****Malignant Fraternities**

**Male Friendship, Homosociality, and Women in Hebrew Bible**

***RELS 4000-090/ WGST 4050-090/ RELS 5000-090* */ WGST 5050-090***

***Thursday 5:30-8:15 / Macy 206***

***Instructor: Dr. Barbara Thiede,*** [bthiede@uncc.edu](mailto:bthiede@uncc.edu) / Macy 208B

***Office hours: Tu/Th 2:30-3:30 pm***

***Course Description:*** The Hebrew Bible was written by men and for men; working out the terms ofmasculinity and establishing how male hegemony valorizes the outcome is essential to the biblical project. In this course, we will explore how male friendship and male homosociality – and their potential homoerotic expression – are engendered and sustained by the use of women’s bodies. We will also examine how the performance of masculinity is both defined and undermined by biblical writers.

***Course Goals for Students:***

* *Mastery of the terminology of masculinity studies and gender criticism.*
* *Analyzing biblical texts academically.*
* *Evaluating academic and scholarly texts respectfully and critically.*
* *Developing convincing and innovative arguments based on source materials.*

***Course Goals for Instructor:***

* *Create a range of assignments, including low-stakes assignments that helps student situate themselves as they work on developing analytical and writing skills.*
* *Offer plenty of feedback to help students understand how to succeed.*
* *Make clear that the class is an open forum for a variety of views (students should never feel they have to agree with me!).*
* *Acknowledge and recognize power differentials.*
* *Send the signal that I am here to help.*

***Course Expectations***

1. **On religious views:** Some of us profess a religion or claim a particular faith. Some of us don’t. To be clear: our classroom is not the appropriate location for discussions of personal religious views but rather a forum for thinking about biblical material critically and inventively, as scholars and academics. Think of your biblical texts as the Ancient Israelite version of Homer’s *Odyssey* and you’ll get the idea. Or to put it another way: Yhwh (otherwise often known as God) is a *character*.
2. **On keeping on top of developments:** Join class prepared. Check your email at least once every day.
3. **Literacy is fundamental:** Spelling, punctuation, comprehensible grammar, complete sentences, fully developed paragraphs with specific examples, and the like are essential. Please be aware that work which does not conform to academic literary standards cannot receive a passing grade, so if you have any worries about your skills in these realms, get help! More on this below….
4. **Class discussion:** Before each class, make sure you have done the reading and thought about it so you can participate with clarity, honesty, and intelligence. Such things are highly valued by your instructor. Please remember that students come from many backgrounds and may have different opinions and please contribute to a respectful classroom environment. Follow the rule of *Step Forward, Step Back*. If you contribute to class discussion, wait a bit before contributing again to give your classmates a good chance to offer their own ideas and analysis.
5. **Respect classmates:** Please address your fellow students by the name and gender pronoun they prefer in class. Do not give fellow students personal information or email addresses to outsiders who are not a part of this class. Class lists may not be used to advertise your particular affiliations, student groups, and the like. This constitutes spamming other students. The Student Organization Handbook explicitly states that “Student organizations may not disclose or collect information in e-mails that they are privileged to access because of their position at the University.”
6. **Respect the instructor’s time:** Bushmen in the Kalahari Desert will hunt an antelope by running it to death, chasing after it until it literally collapses from heat exhaustion. Please let this amazing show of perseverance inspire you when *you* go hunting for information. For example, before you send an email asking for an exam time, what pages were assigned, or the like, please check course documents like the syllabus first. I answer necessary emails with enthusiasm. ☺
7. **We love having guests, but….** Guests may attend this class *only with the written permission of the instructor.*
8. **Respect yourself!** If you have any issues that might compromise your ability to perform well in this class, please inform the instructor **as soon as the issue is relevant**. Think of this class as a nice residential home. If you had a serious problem with the house, such as an infestation of Australian killer wombats, you would want to do something about it as soon as possible. You would not want to wait until the last moment, for instance, when the wombats have eaten all your gardenias, and are about to construct an ICBM to demolish your house for good. Similarly, you should inform the instructor of any issues early, when something can still be done. Please.

