

HRS 121: HEBREW BIBLE
SPRING 2009
SECTION 1: MONDAY 6:00-8:50
MENDOCINO HALL 4004
DR. PHILIP C. DIMARE

OFFICE: Mendocino 2012

OFFICE HOURS: MW: 1:30-2:30; F: 9:00-11:00;
or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION:

Survey of the historical narratives and other literature of the Bible, analysis of archeological evidence and introduction to the basic problems of textual criticism. Topics of study will include the origins and development of early Judaism and its interaction with surrounding cultures.

Note: this course fulfills three units of the General Education C4 requirement.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS:

As the Catalogue Description suggests, "Hebrew Bible" is a course that examines the so-called "Old Testament" from both an historical and literary perspective. It is analytical in approach, and thus will address issues such as archeological evidence and textual criticism. The context of this analysis will be that of Israelite society prior to the Common Era. As such, this course is oriented toward the *academic study of the Hebrew Bible*. It is not a course that seeks to deepen the faith experiences of students, although this would certainly be a positive result; and it is also not a course that seeks to "tear down" the faith experiences of students. Neither of these approaches is appropriate for the academic study of religion, whether related to sacred texts or not. With this in mind, classroom discussions will concentrate on the cultural experiences and perspectives of *ancient* Israel, and will therefore presuppose that the only appropriate frame of cultural reference will be that of ancient Israelite thought. No later system of theological reference will be introduced into our discussions, nor will allegorical or typological interpretations of Biblical texts (usually grounded in post-Biblical theological assumptions) be acceptable as a basis for discussion. This rule applies to *all* later systems of theological reference, whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim.

Our goal here, then, will be to explore the evolution of early Israelite culture, paying particular attention to the underlying assumptions of Biblical historiography, and to the study of parallel texts and cultural artifacts in contemporary societies of the Ancient Near East. Consideration

will also be given to questions surrounding the Canon itself, as well as to the central themes of Covenant, Election, and Redemption.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be exposed to the historical and cultural influences that have played significant roles in the evolution of the values, beliefs and ideas of Western societies, through the study of significant historical, literary, and religious texts
2. Students will acquire a familiarity with the theories and methods of the social sciences in order to enhance their understandings of the major institutions in our society, and the roles that both individuals and groups play in shaping experience
3. Students will achieve a thorough familiarity with the diverse genres of biblical literature
4. Students will come to an understanding of the historical/cultural interaction between ancient Israel and its neighbors
5. Students will acquire an historically informed view of the problems of text-dating, audience reception and authorship that have been raised by contemporary scholars

REQUIRED READINGS:

Stephen Harris and Robert Platzner: *The Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*
Jewish Publication Society: *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures*

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) You are required to do all readings and come to class prepared to discuss the material assigned for that session.
- 2) You will submit twelve questions and short answers (1 to 1 ½ pages) dealing with assigned reading material (see “Question Due Dates” below for due dates). You should take these question and answer assignments seriously; use them to help you to understand the material more thoroughly and to prepare yourself for your exams. They should be well-reasoned inquiries that are stylistically and grammatically appropriate. These questions will be worth ten (10) points each, for a total of 120 total points. Students will be asked to present at least one of their questions/answers in class. **All questions must be submitted in class on the day that they are due! Questions will not be accepted by e-mail. In order to receive credit for these assignments, you must attend the full class session—don’t leave papers on the table in front of the room and leave before class begins; and don’t leave after the break!**
- 3) You will be given two in-class essay exams during the course of the semester. (See “Exam Dates” section below for exam dates.) These exams will ask you to discuss and analyze material we have read and covered in class to that point in the semester. You will be given an exam prompt at least one week prior to each exam. These exams will be worth fifty (50) points each, for a total of one hundred (100) points.
- 4) You will submit a 4-5-page paper at the end of the term. (See “Paper Due Date” section below for due date.) You will be given an extensive prompt explaining what is required for this paper at least two weeks before it is due. This paper will be worth eighty (80) points.

- 5) Although I do not have a formal participation grade beyond your presentation, I am a big fan of discussion, and your questions and comments may convince me that you deserve a higher grade.

