

JS 330: Women in the Jewish Experience

Fall 2005

Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30-1:45, JH1206

Ticket number #17361

Elaine Adler Goodfriend, Ph.D.

Mailbox: Dept. of Religious Studies, FOB 224

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 8:30-9:20, FOB 233, 677-2743, or after class.

Phone messages: 677-3392

E-mail: elaine.goodfriend@csun.edu (Feel free to communicate with me about course related issues, but *only* course related issues.)

This course will offer an understanding of the experience of women in the context of Jewish history, culture and law. We will examine and discuss texts relating to the lives of Jewish women from the biblical period to the present.

Required material for purchase:

1. Bible – Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. If you don't own one, you can buy Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures. Jewish Publication Society. Other editions of the Bible are acceptable; please check with me.
2. The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln, Schocken Books.
3. Rachel Biale, Women and Jewish Law, Schocken. (WJL in syllabus)
4. JS/ WS 330 Reader, available at Northridge Stationary and Copy.

Course Requirements:

1. Students should plan on attending all class sessions. Attendance will be taken at all class meetings because near-perfect attendance is required for adequate learning and to achieve a satisfactory grade. All students are expected to do the readings before class and participate in class discussion. If you are absent 3 or less sessions, I will add 2 points to your final averaged grade.
2. Your final grade will be based on the average of 4 grades, each worth 25%:
 - a. A midterm and a final exam. Questions for the exams will be distributed one week in advance of the test.
 - b. Two writing assignments which will focus on your reading of The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln, and Women and Jewish Law.
3. Always bring the appropriate textbook to class. For the first few weeks you should bring the Tanakh or Bible. The proper text should be brought for two reasons: 1. You will be asked to read aloud in class; 2. You need the text to follow class discussion. Failure to bring your textbook will annoy the Instructor and you may be asked to leave class if you repeatedly neglect this responsibility.
4. **WARNINGS:**
 - a. Cheating on exams and plagiarizing will be penalized with a grade of F. Working together on writing assignments is considered plagiarizing.
 - b. Behavior that is in any disruptive will not be tolerated in class. If your behavior is repeatedly

disruptive, the proper authorities will be notified and you will be barred from attending class.

c. Turn your cell phone off before class and don't play with it during class. Don't leave in the middle of class to use the bathroom or get a drink; do this before class.

d. Your writing assignments will be graded on the basis of their over-all quality, and that includes spelling, punctuation, and grammar. They must be typed and printed in an acceptable form, with numbered pages and proper margins.

5. The Instructor reserves the right to alter the class requirements (exams and writing assignments) in order to facilitate learning and lighten the students' workload.

Tuesday, 8/30: Introduction and overview; the Bible.

Readings: Genesis 1.

Thursday, 9/1: The Creation of Woman.

Readings: Genesis 1-3, Biale, WJL (that's Women & Jewish Law) 121-125.

Tuesday, 9/6: Women in Biblical Narrative.

Readings: Genesis 34, 38, Exodus 1-2, Judges 4-5.

Thursday, 9/8: Women in Biblical Law.

Readings: Exodus 19-22, Leviticus 12, 15.

Tuesday, 9/13: Women in Biblical Law:

Readings: Deuteronomy 21-25; Reader, 1-10, Carol Myers, "Everyday Life of Women in the Biblical World," Jacob Milgrom, "The Rationale for Biblical Impurity."

Thursday, 9/15: The Song of Songs & Esther.

Readings: Song of Songs 1-7, Book of Esther.

Tuesday, 9/20 Women in the Apocrypha.

Readings: Reader, 11-35 – The Book of Judith, 2 Maccabees 7, excerpt from Ben Sirach,

Thursday, 9/22: Women in the Talmud.

Readings: Reader, 36-56 – "Beruriah: Some Writings About Her"; Daniel Boyarin, Carnal Israel, "Rabbinic Writings about Women."

Tuesday, 9/27: Midterm #1.

Thursday, 9/29: Women and the Commandments.

Readings: WJL, 10-43. Reader, Traditional morning prayers;

In the Reader (76-89), you will find questions for each chapter of WJL that you are assigned.

As you read, answer the questions. These will form the basis of class discussion. These questions sheets should be submitted for a grade.

Tuesday, 10/4 - Rosh HaShanah – no class.

Thursday, 10/6: Jewish Law: Marriage.
Reading: WJL, 44-69.

Tuesday, 10/11: Jewish Law: Divorce.
Reading: WJL, 70-101.

Thursday, 10/13 - Yom HaKippurim – no class.

Tuesday, 10/18 – Hag HaSukkoth – no class.

Thursday, 10/20: Jewish Law: Sexuality and Marital Relations.
Reading: WJL, 121-146.

Tuesday, 10/25 – Shemini Atzeret - no class.

Thursday, 10/27: Guest Speaker Maggy Anton, author of *Rashi's Daughters: Johebed*.

Tuesday, 11/1: Jewish Law: NIDDAH: Laws of the Menstruant.
Readings: WJL, pp.147-174

Thursday, 11/3: The Laws of the Menstruant; Jewish Law: Sexuality outside of Marriage.
Readings: Reader, 57-74 – Cohen, “Purity and Piety: The Separation of Menstruants from the Sancta”; WJL, pp.175-197.
(Start reading *Gluckel of Hameln*)

Tuesday, 11/8: Jewish Law: Procreation, Conception & Abortion.
Readings: WJL, 198-238.
(Keep reading *Gluckel of Hameln*)

Thursday, 11/10: Jewish Law: Rape; Epilogue.
Readings WJL, 239-266.

Tuesday, 11/15: Late Medieval and Early Modern Jewish Women.
Readings: *The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln*, Introduction & 1-145.

Thursday, 11/17: Gluckel of Hameln.
Readings: *Memoirs*, 146-227. **Submit written assignments.**

Tuesday, 11/22: The Jewish Immigration to America.
Readings: Reader, 117-146 – Excerpt from R. Scheindlin's *A Short History of the Jewish People*; assorted letters from *A Bintel Brief*. Reader, 117-146.

Thursday, 11/24 – Thanksgiving.

Tuesday, 11/29: Jewish Communities in America.

Film: Hasidim in America (extra-credit assignment on women in Hasidic communities).

Thursday, 12/1: Excerpts from *Mystics, Mavericks and Merrymakers: An Intimate Journey Among Hasidic Girls*, by Stephanie Levine, Reader, 147 and following.

Tuesday, 12/6: National Jewish Population Survey, 2000-2001, Reader, 163-181; Jack Wertheimer, "Jews and the Jewish Birthrate," Commentary Magazine, October 2005

FINALS: Thursday, Dec.15, 12:45-2:45.