

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

Religion 840:201:01 cross-listed Jewish Studies 563:220:01 Introduction to the Bible I: Torah and Prose

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 early history of ancient Israel and Judah. This semester we analyze biblical foundational stories from creation through the reign of king David. Intro to Bible II continues from the reign of Solomon through the final consolidation of the Hebrew Bible. 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*
- 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 (Tuesday, October 20, class time)
- 45% Final exam (Tuesday, December 15, 12:00-3:00)

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 9/1 What is the academic study of religion? How do people study the bible?

Th 9/3 What is the Hebrew Bible? Key terms and concepts

Read: Collins, Introduction

Week 2 T 9/8 University operates on a Monday schedule; No class meeting

Th 9/10 The ancient Near East; overview of political and geographical setting

Read: Collins ch.1, p.15-19; Miller/Hayes pp.1-29

Week 3 T 9/15 Ancient Near Eastern literature and religion

Read: Collins ch.1, p.20-27

Th 9/17 Epigraphic and archaeological evidence for early Israel

Read: texts on sakai; Miller/Hayes pp.30-60

Week 4 T 9/22 Nature of the Pentateuch; stories of creation and flood

Read: Collins ch.2-3; Genesis 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.61-83

Th 9/24 Abraham; covenants

Read: Collins ch.4; Genesis 12-22

Week 5 T 9/29 Ancestor stories; Isaac and Ishmael; Jacob and Esau

read: Gen 23-36

Th 10/1 the Joseph story

Read: Gen 37-50

Week 6 T 10/6 Moses; the exodus; covenants

Read: Collins ch.5; Exodus 1-15:21

Th 10/8 Legal traditions; wilderness wandering

Read: Collins ch.6; Exodus 15-24, 32, 34; Deuteronomy 5; Numbers

Week 7 T 10/13 Priestly traditions; discussion of midterm

Read: Collins ch.7; Exodus 25-40; Leviticus

Th 10/15 Israelite and Judean religion

Read: citations on handout (sakai)

Week 8 T 10/20 midterm

Th 10/22 Deuteronomy; Deuteronomistic ideology; covenants
Read: Collins ch.8; Deuteronomy; Miller/Hayes pp.221-258

Week 9 T 10/27 Joshua; the promise land
Read: Collins ch.9; Joshua; Miller/Hayes pp.84-118

Th 10/29 Period of the Judges; settlement
Read: Collins ch.10; Judges

Week 10 T 11/3 Samuel
Read: Collins ch.11; 1 Samuel; Miller/Hayes pp.119-134

Th 11/5 Saul; kingship in Israel
Read: (review) Collins ch.11; 1 Samuel 8-31; Miller/Hayes pp.134-147

Week 11 T 11/10 David; the History of David's Rise
Read: Collins p.120-124; 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 5

Th 11/12 Court History of David
Read: Collins ch.12; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2; Miller/Hayes pp.148-185

Week 12 T 11/17 Solomon
Read: Collins ch.13; 1 Kings 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.186-220

Th 11/19 The Temple, Jerusalem, Royal ideology of Judah, Davidic covenant
Read: 2 Sam 7; 1 Kgs 6-7; Psalms 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, 132, 78, 89

Week 13 T 11/24 10th century BCE Judean archeological data (online lecture; no meeting)

Th 11/ 26 Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 T 12/1 Exodus and covenant themes in subsequent biblical literature
Read: citations on handout (sakai)

Th 12/3 Historicity and tradition
Read: Collins, introduction

Week 15 T 12/8 Consolidation of the HB; use as "scripture"; notions of Torah authority
Read: Collins ch.29

Th 12/10 Conclusions; discussion of final exam

Final exam