In the ancient world, the family was the basic social unit, upon which a person’s very survival was dependent. In addition to its role as a building block of society, the family was a critical site for the construction of gender, sex, and sexuality of its members. In this course, we will explore how identities such as father, mother, and child were constructed in ancient discourse. We will use feminist and queer perspectives to unpack texts, both written and visual, from the ancient Near East, the Greco-Roman world, the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament. We will consider questions such as, How did women in polygynous marriages “share” their husband? Why would a parent sacrifice a child? What does it mean to call the deity a “father,” and what are the implications of this for human men and women?

Students will be expected to analyze both primary and secondary material carefully, and to prepare thoughtful written responses to the topics addressed in this course. Previous coursework in classics, NEJS, or religious studies would be helpful, but is not required. Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).
Learning Goals
In this course, you will:

1. Develop critical knowledge of ancient texts and their historical contexts.
2. Utilize feminist and queer methodologies as reading strategies for ancient texts.
3. Critically evaluate scholarship on the ancient world.
4. Engage in high-level discussion using academic vocabulary.
5. Produce critical and creative writing about gender, sex, and the family in the ancient world through independent research.

Prerequisites
This course is designed for advanced undergraduate students. Previous coursework in classics, NEJS, or religious studies would be helpful, but is not required.

Evaluation
You will be graded on the basis of the following:

- Attendance and participation: 10%
- Reflections: 20%
- Midterm paper: 30%
- Final paper/project, including in-class presentation: 40%

Attendance
Missing classes is strongly discouraged. You are allowed three absences. For each additional absence your final grade will be penalized by a third of a grade. Seven or more absences will result in a failing grade. Please contact me in the event of an emergency.

Class participation
Your consistent participation in class sessions constitutes a significant portion of your grade and is the most critical component of a successful course. Class participation includes:

- Your prompt, prepared, alert, consistent attendance
- The completion of reading assignments by the dates listed in the syllabus
- Your thoughtful contributions to class discussions

Reflections
Five times in the course you will be required to post on LATTE a 300-400 word reflection assignment on the readings and lectures, specifically responding to a question prompt. These reflections are not graded, but their thoughtful completion constitutes 20% of your grade.

Think of reflections as (intelligent, well-written) journal entries that you would be comfortable sharing with the class. Sometimes they are used to structure discussions (indicate in your reflection if you would like that your words not be shared in class). Reflections are written demonstrations of how you are processing the lectures and readings of the course. In your reflection, you must respond to the question prompt and cite that week’s readings in your response.
**Midterm and Final Papers**
These papers will constitute the bulk of your grade. The 5-page midterm paper will ask you to integrate the texts we have read together for class. The 10-12 page final paper will require independent research and involve an in-class presentation. Several weeks before the due date, you will need to submit a paper proposal and preliminary bibliography and meet with the instructor to discuss your proposed project. Further details will be forthcoming in class.

**Late Work, Extensions and Minimum Page Requirements**
I am usually willing to offer extensions, given legitimate reasons. *If a catastrophe happens and you are afraid your work will not be completed in time, contact me more than 24 hours before the due date and arrange for an extension.* Otherwise, late work, including first drafts, will be penalized by a third of a grade per day (B+ → B → B- and so on) on the final essay. If an essay is due electronically at 11:59 PM and you submit it at midnight, it is late. In addition, final essays that do not meet minimum page/word count requirements will be penalized by a third of a grade for each page that the essay falls short.

**Accessibility**
Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you.

In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

**Academic Integrity**
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides.

**Privacy**
This class requires the use of tools that may disclose your coursework and identity to parties outside the class. To protect your privacy you may choose to use a pseudonym/alias rather than your name in submitting such work. You must share the pseudonym/alias with me and any teaching assistants as needed. Alternatively, with prior consultation, you may submit such work directly to me.
Communications
Please familiarize yourself with our course LATTE page. Here, you may find course readings and assignments, as well as contribute to forums and turn in papers.
In addition to in-class communication, I will communicate important announcements via the “Course Announcements” feature of LATTE, which will be sent to your email. Please be sure to check your email at least once per day.

Course Materials
Required texts
(available for purchase in bookstore and online; also available in Course Reserves at the library)
Course pack (available for purchase from instructor)

Credit Hours
Success in this 4 credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.)

Course Plan

Unit Zero: Introductions and Foundations
Who are we and what are we doing here?

