

Fall 2014

Religion of Israel: The Hebrew Bible

The Literary Traditions of Ancient Israel

Peter T. Lanfer
Course #: Rel 4/JWST 4
Course Location: TBD
M, W, F 1:45-2:50
x-hour: Th 1-1:50

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Course Description:

This course will survey the major genres of literature found in the Hebrew Bible and Apocrypha. The course will emphasize questions about the composition and development of the various biblical texts against the background of ancient Israel and early Judaism. An important aspect of the course will be to trace the development of key themes and ideas within the different historical and literary strata of the biblical literature, such as the Exodus, Davidic monarchy, exile, temple ideology, and legal traditions. As a result, the course also will give students a basic orientation to the early interpretive traditions of ancient Israel and early Judaism.

Students of all backgrounds, cultures, and faith traditions are encouraged to take this course. Prior knowledge of Judaism or other ancient near eastern religions is not required.

Professors Note:

It is not the goal of this course, nor my personal objective, to make you either more or less religious, however it will be important for our discussions that you are open to viewing your own tradition and others from an objective and historical perspective.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students will:

- Gain a familiarity with the books of the Hebrew Bible and the history of ancient Israel
- Receive an introduction into the academic study of ancient religions and religious texts
- Be able to interact with the archaeology of ancient Israel as a tool for interpreting the Hebrew Bible
- Be able to critically evaluate the scholarly and traditional interpretations of the Hebrew Bible

Required Textbooks and Readings:

- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha: NRSV
Other versions of the Bible are acceptable as well (including some online versions, though it will be important to have a Bible that contains the Apocrypha).
- John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).
- William M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- Reserve articles and other readings listed in Course Schedule.

Requirements:

- **Attendance, Reading Responses, and Class Participation (10%).** Students will be expected to respond to questions posted to the discussion section of the Rel 4 Blackboard before the class sessions. Students are expected to attend and participate in class sessions. The assigned readings and responses will be completed by the due dates listed in the course schedule. Failure to participate in class discussions will have a negative affect upon a student's final grade.
- **Exams (75%).** Midterm Exam (30%) and Final Exam (45%). The exams will consist of short answer questions, such as multiple choice and term identification, as well as long answer questions. For the purposes of the exam, I would suggest that students read the assigned readings *actively*, that is, taking notes along the way, especially biblical texts that are highlighted in the secondary reading assignments (Collins, Schniedewind, etc). Students may be permitted to substitute a 2500 word research paper for the final exam. Permission will be granted based on the quality of your earlier writing assignments, your performance on the midterm and the proposed topic of your research. Students will need to consult with me by **October 24th** to discuss eligibility and provide me with an outline of the paper topic including bibliography by **October 27th**.
- **Short Writing Assignments (15%).** Each student will write three short response papers that will focus upon close readings of selected biblical texts and the secondary reading assignments.

The topics for the writing assignments are:

- *Writing Assignment #1 — Creation in Genesis. Assignment will be posted to Blackboard discussion forum by 9/26/14*
 - Compare the account of creation in Genesis 1:1-2:3 with the account in Genesis 2:4-3:1. What are the major differences in focus, style, and language between these two accounts? How would you explain the differences between these accounts? How does modern source critical scholarship explain the differences between the accounts? Do you think that there is another way of explaining the differences between the two accounts besides two different authors? For additional help with the assignment see Collins, 75-77.
- *Writing Assignment #2 — The Davidic dynasty and biblical literature. Assignment will be posted to Blackboard discussion forum by 10/29/14*
 - Describe the ways in which the following biblical texts support and promote the Davidic dynasty and the Promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:1-17, 1 Kings 1, 1 Kings 11:34-36, 2 Kings 19-20, 2 Kings 23-25. How do these texts allude to or take up the Promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:1-17? How do these texts interpret certain historical events as vindication of the Davidic dynasty? You may want to consult the following secondary sources to help you develop your paper: Collins, 254-257, 295; Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book*, 73-90.
- *Writing Assignment #3 — Critical review and evaluation of How the Bible Became a Book (1-117). 4-6 page critical review due via e-mail by 11/12/14*
 - Analysis of Schniedewind's approach to the composition of the biblical texts compared with other modern theories about the composition of the Hebrew Bible. The paper should give a thorough review of the book, followed by a critical comparison of his approach to other approaches (see Collins, 47-65). Students may also consult the extended review of Schniedewind's book in *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5/18 (2004-

2005) – see specifically David M. Carr, “Response to W.M. Schniedewind’s *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*,” and Schniedewind’s “Adrift: *How the Bible Became a Book*” response to Carr. You can access these review articles and responses at <http://www.jhsonline.org>. **The review should address the following questions from *How the Bible Became a Book*:**

- What does Schniedewind say is problematic about past approaches to questions about the composition of biblical literature (see especially chapter 1)?
- What does Schniedewind say are the correct types of questions to ask about the composition of the biblical texts?
- What role do questions about orality and textuality play in Schniedewind’s approach to the composition of the biblical texts?
- When does Schniedewind place the rise of texts in ancient Israel?
- What evidence does Schniedewind use to support his conclusions for the date of the beginnings of biblical literature in ancient Israel?
- Why does Schniedewind argue that the exilic period was *not* a period marked by a flourishing of biblical literature?

