1. SOLA – TRS 118, Women and the Bible
   a. Upper division for reasons:
      i. a) Prerequisite: TRS 97 or 189 (lower- and upper-division versions of The Bible & Its Interpretation, respectively)
      ii. b) Builds on biblical skills and knowledge of prerequisite, with focused topic
      iii. c) Reading is advanced, often theoretical, and handles mature themes
      iv. d) Seminar format requires students to process advanced reading independently before discussing

2. Justification
   a. Grounds – This course expands our Scripture offerings (one of the areas of the major) to another important biblical theme, one that is a key component of current scholarship.
   b. Objectives – At the end of this course, students will:
      i. Know the most important female characters in the Bible;
      ii. Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the interpretive themes and issues raised by the stories of women in the Bible;
      iii. Be able to articulate the basic assumptions and methods of feminist biblical criticism;
      iv. Be able to participate thoughtfully in the current debates about the role of women in the Bible;
      v. Demonstrate an ability to thoughtfully explore the issue of the role of women in the Bible from the perspective of a believer who considers the texts normative and from the critical perspective of the academy.
   c. Relation of objectives to Department, School, or College goals – This course directly addresses the content learning outcome of the TRS major (as described in the catalog) that students will “Demonstrate an understanding of the biblical, theological, historical, and ethical components of the Christian tradition,” as well as the two skills learning outcomes of the TRS major: that students will “Demonstrate an ability to employ contemporary theories and methods of biblical exegesis, systematic theology, and religious studies” and “Demonstrate an ability to explain, analyze, and evaluate multiple informed perspectives in debates about theological and ethical issues.” The course also addresses College goals regarding the Catholic Mission and Inclusive Excellence.
   d. Assignments used to evaluate performance – Students are evaluated in four primary ways:
      i. Essay exams
      ii. Final, synthetic and analytical paper
      iii. Days responsible for leading discussion
iv. Other participation mechanisms – daily writing, quizzes, regular participation in discussion

e. Pass / fail allowed? – yes

3. Student Population – This course will meet the Theological Explorations goal of the Core Curriculum. It is open to all students who have completed the prerequisite: either TRS 97 or 189. As such, the majority of students in this course will be taking it to fulfill a core requirement. There will also be a minority of students taking the course to fulfill an elective within the TRS major or minor. A small number of slots are reserved for students seeking to fulfill an elective in WaGS. It is expected that the course will fill to its cap of 25 students, as is typical for TRS courses fulfilling Core requirements.

4. Relationship to present College curriculum – This course is an elective in the TRS department, to be offered every 2-3 years. It will become part of a cycle of upper-division courses in Scripture. There are enough offerings in TRS each year where there is no real issue of displacement. There is no competition with other programs. This course contributes to the pool of electives for WaGS.

5. Any extraordinary implementation costs – The course uses normal classroom space and has no special costs associated.


7. Course credit and grading options
   a. Value – 1.0 unit
   b. Hours in class – 190 minutes / week x 13 weeks
   c. Preparation hours – 380 minutes / week x 13 weeks
   d. Format – discussion

8. Prerequisites – TRS 97 or 189

9. Course description (catalog) – This course explores the current status of feminist biblical interpretation, focusing on the major female characters of the Old and New Testaments and on their modern feminist interpreters. We will use the tools of academic criticism (historical, literary, rhetorical, et al.) in an attempt to understand the places, roles, and agency of women in the biblical text, in the ancient world that lies behind the text, and in the worlds formed on the belief that these biblical texts are sacred scripture.

