Description
A survey of texts and stories in the Bible that deal with or have been interpreted as dealing with sex and related topics. Course objectives include improving students’ familiarity with the Bible, often less read parts, and their appreciation of the Bible as a collection of writings that derive from and deal with human life in all of its dimensions, sensual, sordid, and sublime. In addition, the course is intended to sharpen students’ critical-reading and interpretive skills through the careful assessment of interpretations of biblical texts that have been put forward.

NB: “Bawdy” = “obscene, indecent, lewd” (Webster’s Unabridged). This course will involve candid discussion of sexual topics. If you find such subjects inappropriate, you should not take this course.

Textbooks
Most readings are accessible electronically on the Rhodes network via the Shortcut to Acad_Dept_Pgm on fileserver1>Relig_Studies>McKenzie>Public>Bawdy Bible>Readings)

Requirements and evaluation
1. Daily quizzes (25%) over the daily readings, both biblical and interpretive, will be given frequently throughout the semester. These will be mostly 10-point, true/false or multiple choice in format.
2. Participation (25%). Yes, this means speaking up in class – but with meaningful contributions through comments and questions. It also means attentiveness and coming prepared with proper materials. Sleeping in class, holding individual conversations, and arriving late are disruptive, detract from the effectiveness of the class, and will have a negative impact on a student’s participation grade.
NB: Attendance at every class is mandatory. Final grades will be reduced one-half letter for each absence beyond three regardless of the reason for the absence. After five absences, a student will normally be asked to withdraw from the course; after six, a student will normally receive a failing grade for the course.
5. Interpretive analyses (50%). Write five analyses of specific interpretations that we read. These are designated on the calendar. These should be 5-7 pages each in length (typed, double-spaced) and should be done following these steps: (a) Read the Bible reading, then write approximately one page summarizing it and explaining what you understand it to mean. For this step and/or the next, you may need to do some research. Check the NOAB, commentaries in the library, and (with caution) on-line sources. (b) Read the article, then write approx. two more pages summarizing the article. Explain the problems with the usual interpretation as pointed out in the article, and give the main
arguments in favor of the new interpretation. (c) Finally, spend a page of so critiquing the new interpretation. Explain what points you find convincing and where you think the weaknesses lie. Some arguments may be technical and based on languages you don’t know, but do your best with what you do understand. Have fun with the essay. Try to be creative, without being flippant or silly. Use as models the readings by Kaltner & McKenzie for the first two classes.

The five interpretive analyses are due at the beginning of class on the days designated on the syllabus. Papers turned in late will be penalized. Papers more than 24 hours late will normally not be accepted.

**Calendar**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed. 8/23</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri. 8/25</td>
<td>Adam’s Bone (Gen 2:18-23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Genesis 1-2;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 8/28</td>
<td>Adam Knew Eve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Genesis 2-3;</td>
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<td><em>Augustine,</em> <em>City of God,</em> Book XIV.16-18, 22-23, available online at: <a href="http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm">www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kaltner/McKenzie, “Does Knowledge of Good and Evil Mean Having Sex?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Wed. 8/30</td>
<td>Eve’s Curse (Gen 3:16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Genesis 3;</td>
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<td>*Fri. 9/1</td>
<td>Did Cain Kill Abel Because He Was Depressed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read:</td>
<td>Genesis 4;</td>
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**First interpretive analysis due** on either Bledstein’s interpretation of Genesis 3 or Gruber’s on Genesis 4.

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon. 9/4</td>
<td>Labor Day. No class.</td>
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Wed. 9/6  Gods and Humans Hook Up (Gen 6:1-4)
Read:  Genesis 6
       Ronald S. Hendel, “When the Sons of God Cavorted with the Daughters of Men,”

Fri. 9/8  METS reunion in Atlanta. No class.

Mon. 9/11  What Do You Do With a Drunken Sailor? (Gen 9:20-27)
Read:  Genesis 5; 9-10
       Stephen R. Haynes, “A Black Sheep in the (Second) First Family,” in Noah’s
       23-40.

Wed. 9/13  Abraham Pimps Sarah (Gen 12:20) and Isaac Cops a Feel (Gen 26:1-11)
Read:  Genesis 12; 20; 26
       J. Cheryl Exum, “Who’s Afraid of ‘The Endangered Ancestress’?” in Exum and
       Clines (eds.), The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible (Sheffield:
       W. Gerald Kendrick, “Selected Translation Problems in Genesis,” Bible
       Translator 41 (1990), 429-30.

*Fri. 9/15  They’re All Just Incestuous Bastards (Gen 19:30-38)
Read:  Genesis 19
       *J. Cheryl Exum, “Desire Distored and Exhibited: Lot and His Daughters in
       Psychoanalysis, Painting, and Film,” in S. Olyan and R. Cully (eds.), “A Wise and
       Discerning Mind” (Brown Judaic Studies 325; Providence: Brown, 2000), 83-97.
       Randall Bailey, “The Incestuous Bastards,” in F. Segovia and M. Tolbert (eds.,)
       Reading From This Place (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 128-33.