***Attendance Policies:*** Policies below are from the *UNCC Faculty Handbook* and the UNC-system handbook (so, yes, expect some bureaucratic language which nevertheless is important to read and digest.

1. Students are expected to attend **punctually** **all** scheduled sessions in the courses for which they are registered and are responsible for completing the work from all class sessions.
2. Students who miss class are responsible for the work missed.
3. Instructors are not required to give make-up tests except in the case of religious observance (see below).
4. You must be **on time** to be counted as present. If you join the session late, *you may be marked absent for that day*.
5. Students **may not** miss more than one class without affecting their grade.

***Absence Policy:***

* **1 absence**: You miss the benefit of any class announcements about changes or expectations, you will miss critical lecture material and class discussion. **It is your responsibility** to acquire notes and information from other students.
* **2 absences:** We only meet once a week, so missing two classes is the equivalent of missing two weeks of class. Thus, 1 letter grade will be deducted from the final grade for the course.
* **3 and more:** student will receive an automatic “F” for the course.

**Plan for emergencies. Assume that you are likely to *have* *to miss class for some unforeseen reason.* You have one day to do exactly that without troubling your grade.**

***Religious Observance:*** Students may take two absences for religious observance *per academic year*. Students must fill out the “Request for Accommodation for Religious Observance” form and turn it in prior to the census day (Sept. 18) to be granted such an absence. See (<http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-134.html>) and (<http://legal.uncc.edu/sites/legal.uncc.edu/files/media/policies/ps-134-AccommodationForm.pdf>).

***Course Syllabus:*** The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor (yes, that is a privilege of power). Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class or by email notice. If you miss class, be sure to ask other students (not me) if there were important announcements you should note.

***Disability accommodations:*** Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

***Preferred Gender Pronoun:*** This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than the one indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

***Grading (Undergraduate students):***

Attendance and class participation: 5

Padlets 5

Article Reviews 10 each / 20 total

Text Case Assignment (750-900words): 20

Paper Proposal Assignment 15

Labbing your work 10

Final paper (1600-1750 words): 25

***Grading (Graduate students):***

Attendance and class participation: 5

Padlets 5

Article Reviews 10 each / 20 total

Text Case Assignment (1000-1200 words): 20

Paper Proposal Assignment 15

Labbing your work 10

Final research paper (3,500-4,000 words): 25

**Required books:**

Most of your reading is on our Canvas site. But you will need your own copy of *The Jewish Study Bible,* second edition (Oxford UP: 2014) ISBN-10: 0199978468 / ISBN-13: 978-0199978465. We need to be on the same page using the same text and the same commentaries: Other translations are not a substitute.

**Writing, a Reprise:** **Please read this carefully; if you feel unable to meet the standards of the course, you may want to reconsider your decision to take this particular course.**

It is not possible to overemphasize the importance your writing will have for assessing your work in this course. This is a senior-level undergraduate course / graduate level course. At this point in your academic career, you should be able to produce an essay that is well-organized, free of spelling and grammatical mistakes, and with accurate and adequate citations. If your reader (that’s me!) is distracted by a plethora of errors, your effectiveness suffers – and so does your grade. A significant part of your grade on any writing assignment will focus on cleanliness and clarity in your copy. I will keep track of the kinds of errors I find in your work. If these reappear on later work, there will be an effect on your grade. In other words, improvement counts and ignoring issues affects your grade. So, and please note well: the following elements will be graded and their weight when the total points you earn add up will be significant:

* Grammar
* Spelling
* Syntax
* Punctuation
* Citations (in appropriate Turabian form)

Some general advice:

* Make sure you keep every paper or essay you write narrowly focused; the more you generalize, the less effective you will be.
* Aim for clarity and accuracy; while I appreciate originality, clarity and accuracy are what I most hope for.
* Do not hesitate to speak to me about any writing assignment – I’ll be glad to try and make my own expectations as clear as I can.

