

Hebrew Bible
RELS-210*/THEO-515*
Fall Term 2009

Instructor: Heather Macumber
Email: heather.macumber@queensu.ca
Time: Monday, 11:30-2:30 p.m.
Room: Ellis 324
Office Hours: TBA

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Introduction in the light of the political, cultural, and religious history of ancient Israel and Judah.

II. COURSE MATERIALS:

a. Required Texts:

Brettler, Mark Zvi and Adele Berlin (eds). *The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Matthews, Victor H. and Don C. Benjamin. *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1991.

b. Assigned Articles (required reading):

See class schedule for the additional articles. They will either be available online or on reserve at the library.

c. Primary Texts (required reading):

It is not enough to simply read about the Hebrew Bible, one must also read it. A requirement of this course is to read a major portion of the Hebrew Bible. Please see the class schedule for a list of assigned readings. In addition, a number of primary ANE texts will also be provided to give additional background.

III. COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goals: To provide students with:

- An overview of the literature of the Hebrew Bible
- An understanding of the major themes and theology of the Hebrew Bible
- An awareness of the development of religious traditions in ancient Israel
- An introduction to the various methodologies of interpreting the Hebrew Bible

Objectives: To enable students to:

- Identify the major types of literature and genres of the Hebrew Bible
- Understand the themes and different streams of traditions present in the Hebrew Bible
- Evaluate the texts within their historical and social contexts
- Apply the literature of the Hebrew Bible to their contemporary settings and in modern religious discourse

IV. Summary of Assignments and Grading

Short Quizzes	15%
Short Paper	15%
Research Paper	30%
Final Exam	40%

Papers will be graded according to grading scale provided on page 8. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated. Late papers will be penalized by 5% per day including weekends. In the case of an illness or family emergency, students may request an extension. Paper lengths are strictly set and are not a guideline but a requirement. Papers that do not adhere to the requirements will be marked with penalties.

V. Assignments and Grading

Short Quizzes: There will be three short quizzes (10-15 minutes in length) interspersed throughout the term. They are designed to prepare the student for the final exam. The quizzes will focus on the lectures and the course readings (including primary texts). Students will write the quizzes at the beginning of class and no extra time allowance will be awarded to late arrivals. Each quiz is worth 5%.

Due: October 5; November 2; November 23.

Short Paper: Students will select a passage from the Hebrew Bible (about 5-10 verses) and write a short paper. This is not a research paper but a chance for the student to demonstrate that they can read and understand the primary text. This paper should be 4-5 pages in length.

The following should be included:

1. *Introduction:* Identify the text you are analyzing and the main content (including characters, purpose of passage). Be sure to also identify the questions you are seeking to answer.
2. *Context:*
 - a. *Biblical:* what role does it play in the book or chapter where it is located. Is it reused or reinterpreted by later authors?

- b. Historical/Archaeological: how does this passage fit into the larger history of ancient Israel? Are there any important connections to other ANE cultures or archaeological finds?
 - c. Social/Political/Religious: how does this passage fit into the social/political/religious practices of ancient Israel?
3. *Other Interpretations:*
- a. How has this passage been interpreted by other communities and (possibly) scholars?
4. *Your own Analysis:*
- a. What are your conclusions about this passage? How would you summarize your findings?

Due: October 19, 2009

Research Paper: An 8-10 page research paper that explores a topic/theme/concept found throughout the Hebrew Bible. Students should also identify a clear thesis statement and argue for it persuasively throughout the paper. A thorough bibliography and a variety of primary and secondary sources should be consulted for this assignment. Students are highly encouraged to discuss either in person or through email with the professor their ideas for the paper before writing.

Due: November 30, 2009

VI. COURSE POLICIES

a. Participation/Reading: Students are expected to prepare carefully for class by engaging with the readings both from the course text and the biblical text. Some supplementary required articles are also assigned in the readings and will be made available on reserve at the library or online.

b. Writing Style Guidelines:

All written work must use Canadian spelling and students are advised to consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (7th ed.; revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007). Parenthetical references (such as MLA or APA) will not be accepted. The Chicago Manual of Style is also available online:

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/contents.html>

c. Inclusive Language:

All students are expected to use gender-inclusive language both in their written work and class participation (i.e., use “man” or “he” only when referring specifically to males).

d. Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is unacceptable and a zero tolerance policy is adopted in this course. It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and a claim of ignorance concerning plagiarism is insufficient. More information can be obtained at the following sites: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.html> and <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/%7Ekloppen/plagiarism.htm> .

e. General Statement on Academic Integrity

Students are expected to abide by the values and practice of Academic Integrity. Departures from Academic Integrity are serious academic offences and may result in a range of penalties. Students are advised to acquaint themselves with the academic regulations in the Faculty of Arts and Science Calendar.

