

Religion 840:206:01 (cross-listed 563:206:01)
Introduction to the Bible II: Prophets and Poetry
Spring 2015

Professor Debra Ballentine
Class Meeting: T, Th 1:10-2:30pm
Hardenburgh Hall A1

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm or by appt

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. This semester we analyze biblical prophecy and poetry in its historical contexts after the reign of Solomon through the final consolidation of the Hebrew Bible. Intro to Bible I, which you are welcome to take another semester, analyzes biblical foundational stories from creation through the reign of king Solomon. 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* (2007) or the (2014) 2nd edition.
- 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
- 45% Final exam

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 1/20 What is the academic study of religion? How do people study the bible?

Th 1/22 What is the Hebrew Bible? Key terms and concepts

Read: Collins, Introduction

Week 2

T 1/27 The ancient Near East and ancient Mediterranean political and geographical setting

Read: Collins ch.1; Miller/Hayes pp.1-29

Th 1/29 The foundational story; Israelite and Judean historiography

Read: Psalm 78; Psalm 105; Nehemiah 9; Collins, "Israel" (Sakai resources) or skim Collins ch.2-13

Week 3

T 2/3 Prophets and Prophecy in Israel and Judah

Read: Exodus 1-4; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1:1-10; 2 Kings 9:1-13; 1 Kgs 22:15-28; Jer 23:16-22

Th 2/5 Professor has Jury Duty - no class meeting

Watch: Eric Cline, "The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel Aren't Lost" *Biblical Archeology Society* online archive, available through Rutgers Library

Week 4

T 2/10 Separate Kingdoms; Deuteronomistic History; Court prophets

Read: Collins ch.13; 1 Kings 1-16; 2 Sam 7, 11-12

Th 2/12 Elijah and Elisha Narratives

Read: Collins ch.14; 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 13; Miller/Hayes pp.259-391

Week 5

T 2/17 Elijah and Elisha (continued)

Th 2/19 Amos, Hosea

Read: Collins ch.15; Amos; Hosea; 2 Kgs 14-17

Week 6

T 2/24 Amos and Hosea (continued)

Th 2/26 Isaiah; Hezekiah; Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem

Read: Collins ch.16; Isaiah 1-39; 2 Kgs 18-21; 2 Chron 29-32; Miller/Hayes 392-438

Week 7

T 3/3 Isaiah (continued)

Th 3/5 Josiah; Finding Deuteronomy

Read: 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 33-35; Miller/Hayes pp.439-477

Week 8

T 3/10 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

Th 3/12 Responses to Exile (continued)

Week 9

T 3/17 Spring Break

Th 3/19 Spring Break

Week 10

T 3/24 Babylonian Exile and Return; Second Isaiah

Read: Collins ch.19; Isaiah 35, 40-55; 2 Chron 36; Miller/Hayes pp. 498-540

Th 3/26 Exile and Return (continued)

Week 11

T 3/31 Postexilic Prophecy

Read: Collins ch.20 and pp.204-205; Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, Isaiah 56-66

Th 4/2 Postexilic prophecy (continued)

Week 12

T 4/7 Rebuilding the Temple; Reconstituting the Community

Read: Collins ch.21; Ezra; Nehemiah

Th 4/9 Chronicles, historiography, and the foundational narrative

Read: Collins ch.22; 1 and 2 Chronicles

Week 13

T 4/14 Songs and Wisdom Literature

Read: Collins ch.23-25; Psalms 23, 24, 78, 136; Proverbs 15; Ecclesiastes 2-3; Job 1-3, 40-42

Th 4/16 Hebrew Short Stories

Read: Collins ch.26; Ruth, Jonah, Esther

Week 14

T 4/21 Greek Empire; Apocalyptic Traditions

Read: Collins ch.27 and pp.206-207; Isa 24-27; Daniel 7-12

Th 4/23 Deuterocanonical books

Read: Collins p.288-ch.28

Week 15

T 4/28 Consolidation of the Hebrew Bible; HB as Scripture; Canonization

Read: Collins ch.29

Th 4/30 Conclusions, discussion of final exam

Final exam: Friday May 8, 8:00-11:00am