

WYB 3670/6670 HS • WOMEN AS INTERPRETERS OF THE BIBLE

I. Course Details

Instructor: Marion Taylor
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 Class: April 16 -20: 9-12:00, 1:00-3:00
 First assignment is due the first day of class –
 extensions until April 31 if necessary and the
 final assignment is due July 15.

Office Hours: By appointment: Wycliffe College, Room 227.

II. Course Description and Learning Outcomes

This course will examine how the Bible has been read, interpreted and proclaimed by women beginning with the period of the early church and including the writings of medieval visionaries, renaissance exegetes and continuing into the modern and post-modern periods. Women's interpretations of the Bible will be examined with a view to recovering women's readings and counter-readings of biblical texts and raising relevant methodological and hermeneutical questions for modern readers. We will particularly focus particularly on women's interpretations of Genesis 1-3 and Pauline texts.

Course Prerequisites

Previous course work in Bible highly recommended. Email professor if you have questions.

Course Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students will	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
Demonstrate the ability to place individual interpreters within their historical context	Class discussions; oral presentation; class paper.	MTS: 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 MDiv: 1.2, 1.4, 1.5

Identify and explain methodological, exegetical and hermeneutical issues raised by interpreters as they engage Scripture;	Class discussions; oral presentation; class paper.	MTS: 1.2, 1.4, 1.5 MDiv: 1.2, 1.4, 1.5
Demonstrate how culture, social setting and gender, culture, class, ethnicity and age influences interpretation	Class discussions; oral presentation; class paper.	MTS: 2.2, 2.3, 3.1 MDiv: 2.2
Use primary and secondary research tools and resources.	Hand out for oral presentation; class paper.	MTS: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3; 3.1 MDiv: 2.1, 2.2

AD Outcomes:

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
Demonstrate the ability to place individual interpreters within their historical context	Participating in discussions of primary and secondary texts about male and female from each period; presenting on one figure and writing on another; reflection paper	PhD: 1.1, 1.2 MA: 1.1 ThM: 1.1 DMin: 1.1, 1.2
Identify and explain methodological, exegetical and hermeneutical issues raised by interpreters as they engage Scripture;	Class discussions; oral presentation; class paper.	PhD: 2.3–2.5 MA: 2.3–2.5 ThM: 2.3–2.5 DMin: 2.1–2.3
Demonstrate how culture, social setting and gender, culture,	Class discussions; oral presentation; reflection paper, class paper.	PhD: 1.1 MA: 1.1

class, ethnicity and age influences interpretation		ThM: 1.1 DMin: 1.1
Use secondary research tools and resources.	Hand out for oral presentation; class paper	PhD: 2.5 MA: 2.5 ThM: 2.5 DMin: 2.5

III.1 Requirements and Evaluation: BD students

1) **Class Participation** (20%) Students are expected to attend every class and to involve themselves fully through preparatory reading and active participation in discussion.

2) **Reflection Paper** (30%). In preparation for the class, each student will read and write a reflection paper on Amanda Benckhuysen's manuscript, *The Legacy of Eve*, which will be on the portal. Your paper should **demonstrate that you have engaged with the contents of the book**. It should include questions that the book raises for you. It should be 4 pages, double-spaced, and use size 12 font. This assignment is due the first class, April 16. If you need an extension to **finish** the book and the reflection paper, you may have until May 1st.

3) **Final Paper** (50%). The paper should be 10-12 pages and is due July 15. Please check out your topic with the professor.

1) Your paper can focus on a women interpreter of the Bible. Remember the focus of the paper must be the selected woman's work as an interpreter of the Bible and **NOT BIOGRAPHY**. The paper should examine a major work(s) of the interpreter and examine the interpretive issues addressed in the work(s). Include in your paper **brief and relevant details** about the writer's birth, family, education, and formative influences that provide the context out of which her interpretive work was done. The larger question at stake is "does the writing say anything about the "place" (social, textual, economic, sexual, etc.) of the author and how that context affected her writing? When analyzing her writing, try to answer the following questions: *What is the purpose of the writing? *Who is the intended audience? * What are the major themes in her work? *What approaches and methods of biblical interpretation are being used? *To what the extent does the author re-write, re-fashion or re-interpret Scripture and/or traditional readings of Scripture in light of her context? *Are there key issues relating to women? *Does she deal with difficult passages like Genesis 1-3 and 1 Timothy 2 and female figures in the Bible If so, how? Finally, consider the question of legacy. If it is relevant, include a reflection on the question of gendered exegesis. Does it make a difference to imagine that the author was a woman?