***You should familiarize yourself with, and conform your conduct to, the University’s Code of Student Academic Integrity (legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407). Plagiarism on any assignment will result, at a minimum, in a failing grade for the course.***

The grading scale used in this course is as follows:

90 – 100 A = demonstrable mastery of material; can creatively synthesize

80 – 89 B = some demonstrable proficiency in control of material & analysis

70 – 79 C = satisfactory performance of assignments; little or no analysis

60 – 69 D = inadequate and/or faulty understanding of material

0 – 59 F = unacceptable work

**A note on process:** While I never assign group work for grades, I do use small groups for tackling material. Be prepared to work with anyone in your class with kindness, care, and respect during class sessions. Make sure to follow the rule: step forward, step back both in general discussion and group discussion.

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| **Assigned readings are listed for the day they are due to be completed.** | | |
| **Module 1: Framing Concerns: On Feminist, Queer, and Masculinity Studies (and Defining our Terms)** | | **What’s It All About?** |
| August 25 | **Introduction to the Course**   * ***READ THIS SYLLABUS****, review PPTX “Reading Academic Materials” on Canvas site* * *And this text from the Jewish Study Bible*: 2 Samuel 11, pp. 622-624. Introducing: “Labbing the Text.” | We will get to know one another, review some skills needed for mastering course content, and lab the assigned text. |
| September 1 | **Reading the Text: Bible as Performance. Queer Performativity, and Defining “Gender Criticism”**   * Ken Stone, “Bibles that Matter - Biblical Theology and Queer Performativity,” pp. 14-25. * Ken Stone,“Gender Criticism: The Un-Manning of Abimelech,” 183-201. | In this introduction to framing concerns, we will consider the nature of Bible and the nature of gender criticism. |
| September 8  **Article Review due at 11:59.** | **On Whose Shoulders do We Stand? Feminist Biblical Scholarship and the Academy**   * Susanne Scholz, Tell Me How You Read This Story and I Will Tell You Who You Are: Post-Postmodernity, Radicant Exegesis, and a Feminist Sociology of Biblical Hermeneutics,” 167-190. * Susanne Scholz, ““Back Then It Was Legal”: The Epistemological Imbalance in Readings of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Rape Legislation,” 93-121. | Susanne Scholz has been a pivotal voice in identifying how “traditional” scholarship (yes, you can assume that means mostly male, white, privileged and Christian) understands How Bible Criticism Must Be Done. These are tough articles, so take them in small portions. |
| September 15 | **Homosociality and Male Friendship: Defining Terms**   * David M. Halperin, “How to do the History of Male Homosexuality,” pp. 87-124. * Dorothy Hammond and Alata Jablow,“Gilgamesh and the Sundance Kid: The Myth of Male Friendship,” pp. 241-258. | What is a genealogy of an idea? We’ll look specifically at the case of male-male relationships in this light. What can we say about ideas of the past (and present) regarding male-male relationships?’ |
| September 22 | **Practicing Reading for Male-Male Relationships: Homosociality, Friendship, and Women’s Bodies**   * Barbara Thiede, “Genesis 38: ‘Lest We Become A Laughingstock,’” pp. 15-36. * Labbing the Text: 2 Samuel 11 * *Jewish Study Bible*: 1 Samuel 9 - 2 Samuel 5, pp. 562-616. | Back to a text (or one of them, anyway). We’ll read a chapter that focuses particularly on male friendships and homosociality, then we will take a second crack at “labbing” a biblical text.  We’ll also take a first look at an extended text which will be the subject of Module 2. |
| **Module 2: Masculinity and Gender Fluidity: On the Boundaries of Bible and the “Ideal Man”** | | **We will study the Saul-Jonathan-David narrative to explore what “being good at being a man” appears to mean in Hebrew Bible.** |
| September 29  **Article Review due at 11:59.** | **Hegemonic Masculinity in Bible**   * David J.A. Clines, “David the Man: The Construction of Masculinity in the Hebrew Bible,” pp. 212-243. * David J.A. Clines, “The Most High Male,” pp. 61-82. | We’ll look closely at the work of David Clines, who was pivotal in establishing how David and Yhwh function as models of biblical masculinity. |