10. Course content – Syllabus attached.

11. Review of experimental offering – The course was offered once (fall 2014) as experimental. The readings and assignments were appropriate for the material and the course level. Pedagogically, it became clear in the semester that the pure Seminar format needs to be supplemented with short lectures by the instructor, as the material in the reading needs commentary. Those will be instituted in the next offering.
Women & the Bible (TRS 118)

SAINT MARY’S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

Zach Flanagin                                      Fall 2014
Phone: 631-8152 (office)                          Tues/Thurs 1:15-2:50
Email: dflanagi@stmarys-ca.edu
Office: Dante 334                                 Classroom: Dante 120
Office hours: Thurs, 3:00-5:00 (or by appt.)
Website: http://gaellearn.stmarys-ca.edu/

COURSE DESCRIPTION: What is the role of women in the Bible? Why do we so rarely hear their stories? What do biblical images of women have to say to the modern world? What does the modern world have to say to biblical images of women? Is the Bible a text that liberates or oppresses women? These questions came to the fore of feminist discourse in America with the publication of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s The Woman’s Bible in 1895, and, nearly a century later, in the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, they moved into the mainstream of academic biblical scholarship. This course will explore the current status of feminist biblical interpretation, focusing on the major female characters of the Old and New Testaments and on their modern feminist interpreters. We will use the tools of academic criticism (historical, literary, rhetorical, et al.) in an attempt to understand the places, roles, and agency of women in the biblical text, in the ancient world that lies behind the text, and in the worlds formed on the belief that these biblical texts are sacred scripture.

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES:

Reasonable and appropriate accommodations for individuals with qualifying disabilities are extended through the office of Student Disability Services. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Services office at (925) 631-4358 to set up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation guidelines and available services. Additional information may be found at the following address on the Saint Mary’s website: http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/sds.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Know the most important female characters in the Bible;
2. Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the interpretive themes and issues raised by the stories of women in the Bible;
3. Be able to articulate the basic assumptions and methods of feminist biblical criticism;
4. Be able to participate thoughtfully in the current debates about the role of women in the Bible;
5. Demonstrate an ability to thoughtfully explore the issue of the role of women in the Bible from the perspective of a believer who considers the texts normative and from the critical perspective of the academy.
REQUIRED TEXTS:
6. The Bible – translation must be NRSV, RSV, or NAB
7. Select readings

REQUIREMENTS:
1. Careful Reading – This is a class about texts, both selections from the Bible and important contributions from modern feminist interpreters. The vast bulk of your work for this class will concern your careful reading of these texts and your preparation to discuss them. Per college policy, expect to do a *minimum* of two hours of preparation for each hour in class. As class meets for 3.25 hours per week, please plan on devoting at least 6.5 hours per week to such careful reading of the assigned texts.
2. Attendance and Class Participation – The focus of this class is group discussion, debate, and lecture about the readings. As such, you must be present and prepared for class each day. There are no excused absences (i.e., “free” absences). *Four (4) or more absences will result in automatic failure of the course.* Significant tardiness can have the same effect.
3. Quizzes / Written Assignments – I will regularly ask the class to write a response to one or more questions about the reading, to be typed (1 page, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 font, 1-inch margins) and handed in at the start of class or uploaded to Moodle. Directions will be posted on Moodle at least 24 hours before the assignment is due. I also regularly give quizzes on the assigned reading. These quizzes are designed to test the quality of your reading. As such, use of your books is allowed. There are no make-ups. *Late written assignments are not accepted.* If you are absent or your printer breaks, please upload a copy of the assignment before the start of the class in which it is due.
4. Leading Discussion in Small Groups – Students will regularly work in small groups to lead portions of the class discussion. Content and form will vary. *(There is a great deal of freedom here.)* The groups are NOT responsible for teaching the class. Their job is to FOCUS the discussion. In each case, the group should produce a 1-2 page, typed *handout that summarizes key information, concepts, and/or questions that arise from the reading*. You will need enough copies to distribute to the class. If you don’t have access to a printer, you may email me a digital version of the handout at least one hour before class, and I will make copies.
5. **Active Participation When You Are NOT Leading Discussion** – You will be leading discussion some of the time (roughly 1 out of every 6 classes). The rest of the time you will not. However, you will always need to be an active participant in that discussion, and thus be properly prepared.