GRADING:

Questions: 130 points
 Exams: 90 points
 Paper: 80 points
Total: 300 points

Exam Dates:

First Exam: Monday, March 9
 Second Exam: Monday, April 20

Paper Due Date: Monday, May 18

Grade Breakdown:

300-285: A
 284-270: A-
 269-264: B+
 263-255: B
 254-240: B-
 239-234: C+
 233-225: C
 224-210: C-
 209-204: D+
 203-195: D
 194-180: D-
 179-0: F

Question Due Dates:

Question 1: February 2
 Question 2: February 9
 Question 3: February 16
 Question 4: February 23
 Question 5: March 2
 Question 6: March 16
 Question 7: March 23
 Question 8: April 6
 Question 9: April 13
 Question 10: April 27
 Question 11: May 4
 Question 12: May 11

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICIES:

Cell Phones are not permitted for use in classroom during class sessions unless there is an emergency. This includes listening to messages, texting, e-mailing, etc. Turn phones to vibrate when you enter the room. If you are using a Cell Phone in the classroom during a class session you will be asked to leave the room for the rest of the session. You may use a computer in class to take notes or to check relevant course material. If you have other work to do on your computer, or simply want to play games or watch videos, do those things somewhere else!

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

The Sac State Catalogue says the following about Academic Honesty:

The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that faculty, staff, and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades. Students are expected to know and abide by university policy about cheating, including plagiarism. The entire document, Policies and Procedures Regarding Academic Honesty, may be found on the university's web site.

Cheating will not be tolerated in this course. If you cheat by using disallowed sources, copying from someone else's paper, or plagiarizing, you will receive a failing grade for the course. You are also subject to being expelled from the university. [University Policy Manual](#)
[Library's Plagiarism Website](#)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION POLICY

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). For more information please visit the [SSWD website](http://www.csus.edu/sswd/) (<http://www.csus.edu/sswd/>). They are located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

SAC STATE LIBRARY

As a Sac State student you have access to the various resources offered by the library such as book checkout, study areas, computer labs, online tutorials, research databases, etc. To learn more about available resources visit the [Sac State Library](http://library.csus.edu/) website (<http://library.csus.edu/>).

STUDENT COMPUTING LABS

Students can use any of the IRT managed student computer labs on campus. Visit the [University Labs website](http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm) (<http://www.csus.edu/uccs/labs/generalinfo/about.stm>) for information about locations, hours, and resources available.

SOME HELPFUL WEBSITES:

- [The APA Website](http://www.apa.org/) (<http://www.apa.org/>)
- [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/) – OWL (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>)
- [Sac State Library](http://library.csus.edu/) (<http://library.csus.edu/>)
- [Sac State Research Guides](http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/) (<http://db.lib.csus.edu/guides/>)

COURSE OUTLINE:**Week One: January 26****Introduction to Course****Topic for discussion: The Hebrew Bible in Context**

- “Old Testament” and “Hebrew Bible”
- The Tanak
- The God/Human Relationship
- Sealing a Covenant
- The Canon of the Hebrew Bible
- The Ancient Near East
- The God of Israel
- The Books of Moses
- The Books of Torah

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 1: The Hebrew Bible

Chapter 2: The Process of Formation

Chapter 3: The Ancient Near East

Chapter 4: The Archaeology

Chapter 5: The God of Israel

Chapter 6: Who Wrote the “Books of Moses”?

Chapter 7: The Five Books of Torah (Divine Instruction)

Week Two: February 2**Topic for discussion: The Book of *Genesis***

- The Primeval History
- The Story of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 8: In the Beginning: The Book of Genesis

Genesis: 1-35; 37-48; 50**Question 1: Due February 2****Week Three: February 9****Topic for discussion: An Israelite “Exodus”**

- Israel Enslaved in Egypt
- Moses and YHWH
- The Flight from Egypt
- Wandering Toward the Promised Land
- Theophany at Sinai/Horeb

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*Chapter 9: Freedom and Responsibility: The Book of *Exodus**Exodus*: 1-15; 19-24; 32-34**Question 2: Due February 9**

Week Four: February 16**Topic for discussion: An Israelite “Exodus” (cont. from Week Three)****Read:** Continue reading from Week Three**Question 3: February 16****Week Five: February 23****Topic for discussion: The Regulation of the Divine/Human Bond**

- Holiness
- Transgression and Sacrifice
- The Establishment of Purity Laws
- Rituals of Atonement
- Leviticus and Deuteronomistic History
- Israel in the Desert
- The Conception of God in *Numbers*

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*Chapter 10: Regulating the Divine-Human Bond: The Books of *Leviticus* and *Numbers**Leviticus*: 11-12; 18-20; 23-25*Numbers*: 13-14; 16-17; 22-24**Question 4: February 23****Week Six: March 2****Topic for discussion: A New “Book of Law”**

