

Religion 840:201:01
cross-listed Jewish Studies 563:220:01
Introduction to the Bible I: Torah and Prose
Professor Debra Ballentine

Fall 2015
Class Meeting: T, Th 1:10-2:30
HH-B3

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Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-1:30
Loree Building, office 132

The Hebrew Bible is an anthology of texts that was produced over the course of about 1000 years. Throughout that time biblical authors and redactors were shaped by and contributed to their social and political surroundings. In this course we study the Hebrew Bible as an ancient Near Eastern text. We use the bible, archeological findings, and ancient inscriptions to reconstruct the early history of ancient Israel and Judah. This semester we analyze biblical foundational stories from creation through the reign of king David. Intro to Bible II continues from the reign of Solomon through the final consolidation of the Hebrew Bible. Through critical analysis of biblical literature, you will gain understanding of how biblical authors responded to historical events by adapting familiar traditions within ever-changing circumstances.

Books:

- The Hebrew Bible. NJPS or NRSV versions. We will discuss various versions in class, and I will consult the Hebrew text as well. Bring your copy of the Bible to every class meeting.
- John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*
- I will post additional (very short) readings to Sakai, such as copies of ancient inscriptions.
- (recommended) Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd Edition). This book is 'recommended' rather than 'required' because it is sometimes hard to find and expensive. However, for students who want to pursue biblical studies further, this is a valuable resource.

Course requirements:

- 10% Participation in class. You should come to class prepared to answer questions, to discuss readings, and to ask thoughtful questions. Participation in class presupposes attendance.
- 45% Midterm exam (Tuesday, October 20, class time)
- 45% Final exam (Tuesday, December 15, 12:00-3:00)

We will adhere to the University's Policy on Academic Integrity

LEARNING GOALS: (i, k, p)

- Social and Historical Analysis i. Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
- Historical Analysis [HST] k. Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- Arts and Humanities (AH) p. Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.

Provisional schedule, topics, and readings:

- Week 1 T 9/1 What is the academic study of religion? How do people study the bible?

 Th 9/3 What is the Hebrew Bible? Key terms and concepts
 Read: Collins, Introduction
- Week 2 T 9/8 University operates on a Monday schedule; No class meeting

 Th 9/10 The ancient Near East; overview of political and geographical setting
 Read: Collins ch.1, p.15-19; Miller/Hayes pp.1-29
- Week 3 T 9/15 Ancient Near Eastern literature and religion
 Read: Collins ch.1, p.20-27

 Th 9/17 Epigraphic and archaeological evidence for early Israel
 Read: texts on sakai; Miller/Hayes pp.30-60
- Week 4 T 9/22 Nature of the Pentateuch; stories of creation and flood
 Read: Collins ch.2-3; Genesis 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.61-83

 Th 9/24 Abraham; covenants
 Read: Collins ch.4; Genesis 12-22
- Week 5 T 9/29 Ancestor stories; Isaac and Ishmael; Jacob and Esau
 read: Gen 23-36

 Th 10/1 the Joseph story
 Read: Gen 37-50
- Week 6 T 10/6 Moses; the exodus; covenants
 Read: Collins ch.5; Exodus 1-15:21

 Th 10/8 Legal traditions; wilderness wandering
 Read: Collins ch.6; Exodus 15-24, 32, 34; Deuteronomy 5; Numbers
- Week 7 T 10/13 Priestly traditions; discussion of midterm
 Read: Collins ch.7; Exodus 25-40; Leviticus

 Th 10/15 Israelite and Judean religion
 Read: citations on handout (sakai)
- Week 8 T 10/20 midterm

- Th 10/22 Deuteronomy; Deuteronomistic ideology; covenants
Read: Collins ch.8; Deuteronomy; Miller/Hayes pp.221-258
- Week 9 T 10/27 Joshua; the promise land
Read: Collins ch.9; Joshua; Miller/Hayes pp.84-118
- Th 10/29 Period of the Judges; settlement
Read: Collins ch.10; Judges
- Week 10 T 11/3 Samuel
Read: Collins ch.11; 1 Samuel; Miller/Hayes pp.119-134
- Th 11/5 Saul; kingship in Israel
Read: (review) Collins ch.11; 1 Samuel 8-31; Miller/Hayes pp.134-147
- Week 11 T 11/10 David; the History of David's Rise
Read: Collins p.120-124; 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 5
- Th 11/12 Court History of David
Read: Collins ch.12; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2; Miller/Hayes pp.148-185
- Week 12 T 11/17 Solomon
Read: Collins ch.13; 1 Kings 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.186-220
- Th 11/19 The Temple, Jerusalem, Royal ideology of Judah, Davidic covenant
Read: 2 Sam 7; 1 Kgs 6-7; Psalms 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, 132, 78, 89
- Week 13 T 11/24 10th century BCE Judean archeological data (online lecture; no meeting)
- Th 11/ 26 Thanksgiving Break
- Week 14 T 12/1 Exodus and covenant themes in subsequent biblical literature
Read: citations on handout (sakai)
- Th 12/3 Historicity and tradition
Read: Collins, introduction
- Week 15 T 12/8 Consolidation of the HB; use as "scripture"; notions of Torah authority
Read: Collins ch.29
- Th 12/10 Conclusions; discussion of final exam
- Final exam Tuesday, 12/15, 12:00-3:00