*Mon. 9/18  Did Isaac Molest Ishmael? (Gen 21:9)
Read:  Genesis 18; 21
       *W. Gerald Kendrick, “Selected Translation Problems in Genesis,” Bible
       Translator 41 (1990), 425-27.
       *Jonathan Kirsch, “What Does Sarah See?” in The Harlot by the Side of the

Wed. 9/20  Why Did Isaac Go to the Field? (Gen 24:63)
Read:  Genesis 24; 1 Kings 18
       Gregory Vall, “What Was Isaac Doing in the Field (Genesis XXIV 63)?” Vetus
       558-60.
       W. Gerald Kendrick, “Selected Translation Problems in Genesis,” Bible
       Translator 41 (1990), 427-29.

Second interpretive analysis due on either Exum (Gen 19) or Kirsch (Gen 21).
Fri. 9/22   You Want Me to Touch Your What? (Gen 24:2, 9; 47:29-31)  
and Does God Hit Below the Belt? (Gen 32:25)  
Read:  Genesis 24; 25; 32; 47; Song of Solomon 7  

Mon. 9/25   Fertility Drugs and Ancient Viagra (Gen 30:14-21)  
Read:  Genesis 29-30  
Read what Josephus said about mandrakes in his Jewish Wars, Book VII, Chapter VI, para. 3 – available at www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/war-7.htm  
Check out the info on mandrakes at: www.panspantry.co.uk/mandrk.htm and www.redgrave.com/mandrake/mandrakery.htm  
Also check out one of the following literary references to mandrakes: J. K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (New York: Arthur A. Levine, 1999), 92-93 or Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet, Act IV, Scene 3.  

*Wed. 9/27 Jacob’s Sex Toys  
Read:  Genesis 30  

*Fri. 9/29 Dinah  
Read:  Genesis 34  

Mon. 10/2   Premature Onan  
Read:  Genesis 38  
For serious interpretations see: www.rtforum.org/lt/lt67.html and www.catholic-forum.com/saints/ncd06105.htm  
And check out Mark Twain’s musings on the subject: www.ralphmag.org/onan.html  

*Wed. 10/4 Potiphar: A Eunuch or Just Unique? (Gen 37:36; 39:1)  
Read:  Genesis 37; 39  

Fri. 10/6   In lieu of mid-term exam, turn in Third interpretive analysis of Noegel (Gen 30), Fleishman (Gen 34) or Contesse (Gen 37; 39).
Mon. 10/9    Moses and God’s Rod
Read:    Exodus 4;

Wed. 10/11   Everything You Want to Know About Sex
Read:    Leviticus 18; 20

Fri. 10/13   No class.

Mon. 10/16   Fall recess

*Wed. 10/18  Bikini Waxing Bible Style
Read:    Deuteronomy 23; 25

*Fri. 10/20  Death on the Pot
Read:    Judges 3

Mon. 10/23  Who’s Zoomin’ Who?
Read:    Judges 4-5

Wed. 10/25  The Trouble With Women Barbers
Read:    Judges 13-16

Fri. 10/27  Biblical Colloquium, Baltimore, MD. No class.

Mon. 10/30  Take My Daughters, Again
Read:    Judges 19; 21
*Wed. 11/1  Sexual Harassment and Seduction
Read:  The book of Ruth

Fri. 11/3  War Trophies and a Love Triangle
Read:  1 Samuel 18-20; 2 Sam 1; 6
**Fourth interpretive analysis due** on Walsh (Deut 25), Halpern (Judg 3), or Nielsen (Ruth).

Mon. 11/6  Vulgarity, Incest, and the Oedipal (Ahinoam)
Read:  1 Samuel 24-26

Wed. 11/8  Lust and Power
Read:  2 Samuel 11-12

Fri. 11/10  My Son the Rapist
Read:  2 Samuel 13-15

Mon. 11/13  Gone to the Dogs
Read:  1 Kings 12-16; 2 Kings 9-10

Wed. 11/15  Whorusalem: The Bitch Had It Coming
or: Bible Porn: Well Endowed Egyptian Men
Read:  Ezekiel 16; 23
Fri. 11/17    I Married a Hooker  
Read: Hosea 1-3  

Mon. 11/20 and Wed. 11/22  SBL Meeting in Washington, DC. No class.

Fri. 11/24    Thanksgiving recess

Mon. 11/27    Saucy Songs  
Read: Psalms 16; 45; 131  

*Wed. 11/29    A Little More than a Six-Pack  
Read: Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) 11:1-2  

*Fri. 12/1    Nebuchadrezzar’s crush on Daniel  
Read: Daniel  

Mon. 12/4    Erotica or Porn  
Read: Song of Songs  

Wed. 12/6    Fifth interpretive analysis due on Homan (Qoh 11:1-2) or Custer (Daniel).