Phil. 3510.001  The Hebrew Bible (2017)

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Office Hours -
UNT: Jewish Studies 12:30-1:30 PM Tuesdays
Off Campus: Kol Ami, 1887 Timber Creek Rd., Flower Mound, by appointment.

This course is dedicated to the memory of my Bible teachers:
Dr. Chanah Brichto, z'li; Dr. David Weisberg, z'li; Rabbi David Shor, z'li

The Hebrew Bible or Hebrew Scriptures (known to Christians as the Old Testament) is one of the foundational books of both western literature and world culture, and serves as the basis for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In this course we will survey the biblical literature, acquaint students with theological, literary, and critical methods for the study of the Bible, situate the Bible within the writings and culture of the ancient Near East (ANE), and discuss the religious heritage of ancient Israel. We will deal with questions of metaphysics, myth, narrative and moral theology – what the biblical text meant to its ancient readers, and what meanings it has today - but also with issues of translation and some historical, sociological, and archaeological issues useful to a fuller understanding for the reader. All texts will be read in English translation.

Required Texts:


Class reading packet created by the instructor.

Required Bible text:

-Either-


-Or-

Course outline:

Jan. 17-19. Reading Bible in Academia – heresy or necessity?
    What do we mean when we say “The Bible?”: How Scripture came to be.
    Reader: Megillah 7a; Matthew 21; Baba Batra 14b-15a

Jan. 24. The “Pre-Biblical” Age: The social, religious, and technological context for the
    composition of Scripture.
    Reader: David Sperling, “Israel’s Religion,” Jewish Spirituality I.

    Reader: “On the Problems of Reconstructing Pre-Hellenistic Israelite History.”

On to the reading of the TaNaKH: Passage assignments and readings (note that
    depending on the progress made in class, we may cover more than one topic in a
    class session, so plan on reading ahead).

Jan. 30. Israel within the Ancient Near East: Conservation and Innovation
    Gen. 1,

Feb. 2. Humanity in Microcosm
    Gen. 2-3
    UtHB: Chapter 2

Feb. Feb. 7. Mythic History
    Gen. 6-11
    BttS “Biblical Narrative.”

Feb. 9. Founding Saga – The Patriarchal Narratives
    Gen. 11:27 – 22:19; Gen. 24-35

Feb. 14. The Emerging Person
    Gen. 37-50

Feb. 16. The Master Story – Divine Symmetrics
    Ex. 1-14

Feb. 21. Songs of the Divine Warrior
    Ex. 15-19

Feb. 23 Hidden and Manifest God: Rhetoric of Covenant
    Ex. 20-23:33, 32-34
    BttS: “Biblical Law”
Feb. 28. The Language of Cult and Law  
   Lev. 1, 19, 23, 25  
   UtHB: Chapter 3

Mar. 2. Heroes and Anti-Heroes of the Wild West(ern Asia)  
   Judges 1, 3-5,

Mar. 7. The Failed Utopia.  
   Judges 13-21

March 9. Midterm  
   I Sam. 1-15  
   UtHB: Chapter 4

March 13-19, 2017  
Spring Break (no classes)

March 21 The First Novel?  
   I Sam. 16-31

Mar. 23. Realism and its Discontents  
   II Sam 1-8  
   UtHB: Chapter 5

Mar. 28. Convention and Irony of Kingship and Prophecy  
   I Kings 1-11

Mar. 30. Adventures in Prophecy  
   I Kings 17-19, 21  
   UtHB: Chapter 6

Apr. 4. Typology and Prophecy  
   II Kings 1-10

Apr. 6. The Poetics of Condemnation, messianic promises  
   Isaiah 1-11

BOOK REVIEW OR RESEARCH PAPER DUE April 4

Apr. 11. Lyrics of Consolation  
   Isaiah 41-53, 60  
   Reader: “Biblical Poetry” Back to the Sources

Apr. 13. Eroticism, Death, and Visionary Theater  
   Jeremiah 2; Hosea 1-3; Ezekiel 1, 10, 16, 37
Apr. 18. The Dawn of Apocalypse  
Zechariah 2:4; 9-14

Apr. 20. The Book of Personal Piety  
Psalms 1, 2, 8, 15, 16, 23, 24, 29, 44, 51, 63, 70, 74, 82,  
UtHB: Chapter 8

