

Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)

CSU Chico / Spring 2005

RS/MJIS 122 Tehema 208

Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:30-10:45 a.m.

Instructor: Rabbi Julie Hilton Danan

Office: Trinity 240 x5108

Office hours, Thursday 12:45-1:30 p.m.

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Class Description: The Hebrew Bible is a foundational text of Western Civilization. It is a book of religion and morality, but also a book brimming with timeless accounts of human struggles, foibles, nobility, conflict and drama. In this class we will be introduced to the Hebrew Bible or Tanakh in English translation, with the Hebrew text available for those who wish. This class will emphasize literature, historical background, and Biblical interpretations from classical Jewish sources through modern psychological perspectives. The course includes reading and analyzing extensive portions of the classic text.

Texts:

Required:

The Jewish Study Bible-Featuring the Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, editors; Michael Fishbane, consulting editor (Oxford University Press, 2004). Page numbers cited below refer to this book.

Who Wrote the Bible?, Richard Elliott Friedman (Perennial Library, 1987).

Optional:

Tanakh-Jewish Publication Society Bible, Hebrew-English Edition. (For students who can read Hebrew and wish to refer to the Hebrew text for enrichment.)

For additional information on any topic explored in this course, the following website is recommended: www.myjewishlearning.com

January 25 Introduction to Course; Introduction to Tanakh/Hebrew Bible

January 27 Biblical Interpretation (Reference: "Jewish Interpretation of the Bible," pp. 1827-1919) and discussion of Genesis Ch. 1-4

Class Format after the first week:

Tuesdays: Discuss assigned essays for 10-15 minutes (average of 9 pages each-come to class with a page of notes on the essay and be prepared to discuss)

Thursday: Oral Reports (OR) begin on Feb. 10. Ten minute reports on one chapter.

Tuesdays *and* Thursdays: Discussions on assigned Biblical passages. Come prepared.

Read the introduction to each Biblical book/section from which the passage is assigned

Who Wrote the Bible? Must be read in its entirety by March 8. Come to class with a one-page summary of the book's major points.

Torah (Pentateuch/Five Books of Moses)

Feb. 1 Abraham and Isaac Gen. 11:26-24:67 “The Religion of the Bible”

Feb. 3 Jacob Gen. 25-36 (No Oral Report today)

Feb. 8 Joseph Gen. 37-47 “Concepts of Purity in the Bible”

Feb. 10 Joseph, cont. Gen. 48-50 OR: “The Bible in the Dead Sea Scrolls”

Feb. 15 Exodus-Plagues & Redemption Exodus 1-15

“Historical & Geographical Background to the Bible”

Feb. 17 Exodus-Theophany/10 Commandments Exodus 19-24

OR: “The Bible in the Synagogue”

Feb. 22 Exodus-The Golden Calf Exodus 31-34

“Historical and Geographical Background to the Bible”

Feb. 24 Leviticus-Sacrifices/ Holiness Code/Jubilee Lev. Ch. 1, 19, 25-26

OR “The Bible in the Liturgy”

March 1 Numbers 10-18 Rebellions and Mutinees “Languages of the Bible”

March 3 Deuteronomy 5-14, 21-25 The Shema, Deuteronomy’s theology & laws

OR “The Bible in the Jewish Philosophical Tradition”

March 8 *Who Wrote the Bible*. Come to class with a page summary on the book.

March 10 Midterm

Spring Break

Nevi'im/Prophets

Judges

March 22 Judges Judges 4-8, 11-12 (Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah)

“Textual Criticism of the Bible”

March 24 Judges 13-16; 19-21 (Samson, Civil War)

OR “The Bible in Jewish Mystical Tradition”

Over the next two weeks, we will read Samuel I-II The Saga of Samuel, Saul & David

March 29 I Samuel 1-15 (Samuel & Saul) “The Canonization of the Bible”

March 31 I Samuel 15-31 (Saul & David) OR “The Bible in Israeli Life”

April 5 II Samuel 1:1-19:1 (David & His Sons-The Rebellion of Absalom)

“The Development of the Masoretic Bible”

April 7 II Samuel 19-24 and I Kings 1-2 (David to Solomon)

OR “Jewish Women’s Scholarly Writings on the Bible”

Literary Prophets

April 12 Isaiah 1, 6, 9, 11, 40, 49:14-50, 52-55, 58, 60, 62, 66

Visions of God and Messiah “The Modern Study of the Bible”

April 14 Jeremiah 1-4, Ezekiel 1-3, 37-38 Prophets of Exile

OR “Jewish Translations of the Bible”

Ketuvim/Writings

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| April 19 | Psalms Ch. 8, 19, 23, 27, 84, 90-93, 104,113-118, 121, 133, 136-7, 144-150. "Reading Biblical Poetry" |
| April 21 | Ecclesiastes (entire book) |
| April 26 | Ruth (entire book) (plus read Ezra, Ch. 9-10) |
| April 28 | Song of Songs (entire book) |
| May 3 | Job (entire book) |
| May 5 | Job, cont. |
| May 10 | Esther (entire book) |
| May 12 | Esther, cont. (and Review) |

Grading:

Participation: 25%

Participation includes attendance, one oral report, taking notes (which will be checked off in class) and participating in discussions. "99 % of success is showing up." (Woody Allen). Points may be deducted for more than two unexcused absences.

Midterm: 25%

The Midterm will consist of multiple choice questions on the subject of Torah, topics covered in class and reading, and the book, *Who Wrote the Bible*.

Final: 25%

The Midterm will have the same format as the Midterm, but will focus on Prophets, Writings, and topics covered the second half of the semester.

Research Paper: 25%

Each student will write a research paper of about 1,000 words on a topic not covered in class. It will be due at the time of the final exam.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and cheating constitute grave violations of the academic integrity policy of the Department of Religious Studies and the University. The policy of Religious Studies is that anyone who is found to have blatantly cheated or plagiarized on an assignment will fail the course and be referred to student judicial affairs for further disciplinary action. Always document both direct quotations and other people's ideas, whether from books, websites or other sources.

Students with Certified Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability that may require reasonable accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The DSS phone number is 898-5959 V/TTY or Fax 898-4411. Visit the DSS website at <www.csuchico.edu/dss/>

Syllabus is subject to revision.

Some Suggested Essay Topics:

Noah and the Great Flood

The Character of Isaac

The Mishkan (Tabernacle) in the Desert

Biblical Law Codes

Any Biblical book not read in class: Joshua, Daniel, Proverbs, any of the 12 minor prophets, etc.

King Solomon

The Divided Kingdom

King Hezekiah

Elijah the Prophet