

Bible II: Torah and Israel's History

ECOS 221

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor

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GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

This course interprets the critical events, developing institutions, and traditions of Israel. Attention is given to the earliest Covenants, to the Exodus, to the rise of the monarchy, and to other events up to the eighth-century prophets.

Proceeding canonically through the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy) and the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings), Bible II examines the narrative of the ancient Israelites from its origins through the Fall of Jerusalem as detailed in the Hebrew Bible. Particular attention is given to a) the socio-historical context out of which the biblical text most probably emerged, b) select methods and tools of biblical scholarship, and c) the engagement of modern users with the biblical text.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to introduce some major aspects of the study of the Hebrew Bible. These aspects include:

1. The historical context of the biblical material
2. The methods and tools of biblical scholarship
3. The use of biblical scholarship in modern ministerial settings

Student Learning Goals

As a result of participating in this course, individuals should be able to:

1. Articulate a history of ancient Israel up to the Fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians (not simply the narrative in the text, but the "history behind the text").
2. Identify the geographic location of ancient nations and cities relevant for the study of the Hebrew Bible.
3. Discuss various exegetical methods used for the study of the Hebrew Bible.
4. Identify various tools for the study of the Hebrew Bible.
5. Prepare a ministry tool (sermon, age-appropriate study, interactive experience, workshop, etc.).

Required Resources

Brenner-Idan, Athalya, ed.. *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy (Feminist Companion to the Bible)*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994. ISBN: 978-1850754633

Hamilton, Victor P. *Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2015. ISBN: 978-0801097737

McKenzie, Steven L., *Introduction to the Historical Books: Strategies for Reading*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. ISBN: 978-0802828774

An NRSV Bible

Other resources available via Moodle

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Attendance and Participation (10%)

As this is a participatory-intense course students must: 1) come prepared to discuss all assigned material in an informed, intelligent, critical (wrestling with author's views) manner and 2) take an active role in all group work and communal engagement activities. Class discussions and assignments will focus on the textbooks and other readings/resources as assigned by the instructor. During discussions, we will treat one another's ideas with respect.

Pre-Residential Assignments (50%)

All pre-residential assignments should be submitted to the instructor *as one large PDF file* at krussaw@cts.edu and copy coshomework@garrett.edu by **June 15, 2019**.

This hybrid course requires students to complete some assignments asynchronously before participating in the on-site sessions. These assignments are designed to acquaint students with foundational understandings of the subject matter as well as provide them with opportunities to "test out" different applications of the material. Pre-residential assignments will include creating maps relevant for the study of the Torah and Historical Books, and short essays responding to prompt questions based upon readings and other learning resources.

Time and Space Assignment (10 points)- see handout

Knowledge of the social and historical context of the Hebrew Bible is important for preaching and teaching. This assignment requires students to create timelines and maps for their future use.

Short Essay Assignments (40 points; 10 points/essay)

This assignment requires students to submit short essays based upon required readings and review of other resources provided on Moodle. Students should attend to page limits for each of these essays.

Essay 1 - The World of the Ancient Near East (2-3 pages)

Activity: Watch “World of the Ancient Near East” podcast (YouTube link on Moodle); Read Lenzi “How Does the Hebrew Bible Relate to the Ancient Near Eastern World?” (Moodle upload); Read Gen 1-4; Hamilton chapter 1 “Creation and the Fall”; Read Enuma Elish (Moodle upload)

Respond to two questions:

1. *What is the relationship between the world of the ancient Near East and the world as depicted in the Book of Genesis?*
2. *Hamilton highlights non-biblical creation stories and attends to two stories from Mesopotamia in which creation is a prominent theme. Compare and contrast the biblical creation stories with the relevant portions of Enuma Elish attending to the following:*
 - a. *Portrayal of the deity/deities*
 - b. *Themes of mortality*
 - c. *Role(s) of women/the feminine (2-3 pages)*

Essay 2 - The Law (3-4 pages)

Activity: View the podcasts “Audience of the Ten Commandments,” “Law and the Bible,” and “The Ten Commandments”; Read Exodus 19-24; Read Hamilton chapters 9, 13, and 15 “Law and Covenant,” “Clean and Unclean” and “A Holiness Manifesto”; Read Leviticus 11 -15; Read Be’er “Blood Discharge: On Female Im/Purity in the Priestly Code and in Biblical Narrative”; Read Leviticus 17-26

Respond to two questions:

1. *How- if at all - has female impurity (i.e., menstruation) been presented in your religious context? How does Be’er’s support or challenge these readings? Based upon your reading of portions of the Priestly Code in Leviticus how ought modern readers engage around issues of impurity as presented in the biblical text?*
2. *The laws of Leviticus 18 outlining forbidden sexual relations belong to a larger block of cultic prohibitions known as the “Holiness Code” (Lev 17-26). Consider Leviticus 18 within its larger socio-literary context. Think about who the implied speaker in this passage, who (in detail) the intended audience appears to be, and what segment of Israel’s population (i.e., rich, poor, bureaucrats, scribes, priests, prophets, shepherds, slaves, men, women, urbanites, rural dwellers) benefits from the code and what segment suffers? Answer the following questions: What is the attitude toward human sexuality in Leviticus 18? Are all the prohibitions found in Leviticus 17-26 relevant today? If not, what makes some more relevant than others?*

Essay 3 - The Monarchy (3-4 pages)

Activity: View the two-part podcast "Royal Theology" (YouTube link on Moodle). Read McKenzie chapters 1, 2, 6, and 7 "In Search of the Historical Books," "The Works Behind the Historical Books," "1-2 Samuel," and "1-2 Kings"; Read 1 Samuel - 1 Kings

Respond to two questions:

1. *What are the promises of the Royal Ideology and how does it describe God's relationship to David and to Jerusalem/Zion? How does the Royal Ideology imagine God's relationship to the gods of the nations (see 2 Sa 7).*
2. *The Deuteronomistic Historian ascribes one paradigmatic sin to Solomon (1 Kings 11:5-13), but the previous chapters (1 Kings 3-10) present a genuinely mixed picture of Solomon's tenure. What are the most positive portrayals of Solomon's reign? What are some of the most negative portrayals of Solomon's reign?*

Essay 4 - Looking Forward (1 page)

Having completing these assignments, what is there about the Hebrew Bible that you have not had the opportunity to address? What questions have been raised for you but not yet resolved satisfactorily?

NOTE: Students should submit all pre-residential assignments to the instructor and copy coshomework@garrett.edu.

Quizzes (20%)

Students will demonstrate fluency with Torah and Historical Books material via two (2) 100-point tests. Tests will cover reading material as well as in class lectures and assignments. These tests will be given at the beginning of class during the residential portion of the course. There will be no makeup tests.

Ministry Tool Presentation (20%)

The Ministry Tool Presentation assignment is an opportunity for students to practice using Torah and Historical Books learnings in a context that represents their vocational environment, and to learn from each other.

This project includes two parts: a peer assessment and an in-class presentation. Each student will submit an assessment for each of their colleagues' presentations (50% of assignment grade) in addition to presenting their own ministry tool (50% of assignment grade).

Students will choose a passage from the list below and prepare a short in-class (up to 15 minutes) presentation that demonstrates how you might use your learnings beyond this class. Consider presenting a Bible study, sermon, or workshop exercise. Presentations might explain

the elements of the study, model a portion of a sermon, or discuss a particular aspect of an exercise.

Leviticus 19:1-37
Numbers 22:21-39

Joshua 2:1-24
Ezra 9:1-15

GRADING

Final Grade Calculation

Final grades will follow Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Course of Study grading standards and be calculated thusly:

Grade Calculation		COS Grading Standards	
Assignment	Final Grade	A	Exceeds expectations
Attendance and Participation	10%	B	Expected Quality
Quizzes	20%	C	Passing Work
Ministry Tool Presentation	20%	D	Unacceptable (no credit)
Pre-Residential Assignments	50%	F	Fail

NB (*Nota Bene*, “Note Well”)

All course requirements must be completed to successfully complete the course. Additionally, all assignments must be submitted on the date specified. Requests for extensions are strongly discouraged.

Keep in mind, most conferences require a letter grade of C or better to pass the course.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Inclusive Language

In 1986 the AAR (American Academy of Religion) Publications Committee prepared and approved an Inclusive Language Policy. For the purposes of this policy, exclusive language is defined as a consistent pattern of English usage where the male is taken to be the normative human person; i.e., the word “man” connotes both the male and the human being as such.

Sensitivity to issues of inclusive language is required for all written and oral work related to the course. Students are expected to use inclusive language for God. For example, avoid using only gender specific language for God.

Additionally, this course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Amendments

The professor reserves the right to amend or change this syllabus.

In-Residence Course Schedule

	Focus/Activity
Monday	(Re)Introduction to the Course The Problem* With the Bible Documentary Hypothesis Cognition Check HOMEWORK: Study for Quiz 1
Tuesday	Quiz 1 Exegetical Methods Exodus and Entry
Wednesday	United and Divided Monarchy Judah in the 8 th Century Tools for Study HOMEWORK: Study for Quiz 2 Prepare Ministry Tool presentations
Thursday	Quiz 2 Ministry Tool presentations (part I)
Friday	Ministry Tool presentations (part II) Looking Forward Course Evaluations