The ASUS Academics Resource Website can be accessed at http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/facstaff/facboard/2005-06_Acad_Year/2006_03/AppA_ASUS_AOC_Website.pdf

f. Students with Special Needs/Short-term Medical Issues/Conflicts

Refer to the following website:

<http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/exams/xttinfo4.html#General%20Information>

g. Late Papers/Missed Tests/Exams Policy

All course work is due on the date specified in the course syllabus at the beginning of class. Late assignments will receive a penalty of 5% per day including weekends. Extensions will not be given except in the case of illness or family emergency and must also provide documentary evidence (doctor's note or funerary notice).

For missed tests/exams due to illness or other documented extenuating circumstances it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor ASAP to make further arrangements.

VII. COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1

September 14

Class: Introduction

1. Introduction: Course Outline and Requirements
2. The Hebrew Bible: What is it and why study it?
3. Geography of ancient Israel and the ancient Near East

Readings:

1. Brettler, Mark Zvi, "Torah," in *JSB*, 1-7.
2. Brettler, Mark Zvi, "Nevi'im," in *JSB*, 451-461.
3. Brettler, Mark Zvi, "Kethuvim," in *JSB*, 1275-1279.

4. Brettler and Berlin, "Historical and Geographical Background to the Bible," in *JSB*, 2048-2062.
5. Brettler and Berlin, "Textual Criticism of the Bible," in *JSB*, 2067-2072.

Week 2**September 21***The Class: The Pentateuch/Torah I*

1. Epic Sources: The Composition of the Pentateuch
2. The Primeval History: Genesis 1-11
3. The First Families: Genesis 12-50
4. The Wilderness Traditions

Readings:

1. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Two Centuries of Pentateuchal Scholarship" in *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 1-30.
2. Genesis (plus introduction in *JSB*)
3. Exodus (plus introduction in *JSB*)
4. Numbers (plus introduction in *JSB*)
5. "Enuma Elish" in *Old Testament Parallels* (eds. Victor Matthews and Don C. Benjamin; New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 7-15. [Hereafter this book will simply be referred to as *OTP*]
6. "The Story of Gilgamesh" in *OTP*, 35-40.
7. "The Story of Sargon's Birth" in *OTP*, 55-56.
8. "The Treaty of Ramses II and Hattusilis III" in *OTP*, 49-53.

Week 3**September 28***Class: Biblical Law*

1. Types of law
2. Ancient Near Eastern parallels
3. Purpose of the law

Readings:

1. Jonathan Klawans, "Concepts of Purity in the Bible," in *JSB*, 2041-2047.
2. Leviticus
3. Deuteronomy
4. "The Code of Hammurabi" in *OTP*, 62-67.
5. "The Sumerian Code" in *OTP*, 68-69.
6. "The Hittite Code" in *OTP*, 70-71.
7. "The Middle Assyrian Code" in *OTP*, 72-73.

Week 4**October 5***Class: Early Israel*

1. Israelite Origins and Establishment in the Land: Exodus, "Conquest," Settlement
2. Political and Social Organization of Early Israel

Readings:

1. Richard S. Hess, "Early Israel in Canaan, A Survey of Recent Evidence and Interpretations," in *Israel's Past in Present Research, Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography* (ed. V. Philips Long; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999) pp. 492-518. Available online at: <http://individual.utoronto.ca/mfkolarcik/jesuit/richardhess.htm>
2. Joshua (plus introduction in *JSB*)
3. Judges (plus introduction in *JSB*)
4. "El Amarna Letters" in *OTP*, 77-80.
5. "The Stele of Merneptah" in *OTP*, 81-82.

