

## Department of Theology

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### UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: **Spring 2010**  
Instructor: John Zemler  
Course #: THEO 4030/5030  
Section: 101/101  
Course Title: **Women in the Bible**

#### Description:

This is a demanding third-level Theology course. We will explore the status and roles of women in the Bible. There will be an emphasis on social and historical background as well as narrative and theological themes. Some of the women of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible to be studied include the following: Eve, Dinah, Lady Wisdom, and Hulda. Some of the women from the New Testament include Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Martha, Mary, the Canaanite Woman, Martha and Mary.

If you have someone in particular you would like to study, let the professor know and we can make that happen.

We will be very interested in how women are portrayed in scripture and the theological and narrative purposes they serve as characters. We will also examine how the Jewish and Christian traditions have interpreted some of these women. There will be particular interest in how women are portrayed and in how various types of feminist theologians interpret scripture. To that end, the course will be as much about hermeneutics as it is about exegesis.

In a perfect world all of the students would be prepared for advanced study of a biblical topic in English translation. Given the lack of perfection in the world, the professor does not really believe that it the case. To help ensure that all students can acquire as much knowledge as possible, we will have an overview of biblical studies for several weeks. This will include the structure and content of the Bible, how it is usually examined in academia, and some basic theology. For those who know all of this, it will make the first exam that much easier. For those who don't know all of this, it means they will be better prepared for the first exam and more advanced work in scripture.

The course is demanding. Expect to work. Attendance and attention is mandatory.

The instructor enjoys teaching theology and demonstrating how it is relevant to our modern world. He also enjoys interacting with students who are dedicated to all facets of their education.

Everything necessary to succeed in this course is presented within the course content. Personal faith commitments are not required to succeed in this course. It is an academic theology class where everything that is required to succeed is presented in the course itself.

**Learning Objectives:** As a third-level theology course, this class aims to help students meet certain basic objectives. These are as follows:

1. Describe theologically the basic content of the Catholic faith in relation to other Christian and

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religious traditions as well as other world views.

2. Interpret theological texts and frameworks in their historical contexts.
3. Articulate implications of Christian faith for growth in holiness and promotion of justice in the contemporary world.

Additionally, students who are interested in achieving both high grades and an education will be able to acquire and articulate the biblical, historical, and systematic elements of the study of women in the Bible. This articulation can be demonstrated by something as basic and easy as the memorization of useful facts to something more complex such as the synthesis of those facts into a written theological framework that is both accurate and meaningful.

Student achievement of these objectives is assessed in the context of a research paper and several examinations.

### Required texts:

#### **Required Texts:**

1. Reading the Women in the Bible, Tikva Frymer-Kensky
2. Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels, Frances Taylor Gench
3. Choosing the Better Part? Women in the Gospel of Luke, Barbara E. Reid
4. Mary in the New Testament, edited by a bunch of folks
5. Other readings may be made available.

A Study Bible: A particular Bible was not ordered for the course. Students are expected to have access to one and be able to find biblical references without too much difficulty. If you need help with this, please see me.