Week 1

Mon. 1/13
Introductions, course policies, syllabus overview

Wed. 1/15 Overview
Read: “Gender, Sex, and Sexuality” in Introduction to Sociology (until “Theoretical perspectives on Gender,” option to skim the remainder)
https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontosociology/chapter/chapter12-gender-sex-and-sexuality/

Thurs. 1/16 Discussion
Topic: How can we apply modern categories and definitions of sex, gender, and sexuality to ancient texts?

Week 2

Mon. 1/20
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY, NO CLASS

Wed. 1/22 Overview

**Thurs. 1/23 Discussion**
LATTE reflection #1: Consider both of the readings we have read so far. What ideas surprised or challenged you? What questions do you have so far? What connections can you make with topics you may have already studied?

*Unit One: The Father*
How is fatherhood constructed in ancient discourse?
What are the implications for gender, sex, and sexuality?

**Week 3**

**Monday 1/27 Overview**

**Wednesday 1/29 Close Reading**
Read: Genesis 10
Sumerian King List
Matthew 1

**Thursday 1/30 Discussion**
Topic: How do these genealogies and lists function in ancient discourse? What narrative(s) do they create about fatherhood and family?

**Week 4**

**Monday 2/3 Overview**

**Wednesday 2/5 Close Reading**
Read: Genesis 22, Judges 11
Watch: Iphigenia at Aulis

**Thursday 2/6 Discussion**
Topic: What are the similarities and differences in these stories of a sacrificed daughter? What is the function of stories like this? Why are they so powerful?

**Week 5**

**Monday 2/10 Overview**
**Wednesday 2/12 Close Reading**
Read: Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 33:12-18; Hosea 2; Mark 1:9-11 & Romans 1:3-4 (adoption of Jesus) vs. Matthew 1 (incarnationism)

**Thursday 2/13 Discussion**
LATTE Reflection #2: Consider all of the readings from this unit. What are the different ways fatherhood is constructed in ancient discourse? What are the implications for understanding “manhood” and “masculinity”?

**Week 6**

**Monday, 2/17-Friday, 2/21**
MIDTERM RECESS, NO CLASS

**Unit Two: The Mother**
How is motherhood constructed in ancient discourse?
What are the implications for gender, sex, and sexuality?

**Week 7**

**Monday, 2/24 Overview**
Ch. 4: “Beyond biology: the constructed nature of motherhood(s) in ancient Near Eastern sources and studies,” Agnès Garcia-Ventura.

**Wednesday, 2/26 Close reading**
Read: KAR 321 (Foster 2005 translation)

**Thursday, 2/28 Discussion**
Topic: How does the construction of the *naditu* in ancient discourse challenge the idea of motherhood as “natural” or “inherent” to women?

**Week 8**

**Monday, 3/2 Overview and close reading**

**Wednesday, 3/4**
Read: Genesis 24

**Thursday, 3/5 Discussion**
Topic: What is the function of the “house of the mother”? How does it challenge or complement the “house of the father”? What implications does it have for the ancient understanding of “womanhood”? 
Week 9

Monday, 3/9 Overview

Wednesday, 3/11 Close reading
Read: Matthew 1:18-24; Luke 1:26-58

Thursday, 3/12 Discussion
LATTE Reflection #3: Consider Genesis 24 and Mathew 1 and Luke 1. How do biblical authors construct motherhood? What role do they imagine women to have in their children’s lives? How does these depictions challenge or complement the idea of the Babylonian *naditu*?

Week 10

Monday 3/16 Overview

Wednesday 3/18 Close reading
Read: Demosthenes, *Against Nearera*

Thursday 3/19 Discussion
Topic: How was motherhood constructed in ancient Greece and what relationship did it have to the issue of citizenship?
*Write: Midterm paper due

Week 10

Monday 3/23 Overview

Wednesday 3/25 Close Reading
Read: Livy, *History of Rome* 1.9 & 1.13, “The Sabine Women” (content warning: sexual violence)

Thursday 3/26 Discussion
LATTE Reflection #4: Consider all of the readings from this unit. What are the different ways motherhood is constructed in ancient discourse? What are the implications for understanding “womanhood” and “femininity”?

Unit Three: The Child
How is childhood constructed in ancient discourse?
What are the implications for gender, sex, and sexuality?

