Syllabus

THE BOOK OF RUTH: A LIT. APPROACH TO THE BIBLE - 19442

Last update 30-01-2014

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Comparative Literature

Academic year: 2

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof Ilana Pardes

Coordinator Email: mspardes@mscc.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Wed 2-3pm

Teaching Staff:
Prof Ilana Pardes
Course/Module description:

The Book of Ruth: A Literary Approach to the Bible
The Book of Ruth was hailed as a literary gem by many of its readers. The Book of Ruth will serve as a springboard to discuss major features of biblical aesthetics. We will also consider the unconventional aspects of the text, primarily, the privileged position that is given to women and strangers. The interrelations between aesthetic, legal, and ethical questions will be of special interest. We will explore different literary readings of the Book of Ruth (from Goethe’s observations to feminist readings in the 20th century) and explore various moments of reception (from the midrash to ceremonies in the kibbutzim). The reading list will include articles and essays by: Erich Auerbach, Robert Alter, Phyllis Trible, Julia Kristeva, Mieke Bal, and Michal Ben-Naftali.

Course/Module aims:

This is an introductory course whose aim is to explore different literary approaches to the biblical text. The Book of Ruth serves as a case study

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
To examine the poetics of the biblical text
To describe the perception of hesed (kindness/compassion)
To identify type-scenes
To define gender issues
To compare between the Book of Ruth and Genesis

Attendance requirements(%):
80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: seminar

Course/Module Content:

The Book of Ruth: The Question of Genre
Intro
A Female lekh lekha and the question of Estrangement
Reversals in the Betrothal Type-Scene and the quest for Hesed
Ruth and the Daughters of Moab: Illicit Sexuality
Ruth and Tamar
Ruth-Rachel-Leah: Idyllic Revisionism?
Ruth in the Zohar
S.Y. Agnon’s “Bidmi Yameah” – Between the Zohar and the Enlightenment
Ruth in Israeli Culture: from Bezalel to the Kibbutzim
Ruth in African-American Culture – from The Song of Solomon to Beloved
Conclusion and Students Presentations

Required Reading:
Erich Auerbach, "The Scar of Odysseus," in Mimesis
Julia Kristeva, Strangers to Ourselves, - Intro and passages on the Book of Ruth
Rober Alter, on biblical type-Scenes - The Art of Biblical Narrative
Phyllis Trible, A Human Comedy in God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality
Ronal Hendel, Chana Kronfeld, Ilana Pardes, Gender and Sexuality in Reading
Genesis; Ten Methods (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71-91.
Mieke Bal, Heroism and Proper Names, or the Fruits of Analogy, in Lethal Love:
Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories (Bloomington: Indiana University
Press, 1987), 68-88
Ilana Pardes, Idyllic Revisionism: The Book of Ruth, in Countertraditions in the
Bible
Michal Ben-Naphtali, A queer Reading of Ruth
Stephen Greenberg, on homosexuality in the Bible
Ruth Kara-Kaniel-Ivanov on Ruth in the Zohar
S.Y. Agnon, In the Prime of her Life, Bidmi yameah
Nitza Ben-Dov on Bidmi Yameh
Anita Shapira, The Bible and Israeli Identity
Toni Morrison Song of Solomon and Beloved

Additional Reading Material:
Yair Zakovitch, The Book of Ruth, Mikra le-Yisrael (Hebrew)

Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 80 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 10 %
Project work 0 %
Assignments 10 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %
Additional information:
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