

HRS 121: HEBREW BIBLE
FALL 2011
SECTION 1: TU/TH 9:00-10:15
ALPINE HALL 218
DR. PHILIP C. DIMARE

OFFICE: Mendocino Hall 2012

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday/Thursday, 12:15-1:15; Wednesday, 4:30-5:30; OR BY APPOINTMENT

OFFICE PHONE: 278-5040

E-MAIL: dimare@csus.edu

<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/d/dimarep/>

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:

Michael D. Coogan: *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*
 Jewish Publication Society: *Tanakh: Holy Scriptures*
 Richard Friedman: *The Bible with Sources Revealed*

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) You are required to do all readings and come to class prepared to discuss the material assigned for that session. (**Note: All reading assignments for the Friedman text will be made in class.**)
- 2) Students will prepare five (5) comment papers (2 pages) during the course of the semester. (See “Comment Papers” section below.) These comment paper assignments will ask you to discuss and analyze material we have read and covered in class to that point in the semester. These assignments will be worth 20 points each, for a total of 100 points.
- 3) You will submit a 5-6-page paper at the end of the term. (See “Paper Due Date” section below for due date.) You will be given a prompt explaining what is required for this paper at least two weeks before it is due. This paper will be worth one hundred (100) points.
- 4) 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:

Essay Assignments: 100 points
 Final Paper Assignment: 100 points
Total: 200 points

Comment Paper Due Dates:

Comment 1: Tuesday, September 6
 Comment 2: Tuesday, September 20
 Comment 3: Tuesday, October 25
 Comment 4: Tuesday, November 8
 Comment 5: Tuesday, November 29

Grade Breakdown:

200-190: A
 189-180: A-
 179-176: B+
 175-166: B
 165-160: B-
 159-156: C+
 155-146: C
 145-140: C-
 139-136: D+
 135-126: D
 125-120: D-
 129-000: F

Paper Due Date: Tuesday, December 13

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICIES:

Computers, I-Pads, and Cell Phones are not permitted for use in classroom during class sessions unless there is an emergency. In regard to Cell Phones, 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.

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: August 30 and September 1****Introduction to Course****Topic for discussion: The Hebrew Bible in Context**

- “Old Testament” and “Hebrew Bible”
- The Tanakh
- 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: *The Old Testament* (note: this is Coogan’s book, not the Hebrew Bible)

Part One: Introductory

Chapter 1: What is the Old Testament?

Chapter 2: The Promised Land

Week Two: September 6 and 8**Topic for discussion: The Book of Genesis**

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

Read: *The Old Testament*

Part Two: Cosmic Origins

Chapter 3: Creations: Genesis 1-3

Chapter 4: The Formation of the Pentateuch

Chapter 5: Primeval History: Genesis 4-11

Part Three: National Origins

Chapter 6: The Ancestors of Israel: Genesis 12-50

Comment Paper 1, Due: September 6**Week Three: September 13 and 15****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: *The Old Testament*

Part Three: National Origins

Chapter 7: Escape from Egypt: Exodus 1-5

Chapter 8: From Egypt to Sinai: Exodus 16-24

Chapter 9: Law and Ritual Exodus: 20:22-23:33, 25-40

Week Four: September 20 and 22**Topic for discussion: An Israelite “Exodus” (cont. from Week Three)****Read:** Continue reading from Week Three**Comment Paper 2, Due: September 20****Week Five: September 27 and 29****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: *The Old Testament*

Chapter 10: Ritual and Holiness, Leviticus

Chapter 11: In the Wilderness, Numbers

Week Six: October 4 and 6**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: *The Old Testament*

Chapter 12: The End of the Journey to the Promised Land, Deuteronomy

Week Seven: October 11 and 13**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: *The Old Testament*

Chapter 13: Joshua and the Conquest of the Land of Canaan, Joshua

Chapter 14: The Emergence of Israel in the Land of Canaan, Judges and Ruth

Week Eight: October 18 and 20**Topic for discussion: Monarchical Beginnings**

- Samuel and Saul
- Saul’s Reign

- The Great King David
- From Tribal Organization to Monarchy

Read: *The Old Testament*

Part Four: Kings and Prophets

Chapter 15: The Establishment of the Monarchy, 1 Samuel

Chapter 16: The Reign of David, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings 1-2, and Psalm 89

Week Nine: October 25 and 27

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: *The Old Testament*

Chapter 17: The Reign of Solomon, 1 Kings 1-11 and Psalm 89

Chapter 18: The Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah from the Late Tenth to the Early Eighth

Century BCE 1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 14

Comment Paper 3, Due: October 25

Week Ten: November 1 and 3

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: *The Old Testament*

Chapter 19: The Northern Kingdom of Israel in the Eighth Century BCE, 2 Kings 14-17, Amos and Hosea

Week Eleven: November 8 and 10

Topic for discussion: The Crisis of the “Northern Kingdom”

- The Assyrian Crisis
- Isaiah of Jerusalem

Read: *The Old Testament*

Chapter 20 The Kingdom of Judah in the Eighth and Early Seventh Centuries BCE,

2 Kings 15-20, 2 Chronicles 29-32, Isaiah 1-39, and Micah

Comment Paper 4, Due: November 8

Week Twelve: November 15 and 17**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: *The Old Testament*

Chapter 21: Judah in the Seventh Century BCE: The End of the Assyrian Domination 2 Kings 21-23, 2 Chronicles 33-35, Zephaniah, Nahum, and the Prayer of Manasseh

Chapter 22: The Fall of Jerusalem, 2 Kings 23:31-25:30, 2 Chronicles 36, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and the Letter of Jeremiah

Part Five: Exile and Return

Chapter 23: After the Fall: Jews in Judah and Babylon, Lamentations, Psalm 137, Obadiah, and Ezekiel

Chapter 24: Return from Exile Ezra 1-2, and Isaiah 34-35 and 40-55

Part Six: Reconstruction and Consolidation

Chapter 25: The Early Restoration: Ezra 3-6, 1 Esdras, Haggai, Zechariah 1-8, Isaiah 56-66

Chapter 26: Judah in the Fifth Century BCE: Ezra 7-10, Nehemiah, Isaiah 24-27, Zechariah 9-14, Joel, Malachi, and 2 Esdras

Week Thirteen: November 22 and 24 (note: no class meeting on November 24, Thanksgiving holiday)**Topic for Discussion: The Psalms**

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

Read: *The Old Testament*

Chapter 27: Traditions Rewritten and Consolidated: 1-2 Chronicles, Psalms, and Proverbs

Week Fourteen: November 29 and December 1**Topics for discussion: Job and Ecclesiastes**

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

Read: *The Old Testament*

Part Seven: Controversy and Challenge

Chapter 28: Dissidents and Lovers: Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon

Chapter 29: Encounters with the Greeks: 1-2 Maccabees, Baruch, Sirach, The Wisdom of Solomon, and 4 Maccabees

Chapter 30: Heroes Under Foreign Rulers: Jonah, Esther, Additions to Esther, Judith, Tobit, 3 Maccabees, Daniel, and Additions to Daniel

Comment Paper 5, Due: November 29**Week Fifteen: December 6 and 8****Topic for discussion: An Alternative History****Review****Week Sixteen: Finals Week, December 12-16****Paper Due: Tuesday, December 13**