

Religion 840:201 and Jewish Studies 563:220
Introduction to the Bible I: Torah and Prose
Fall 2020

Remote Instruction via Sakai

Virtual/Phone meetings by appointment
Virtual Office Hours: Fridays TBD

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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 Lesson 1, and I will share from the Hebrew text as well. You may use an online version if you prefer.
- John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (page numbers listed are based on the 2nd edition, but any edition of the textbook will do)
- Study Guide PDF and additional short readings from Sakai, e.g. copies of ancient inscriptions.
- (recommended) Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd Edition). This 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:

50% Lesson Study Guide Assignments. These take the place of "preparation, attendance, and participation," and include answering reading and video comprehension questions (multiple choice, short answer) for each lesson. Lesson content is delivered asynchronously to allow maximum flexibility for students. Likewise, the suggested weekly schedule (below) is not mandatory; students may pace themselves as needed, considering your responsibilities and the uncertainties of our current situation.

25% Midterm exam. Due to remote instruction, exam will be open book and open note.

25% Final exam. Due to remote instruction, exam will be open book and open note.

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

Lesson topics and readings and suggested weekly schedule:

Week 1 Lesson 1: What is the academic study of religion? How do people study the bible?
(9/1-4)

Week 2 Lesson 2: What is the Hebrew Bible? Key terms and concepts
(9/8-11) Read: Collins, Introduction

Lesson 3: The ancient Near East; overview of political and geographical setting
Read: Collins ch.1, p.17-20; Miller/Hayes pp.1-29

Week 3 Lesson 4: Ancient Near Eastern literature and religion
(9/14-18) Read: Collins ch.1, p.20-29

Lesson 5: Epigraphic and archaeological evidence for early Israel
Read: texts on sakai; Miller/Hayes pp.30-60

Week 4 Lesson 6: Nature of the Pentateuch; stories of creation and flood
(9/21-25) Read: Collins ch.2-3; Genesis 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.61-83

Lesson 7: Abraham; covenants
Read: Collins ch.4; Genesis 12-22

Week 5 Lesson 8: Ancestor stories; Isaac and Ishmael; Jacob and Esau
(9/28-10/2) Read: Gen 23-36

Lesson 9: the Joseph story
Read: Gen 37-50

Week 6 Lesson 10: Moses; the exodus; covenants
(10/5-9) Read: Collins ch.5; Exodus 1-15:21

Lesson 11: Legal traditions; wilderness wandering
Read: Collins ch.6; Exodus 15-24, 32, 34; Deuteronomy 5; Numbers

Week 7 Lesson 12: Priestly traditions; discussion of midterm
(10/12-16) Read: Collins ch.7; Exodus 25-40; Leviticus

Midterm

- Week 8 (10/19-23) Lesson 13: Deuteronomy; Deuteronomistic ideology; covenants
Read: Collins ch.8; Deuteronomy; Miller/Hayes pp.221-258
- Lesson 14: Joshua; the “promised” land
Read: Collins ch.9; Joshua; Miller/Hayes pp.84-118
- Week 9 (10/26-30) Lesson 15: Period of the Judges; settlement
Read: Collins ch.10; Judges
- Lesson 16: Samuel
Read: Collins ch.11; 1 Samuel; Miller/Hayes pp.119-134
- Week 10 (11/2-6) Lesson 17: Saul; kingship in Israel
Read: (review) Collins ch.11; 1 Samuel 8-31; Miller/Hayes pp.134-147
- Lesson 18: David; the History of David’s Rise
Read: Collins p.144-160; 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 5
- Week 11 (11/9-13) Lesson 19: Court History of David
Read: Collins ch.12; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2; Miller/Hayes pp.148-185
- Lesson 20: Solomon
Read: Collins ch.13; 1 Kings 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.186-220
- Week 12 (11/16-20) Lesson 21: Archeological data from 10th century BCE Judah and Israel
- Lesson 22: 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 (11/23-25) Lesson 23: Exodus and covenant themes in subsequent biblical literature
Read: text search exercise
- Thanksgiving Break
- Week 14 (11/30-12/4) Lesson 24: Historicity and tradition
Read: Collins, introduction
- Lesson 25: Consolidation of the HB; use as “scripture”; Torah authority

Read: Collins ch.29

Week 15 Conclusions; discussion of final exam
(12/7-10)

Final exam (exam week = 12/15-22)

Core Curriculum 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.