possible points
And would earn a maximum of	90 points out of 100	70 points out of 100	40 points out of 100	0 points out of 100

Format of assignments turned in:

Work must be typed, double spaced, in twelve point type, using times new roman, courier, or arial font. Margins are to be set at no more than 1 inch top and bottom, and 1.0 inches left and right. Hardcopies must be single sided and printed using black ink, except for links, diagrams, or pictures, which may be in color.

If you are turning in an assignment by email, please remember to do the following:

- 1) save your work as a Microsoft Word 2003 or 2007 (or later) document (must be saved with file extension .doc or .docx). If your computer cannot process MS Word documents, then you may save it as a Rich Text Format document (saved with extension .rtf). Work in any other formats will not be read.
- 2) Attach the saved document to an email.
- 3) Open the document and 'select all' text; copy the entire text of your paper, and then paste the text into the body of the email (even though it will lose formatting).
- 4) Send the email with the text included in the message, and the document file attached, to my address: rabbijoeb@hotmail.com, or jblair@mbc.edu. In the Subject field please include the terms "MBC Religion 101", your name, and an identification of what assignment you are submitting. It should look something like this:

Subject: MBC Religion 101 Amelia Bedelia (your name) Assignment: Extra Credit Paper Number 2.

Be sure to keep a copy of the paper in your document files, and also a copy of the email and the attachments in your sent email files (easiest to do by sending the mail with a CC [carbon copy] addressed to your own email address – remember not to delete it when it arrives!). That copy will be the means to show that you submitted the paper on time if it is not received in my email inbox for any reason. Absent actual receipt, or the submission of a forwarded copy of the email, showing the document, including all header information (which indicates time sent and contains message identification information), the paper will be considered as not submitted on time, and will be downgraded as shown above, until it is turned in and received.

Failure to abide by these requirements will be penalized by loss of points.

Course Outline

Women of Interest in this course:

You are encouraged to attend carefully to the stories we read, paying particular attention to the various women within the text. This would include: Lilith, Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah, Dinah, Miriam, Potiphar's wife, Tzipporah, Lot's wife, Rahav, Tamar, Hannah, Devorah, Yael, Avigayil, Michal, Batsheva, Jezebel, Delilah, the female protagonist(s) in the Song of Songs, Ruth, Naomi, and Esther. Note also feminine characterizations for G-d, Israel the people, and Israel the land.

Assignments and Class Topics by Class Meeting:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assigned Text & Scripture Readings</u>
To be completed before Class Meets		
----Week 1		
9/2	Introduction Course: Requirements, Grading, Sources, Submitting Work, Texts Office Hours, Location, Contacts Judaism: An Overview Jewish groups then and now The Hebrew Scriptures: How the Bible was written, by whom Jewish Literature Jewish Time Line Surrounding cultures and peoples	<u>None</u>
9/4	Introduction, Concluded Genesis/Creation Midrash: Lilith and Eve Gen. 1 & 2, Eve & Adam & Lilith	TC Ch. Intro, 1; T Gen. 1-3, 6-9,
-----Week 2		
9/9	Noah Babel Abraham & Sarah What sort of person was Abraham? What sort of person was Sarah? Hagar? What faith did they show? How did they interact? What does that tell us about the relationship of men and women?	T; Gen 11-13, 15-19,
9/11	Abraham & Sarah, continued Birth of Isaac Death of Sarah	T; Gen 21-23

----Week 3

9/16

Isaac/Rebecca

TC, Ch. 2;
T Gen. 24-34;

What sort of person was Isaac?
What sort of person was Rebecca?
What sort of relationship did each of these persons have with others?
How do the traits of these persons still inform us today?

9/18

Jacob/Rachel/Leah/Bilhah/Zilpah

What sort of person was Jacob?
What sort of person was Rachel, Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah?
What sort of relationship did each of these persons have with the others?
How do the traits of these persons still inform us today?
The four Matriarchs – what sort of people were they?
Why were Bilhah and Zilpah not included in the Matriarchs?

