

**Religion 840:206**  
**Jewish Studies 563:206**  
**Introduction to the Bible II: Prophets and Poetry**  
**Spring 2021**

**Remote Instruction via Sakai**

Virtual/Phone meetings by appointment  
Virtual Office Hours: Fridays TBD

**Professor Debra Ballentine**

Debra.Ballentine@rutgers.edu

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. This semester we analyze biblical prophecy and poetry in its historical contexts after the reign of Solomon through the final consolidation of the Hebrew Bible. Intro to Bible I, which you are welcome to take another semester, analyzes biblical foundational stories from creation through the reign of king Solomon. 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 Lesson 1, and I will share from the Hebrew text as well. You may use an online version if you prefer.
- John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (page numbers listed are based on the 2nd edition, but any edition of the textbook will do)
- Study Guide PDF and additional short readings from Sakai, e.g. copies of ancient inscriptions.
- (recommended) Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (2nd Edition). This 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:**

50% Lesson Study Guide Assignments. These take the place of "preparation, attendance, and participation," and include answering reading and video comprehension questions (multiple choice, short answer) for each lesson. Lesson content is delivered asynchronously to allow maximum flexibility for students. Likewise, the suggested weekly schedule (below) is not mandatory; students may pace themselves as needed, considering your responsibilities and the uncertainties of our current situation.

25% Midterm exam. Due to remote instruction, exam will be open book and open note.

25% Final exam. Due to remote instruction, exam will be open book and open note.

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

Lesson topics and readings and suggested weekly schedule:

Week 1 (1/19-1/22)

Lesson 1: What is the academic study of religion? How do people study the bible?

Week 2 (1/25-1/29)

Lesson 2: What is the Hebrew Bible? Key terms and concepts

Read: Collins, Introduction

Lesson 3: The ancient Near East and ancient Mediterranean political and geographical setting

Read: Collins ch.1; Miller/Hayes pp.1-29

Week 3 (2/1-2/5)

Lesson 4: The foundational story; Israelite and Judean historiography

Read: Psalm 78; Psalm 105; Nehemiah 9; Collins, "Israel" (Sakai resources) or skim Collins ch.2-13

Lesson 5: Prophets and Prophecy in Israel and Judah

Read: Collins p.187-190 on prophecy; Exodus 1-4; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 1:1-10; 2 Kings 9:1-13; 1 Kgs 22:15-28; Jer 23:16-22

Week 4 (2/8-2/12)

Lesson 6: Separate Kingdoms; Deuteronomistic History

Read: Collins ch.13; 1 Kings 1-16

Lesson 7: Prophets and Kings: divine approval and royal authority; Court prophets

Read: Collins p.150-153 from ch.12; 2 Sam 7, 11-12

Week 5 (2/15-2/19)

Lesson 8: Elijah and Elisha Narratives

Read: Collins ch.14; 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 13; Miller/Hayes pp.259-391

Lesson 9: Jehu's Coup; Fall of Samaria

Read: 2 Kgs 9-17

Week 6 (2/22-2/26)

Lesson 10: Watch: Eric Cline, "The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel Aren't Lost" *Biblical Archeology Society* online archive, available through Rutgers Library

Lesson 11: Amos and Hosea

Read: Collins ch.15; Amos; Hosea

Week 7 (3/1-3/5)

Lesson 12: Isaiah; Hezekiah; Sennacherib's Siege of Jerusalem

Read: Collins ch.16 and review from ch.14 on Sennacherib p.180-183; Isaiah 1-39; 2 Kgs 18-21; 2 Chron 29-32; Miller/Hayes 392-438

Midterm instructions; Review for midterm

Week 8 (3/8-3/12)

Midterm

Lesson 13: Josiah's Reforms; Finding Deuteronomy

Read: Collins ch. 8; 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chronicles 33-35; Miller/Hayes pp.439-477

Spring Break 3/15-3/19

Week 9 (3/22-3/26)

Lesson 14: Fall of Jerusalem

Read: review section from Collins ch.14 on Fall of Judah p.183-184; 2 Kgs 24-25; 2 Chron 36

Lesson 15: Responses to Exile: Jeremiah; Lamentations; Ezekiel

Read: Collins ch.17-18; 2 Kgs 24-25; 2 Chron 36; Jer; Lam; Ezek; Ps 79; Ps 137; Miller/Hayes pp.478-497

Week 10 (3/29-4/2)

Lesson 16: Life in Exile

Read: review prior readings as needed

Lesson 17: Edict of Cyrus

Read: review prior readings as needed

Week 11 (4/5-4/9)

Lesson 18: Second Isaiah and Postexilic Prophecy

Read: Collins ch.19 and ch.20; Isaiah 35, 40-55; 2 Chron 36; Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, Isaiah 56-66; Miller/Hayes pp. 498-540

Lesson 19: Reconstituting the Community; Ezra and Nehemiah

Read: Collins ch.21; Ezra; Nehemiah

Week 12 (4/12-4/16)

Lesson 20: Chronicles, historiography, and the foundational narrative

Read: Collins ch.22; 1 and 2 Chronicles

Lesson 21: Songs and Wisdom Literature

Read: Collins ch.23-25; Psalms 23, 24, 78, 136; Proverbs 15; Ecclesiastes 2-3; Job 1-3, 40-42

Week 13 (4/19-4/23)

Lesson 22: Hebrew Short Stories

Read: Collins ch.26; Ruth, Jonah, Esther

Lesson 23: Greek Empire; Apocalyptic Traditions

Read: Collins ch.27 and pp.248-49; Isa 24-27; Daniel 7-12

Week 14 (4/26-4/30)

Lesson 24: Deuterocanonical books

Read: Collins p.348-54 on 1-2 Maccabees and ch.28

Lesson 25: Consolidation of the Hebrew Bible; HB as Scripture; Canonization

Read: Collins ch.29

Week 15 (5/3)

Conclusions, discussion of final exam

Final exam (exam period = 5/6-5/12)

Core Curriculum 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.