2). Your paper could look at a larger issue- women's interpretations of a particular figure (Eve, Sarah, Hagar etc.) or women's writings on the apostle Paul. Please see professor for further guidelines.

III.2. Requirements and Evaluation: AD students

1) **Class Participation (20%)** Students are expected to attend every class and to involve themselves fully through preparatory reading and active participation in discussion.

2) **Reflection Paper (10%)**. In preparation for the class, each student will read and write a reflection paper on Amanda Benckhuysen's manuscript, *The Legacy of Eve*, that will be on the portal. Your paper should **demonstrate that you have engaged with the contents of the book** and include questions that the book raises for you. It should be 4 pages, double-spaced, and use size 12 font. This assignment is due the first class, April 16. If you need an extension to **finish** the reflection paper, you may have until May 1st.

3) **Report/Reflection Paper (30%)** on 3 agreed upon 3 books (30%) 7-10 pages due July 1.

The Handbook, Deborah's Daughters and one other. If you want to choose other books, please consult professor.

Joy Schroeder, *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Strangely Familiar: Protofeminist Interpretations of Patriarchal Biblical Texts.

Eds. Nancy Calvert-Kooyzis and Heather Weir Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009. - a collection of essays on women interpreters

Breaking Boundaries; Female Biblical Interpreters Who Challenged the Status Quo. Eds. Nancy Calvert-Kooyzis and Heather Weir, New York; T& T Clark, 2010- a collection of essays on women interpreters.

Anthologies of 19th writings by women:

Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir, *Women in the Story of Jesus: The Gospels through the Eyes of nineteenth-century Female Biblical Interpreters*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

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

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

Curtis W. Freeman, *A Company of Women Preachers: Baptist Prophetesses in Seventeenth-Century England ; A Reader* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011).

4) **Final Paper (40%) see topics above. Due July 15**

IV. Policy on Plagiarism

All written work submitted must be your own. Plagiarism is a serious offense. Plagiarism is using the ideas and writings of others and representing them as your own. Even if you do not copy another source word-for-word, but rather rephrase the source without attributing it to the original author by including a footnote, you are guilty of plagiarism. *The minimum penalty for a Plagiarized paper is the grade of zero.* For a useful tutorial on plagiarism see https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/plagiarism_test.html

See also The U of T Libraries:
<http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/plagiarism>

V. Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than two weeks before the completion of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

VI. Required Texts

Amanda Benckhuysen, *The Legacy of Eve*, available in manuscript form on the portal.

Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters Edited by Marion Ann Taylor; associate editor Agnes Choi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012). You may purchase this book from Marion Taylor or online.

* Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard.

1. Introduction: Women Writers of the Early Church

Guest: Catherine Sider Hamilton on Early Christian women engaging Paul
Lecture: Hidden Voices: Toward a More Inclusive History of the Interpretation of the Bible

***Read** the *Handbook* entries on Proba, Marcella, Macrina the Younger, Paula, Egeria, Eudocia, and Dhuoda.

***Read** Joy Schroeder, “Melania’s Lost Notebooks: Retrieving the Voices of Jewish and Christian Women in Late Antiquity” see Blackboard.

We will discuss Proba’s and Eudocia’s Centos, Egeria’s Journeys and Macrina “On the Soul and the Resurrection”.

2. Medieval and Early Modern Women Interpreters

Read the *Handbook* entries on Hrotsvit, Hildegard, Elisabeth of Schonau, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Mechthild of Hackeborn, Hadewijch, Gertrude the Great, Birgitta of Sweden, Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena, Tornabuoni, Beaufort, Pulci

***Read** Hildegard, see portal

***Read** Pulci, "Play of the Destruction of Saul and the Lament of David" in Antonia Pulci, *Lives and Bible Stories for the Stage*, Ed Elissa Wave, 2010. See U of T library <http://www.itergateway.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/resources/saints-lives>

Read Tornabuoni "Esther" on portal. For more on her see **Sacred narratives [electronic resource]** Lucrezia Tornabuoni de' Medici ; edited and translated by Jane Tylus at the University of Toronto library website <https://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?11564843&uuid=22b4a4e0-d007-4a87-bbaa-f487ecc9f1e8>

PM focus on Hildegard on Paul

Read Leroy Huizenga, "St Hildegard of Bingen's Premodern and Postmodern Paul," a paper on the portal. Read examples from p. 17-31, though the early part of the paper is foundational for his argument.

