

Early Patriarchal Developments

M-W-F 10:20-11:20

Office Hours: M & W, 2:30-4:00 & by appointment

Course Description

Alan Johnson describes patriarchy as the air we breathe, a system so pervasive that there is no way to escape it. What are the origins of this system? Is it, as many scholars once claimed, a natural and universal social arrangement throughout history? In this class we will look at some of the sources of the “modern” western patriarchal system, including early Israelite society and religion, and its counterparts in Mesopotamia. As much of the early Israelite system is borrowing or responding consciously to the religious, legal, and social traditions of their neighbors in Mesopotamia, especially after the Exile in ~600 BCE, we will also look at ancient Mesopotamian religious and legal thought and how it contributed to the earliest development of patriarchy.

Course Overview

This course will explore the history of the development of modern patriarchal thought from its roots in early Jewish and pagan thought. We will read many primary sources that are drawn on even today as justification for patriarchal systems and modes of thought, and learn to explore them from a feminist perspective.

Additionally, this course is structured to operate in tandem with the other half-semester course being offered this semester, Feminist Theology. We believe that by offering these two courses back-to-back, we will be able to introduce students to basic texts such as the old and new testaments, and then proceed to explore how feminist theologians have used and reinterpreted the foundational documents of Christianity in recent years.

Throughout the course we will encourage students to view the bible not merely as a foundational or holy document, but also as a *text* – that is, a work of literature which draws upon and is informed by the culture and oral tradition in which it was created. Likewise, as we prepare you for the second half-semester course, we will be reading a modern work of fiction to emphasize the living nature of any document, and how it can be (and is) revitalized through new interpretations and new critical lenses.

Required Texts

Most readings will be available on e-reserve or distributed as handouts in class.

Additionally, we will be reading the book *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant.

We will also be using the book *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* by Bernadette Brooten.

You will also probably want to have a bible, though it's all available online.

Required Assignments

W: Gerda Lerner, "The creation of patriarchy," chapters 1(?) & 11 (e-reserve)
W: Alan Johnson, "Patriarchy: the system" (e-reserve)

Unit Two: Creation and Social Ordering

Week 2: In the Beginning

M: The Enuma Elish (e-reserve)

W: Genesis 1-15(?)

F: Genesis 15(?)-x

Red Tent chapters 1 & 2

Week 3: Codes of Law

M: Hammurabi's Code (e-reserve)

Topic for Presentation due

W: Leviticus x-x

Red Tent chapters 3 & 4

F: Deuteronomy x-x

Week 4: Personal and Political religion

M: "Practices of the individual and family: Mesopotamia, Syria-Canaan, and Israel" from *Religions of the Ancient World* (e-reserve)

W: "Religious Personnel: Mesopotamia, Syria-Canaan, and Israel" from *Religions of the Ancient World* (e-reserve)

F: "Religious Organizations and Bodies: Mesopotamia, Syria-Canaan, and Israel" from *Religions of the Ancient World* (e-reserve)

Unit Three: Christianity in its Early Days

Week 5: Early Christianity

M: "Early Christianity," by Harold Attridge, from *Religions of the ancient world* (e-reserve)

W: Pagels, Elaine H. "What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity". *Feminist Theory: A Reader* (e-reserve)

F: "Early Christian Women & Pagan Opinion," by Margaret Y. Macdonald, P 127-154 (e-reserve)

Week 6: Early Christians & Heteronormativity

M: *Love Between Women*, chapters 1-3

Presentation Outline due

W: *Love Between Women*, chapters 4-6

F: *Love Between Women*, chapters 7-9

Romans 1:18-32

Week 7:

M: *Love Between Women*, chapters 10-12

W: Presentations

F: Presentations, concluding remarks & Evaluations

Final Papers Due by 5 PM