6. **Exams** – There will be two mid-term exams in this course, testing your individual grasp of the material. The dates are given in the course schedule below, although they are subject to change.

7. **Final Paper** – At the end of this course you will write a paper that explores what you learned in this course and why it might matter in the 21st century. This is not a research paper, but a combination of synthesis, reflection, and analysis. It will be due during finals week. Details will be forthcoming.

**GRADING:**

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leading Discussion in Small Groups:</td>
<td>20% (4 classes x 5% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Participation When You Are NOT Leading Discussion:</td>
<td>25% (inc. quizzes and write-ups)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exams:</td>
<td>30% (2 exams x 15% each)</td>
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<td>Final Paper:</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**REFLECTIONS ON GRADING:**

First, though effort is noted, appreciated, and admired, grades are based on achievement, not effort.

Second, extra work does not constitute extra credit. You can submit extra work and it will certainly be considered, but only as additional evidence of your level of achievement. Seven extra papers, all of “B” level of achievement, do not yield an “A” but further demonstrate that a “B” is the appropriate grade.

Third, I view final grades like the financial statements which CEO’s are required to sign. My signature on the grade sheet is my certification to the world that you have demonstrated a particular level of competency. To give a student a higher or lower grade than what she or he has demonstrated would be an act of fraud on anyone who might ever look at that transcript. One clear implication of this standard: there are no courtesy grades.

Fourth, I view the meaning of letter grades in their traditional sense: “A” reflects exceptional academic performance; “B” is above average academic performance; “C” is, quite literally, average academic performance; “D” is marginal academic performance; “F” does not merit academic credit. For how this applies to writing assignments, see the attached sheet entitled, “St. Mary’s College Writing Standards.”
Fifth, I do not begin by presuming that the paper is an “A+” which then needs to have every point deduction accounted for as in an Olympic gymnastics competition. Instead, I presume your paper will be solid and about average. Hence, I begin by presuming your grade is “B-”. To the extent that it is above average, the grade it deserves climbs the scale.

Sixth, I strongly support the Academic Honor Code. Sometimes it takes true courage, but academic integrity is what is called for, period. Learn to face the blank page, and encourage your friends to do the same. Take pride in your own words and your own work. That is the best method for true academic growth. Be sure to give citations when citations are due (for example, these reflections are the product of Professor Tom Poundstone). Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is no excuse.

CLASS RULES:

1. Technology use – No computers, cell phones, or other such devices are allowed to be on or out during class. If you have a family emergency that requires an exception to this rule, please see me. Any texting, tweeting, etc., during class will result in a warning for the first offense and failure of the course for a second offense.

2. Be courteous. Respect one another. In this course we will be critically discussing religious traditions and ideas that are deeply meaningful to billions of people across the globe. Please observe the basic social graces. No interrupting – I will be responsible for giving everyone a chance to speak. No ridiculing other viewpoints. All of us can learn something from listening to others with an open mind.

3. Do not shy away from your own opinion. Discussion may lead to disagreement. Our goal is not to settle questions that people have been arguing about for centuries. It is to come to a better understanding of each of the viewpoints that are available, so that we can each make more informed choices.

4. Guidelines for group work: I strongly encourage you to work in groups outside of class. Discuss the texts with one another. Share ideas and concerns. **However, unless specifically directed otherwise, you must do all the written assignments on your own!** Separate yourself from the group to do your writing. There is no excuse for identical entries to your written assignments – this includes both copied words and identical content. Group work is intended to help you flesh out your own ideas and opinions, not copy from others. If you do choose to work in groups for an assignment, please list the names of the other group members on the paper that you turn in to me.