Academic Honor

All assignments contributing to your assessment in this course must be completed by you alone, or as the product of a group project (such as the course wiki). Any copying (electronic or otherwise) of another person’s written work, in whole or in part, is a violation of the Dartmouth Honor Code. If you have questions about whether some element of your work is acceptable under the Honor Code, please speak with me first.

Disabilities:

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me before the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

Additional Support for your Learning

Academic Skills Center (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/>)

The Academic Skills Center is open to the entire Dartmouth Community. Here are some common reasons why you might visit the ASC:

- You're getting B's but you want to get A's
- You don't feel comfortable talking in class
- You're attending class regularly but you feel like you're missing important points
- You feel like you're a slow reader
- You feel like you don't have enough time to get everything done
- You're not sure how to take notes
- You want to sign up for a tutor or study group
- You're not sure if you should get tested for a learning disability

The Research Center for Writing, and Information Technology (RWiT)
(<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rwit/>)

The Student Center for Research, Writing, and Information Technology (RWiT) is a place where you can meet with an undergraduate tutor to discuss a paper, research project, or multi-media assignment. The RWiT tutors are trained to help you at any phase of your process. Whether you are brainstorming or planning, drafting or structuring, tweaking or polishing, the RWiT tutors can provide feedback that will help you to create final products of which you can be proud.

Religious Observances

Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Tentative Course Schedule

The Course Schedule may change to accommodate guest lectures, special events, and to reflect student needs. The readings listed in the course syllabus may be supplemented by primary and secondary source readings distributed in class and via blackboard. It is your responsibility to ensure you are keeping up with the readings for class.

Week 1:

Mon 9/15 *Introduction to Course and Assignments*

Readings: Read syllabus, Introduction to New Oxford Annotated Bible, and familiarize yourself with the reference system in the NRSV. Collins 1-14.

Wed 9/17 *The Ancient Near Eastern Context of the Biblical Literature and Survey of Israel's Narrative History*

Readings: Collins, 1-27, see also Maps of Ancient Near East in New Oxford Annotated Bible. You should be able to identify the following cities, regions, and physical features of the ancient Near East: Jerusalem, Canaan, Egypt, Sinai, Mesopotamia, Babylon, Assyria, Euphrates River, Tigris River, Nile River, Syro-Arabian Desert, Red Sea, Aram/Syria, Jordan Valley, Samaria, International Coastal Highway, King's Highway.

Fri 9/19 *Genesis 1: The Priestly Account of Creation and the Enuma Elish*

Readings: Genesis 1-2:4, and the Enuma Elish in J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (on course website). Schniedewind 1-63.

Week 2:

Mon 9/22 *The Yahwist account of Creation and the Rise of Critical Scholarship*

Readings: Genesis 1-3, 6-8, 12-37, Leviticus 1-16, Deuteronomy 12, 28, 2 Kings 22-23; Collins, 28-35.

Wed 9/24 *Literary Criticism and the Composition of the Torah: The Creation Narratives and Primeval History*

Readings: Collins 36-43, Genesis 1-3, Gen 12-23.

Th x-hour *The Patriarchal Narrative and the Documentary Hypothesis. Does it work?*

Readings: Collins 44-54, Genesis 1-3 (re-read), 6-8 (re-read), 24-28

Fri 9/26 No Class. Class moved to x-hour

Writing Assignment #1 Due on Blackboard

Week 3:

Mon 9/29 Class moved to x-Hour!

Wed 10/1 *The Exodus and the beginnings of Israel: Covenant and Law in the Torah*

Readings: Collins 55-73, Exodus 1-24, Genesis 12, 15, 17;

Supplemental reading: G.E. Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law and Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954) 26-46.

Thurs 10/2 x-Hour *The Priestly School and Priestly Literature in the Torah*

Readings: Collins, 74-83, Exodus 25-40; Leviticus 1-16; J. Levenson, "Temple and World" *Journal of Religion*.