----Week 4

9/23

Dinah, Miriam

Joseph, Potiphar's wife

Forgiveness

Sexuality & Control

Typological Numbers

Looking at Dinah's story, can it be read in multiple ways?

What does it say about women?

What is similar about Joseph and Dinah?

Have you ever forgiven/been forgiven?

How does forgiveness appear in your life?

TC, Ch. 3;
T, Gen. 37-46, 50;

9/25

Exodus/Moses/Tziporah

T, Exodus 1-15, 18-20, 25,
31-32, 34;

Would scientific explanations of the plagues help or hinder faith?

What kind of proof can there be for the Exodus?

What sort of person was Moses?

Moses is held up as an ideal: in your opinion, would he be a suitable model for a life partner?

What kind of relationship could Moses have had with Tziporah?

What does their relationship tell us about the ideals and attitudes of some people towards marriage and women of that time?

How is Miriam portrayed? Is she a realistic image of a woman?

Is Potiphar's wife a realistic portrayal of a woman? Of a woman's sexuality? What social and moral message is offered?

----Week 5

9/30

NO CLASS

ROSH HASHANAH

SUGGESTION: Your first paper (5 pages) on the Torah portion of the Tanakh is due 10/14. Begin it now, and turn it in on time, before Fall break.

Extra credit opportunities – consider taking advantage of some of them!

----Week 7, Cont'd.

10/16 Prophets

Kings T 1:1-3, 9-11, 16-19, 21;
David: The Psalmist, Michal, Bathsheba
Michal, Avigayil, Bathsheba,
Consider Rachav, Hannah, the Witch of Ein Dor, Michal, Bathsheba,
Avigayil, Jezebel, and the harem of Solomon: what do we learn from
these about the ideas concerning women? Were they constant? How did
they develop?

----Week 8

10/21 NO CLASS FALL BREAK

10/23 Prophets: Kings T 2:2, 4, 7, 8, 11
Solomon: The Proverbist, Wives, Sons Look up King Solomon
Queen of Sheba, Jezebel
Consider Jezebel and the harem of Solomon: what do we learn from
these about the ideas concerning women? Were they constant? How did
they develop?
Solomon. Sons of Solomon. Jezebel.

----Week 9

10/28 Isaiah Is. 1, 2, 4-5, 50-66
The divided kingdom EF – all related sections
Ahaz Look up Isaiah
Isaiah speaks little of women. What does this tell us?

10/30 Prophets TC – Remainder of the book
Jeremiah Jer. 1-2, 7, 8, 31, 39, 40;
Ezekiel Ez. 1, 8, 19, 23, 37;
Look up Jeremiah & Ezekiel
Jeremiah describes the destruction, and paints word pictures, including
references to women. How does this compare with Isaiah?
What is Ezekiel's view of the world?
Ezekiel speaks little of or to women directly, but uses feminine imagery
for Jerusalem and Israel: what does this tell us?

SUGGESTION: Your second paper (5 pages) on the Nevi'im
(Prophets) portion of the Tanakh is due 11/13. Begin it now, and
turn it in on time.

----Week 10

11/4 NO CLASS

----Week 10, Cont'd.

11/6	Prophets	
	The Twelve "Minor" or "Lesser"	
	Hosea	Hos. 1-4, 11;
	Joel	Joel 1;
	Amos	Amos 5, 7;
	Obadiah	Obad. ---
	Jonah	Jon. 1-4;
	Micah	Mic. 4, 6;
	Nahum	Nah. 3;
	Habbakuk	Hab. ---
	Zephaniah	Zeph. 1;
	Haggai	Hag. 1;
	Zechariah	Zech. 3, 4;
	Malachi	Mal. 1;
	Destruction of the first Temple	
	Exile (Babylonian)	Look up Micah, Nahum
	Hezekiah	Habbakuk, Zephaniah
	Alexander the Great	Haggai, Zechariah,
	Cyrus	Malachi, Hosea, Joel,
	Return	Amos, Obadiah, & Jonah
	The prophet as conscience	
	Looking at the wife of Hosea (as a symbol of Israel, wife of G-d), what do we learn concerning views of women?	
	Prophet as Healer	
	Which prophet would be the best to speak to our world today? Why?	
	What about a woman prophet?	
	What are the major problems in the 21 st century & how would a prophet address them?	
	What would the response of most people be?	
	Q&A	
	Wrap up of the Book Of Prophets (Nevi'im)	
	End of Prophecy	

