

# Religion in Global Perspective: Religion and Sexuality

Spring 2017

Religious Studies 101 / Jewish Studies 231

## ***Instructor:***

Professor Jordan D. Rosenblum

Office: 1404 Sterling Hall

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 1:00-2:00 pm; and by appointment

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## ***Course Hours:***

Monday and Wednesday 11:00-11:50 am

## ***Prerequisite(s):***

This course assumes no prior knowledge of religion, sexuality, and/or gender.

## ***Course Description:***

This course examines “what religion is” by investigating how religious traditions imagine, interrogate, and regulate sexuality. Mapping out the contours of this inquiry requires exploration of related topics such as gender, embodiment, and historical (re)constructions. We will focus on the religions of the Ancient Mediterranean (especially that of Greeks, Romans, Rabbinic Jews, and early Christians).

## ***Course Goals:***

Our goals in this course mirror the four general learning outcomes for the Religious Studies curriculum, major, and certificate. To wit:

Our desired outcomes for students focus on proficiency in:

- 1) Close reading, interpretation, and written and oral analysis
- 2) Accessing, appraising, and utilizing a variety of resources and methods for research across disciplinary lines
- 3) Categorizing, analyzing, and comparing diverse systems of value and belief in a variety of contexts
- 4) Global and local religious literacy; identifying, evaluating, and interpreting the interrelationships and impact of religious worldviews and communities in Wisconsin, the United States, and globally

## ***Classroom Etiquette:***

In both class and discussion sections, students are expected to arrive on time and should not engage in private conversations. Students wishing to use laptops must: (1) sit in the first three rows of class; and (2) refrain from using them for anything besides taking class notes. **There is a one-strike policy for using laptops for anything else. Should any instructor observe you playing on the internet, etc., you will no longer be allowed to**

**use your laptop in class for the remainder of the semester.** There is no reason for a student to be talking or sending texts on a cellular phone during class time. This is distracting to both professor and students. Cellphones must be turned off and put away during class. *Students whose behavior in class is disruptive can expect a significant reduction in their final grade.*

***Requirements and Grading:***

(1) Regular class attendance of lectures and careful preparation of assigned texts are essential aspects of this course. Please bring the assigned texts to class each week. In grading papers and tests, I will be particularly concerned that you are learning the material and concepts that are taught in class sessions. While prior learning can augment the material and concepts learned in class, it is not a substitute for doing the work required for this course.

(2) Attendance and participation: 10%. Active involvement in class is highly important and includes attendance as well as participation in class discussion.

(A) You may receive extra credit for participation. In order to do so, you must attend a Religious Studies-sponsored event (for events, see: <http://religiousstudies.lss.wisc.edu/?q=node/10>); complete the extra credit form (found on our Canvas page); and submit it to the instructor within one week of attending the event. Students may do so up to twice this semester. Based on the quality of work, you may receive up to 2 points per assignment added to your final participation grade (total of 4 possible points for the semester).

(3) Two papers: 20% each; 40% total. Two short papers, no more than **three** typed, double-spaced pages are due by **12:00 pm on February 24 and April 14**. For each paper, choose two primary texts assigned to be read on different class days. Using a secondary reading from yet another class day, place these three texts (two primary and one secondary) into conversation with each other. Your paper should have a clear thesis that indicates how these readings help elucidate the academic study of religion and sexuality.

N.B.: Students taking this course for Jewish Studies credit must compare primary sources related to Judaism in each of their papers.

(4) Take-Home Midterm: 25%. The take-home exam, due by **12:00 pm on March 15**, will address the readings and class discussions up to that point.

(5) Take-Home Exam: 25%. The take-home exam, due by **12:05 pm on May 6**, will be cumulative and will address issues covered in the readings and class discussions.

**\*\*Students are expected to bring relevant texts to every class\*\***

***Honor Code:***

Students are expected to follow the University of Wisconsin-Madison Academic Honor Code. If students have any questions about this policy, please speak with the professor.

More information on plagiarism can be found at:

[http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html)

**Extension Policy:**

Extensions on papers and exams will **not** be granted. For each 24-hour period that a paper is late, the student's grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.

**Grade Scale:**

A: 94-100    AB: 88-93    B: 83-87    BC: 77-82    C: 70-76  
D: 60-69    F: 0-60

**Required Books:**

- (1) Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Women's Religions in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook* [Oxford University Press] (*WR*)
- (2) Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* [The History of Sexuality, vol. 2; Vintage Books] (*UP*)
- (3) Electronic Reserve: Canvas (readings marked with \*)

**Class Schedule:**

January 18	<u>Introduction</u> <b>Reading:</b> *Course Syllabus
<u>Definitions</u> January 23	<u>Defining "Religion"</u> <b>Reading:</b> *Arnal and McCutcheon, "On the Definition of Religion"
January 25	<u>Defining "Sexuality"</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>UP</i> , 3-32
January 30	<u>Defining "Religion(s)" of the Ancient Mediterranean</u> <b>Reading:</b> *Ehrman, "The World of Early Christian Traditions"
<u>Normative Sex</u> February 1	<u>Greek and Roman Notions of Normative Sex</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>UP</i> , 185-225; <i>WR</i> §102
February 6	<u>Normative Sex in the Hebrew Bible</u> <b>Reading:</b> *Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:10-21; *Deuteronomy 21:15-17; 22:13-29; Boyarin, "Are There Any Jews in 'The History of Sexuality,'" available online at: <a href="http://nes.berkeley.edu/Web_Boyarin/BoyarinArticles/74%20Are%20There%20Any%20Jews%20(1995).pdf">http://nes.berkeley.edu/Web_Boyarin/BoyarinArticles/74%20Are%20There%20Any%20Jews%20(1995).pdf</a>
February 8	<u>Normative Sex in Rabbinic Literature I</u> <b>Reading:</b> *Satlow, "'They Abused Him like a Woman'"
February 13	<u>Normative Sex in Rabbinic Literature II</u> <b>Reading:</b> *Boyarin, "Engendering Desire"

