

Religion 840:201:03
Hebrew Bible
Fall 2013

Professor Debra Ballentine
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Loree Building, office 132
Office Hours: Thursdays 11:00-12:00

Class Meeting: M, Th 9:15-10:35
Hickman Hall 205

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 history of ancient Israel and Judah. 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.

Required books:

The Hebrew Bible. NJPS or NRSV versions. We will discuss various versions in class. It can be interesting to have several versions for comparison, 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* (Fortress Press, 2007)

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; Thursday Oct. 24

45% Final exam; Friday Dec. 20, 4:00-7:00pm

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

Provisional Schedule, Topics, and Readings:

- Week 1 Th 9/5 What is the academic study of religion? How do people study the bible?
- Week 2 M 9/9 What is the Hebrew Bible? Some key terms and concepts
Read: Collins, Introduction
- Th 9/12 The ancient Near East; overview of political and geographical setting
Read: Collins ch.1; Miller/Hayes pp.1-29
- Week 3 M 9/16 Epigraphic and Archaeological Evidence for early Israel
Read: texts on sakai; Miller/Hayes pp.30-60
- Th 9/19 Israel's Foundational Narrative: creation, flood
Read: Collins ch.2-3; Genesis 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.61-83
- Week 4 M 9/23 Foundational Narrative, continued: Abraham, ancestor stories
Read: Collins ch.4; Genesis 12-50
- Th 9/26 Foundational Narrative, continued: Moses, the Exodus
Read: Collins ch.5; Exodus 1-15:21
- Week 5 M 9/30 The 10 Commandments; Wilderness Wanderings
Read: Collins ch.6; Exodus 15-24, 32, 34; Deuteronomy 5; Numbers (narrative)
- Th 10/3 Priestly Traditions
Read: Collins ch.7, Exodus 25-40; Leviticus
- Week 6 M 10/7 Joshua, the Land
Read: Collins ch.9; Joshua; Miller/Hayes pp.84-118
- Th 10/10 Period of Judges; Kingship in Israel; Saul
Read: Collins ch.10-11; Judges; 1 Samuel; Miller/Hayes pp.119-147
- Week 7 M 10/14 David
Read: Collins ch.12; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2; Miller/Hayes pp.148-185
- Th 10/17 Solomon; discussion of midterm
Read: Collins ch.13; 1 Kings 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.186-220
- Week 8 M 10/21 The Temple, Jerusalem, Royal Psalms
Read: 1 Kgs 6-7; 2 Sam 7; Psalms 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122; Psalms 132, 78, 89
- Th 10/24 midterm exam

- Week 9: M 10/28 Prophets and Prophecy in Israel and Judah
Read: Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1:1-10; 2 Kgs 9:1-13; 1 Kgs 22:15-28; Jer 23:16-22
- Th 10/31 Deuteronomy, Deuteronomistic Ideology
Read: Collins ch.8; Deuteronomy; Miller/Hayes pp.221-258
- Week 10 M 11/4 Separate Kingdoms; Deuteronomistic History
Read: Collins ch.14; 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17; Miller/Hayes pp.259-391
- Th 11/7 Amos, Hosea, Isaiah; Hezekiah; Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem
Read: Collins ch.15-16; Amos; Hosea; 2 Kgs 18-21; Isa 36-39; 2 Chron 29-32; Miller/Hayes 392-438
- Week 11 M11/11 Josiah; Finding Deuteronomy
Read: 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 33-35; Miller/Hayes pp.439-477
- Th 11/14 Fall of Jerusalem; Responses to Crisis: Jeremiah; Lamentations; Ezekiel
Read: Collins ch.17-18; 2 Kgs 24-25; 2 Chron 36; Jer; Lam; Ezek; Ps 79; Ps 137; Miller/Hayes pp.478-497
- Week 12 M 11/18 Babylonian Exile and Return
Read: Collins ch.19-20; Isaiah 35, 40-55; 2 Chron 36; Miller/Hayes pp. 498-540
- Th 11/21 Rebuilding the Temple; Reconstituting the Community
Read: Collins ch.21-22; Ezra; Nehemiah
- Week 13 M 25, T 26 Biblical Archaeology Society lectures (online), watch on your own
- Th 28 no class-Thanksgiving break
- Week 14 M 12/2 Wisdom Literature, Songs, and Stories
Read: Collins ch.23-26; Psalms 23, 24, 78, 136; Proverbs 15; Ecclesiastes 2-3; Job 1-3, 40-42; Jonah
- Th 12/5 Greek Empire; Apocalyptic Traditions
Read: Collins ch.27; Isa 24-27; Daniel 7-12
- Week 15: M 12/9 Consolidation of the Hebrew Bible; HB as Scripture; Canonization
Read: Collins ch.28-29

Final exam, Friday Dec. 20 4:00-7:00pm