5. **Finally, familiarize yourself with the Academic Honor Code.** Cheating and plagiarism (the copying of someone else’s words or ideas without properly citing them) are violations that require an automatic failure for the course. Note – you must cite the source of every bit of information that you use in your written work, unless it is clearly common knowledge known by any person on the street. These citations are required after every paraphrase or quote. Also, you must use quotes if you copy three or more words in a row from any source. I take academic integrity very seriously. According to the Honor Code, “Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of College policy because, among other things, it undermines the bonds of trust and honesty between members of the community.” Violations of the Code include but are not limited to acts plagiarism. For more information, please consult the **Student Handbook** at www.stmarys-ca.edu/your-safety-resources/student-handbook.
ADDITIONAL NOTES:

1. I am here to help you. Please do not hesitate to come to me when problems arise that affect your academic performance.
2. You are responsible for your St. Mary’s email account. If you do not check it regularly, you are responsible for having it forwarded to another address.
3. There is a Moodle webpage for this course that contains announcements, supplementary material, and links to online sources. This webpage will be updated throughout the semester. The link is http://gaellearn.stmarys-ca.edu/. You are responsible for checking this webpage before each class.
4. Enjoy yourselves!

COURSE SCHEDULE: [May be subject to change.]

***Always bring your Bible with you to class!

Unit 1 – Seminal Events and Ideas in Feminist Biblical Interpretation

1. Topic #1 – Introduction (Sep 2)
   a. Romans 16
   b. Groups
2. Topic #2 – Feminist Biblical Interpretation 101 (Sep 4)
   a. Cullen Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, ix-xiii, 1-37
   c. Assignment
      i. Each student should come to class with a written list of at least five definitions, concepts, or events that s/he deems important to remember as part of Feminist Biblical Interpretation 101.
3. Topic #3 – Re-reading Genesis 1-3 (Sep 9)
   a. *Genesis 1:26-3:24* [Link available on the course website]
   c. **“The Role of Believing Women,”** http://www.john14-6.org/Women.htm, pp. 1-7 [Link available on the course website]
   e. Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, 38-61
   f. Carol Newsom, et al., *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 46-50
Unit 2 – Ancient Israelite Women

1. Topic #1 – Methodological Issues (Sep 11)
   a. Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, 62-85
   b. Carol Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 1-37

2. Topic #2 - What archaeology and anthropology can tell us (Sep 16)

3. Topic #3 – Reconstructing the life of early Israelite women (Sep 18)

4. Topic #4 – The “So What” Question; Reading Genesis 2-3 as myth and etiology (Sep 23) [LONG]

Unit 3 – Ancient Goddesses and YHWH

1. Topic #1 – Mesopotamian Goddesses (Sep 25) [LONG]

2. Topic #2 – The Hebrew Bible, part 1 (Sep 30)
   a. Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, 86-108
   b. Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 83-117

3. Topic #3 – The Hebrew Bible, part 2 (Oct 2)
   a. Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses*, 118-83

4. Topic #4 – Sex and Gender (Oct 7)

Unit 4 – The Female Characters of the Hebrew Bible

1. Topic #1 – Women in the Ancestral Narratives of Genesis (Oct 9)

2. Topic #2 – Women in Joshua and Judges (Oct 14)
   a. Joshua 2
   b. Judges 4-5, 11, 13-16, 19-21
   c. Carol Newsom, et al., *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 103-41

3. Topic #3 – Women in Wisdom Literature and the Song of Songs (Oct 16)
   a. Proverbs 1-9, 31
   b. Song of Songs 1-8

4. Topic #4 – Female Protagonists (Oct 21)
   a. Ruth 1-4
   b. Esther 1-10
   c. Susanna 1 (chapter 13 of the Greek version of Daniel)
   d. Judith 1-16
   e. Carol Newsom, et al., *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 142-49, 201-07, 426-35, 383-95
Unit 5 – The Greco-Roman Context for Women

1. Topic #1 – Methodology (Oct 28)
   a. Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings*, 3-21
2. Topic #2 – Women in Pagan Religions (Oct 30)
3. Topic #3 – Greco-Roman Culture (Nov 4) [LONG]

