

HRS 121: HEBREW BIBLE
DR. PHILIP C. DIMARE
FALL 2008
MENDOCINO HALL 1020; TTH: 9:00-10:15

OFFICE: Mendocino 2012

**OFFICE HOURS: MW: 12:00-2:00; TTH: 12:00-1:00; 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 dealing with assigned reading material. (See “Question Schedule” below for due dates.) These questions will be worth ten (10) points each, for a total of 120 total points. Each student will present one of his or her questions in class during the semester. These presentations will be worth ten (10) points, for a total of ten points. Together, your twelve questions and single presentation will be worth 130 total points. Students will be chosen at random for presentations, so be prepared with your questions. If you miss class with an unexcused absence on the day that you are called on to present, you will lose twenty (20) points. **All questions must be submitted in class on the day that they are due! Questions will not be accepted by e-mail.**
- 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 forty-five (45) points each, for a total of ninety (90) 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:	<u>80 points</u>
Total:	300 points

Exam Dates:

First Exam:	Thursday, October 16
Second Exam:	Thursday, November 20

Paper Due Date: Tuesday, December 16

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:	Thursday, September 11
Question 2:	Thursday, September 18
Question 3:	Thursday, September 25
Question 4:	Thursday, October 2
Question 5:	Thursday, October 9
Question 6:	Thursday, October 23
Question 7:	Thursday, October 30
Question 8:	Thursday, November 6
Question 9:	Thursday, November 13
Question 10:	Tuesday, November 25
Question 11:	Thursday, December 4
Question 12:	Thursday, December 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: September 2 and 4****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

(week one cont.)

- 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 God of Israel

Chapter 5: Who Wrote the “Books of Moses”?

Chapter 6: The Five Books of Torah (Divine Instruction)

Week Two: September 9 and 11

Topic for discussion: The Book of *Genesis*

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

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 7: In the Beginning: The Book of Genesis

Genesis: 1-35; 37-48; 50

Question 1: Due Thursday, September 11

Week Three: September 16 and 18

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 8: Freedom and Responsibility: The Book of *Exodus*

Exodus: 1-15; 19-24; 32-34

Question 2: Due Thursday, September 18

Week Four: September 23 and 25

Topic for discussion: An Israelite “Exodus” (cont. from Week Three)

Read: Continue reading from Week Three

Question 3: Due Thursday, September 25

Week Five: September 30 and October 2

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

(week five cont.)

- The Conception of God in *Numbers*

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 9: 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: Due Thursday, October 2

Week Six: October 7 and 9

Topic for discussion: A New “Book of Law”

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

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 10: A Mosaic Legacy: The Book of *Deuteronomy*

Deuteronomy: 4-11; 24-25; 28-31

Question 5: Due Thursday, October 9

Week Seven: October 14 and 16

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 11: Introduction to the Deuteronomistic History

Chapter 12: The Origins of Israel: The Book of *Joshua*

Chapter 13: YHWH’s Warriors: The Book of *Judges*

Joshua: 1-2; 6; 10; 24

Judges: 1-8; 11-16

First Exam: Thursday, October 16

Week Eight: October 21 and 23

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 14: 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 Thursday, October 23

Week Nine: October 28 and 30**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 15: 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 Thursday, October 30**Week Ten: November 4 and 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 16: The Nature and Function of Israelite Prophecy

Chapter 17: Prophets to the Northern Kingdom: The Books of *Amos* and *Hosea*

Question 8: Thursday, November 6**Week Eleven: November 11 and 13****Topic for discussion: The Crisis of the “Northern Kingdom”**

- The Assyrian Crisis
- Isaiah of Jerusalem

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 18: The Assyrian Crisis: Isaiah of Jerusalem, Micah, Zephaniah, and Nahum

Isaiah: 1-13; 24-25; 40-45; 49-53; 60-66

Question 9: Thursday, November 13**Week Twelve: November 18 and 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

(week twelve cont.)

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 19: The Babylonian Threat: The Books of *Jeremiah*, *Habakkuk*, and *Obadiah*

Chapter 20: Prophets in Exile: The Book of *Ezekiel* and Second Isaiah

Jeremiah: 1-7; 23-31

Ezekiel: 1-11; 18; 37

Second Exam: Thursday, November 20

Week Thirteen: November 25 and 27 (note: no class meeting on the 27th; Thanksgiving Break)

Topic for Discussion: The Psalms

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

Read: *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*

Chapter 24: Worshiping at the Second Temple: Hebrew Poetry and the Book of Psalms

Psalms: Selected Readings Announced in Class

Question 10: Due Tuesday, November 25

Week Fourteen: December 2 and 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 25: Israel's Wisdom Writers: The Books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes

Job: Entire Book

Ecclesiastes: Selected Readings Announced in Class

Question 11: Due Thursday, December 4

Week Fifteen: December 9 and 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 27: 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: Thursday, December 11

Week Sixteen: Finals Week, December 15-19

Paper Due: Tuesday, December 16