Apr. 25. Motifs of God and Death  
Psalms 90, 91, 104, 119, 121, 126, 133, 137, 145, 150

Apr. 27. A Common Sense God  
Proverbs 1-9; Job 1-10; Eccl. 1-2  
UtHB: Chapter 7

May 3. Polemical and Satirical Storytelling  
Ruth, Jonah and Esther

Loose end session: The Garden of Metaphor – Song of Songs

Review

May 6-11, 2017 Finals

Things that will help you get through college:

http://theconversation.edu.au/no-youre-not-entitled-to-your-opinion-9978  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mt_VtTnfX2w

Making the Grade:

1. Exams

There will be a mid-term and final. The **midterm will be worth 25% of your grade, the final 30%**. Each exam will consist of multiple choice, term definitions, and passage interpretations.
2. Participation

CLASS PARTICIPATION IS REQUIRED. I expect you to come to class having done each day’s reading and prepared to say something about it. To further this goal, you are required to bring an Entry Ticket to class each day.

3. ENTRY TICKETS. For each class, prepare at least one question or comment about the reading (especially the biblical passages themselves) for that class and hand in a 3x5 index card (no alternative papers – no folded notes, 3M stickies, or 4x6) with your name at the beginning of class. It should always look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question or observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the entry tickets is to get you thinking about the reading and the questions it raises for you, stimulating your participation – not all questions will necessarily be answered directly in class. Periodically, I will read out selected questions to the class. Do not neglect this – the cards I gather will help me determine your participation grade – 20% of the total class grade.

IMPORTANT THINGS FROM PHILOSOPHY DEPT:

- Students are responsible for reading, understanding and knowing UNT’s Academic Dishonesty Policy (pergerism) that can be found at: http://www.vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm
- The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.
- Drop/Withdrawal Information, and other important Academic Dates can be found at: http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html
3A or B. - Book Assignment or Research Paper

You are required to read and review one of the following books or write a short research paper. There are seventy-five (75) choices for review. This review is 25% of your grade.


Fox, Michael V., *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, Madison:


3A. If you choose the Report:
Your report should be a minimum of 1000 words. For bibliographical citations and questions of grammar and style, refer to the Chicago Manual of Style ONLY (gird up your loins, there are websites and programs that will do most of the formatting for you). You may consult the latest editions in Willis Library or in the Department of History library. There is an online edition. http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html

3B. If you choose the Research Paper:
Your research paper should be a minimum 1000(4-5 pages) words. You must use four (4) discrete sources, only one of which can be an internet site. For bibliographical citations and questions of grammar and style, refer to the Chicago Manual of Style (gird up your loins, there are websites and programs that will do most of the formatting for you).
You must select a topic from one of the one listed below THIS IS FOCUSED ENTIRELY ON THE HEBREW BIBLE UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED BY THE TITLE, not later traditions, be they Jewish, Christian, or Islamic, on these topics:

Israelite afterlife
Israelite family
Israelite women, status of
The debate over parallelism (compare and contrast three critics)
The human kingship controversy
Angels and divine beings in HB
Ritual purity in HB
Israelite diet (physical, social, religious dimensions)
The Israelite theory of the body
Birth and abortion in HB
God’s emotions
God’s body
Sacrificial system/cult
Numbers in the HB
Human sacrifice
Attitudes toward Egypt
 Literary Ancient Near Eastern Context (can compare HB to Egyptian or Mesopotamian lit.)
HB Apocalypse and end of the world
Kingship and Messianism in HB
Demons and Spirits in HB
Mythic Creatures in HB
 Debates on dating and chronology of HB
Warfare in HB
Dead Sea Scrolls and HB
Foreign Gods appearing in the HB
Dating the Book of Deuteronomy
Dreams and Omenromancy in the HB
Licit and Illicit Divination and
Manticism in the HB
Calendars and Time in the HB
Typological Scenes
Genealogy
Dating the Exodus
Fasting
Dating a select book of the HB
Idols and Representations of Deity in HB
Humor and Irony in HB

HB as Interpreted in Quran
HB as Interpreted in Christian Scriptures
 Magic and Wondrous Acts (real, fake, or hierarchy?)
Music in the HB
Perception of Nature
Redemption and Divine Ownership
Scientific World View within the HB
Scientific Critique of the Hebrew Bible
Form, Function, and Symbolism of the Tabernacle
Suffering in the HB