- February 15 Normative Sex in Rabbinic Literature III  
**Reading:** \*Satlow, “‘Wasted Seed’”
- February 20 Normative Sex in Early Christianity  
**Reading:** \*Mark 10:1-12; \*1 Corinthians 7; 11:2-16; 14:33-36;  
\*1 Timothy 2:8-3:7; WR §41; 92B; 106
- February 22 No Class: Work on your paper  
**Paper One due on February 24 at noon**
- Sexual Restraint
- February 27 Sexual Restraint in Greek and Roman Religion  
**Reading:** UP, 33-52, 78-93; WR §16C-D; 18-19
- March 1 Sexual Restraint in Rabbinic Literature  
**Reading:** \*Satlow, “‘Try to Be a Man’”
- March 6 Sexual Restraint in Early Christianity  
**Reading:** WR §117C, 124A; Castelli, “Virginité and its Meaning for Women’s Sexuality in Early Christianity,” available online at: [https://www.academia.edu/1862785/Virginity\\_and\\_its\\_meaning\\_for\\_womens\\_sexuality\\_in\\_early\\_Christianity](https://www.academia.edu/1862785/Virginity_and_its_meaning_for_womens_sexuality_in_early_Christianity)
- Sexual Renunciation
- March 8 Vestal Virgins  
**Reading:** \*Beard, “Re-reading (Vestal) Virginité”; WR §16G, 81-82
- March 13 (Non-)Renunciation of Sex in Rabbinic Literature  
**Reading:** \*Harvey, “The Pupil, the Harlot and the Fringe Benefits”; Rosenblum, “The Night Rabbi Aqiba Slept with Two Women,” available online at: [https://www.academia.edu/19472601/The\\_Night\\_Rabbi\\_Aqiba\\_Slept\\_with\\_Two\\_Women](https://www.academia.edu/19472601/The_Night_Rabbi_Aqiba_Slept_with_Two_Women)
- March 15 **TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE**  
**12:00 pm** (no class today)
- March 18-March 26 **SPRING BREAK**
- March 27 Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity I  
**Reading:** WR §120; re-read \*Harvey, “The Pupil, the Harlot and the Fringe Benefits”
- March 29 Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity II  
**Reading:** WR §105; 92A

Embodiment

- April 3 Breastfeeding in Rabbinic Literature  
**Reading:** \*Rosenblum, “Blessings of the Breasts”; *WR* §127
- April 5 Breastfeeding in Christian Literature  
**Reading:** \*Penniman, “Fed to Perfection”
- April 10 The Devil’s Hammer: Witchcraft and Gender as Discourse  
Anna Grelson Guest Lecture  
**Reading:** \*Stratton, *Naming the Witch*, pp. 1-18, 24-25
- April 12 No Class: Passover and work on your paper  
**Paper Two due on April 14 at noon**
- April 17 Menstrual Blood in Rabbinic Literature  
**Reading:** *WR* §35; Fonrobert, “Blood and Law,” available online at:  
<http://web.stanford.edu/dept/jewishstudies/people/fonrobert/BloodandLaw.pdf>
- April 19 Menstrual Blood in Early Christianity  
**Reading:** *WR* §34; Vuong, “Purity, Piety, and the Purposes of the *Protevangelium of James*,” available online at:  
[https://www.academia.edu/2103950/\\_Purity\\_Piety\\_and\\_the\\_Purpose\\_s\\_of\\_the\\_Protevangelium\\_of\\_James\\_](https://www.academia.edu/2103950/_Purity_Piety_and_the_Purpose_s_of_the_Protevangelium_of_James_)
- April 24 Jesus’ Foreskin  
**Reading:** Jacobs, “Blood Will Out,” available online at:  
[https://www.academia.edu/1848855/\\_Blood\\_Will\\_Out\\_Jesus\\_Circumcision\\_and\\_Early\\_Christian\\_Readings\\_of\\_Exodus\\_4\\_24-26\\_Henoch\\_30\\_2008\\_310-32](https://www.academia.edu/1848855/_Blood_Will_Out_Jesus_Circumcision_and_Early_Christian_Readings_of_Exodus_4_24-26_Henoch_30_2008_310-32)
- Martyrdom
- April 26 Martyrdom in Ancient Judaism  
**Reading:** \*Moore and Anderson, “Taking It like a Man”; *WR* §109
- May 1 Martyrdom in Early Christianity  
**Reading:** *WR* §114; Vuong, “The Impact of Social and Economic Status on the Experience of Martyrdom,” available online at:  
[https://www.academia.edu/2104048/\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Social\\_and\\_Economic\\_Status\\_on\\_the\\_Experience\\_of\\_Martyrdom\\_A\\_Case\\_Study\\_of\\_Perpetua\\_and\\_Felicitas\\_](https://www.academia.edu/2104048/_The_Impact_of_Social_and_Economic_Status_on_the_Experience_of_Martyrdom_A_Case_Study_of_Perpetua_and_Felicitas_)
- May 3 Conclusions  
**Reading:** *UP*, 247-254

May 6

**TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE  
12:05 pm**