Week 5**Thanksgiving – No Class****October 12****Week 6****October 19***Class: Elements of Israelite Religion*

1. The Deities of Canaan
2. Yahweh and Monotheism
3. Covenant
4. Ritual and Worship

Readings:

1. Stephen A. Geller, "The Religion of the Bible" in *JSB*, 2021-2040.
2. John L. McLaughlin, "El and Yahweh" (handout).
3. "The Stories of Ba'al and Anat" in *OTP*, 157-168.
4. [begin reading next week's Hebrew Bible readings]

Week 7**October 26***Class: The Period of the Monarchy and the Emergence of Prophecy*

1. The Deuteronomistic Historian
2. The Rise and Fall of Israel
3. The 8th century prophets

Readings:

1. 1 & 2 Samuel (plus introduction in *JSB*)
2. 1 & 2 Kings (plus introduction in *JSB*)
3. Amos or Micah or Hosea (plus introductions in *JSB*)
4. Isaiah 1-39 (plus introduction in *JSB*)

5. “The Mari Prophecies” in *OTP*, 109-110.
6. “The Stele of Mesha” in *OTP*, 112-114.
7. “The Siloam Inscription” in *OTP*, 130-131.
8. “The Annals of Sennacherib” in *OTP*, 139-140.

Week 8**November 2**

Class: Rise of Babylon and Responses to the Babylonian “Exile” (587-540 B.C.E.)

1. The Deuteronomic Response
2. The Prophetic Response
3. The Priestly Response

Readings:

1. Joseph Blenkinsopp, “Between the Old Order and the New” in *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 148-193.
2. Jeremiah (plus introduction in *JSB*)
3. Isaiah 40-55 (plus introduction in *JSB*)
4. Ezekiel (plus introduction in *JSB*)

Week 9**November 9**

Class: Post-Exilic Developments I: The Persian Period

1. Return from Exile
2. Restoration in Israel
3. The Diaspora Community

Readings:

1. Haggai (plus introduction in *JSB*)
2. Zechariah (plus introduction in *JSB*)
3. Ezra-Nehemiah (plus introduction in *JSB*)
4. “The Cylinder of Cyrus” in *OTP*, 147-150.

Week 10**November 16**

Class: Post-Exilic Developments II

1. The Rise of Apocalypticism
2. The Reinterpretation of Prophecy
3. The Jewish Pseudepigrapha Books
4. The Qumran Sect

Readings

1. Esther Eshel, “The Bible in the Dead Sea Scrolls” in *JSB*, 1920-1928.
2. Daniel
3. 1-2 Maccabees
4. “The Book of Watchers” [also known as 1 Enoch 1-36] available online:
<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/ethiopian/enoch/1watchers/watchers.htm>

5. “The War Rule (1QM)” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (ed. Geza Vermes; Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1995). 123-45.

Note: Due to the large amount of material in both the Book of Watchers and The War Rule, you do not need to read it entirely but please do read through some of it.

Week 11

November 23

Class: The Psalms & Hebrew Short Story

Readings:

1. Adele Berlin, “Reading Biblical Poetry,” in *JSB*, 2097-2104.
2. Read Psalm 22 along with 20 psalms of your choice.
3. Read Jonah
4. Read Ruth

Week 12

November 30

Class: Wisdom Literature and Exam Review

Readings:

1. “Wisdom in the Old Testament” *ABD* VI: 920-31.
2. Proverbs 1-15, 31.
3. The Book of Job.
4. “The Teachings of Amen-em-ope” in *OTP*, 189-198.
5. “The Sufferer and the Friend” in *OTP*, 219-224.

Evaluation of Papers

Papers in this course must go beyond simply summarizing an author’s work. Students are expected to analyze, synthesize and evaluate both the primary and secondary literature. A paper should never be mainly a string of quotations or repetition of secondary literature. Students are expected to be creative and to advance their own arguments. Finally, stylistic format (spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, page layout (1 inch margins), font (12 point Times New Roman), footnote and bibliographical citations) is very important and papers will be graded accordingly.

Letter Range	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter	Other qualities expected of students
A Range	Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, broad knowledge basis.			
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and Creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and

A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; master of an extensive knowledge base. Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; master of an extensive knowledge base.
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base.
B Range				
Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.				
B+	77-79	3.3	Very good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B	73-76	3.0	Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature.
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria.