

**Religion 840:201:03**  
**Hebrew Bible**  
**Spring 2013**

Professor Debra Ballentine  
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Loree Building, office 132  
Office Hours: Thursdays 9:30-10:30

Class Meeting: T, F 9:15-10:35  
Hickman Hall 214

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. 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.

Required books:

The Hebrew Bible. I recommend the NJPS or NRSV versions. We will discuss various versions in class. It can be interesting to have several versions for comparison, 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* (Fortress Press, 2007)

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* (2<sup>nd</sup> 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:

15% 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.

40% Midterm exam; Tuesday, 3/12

45% Final exam; Tuesday, 5/14 8am-11am

We will adhere to the University's Policy on Academic Integrity.

## Provisional Schedule, Topics, and Readings:

- Week 1      T 1/22 What is the academic study of religion? How do people study the bible?  
  
F 1/25 What is the Hebrew Bible? Some key terms and concepts  
Read: Collins, Introduction
- Week 2      T 1/29 The ancient Near East; overview of political and geographical setting  
Read: Collins ch.1; Miller/Hayes pp.1-29  
  
F 2/1 Epigraphic and Archeological Evidence for early Israel  
Read: texts on Sakai; Miller/Hayes pp.30-60
- Week 3      T 2/5 Israel's Foundational Narrative: creation, flood  
Read: Collins ch.2-3; Genesis 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.61-83  
  
F 2/8 Foundational Narrative, continued: Abraham, ancestor stories  
Read: Collins ch.4; Genesis 12-50
- Week 4      T 2/12 Foundational Narrative, continued: Moses, the Exodus  
Read: Collins ch.5; Exodus 1-15:21  
  
F 2/15 The 10 Commandments; Wilderness Wanderings  
Read: Collins ch.6; Exodus 15-24, 32, 34; Deuteronomy 5; Numbers (narrative)
- Week 5      T 2/19 Priestly Traditions  
Read: Collins ch.7, Exodus 25-40; Leviticus  
  
F 2/22 Joshua, the Land  
Read: Collins ch.9; Joshua; Miller/Hayes pp.84-118
- Week 6      T 2/26 Period of Judges; Kingship in Israel; Saul  
Read: Collins ch.10-11; Judges; 1 Samuel; Miller/Hayes pp.119-147  
  
F 3/1 David  
Read: Collins ch.12; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2; Miller/Hayes pp.148-185
- Week 7      T 3/5 Solomon; discussion of midterm  
Read: Collins ch.13; 1 Kings 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.186-220  
  
F 3/8 The Temple, Jerusalem, Royal Psalms  
Read: 1 Kgs 6-7; 2 Sam 7; Psalms 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122; Psalms 132, 78, 89
- Week 8      T 3/12 midterm exam  
  
F 3/15 Prophets and Prophecy in Israel and Judah  
Read: Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1:1-10; 2 Kgs 9:1-13; 1 Kgs 22:15-28; Jer 23:16-22

## Provisional Schedule, Topics, and Readings:

- Week 9: T 3/19, F 3/22 Spring Break
- Week 10 T 3/26 Deuteronomy, Deuteronomistic Ideology  
Read: Collins ch.8; Deuteronomy; Miller/Hayes pp.221-258
- F 3/29 Separate Kingdoms; Deuteronomistic History  
Read: Collins ch.14; 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17; Miller/Hayes pp.259-391
- Week 11 T 4/2 Amos, Hosea, Isaiah; Hezekiah; Sennacherib's Seige of Jerusalem  
Read: Collins ch.15-16; Amos; Hosea; 2 Kgs 18-21; Isa 36-39; 2 Chron 29-32; Miller/Hayes 392-438
- F 4/5 Josiah; Finding Deuteronomy  
Read: 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 33-35; Miller/Hayes pp.439-477
- Week 12 T 4/9 Fall of Jerusalem; Jeremiah; Lamentations  
Read: Collins ch.17; 2 Kgs 24-25; 2 Chron 36; Jeremiah; Lamentations; Psalm 79
- F 4/12 Babylonian Exile; Ezekiel  
Read: Collins ch.18; Psalm 137; Ezekiel; Obadiah; Miller/Hayes pp.478-497
- Week 13 T 4/16 Return from Exile; Rebuilding the Temple  
Read: Collins ch.19-20; Isaiah 35, 40-55; 2 Chron 36; Miller/Hayes pp. 498-540
- F 4/19 Ezra; Nehemiah; Reconstituting the Community  
Read: Collins ch.21-22
- Week 14 T 4/23 Wisdom Literature, Songs, and Stories  
Read: Collins ch.23-26; Psalms 1, 23, 24, 136; Proverbs 15; Ecclesiastes 3; Job 1-2, 29-42; Jonah
- F 4/26 Greek Empire; Apocalyptic Traditions  
Read: Collins ch.27; Daniel 7-12
- Week 15: T 4/30 Consolidation of the Hebrew Bible; HB as Scripture; Canonization  
Read: Collins ch.28-29
- F 5/3 Final observations

Final exam Tuesday, May 14, 8am-11am