Fri 10/3 *The Background and Composition of Deuteronomy & The Deuteronomistic History*

Readings: Collins, 84-93, Schniedewind, 64-81, Deuteronomy, 2 Kings 22-23

Supplemental Reading: Steven McKenzie, "The Deuteronomistic History," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (course website)

Week 4:

Mon 10/6 *The Book of Joshua and the "Conquest" of Canaan.*

Readings: Collins, 94-107, Joshua 1-17, William G. Dever, *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*, 56-84. Lawrence E. Stager, "Forging An Identity," in Coogan, *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, 104-111.

Wed 10/8 *The Deuteronomistic History: Judges,*

Readings: Collins 108-115, Judges 1-2, 9, 19-21.

Fri 10/10 *The Deuteronomistic History: First and Second Samuel*

Readings: Collins 116-130, 1 Samuel 9-15; 2 Samuel 2-7

Week 5:

Mon 10/13 *Solomon and Royal Ideology*

Readings: 1 Kings 1-16; Psalms 2, 45, 89, 110, Collins, 131-140. William G. Dever, *Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Biblical Research*, 85-117.

Wed 10/15 *Jerusalem and the Temple Cult: Centralization and YHWH's home*

Readings: Deut 16, Judg 17-18, 1 Kgs 12-16, 2 Kgs 9-22

Supplemental Reading: Ronald Hendel, "Israelite Religion," in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, pp. xlv-xlviii.

Fri 10/17 Midterm Exam

Week 6:

Mon 10/20 - Israelite Temple Cult

Readings: Leviticus 1-7, 12-15, Num 19. Additional Readings on Course Website.

Wed 10/22 The Psalms: Liturgy in Modern Research

Readings: Psalms 2, 23, 42-43, 46-48, 93-100, 104-106.
Additional readings on course website.

Thurs 10/23 x-hour mtg Assyria at Dartmouth

(class meets at the Hood Museum, on the benches facing the Assyrian Reliefs)

Isa 28:1-32:20; 2 Kgs 16:1-17:41; 18:1-20:21

Fri 10/24 Prophecy and the end of the United Kingdom

Readings: 1 Kings 17-2 Kings 25; Collins, 141-152

Week 7:

Mon 10/27 Assyrian Imperialism, Amos and Hosea

Readings: Isaiah 1-6; Leviticus 17-26; Amos; Hosea, Collins, 153-163; John Holladay, "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel."

Wed 10/29 The Late Judahite Monarchy and the Composition of Classical Prophetic Literature

Readings: Isaiah 1; 5; 6-9; Collins 164-173, Schniedewind, 84-90;

Writing Assignment #2 Due

Fri 10/31 Class moved to x-Hour week 8

Week 8:

Mon 11/3 The Babylonian Invasion and the Collapse of Retribution Theology

Readings: Jeremiah and Lamentations, Collins 174-184.

Wed 11/5 Prophecy in Exile:

Readings: Ezekiel, Isaiah 34-66, Collins 185-208

Th 11/6 x-Hour Israelite Religion in Exile

Readings: Jonah 1:1-17, 3:1-4:11, Ruth (entire), Daniel 1-6, and Ezr 7:1-10:44. 2. Collins 268-277.

Supplemental Reading: Mary Joan Winn Leith, "Israel among the Nations," in Coogan, *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, 276-311.

Fri 11/7 Biblical Literature in the Second Temple Period: The Restoration

Readings: Schniedewind, 139-194; Collins, 209-228; Isaiah 56-66; Haggai, Ezra, Nehemiah.

Week 9:

Mon 11/10 *How Did the Bible Become a Book?*

Readings: See reviews of *How the Bible Became a Book* — D. Carr, “Response to W.M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*, *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* (2003); and Schniedewind’s response to Carr, “Adrift” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* (2003).

Wed 11/12 *Temple Traditions in the Second Temple Period*

Readings: Ezekiel 40-48; Isaiah 65; Psalm 18.

Writing assignment # 3: Critical Review Paper Due by midnight via e-mail!

Fri 11/14 *Wisdom Traditions in the Biblical Literature*

Readings: Collins, 236-267; Job, Qohelet, Proverbs.

Week 10:

Mon 11/17 *Apocalyptic Prophecy and The Literature of the Apocrypha*

Readings: Collins, 278-301; Daniel 7-12, 1-2 Maccabees.

Final Exam will be a take home exam delivered and returned via e-mail.