Week 11

Monday, 3/30 Overview

Wednesday, 4/1 Close Reading
Read: Genesis 29-30, 34 (content warning: sexual violence)

Thursday, 4/2 Discussion
Topic: How does the Hebrew Bible represent childhood? How do polygamous/polycoitus marriages and half-siblings complicate family matters such as inheritance?
*Write: Proposal and bibliography for final paper due

Week 12

*Conferences with instructor regarding final paper will be held this week*

Monday, 4/6 Overview
Read: Colossians 3:18-4:6, Ephesians 6:1-16

Tuesday, 4/7 Discussion
BRANDEIS THURSDAY
Topic: How does the New Testament represent childhood? How does its understanding of “the child” relate to its understanding of gender and slavery?

Week 13

Wednesday, 4/8-Thursday, 4/16
PASSOVER AND SPRING RECESS, NO CLASS

Week 14

Monday, 4/20 Overview

**Wednesday, 4/22 Close Reading**
Select one image from Monday’s reading. Collect as much information as you can find on it and be prepared to share it in a small group. Bring a hard copy of the image.

**Thursday, 4/23 Discussion**
LATTE Reflection #5: Consider all of the readings from this unit. What are the different ways childhood is constructed in ancient discourse? What are the implications for understanding gender, sex, and sexuality as categories?

**Week 15**

**Monday, 4/27**
Student Presentations

**Wednesday, 4/29**
*Discussion*
Semester wrap-up and consideration of future avenues of study

**At-A-Glance Schedule of Classes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>1/15</td>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>“Gender, Sex, and Sexuality”</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>1/16</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>Mon.</td>
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<td>MLK DAY: NO CLASS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>“Kinship at the Dawn of Politics”</td>
<td>LATTE Reflection #1</td>
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<td>Th.</td>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>1/27</td>
<td>The father</td>
<td>“Understanding Biblical Genealogies”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>The father</td>
<td>Genesis 10 Sumerian King List Matthew 1</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>1/30</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>The father</td>
<td>“The Sacrificed Daughter”</td>
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<td>Wed.</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>The father</td>
<td>Judges 11</td>
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<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Iphigenia at Aulis</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>2/10 The father</td>
<td>“A Sexless Father and His Procreating Sons.”</td>
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<td>Wed.</td>
<td>2/12 The father</td>
<td>Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 33:12-18; Hosea 2; Mark 1:9-11 &amp; Romans 1:3-4; Matthew 1</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>2/13</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>LATTE Reflection #2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Mon.-Fri.</td>
<td>2/17-2/21 MIDTERM RECESS: NO CLASS</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>2/24 The mother</td>
<td>“Beyond Biology”</td>
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<td>Wed.</td>
<td>2/26 The mother</td>
<td>KAR 321</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>2/27 Discussion</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>3/2 The mother</td>
<td>“Bet ‘Em”</td>
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<td>Wed.</td>
<td>3/4 The mother</td>
<td>Genesis 24</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>3/5 Discussion</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>3/9 The mother</td>
<td>“Jesus and His Mother”</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>3/12 Discussion</td>
<td>LATTE Reflection #3</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>3/16 The mother</td>
<td>“Motherhood, gender and identity in the Athenian polis”</td>
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<td>Wed.</td>
<td>3/18 The mother</td>
<td>Against Neaera</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>3/19 Discussion</td>
<td>*Midterm paper due</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>3/23 The mother</td>
<td>“Mater Patriae”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>3/25 The mother</td>
<td>“The Sabine Women”</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>3/26 Discussion</td>
<td>LATTE Reflection #4</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>3/30 The child</td>
<td>“Children in Biblical Israel”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>4/1 The child</td>
<td>Genesis 29-30, 34</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>4/2 Discussion</td>
<td>*Proposal and bibliography for final paper due</td>
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<td>Mon.</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>The child “New Testament... Roman World” Colossians 3:18-4:6, Ephesians 6:1-16</td>
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<td>Tues.</td>
<td>4/7</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Wed. Thurs.</td>
<td>4/8-4/16</td>
<td>PASSOVER AND SPRING RECESS, NO CLASS</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>The child “Representations”</td>
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<td>Wed.</td>
<td>4/22</td>
<td>Select and prepare to present image from Monday’s reading</td>
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<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>LATTE Reflection #5</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>4/27</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>4/29</td>
<td>LAST DAY OF CLASS: Wrapping up and further questions</td>
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<td>TBA</td>
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<td>FINAL PAPER DUE</td>
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