

Religion 840:201:01
(cross-listed 563:220:01)
Introduction to the Bible I: Torah and Prose
Fall 2014

Professor Debra Ballentine
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-1:30
Loree Building, office 132

Class Meeting: Mondays, Wednesdays 3:55-5:15 - Ruth Adams Building 206

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* (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* (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 – Monday 10/20

45% Final exam - Friday 12/19 12-3pm

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

W 9/3 What is the academic study of religion? How do people study the bible?

Week 2

M 9/8 What is the Hebrew Bible? Key terms and concepts

Read: Collins, Introduction

W 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

M 9/15 Ancient Near Eastern literature and religion

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

W 9/17 Epigraphic and archaeological evidence for early Israel

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

Week 4

M 9/22 Nature of the Pentateuch; stories of creation and flood

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

W 9/24 Abraham; covenants

Read: Collins ch.4; Genesis 12-22

Week 5

M 9/29 Ancestor stories; Isaac and Ishmael; Jacob and Esau

Read: Gen 23-36

W 10/1 the Joseph story

Read: Gen 37-50

Week 6

M 10/6 Moses; the exodus; covenants

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

W 10/8 Legal traditions; wilderness wandering

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

Week 7

M 10/13 Priestly traditions; discussion of midterm

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

W 10/15 Israelite and Judean religion

Read: study for midterm

Week 8

M 10/20 midterm

W 10/22 Deuteronomy; Deuteronomistic ideology; covenants

Read: Collins ch.8; Deuteronomy; Miller/Hayes pp.221-258

Week 9

M 10/27 Joshua; the promise land

Read: Collins ch.9; Joshua; Miller/Hayes pp.84-118

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

Week 10

M 11/3 Samuel

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

W 11/5 Saul; kingship in Israel

Read: (review) Collins ch.11; 1 Samuel 8-31; Miller/Hayes pp.134-147

Week 11

M 11/10 David; the History of David's Rise

Read: Collins p.120-124; 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 5

W 11/12 Court History of David

Read: Collins ch.12; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2; Miller/Hayes pp.148-185

Week 12

M 11/17 Solomon

Read: Collins ch.13; 1 Kings 1-11; Miller/Hayes pp.186-220

W 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

M 11/24 Archeological data from 10th century BCE Judah and Israel (online lecture); no class meeting

W 11/26 change of class designation day to Fridays

Week 14

M 12/1 Exodus and covenant themes in subsequent biblical literature

Read: research exercise given previous class

W 12/3 Historicity and tradition

Read: Collins, introduction

Week 15

M 12/8 Consolidation of the HB; use as "scripture"; notions of Torah authority

Read: Collins ch.29

W 12/10 Conclusions; discussion of final exam