3. Women of the Reformation to Early Modern (1500-1700).

***Read** the *Handbook* entries on Aemilia Lanyer, Christine de Pizan, Margery Kempe, Beutler. Nogarola, Berta Jacobs, Tornabuoni. Beaufort, Pulchi, Narducci, Marguerite de Navarre, Argula von Grumbach, Marie Dentiere, Zell. Rachel Speght (fl 1617), van Shurman, Juans Ines de la Cruz

***Read** Argula von Grumbach, 119-121.

***Read** Katherine Zell,

PM Focus on Lanyer and Fell on the apostle Paul.

Read Margaret Olofson Thickstun, "Writing The Spirit: Margaret Fell's Feminist Critique of Pauline Theology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LXIII/2 269-279 and check out Fell herself at Margaret Fell, *Womens Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed of by the Scriptures*, 1666

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/fell/speaking/speaking.html>

Or <https://users.wfu.edu/zulick/340/Felltext.html>

***Read** Hilary Elder, "Opposing Paul with Paul: Aemilia Lanyer's Feminine Theology," in *Strangely Familiar: Profeminist Interpretations of Patriarchal Biblical Texts*, ed Nancy Calvert-Kooyis and Heather Weir, (Atlanta: SBL, 2009) 209-226. Check out Lanyer's poems

<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/lanyer1.html>

4. Early Modern and Modern Period (1700-1900)

***Read** the *Handbook* entries on Morata, Lock, Herbert, Lanyer, Davies, Hutchinson, Guyart or Marie of the Incarnation, *Tarabotti*, *Hopton*, *Petersen*,

Guyon, Mary Astell, Susanna Wesley, Rowe, Dutton, Bowdler, Carter, Francis, Trimmer, Barbauld,

PM focus on Paul with Mary Astell, *Some Reflections on Marriage* (1706) and Antoinette Brown Blackwell

Discussion of Benckhuysen's chapter 5 "Women as Preachers, Teachers and Religious Teachers in the 17th -19th centuries."

Peruse -Astell, Mary, "Some Reflections on marriage."

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/astell/marriage/marriage.html>

***Read** Margaret Olofson Thickstun, "'This was a Woman that taught': Feminist Scriptural Exegesis in the Seventeenth century," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, Volume 21, (1992) 149-158.

***Read** Antoinette Brown Blackwell "'Exegesis of 1 Corinthians XIV., 34, 35; and I Timothy, II., 11, 12.'" 1849 in the *Oberlin Quarterly Review* "

***Read** Donna Giver Johnston, "The Ordination of Antoinette Brown: The Transformation of 'decency and Order' from Barrier to Bridge" *Glossolalia* 4.1 (dec 2011) 150-166.

Or **Read** Beth Bidlack, "Antoinette Brown Blackwell: Pioneering Exegete and Congregational Minister," in *Strangely Familiar: Protofeminist Interpretations of Patriarchal Biblical Texts*. Eds. Nancy Calvert-Kooyis and Heather Weir Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009, 151-170.

5. Women of the Modern and Post- Modern Periods

Read a selection of the *Handbook* entries on More, Southcott, Cornwallis, Wollstonecraft, Livermore, Elaw, Truth, Grimke, Julia Smith, Boddington Phoebe Palmer, Stowe, Stanton, Blackwell, Charles, Rossetti, Baxter, Willard, Bushnell, ramabai, Briggs, Sayers, Baldwin, Douglas, Achtemeier

Discussion of Benckhuysen's chapter 8, "*The ongoing Journey toward the Inclusion of Women*"

***Read** Sharon Ringe, "When Women Interpret the Bible," in *Women's Bible Commentary* Third Edition (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2012) 1-9.

***Read** "Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth" in *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Ed. Donald McKim, 606-610.

***Read** "Trible, Phyllis (b 1932),

PM focus on *Focus on Paul* with Harriet Livermore, Zilpha Elaw and Old Elizabeth and Katharine Bushnell and the contemporary debate on Paul

Read Harriet Livermore, *Scriptural Evidence in Favor of Female Testimony in Meetings for the Worship of God* [published in Portsmouth, New Hampshire,

Read Mitzi J. Smith, "Unbossed and Unbought": Zilpha Elaw and Old Elizabeth and a Political Discourse of Origins," *Black Theology (BT)* 9.3 (2011) 287-311.

Read Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *A New Gospel for Women: Katharine Bushnell and the Challenge of Christian Feminism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 137-151.

Harriette Livermore, *Scriptural Evidence in Favor of Female Testimony* (1824)

https://archive.org/stream/scripturaleviden00live/scripturaleviden00live_djvu.txt
Francis Willard, *Women in the Pulpit* (1880)
<https://archive.org/details/womaninpulpit02willgoog>