- The Deuteronomic View of History
- Good King Josiah
- Covenant Renewal and National Restoration
- The Death of Moses

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*Chapter 11: A Mosaic Legacy: The Book of *Deuteronomy**Deuteronomy*: 4-11; 24-25; 28-31**Question 5: Due March 2****Week Seven: March 9****Topics for discussion: Israel’s Origins and the Rise of YHWH’s Warriors**

- A “Deuteronomistic History”
- Historical Origins of Ancient Israel
- Myth and History
- The Conquest of Canaan
- The Conquest as Holy War

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 12: Introduction to the Deuteronomistic History

Chapter 13: The Origins of Israel: The Book of *Joshua*Chapter 14: YHWH’s Warriors: The Book of *Judges**Joshua*: 1-2; 6; 10; 24*Judges*: 1-8; 11-16**First Exam: March 9**

Week Eight: March 16**Topic for discussion: Monarchical Beginnings**

- Samuel and Saul
- Saul's Reign
- The Great King David
- From Tribal Organization to Monarchy

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 15: The Birth of the Monarchy: The Books of *1 and 2 Samuel*

1 Samuel: 1-10; 15-31

2 Samuel: 1-7; 11-19

Question 6: Due March 16**Week Nine: March 23****Topic for discussion: The Struggles of “Two Kingdoms”**

- Two Editions of Deuteronomistic History
- The Glorious and Tragic Reign of Solomon
- The Death of Solomon
- The Kingdom Divides
- The Prophets Elijah and Elisha
- The Assyrian Invasion
- Judah Stands Alone
- Josiah as the Deuteronomistic Hero
- The Final Days of Judah
- The People and YHWH

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 16: Parallel Stories of Israel and Judah: The Books of *1 and 2 Kings*

1 Kings: 1-3; 8-11; 17-21

2 Kings: 2; 17-19; 22-23

Question 7: Due March 23**SPRING BREAK: MARCH 30-APRIL 5, NO CLASSES****Week Ten: April 6****Topics for discussion: Prophecy, Amos, and Hosea**

- The “Spokespersons of God”
- Forms and Characteristics of Prophecy
- The Historical Amos
- The Historical Context of Hosea

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 17: The Nature and Function of Israelite Prophecy

Chapter 18: Prophets to the Northern Kingdom: The Books of *Amos* and *Hosea*

Question 8: April 6

Week Eleven: April 13**Topic for discussion: The Crisis of the “Northern Kingdom”**

- The Assyrian Crisis
- Isaiah of Jerusalem

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 19: The Assyrian Crisis: Isaiah of Jerusalem, Micah, Zephaniah, and Nahum
Isaiah: 1-13; 24-25; 40-45; 49-53; 60-66

Question 9: April 13**Week Twelve: April 20****Topics for discussion: The Rise of Babylonia and the Prophecy of Jeremiah and Ezekiel**

- The Structure of Jeremiah
- Exile, Restoration, and Covenant Renewal
- Ezekiel’s Prophetic Warnings
- Israel’s Redemption and Individual Responsibility

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 20: The Babylonian Threat: The Books of *Jeremiah*, *Habakkuk*, and *Obadiah*
 Chapter 21: Prophets in Exile: The Book of *Ezekiel* and Second *Isaiah*
Jeremiah: 1-7; 23-31
Ezekiel: 1-11; 18; 37

Second Exam: April 20**Week Thirteen: April 27****Topic for Discussion: The Psalms**

- Hebrew Poetry
- The Book of *Psalms* and Davidic Authorship
- Categories of Psalms

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 25: Worshiping at the Second Temple: Hebrew Poetry and the Book of Psalms
Psalms: Selected Readings Announced in Class

Question 10: Due April 27**Week Fourteen: May 4****Topics for discussion: Job and Ecclesiastes**

- Issues in a Postexilic Age
- Job’s Existential Anguish
- YHWH’s Whirlwind
- The Limits of Human Understanding

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 26: Israel’s Wisdom Writers: The Books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes
Job: Entire Book
Ecclesiastes: Selected Readings Announced in Class

Question 11: Due May 4

Week Fifteen: May 11

Topic for discussion: An Alternative History

- The History in Chronicles
- From Solomon to Hezekiah
- The Placement of Chronicles in the Canon

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 28: Reinterpreting Israel's History: The Books of *1 and 2 Chronicles*

1 Chronicles: 10-23; 29

2 Chronicles: 1-2; 7-8; 12-13; 33-36

Question 12: May 11

Week Sixteen: Finals Week, May 18 - 22

Paper Due: Monday, May 18