Unit 6 – The Ancient Jewish Context for Women

1. Topic #1 – Rabbinic Sources (Nov 6)
2. Topic #2 – Non-rabbinic Sources (Nov 11)

Unit 7 – Women in the Ministry of Jesus (Nov 13)

1. Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, 124-51

Unit 8 – Women in the Letters of Paul

1. Topic #1 – The Corinthian Church (Nov 18)
   a. 1 Corinthians 1-16
   b. Carol Newsom, et al., *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 557-65
2. Topic #2 – Paul, continued (Nov 20)
   a. Romans 16
   b. Galatians 3:28
   c. Carol Newsom, et al., *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 555-56, 572-73
   e. Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, 172-93

Unit 9 – Women in the Pauline Legacy

1. Topic #1 – Deutero-Pauline Writings and the Pastoral Letters (Nov 25)
   a. Murphy, *The Word According to Eve*, 215-35
   b. Ephesians 5:15-6:9
   c. 1 Timothy 1-6
   d. 2 Timothy 1-4
   e. Titus 1-3
   f. Carol Newsom, et al., *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 576-80, 595-604

2. Topic #2 – Thecla and Other Pauline Traditions (Dec 2)
   b. Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings*, 150-56

Unit 14 – Women in the Postbiblical Age (Dec 4)


Unit 15 – Women’s Ordination (during final exam period, date and time according to college schedule)


3. Conversation between Robert J. Egan and Sarah Butler in *Commonweal* (April 11 and July 18, 2008), parts 1-3 [Links available on the course website]
A brief sampling of sources available in the Saint Mary’s College Library collections on subjects relevant to study in TRS 118—Women and the Bible reveals that our collections are generally adequate for undergraduate study in this topic. Depending on the specific focus of a given course term, or the interests which particular students may want to pursue, students may need to supplement Library holdings and subscriptions by Link+ or other sources and should be encouraged to seek help from Reference librarians to find appropriate sources in the journal literature.

Books (Numbers in parentheses following each subject category indicate how many titles are cataloged in the Saint Mary’s College Library collections)

- Women in the Bible (51)
- Bible--Feminist Criticism (12)
- Women in Christianity (29)
- Women in Judaism (14)
- Feminist Theology (72)
- Womanist Theology (11)

Reference Works

The Encyclopedia of Judaism, 1999 (3 volumes plus supplements)
The New Encyclopedia of Judaism
New Catholic Encyclopedia (15 volumes, plus supplements)
Women in the Biblical World: A Study Guide
Women's Bible Commentary

Journals - The Library’s collections include numerous journals which publish articles of Biblical commentary. Study and research on women in the Bible, their theological, historical and sociological significance, is an active field of publication for both popular and scholarly writing, well covered in the journals available to Saint Mary’s students. For example, a search in Harvard Theological Review on “Feminist theology” yields 95 articles many of which are based on textual analysis of Biblical passages. As noted above, students should be encouraged to seek help from Reference librarians to find appropriate sources in the literature. Instruction sessions/workshops with the Theology and Religious Studies librarian are also available on request by the faculty member at appropriate points in the course.

Databases

Catholic Periodical and Literature Index (search on “women in the bible” yields 331 articles and reviews)
ATLA Religion Database
Dear Zach and Kathy,

I have circulated these to the SOLA chairs. No concerns or questions have been raised, and I am happy to support this proposal.

Steve
On 4/13/2015 9:23 AM, Zach Flanagan wrote:

Dear Steve,

Here is the info about the TRS courses going to the UEPC.

- TRS 118 – Women and the Bible
  - This course explores the current status of feminist biblical interpretation, focusing on the major female characters of the Old and New Testament and on their modern feminist interpreters. We will use the tools of academic criticism (historical, literary, rhetorical, etc.) in an attempt to understand the places, roles, and agency of women in the biblical text, in the ancient world that lies behind the text, and in the worlds formed by the belief that these biblical texts are sacred scripture. **Prerequisite:** TRS 97 or 189.

