Humanities 1 Professor Stanley Chodorow Winter 2015

## Writing Assignment #1: Hebrew Bible

Choose one of the two following essay topics:

1. The patriarchal family was large and complex, and the stories of the Hebrew patriarchs deal with relationships between the father and his sons by his wife, between the father and his sons by his concubines (maid servants), between sons, between sons and daughters and the sons of daughters, between sons and inlaws, and between the family and servants, some of whom play critical roles. In such a society organized on the basis of families, power within a family, then, makes a big difference. Who in the Genesis families really has the power to affect their futures? Using Genesis, make and defend a claim about family relations in patriarchal society.

2. There are numerous deception stories in Genesis, most notably centered around Jacob (Israel) and his family – see Jacob and Esau, Rachel and Leah, Judah and Tamar, and Joseph and his brothers. Does the Hebrew Bible portray deception as a positive attribute or a negative one? What are the consequences or the rewards of such behavior? Using two of the deception stories listed above (you must choose two), write a thesis-based essay in which you compare or contrast the significance of deception in your two episodes.

Thesis: Make sure that your claim meets the standards outlined in the "Thesis" handout.

4 tests for a good thesis:

- 1. Is it an explanation, not a fact?
- 2. Can someone argue against it?
- 3. Is it too obvious to be worth defending?
- 4. Is it precise?

Evidence: Make sure your argument shows just how the textual evidence supports the thesis.

Length: 4-5 pages.

Due: After lecture, Tuesday 27 January. Late papers will be penalized by the subtraction of one-third letter grade per day. Finally, don't forget turnitin.com!