| October 6 | **Male Friendship, Homosociality, and Hegemonic Masculinity in the Saul-Jonathan-David Narrative**   * Saul M. Olyan, “‘Surpassing the Love of Women’: Another Look at 2 Samuel 1:26 and the Relationship of David and Jonathan,” 85-99. * Yaron Peleg, “Love at first Sight? David, Jonathan, and the Biblical Politics of Gender,” 171-89. * Ken Stone, “Queer Reading Between Bible and Film: *Paris is Burning* and the ‘Legendary Houses’ of David and Saul,” 75-98. * Theodore W. Jennings, “Warrior Love” and “Love Triangle,” 3-36. | Four takes on the issues: Who are these characters and what is happening in the text to blur or confuse boundaries? |
| October 13  **Text Case Assignment due at 11:59.** | **Labbing the Text**   * *Jewish Study Bible*: 1 Samuel 9 - 2 Samuel 5, pp. 562-616. | Let’s revisit: What do you notice now that you didn’t see the first time around? |
| **Module 3: (Re)gendering the Text and the Queer/Transgender Gaze** | | **More blurring of boundaries? Fluidity in gender identities?**  **We will find queer and masculinity studies in deep conversation – and of course, both fields stand on the shoulders of feminist scholars.** |
| October 20 | **(Re)gendering the Text: the Transgender Gaze**   * Deryn Guest, “Troubling the Waters: תהום, Transgender, and Reading Genesis Backwards,” 21-44. * Deryn Guest, “Judges,” 167-189. | Guest offers a playful and transformative reading of Genesis. Guest’s view of Judges will be an intense and closely developed one. Please read carefully! |
| October 27 | **(Re)gendering the Text: the Transgender Gaze, redux**   * Deryn Guest, “Modeling the Transgender Gaze: Performances of Masculinities,” 45-80. * Labbing the Text: Judges 4-5 | More from Guest; our questions, here, will have to do with the work of gender bending in biblical studies. |
| November 3  **Paper Proposal due at 11:59.** | **Samson: Queer / Masculinity Readings of the Samson Narrative**   * Ela Lazarewicz-Wyrzykowska, “Samson: Masculinity Lost (and Regained?), 172-187. * Marco Derks, “‘If I Be Shaven Then My Strength Will Go From Me’: A Queer Reading of the Samson Narrative,” 553-573. * Judges 13-16. | Same, here: We should be able to recognize from these scholars and the text that the world of the Hebrew Bible may not be so binary as we might imagine… |
| **Module 4: Sexual Violence and the Construction of Gender**  **Trigger warnings:** Much of the material in this module treats texts of sexual violence – feel free to see me for more information. | | **We will take a close look at sexual violence of various kinds; take care of yourselves.** |
| November 10 | **Legislating Rape: The Laws of Hebrew Bible, Gender, and Ethnicity**   * Harold C. Washington, “‘Lest He Die in the Battle and another Man Take Her’: Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Laws of Deuteronomy 20-22,” 185-213*.* * M I. Rey. “Reexamination of the Foreign Female Captive: Deuteronomy 21:10-14:10-14 as a Case of Genocidal Rape,” 37–53. * Deuteronomy 20-22 | Washington’s article is still quoted by scholars; Rey’s article has opened up the same texts Washington discusses to introduce what mostly white scholars largely forget (or ignore): matters of ethnicity regarding sexual violence in Hebrew Bible. |
| November 17 | **Narrative Rape, Homosociality, and Sexual Violence in Bible (And What Makes An Ideal King)**   * Barbara Thiede, “Disposing of Daughters, Sisters, and Wives: The Rapes of Tamar and of David’s *Pilagshim*,” 22-45. * Barbara Thiede, “The Once and Future King: Saul, David, and the Practice of Sexual Violence,” 74-99. * 2 Samuel 13 | The point in both these book chapters is to think about the ways many male characters collude in sexual violence. The workings of hegemonic masculinity in Hebrew Bible are reliant on a company of men (today, too). |
| December 1  **Labbing Exercise** | **Labbing Your Texts / Class Summary** | It’s your turn to present a labbing of your text! |
| **FINAL PAPERS DUE 5 p.m. last day of class (December 10 at 11:59).** | | |