Chronological Overview

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|-------------|--|
| 1000 BCE | David’s conquest of Jerusalem; Rise of United Monarchy |
| 960 BCE | Solomon builds first temple in Jerusalem |
| 928 BCE | Division of United Monarchy; Beginning of Divided Monarchy |
| 745 BCE | Rise of Assyrian involvement in northern kingdom; Tiglath-pileser III campaigns to Upper Galilee |
| 722 BCE | Fall of the northern kingdom to Assyria |
| 701 BCE | Sennacherib’s campaign to Judah |
| 609 BCE | Fall of Nineveh; Rise of Babylonian Empire |
| 597 BCE | First Babylonian deportation; Royal family exiled to Babylon |
| 587 BCE | Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians |
| 586 BCE | Jerusalem temple destroyed |
| 539 BCE | Babylon falls to Persia; Edict of Cyrus allows exiled Judeans to return home |
| 520-515 BCE | Rebuilding of the temple (time of Haggai and Zechariah) |
| 458 BCE | Ezra’s mission to Jerusalem |
| 445 BCE | Nehemiah’s journey to Jerusalem |
| 333 BCE | Persian Empire falls to Greece (Alexander) |
| 167 BCE | Antiochus introduces foreign worship to the temple |

| | |
|------------|--|
| 167-63 BCE | Beginning of Maccabean Revolt; Hasmonean Dynasty |
| 63 BCE | Beginning of Roman Rule (Pompey) |

Archaeological Chronology

Bronze Age (3200-1200)

Early Bronze Age (3200-2000)

Middle Bronze Age (2000-1550)

Late Bronze Age (1500-1200)

Iron Age

Iron Age I (1200-1000) – Emergence of ancient Israel

Iron Age II (1000-539) – Monarchic periods; exile

Iron Age II (539-333) – Restoration; Persian Empire

Classical Period

Hellenistic Era (332-63)

Hasmonean Period (164-63)

Helpful Sources on the Historical, Archaeological, and Geographical Background of Ancient Israel and the Near East

Mazar, A. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, Volume I

Stern, E. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, Volume II

Aharoni, Y. *MacMillan Bible Atlas*

Rainey, A.F. *The Sacred Bridge*.

Matthews, V. *A Concise History of Ancient Israel*.

IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament.

Course Bibliography

Ackerman, S., *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-Century Judah* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1992).

Aharoni, Y., *The Carta Bible Atlas* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2002).

Albright, W.F., *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (London, 1968).

Alter, Robert and R. Kermode, *A Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1987).

Berquist, Jon L, *Judaism in Persia's Shadows* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

Barton, J., "Historical-Critical Approaches," *Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (Edited by John Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Berlin, A. and M.Z. Brettler (ed.), *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Blenkinsopp, J., *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

_____. *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997).

Brettler, M.Z., *How to Read the Jewish Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

_____. *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Broshi, M., "The Expansion of Jerusalem during the Reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh," *Israel Exploration Society* 24 (1974) 21-26.

Friedman, R.E., *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1997).

- Charlesworth, J.H. (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (New York: Doubleday, 1983-1985).
- Cogan, M., *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth-Seventh Centuries* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1974).
- Collins, J., *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fortress, 1993).
- Cross, F.M., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).
- Finkelstein, I., "The Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts* (Edited by M. Coogan, J.C. Exum, and L. Stager; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994).
- Fishbane, M., *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).
- Frankena, R., "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy," *Old Testament Studies* 14 (1965) 122-154.
- Freedman, D.N. (ed), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 volumes; New York: Doubleday, 1992).
- Friedman, R.E., *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).
- Gottwald, N.K., *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).
- Gunkel, M., *An Introduction to the Psalms* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1998).
- Halpern, B., *The First Historians: The Hebrew Bible and History* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).
- Hallo, W. and K. Lawson Younger (eds), *The Context of Scripture* (3 volumes; Leiden: Brill: 1997-2002).
- Knohl, I., *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007).
- Kugel, J.L., *The Bible As It Was* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1997).
- Levenson, J.D., *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985).
- Levinson, B., *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Matthews, V., *A Brief History of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003).
- Mazar, A., *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 BCE* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1990).
- McKenzie, S.L., "Deuteronomistic History," In *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 2:160-168.
- Mendenhall, G.E., "Covenant Form in Israelite Traditions," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (1954) 50-76.
- Miller, P.D., "Wellhausen and the History of Israel's Religion," *Semeia* 25 (1982) 61-73.
- Niditch, S., *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996).
- Noth, M., *The Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1981).
- Petersen, D.L., *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).
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- Seitz, C., *Zion's Final Destiny: The Development of the Book of Isaiah* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991).
- Smith, M.S., *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).
- Stern, E. (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of the Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1993).
- Weinfeld, M., *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).

_____. "Deuteronomy, Book of," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* Volume 2 (Edited by D.N. Freedman; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 158-170).

Wellhausen, J., *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973).

Wilson, R.R., *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).