-----Week 11

11/11	Prophets	
	Conclusion	
	Writings	
	Introduction – contents & structure	
	Psalms	Ps. 3, 6, 15, 22-23, 27, 51, 70, 72, 84, 96, 104, 113, 121, 137, 145, 149;
		Look up King David, Psalms
	Identify your favorite Psalm, and be prepared to explain what it says to you, and why it is your favorite.	

----Week 11, Cont'd.

11/13	Writings Proverbs Job	Pro. 1, 2, 8, 10, 14, 28, 31; Job 1, 2, 3, 6, 9-10, 12-14, 16-17, 19, 21, 23-24, 26, 32, 38-42;
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Proverbs is often called 'wisdom literature'. Why?
What writings in other religious traditions might be of similar type?
Reading Job, we find that his entire family is wiped out at the start, and he ends by forming a new family. What does this say about the value placed on a wife and children?

Second Paper (on Prophets) due today, 11/13. Please note TURNING IN WORK, above.

-----Week 12

11/18	Writings 5 Megillot Song of Songs Ruth	Song 1-8; Rut. 1-4;
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Who wrote the Shir haShirim?
Who wrote the Book of Ruth?

Read Song of Songs, Ruth, and Esther especially carefully with an eye towards the central role women play in these readings.

11/20

Esther Lamentations Ecclesiastes	Est. 1-10; Lam. 1-2; Ecc. 1-4, 7-9, 11-12; Look up Ecclesiastes (Kohélet)
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Who wrote the book of Esther? Why is it unique in all the bible?
Who wrote Lamentations and Ecclesiastes?

Read Song of Songs, Ruth, and Esther especially carefully with an eye towards the central role women play in these readings.

----Week 13

11/25 Daniel Dan. 1-2, 5-7;
Ezra Ez. 1;
Nehemiah Neh. 1-2;
Chronicles 1 & 2 1 Chron. 1, 3, 9, 14-16,
20-21;
End of the Canon of the Bible 2 Chron. 1-3, 9, 11
Look up Daniel, Ezra,
Nehemiah
How does Chronicles compare to the rest of the Tanach?
Afterwards, and Who Wrote the Bible
Roman/Hellenistic Conquest
Maccabean Revolt
Destruction of the second Temple
Exile (Diaspora)
Official 'state' record

11/27 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK

----Week 14

12/2 Wrap Up Discussion
Authorship
Bloom: J, E, P, D; Other theories
What of Women?
What have you learned about the Hebrew Scriptures?
What have you learned about the persons and times of the Tanakh?
What have we learned about the views and role of women through these texts?
How will this knowledge and material affect how you go through your life?

NOTE: All extra credit and make up work due by 5 pm today, 12/2. Anything turned in after this time will not be counted towards your grade.

12/4 REVIEW CLASS
OPTIONAL
ATTENDANCE WILL NOT BE TAKEN

Bring any questions you may have. I will present a brief overview of the highlights of the material that we covered, and answer any questions you may have. This session is for your benefit and to assist you in preparing for the final exam. It is optional – I will not take attendance.

Week of 12/7 EXAMS

The Final exam will be open book, open note, in classroom/exam hall, at the times and places shown on the official schedule. It is an essay/short paper style exam, much like the papers you have written through the course. There will be a variety of questions presented: you will respond to the one prompt/topic to which everyone must respond, and then pick a specified number in addition to that one to answer. Last semester, the total number of topics was three; one required and two chosen from a variety of prompts/topics. I expect you to demonstrate familiarity with the text and display some original thought in each essay, which is unlikely to be accomplished in anything less than a page (approximately 350-500 words).

Learn, Enjoy, and Good Luck!