- TRS 128 – The Trinity
  - The heart of Christian liturgy, its strangest and most fascinating set of beliefs, rests in the Trinity. This course explores the Christian doctrine of God through its most significant controversies, both ancient and modern. Students will acquire a thorough context for the Christian understanding of God, as well as a more robust sense of this understanding as it continues in the present. **Prerequisite:** TRS 97 or 189.

- TRS 135 – Christian Liturgy and Sacrament
  - Without a direct and living encounter with God in prayer, the Christian religion becomes little more than a collection of intellectual propositions and dead ideals. But what does it mean to encounter God in prayer? Christian's have struggled greatly with this question over the course of their history. Students will spend half a year exploring the unity of prayer and its roots in Judaism and the present age and by examining the theological and exegetical questions of the role of Christian worship, especially in the Martin Luther's time. **Prerequisite:** TRS 97 or 189.

- TRS 173 – The Virgin Mary
  - This course examines the roots and rise of Christian, especially Catholic, devotion to the Virgin Mary. Thought concerning Mary as expressed in the writings of the Church Fathers as well as the growth of traditional popular Marian piety will be addressed. Both doctrine (official teaching) as well as devotional practices (rosary, devotionals, etc.) and phenomena such as apparitions (Guadalupe, Lourdes) will all be examined. Contemporary fiction and autobiography are also included as evidence of the continuing relevance of traditional devotion to the Virgin Mary.
the Virgin Mary to modern life and living. *P prerequisite: TRS 97 or 189.*

- TRS 189 – The Bible & Its Interpretation: Great Themes
- Intended for junior transfers (16.0+ entering credits), this course focuses on the Bible, the sacred scriptures of the Jewish and Christian peoples, texts that have had a profound influence on religion, art, politics, and culture for over two thousand years. This course will introduce students to the most important biblical texts and themes, focusing especially on the Torah and the Gospels, and will teach students to employ critical, scholarly tools for reading and interpretation. In addition, each section of this course will focus on a special issue, theme, or question that appears in a diversity of biblical texts and that moves beyond the Bible to modern relevance or implications (e.g., justice, politics, liturgy, theodicy, art). Co-curricular lectures are an integral part of this class. *P prerequisite: None. May not be taken by students who have completed TRS 97.*

Zach Flanagin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Theology & Religious Studies
Saint Mary's College of California
dflanagi@stmarys-ca.edu

On Fri, Apr 10, 2015 at 3:44 PM, Steve Woolpert <woolpert@stmarys-ca.edu> wrote:
Hi Zach,

I think catalog descriptions and syllabi for these courses are sufficient for circulation to the SOLA chairs.

Steve

On 4/10/2015 12:58 PM, Zach Flanagin wrote:
Hi Steve,

I hope that you are looking forward to a nice weekend. I just wanted to give you a heads up that I heard (quite unexpectedly) this week from the chair of the UEPC that some of our TRS courses never finished the UEPC approval process—and thus still need to have their final review. (There was apparently some confusion on my part about what got approved when we revised our major last year.) I know that part of the process is for you to circulate information to the chairs for comment, and then for you to decide on your final approval. All the courses are solid (having been offered experimentally at least once) and thus should not present any major difficulties. What do you need from me? Do you want catalog descriptions? Syllabi? The full course proposals going to the UEPC? Here is the list of the courses that I need to complete the paperwork on:

- TRS 118 – Women and the Bible
- TRS 128 – The Trinity
- TRS 135 – Christian Liturgy and Sacrament
- TRS 173 – The Virgin Mary
- TRS 189 – The Bible & Its Interpretation: Great Themes

Thanks,

Zach Flanagin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Theology & Religious Studies
Saint Mary’s College of California
dflanagi@stmarys-ca.edu