Rabbi Joe

Mary Baldwin College
Fall 2008 Religion 101
Hebrew Scriptures: The Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) & Women In It
Tuesday-Thursday 9:25-10:40
Instructor: Rabbi Joe Blair
Updated 08-29-2008

EXTRA CREDIT AND MAKEUP WORK ASSIGNMENTS

[A calendar of Jewish holidays and events at Temple House of Israel is available online at www.thoi.org. Click on the 'Calendar 5769' link.]

For Extra credit you may attend any one Shabbat (Friday evening) service at Temple House of Israel during the semester (held alternate weeks, in general). Services usually run from 7:30 to 9:15 pm. There are light refreshments after the service. Be sure to inform me in writing that you have attended after you go.

For Extra credit you may attend up to three of any Jewish Holiday services at Temple House of Israel during the semester (see the calendar for dates and events). Holiday Services usually run from 7:30 to 9:30 pm, or from 10 am to 1 pm. There are sometimes light refreshments after the service. Be sure to inform me in writing that you have attended after you go.

For Extra credit you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the basic sources of the Sabbath and its observance, describing some of the major practices associated with celebrating it, and telling me your reaction to it.

For Extra credit you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the basic sources of the holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, describing some of the major practices associated with celebrating each of them, and your response to them.

For Extra credit you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the basic source of the holidays of Sukkot (Feast of Booths), Shemini Atzeret (Eighth day of Tarrying) and Simchat Torah (Rejoicing in the Law), and describing some of the major practices associated with celebrating them, and your response to them.

For Extra Credit, you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the basic sources of the holiday of Passover, describing some of the major practices associated with celebrating it, and your response to this holiday (what you think, how you feel about it);
or

For Extra Credit, you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the basic sources of the holiday of Shavuot, describing some of the major practices associated with celebrating it, and your response to this holiday (what you think, how you feel about it);
or

For Extra Credit, you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the form of prayer in Jewish worship and how it varies through the year, and your response to this form, including how it differs from your own practices; or

For Extra Credit, you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the Jewish calendar and why Jewish holidays appear at different times on the secular calendar from year to year, and what your reaction to this way of calculating times might be.

For Extra credit you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the source of the holiday of Tu Bi'Shevat (15th of Shevat), describing some of the major practices associated with celebrating it, and comparing it to other holidays in your own experience.

For Extra credit you may attend the Community Awareness Shabbat service at Temple House of Israel on December 7th or February 6th and write a reaction paper to it of 3 pages, focusing on what differences you found from your own faith tradition, what similarities there were, and what you thought and how you felt about the service.

For Extra credit you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the basic history and source of the Bat Mitzvah, and describing some of the major practices associated with celebrating it. Also explain how it differs from the Bar Mitzvah.

For Extra credit you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the differences of the ritual called Brit Milah (circumcision) and the ritual called Brit Bat (naming of the daughter), and your reaction to each.

For Extra credit you may borrow from the library the DVD "What Harm is it to be a Woman?" and watch segment 1, Violence within Marriage and Judaism; then write an additional 3 page paper reacting to this presentation.

The following options may not be available to you this semester due to the dates on which they fall:

For Extra credit you may attend one or more of the events of the Shenandoah Valley Holocaust Education Project at THOI between April 23rd and 30th, and write an additional 3 page paper describing what you attended, how you see it as applying to you personally, as well as to the general population, and setting forth your opinion of the presentation.

For Extra credit you may attend the Tu Bi'shevat seder (there is a fee to attend and reservations are required) at Temple House of Israel at 5 pm on Sunday, February 9th, 2009.

For Extra credit you may attend one or more of the events of the Staunton Jewish Film Festival, at the Visulite Theater from March 27th to April 3rd, and write an additional 3 page paper describing each film you attended and setting forth your opinion of it.

For Extra credit you may attend the Passover Seder at THOI (there is a fee to attend and reservations are required).

Whether or not you attend the seder, you may write an additional 3 page paper explaining the history and sources of this ritual, describing the event you attended (if you attended), and setting forth your opinion of it, and how you think it might tie into your own religious observances.