



TYNDALE
University College

RLGS 1013: OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE

Winter 2010; Fridays, 1:00–4:00 PM; Room #1008

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Class cancellations due to inclement weather or illness will be announced/posted here.

mytyndale.ca — This course has resources pages which are meant to enhance your learning experience and which you may need to use to complete some assignments. It is where I will post news items, notices and marks. Log in often with your **mytyndale.ca** username and password.

Mailboxes — Every student is responsible for information communicated through the student mailboxes (a mailbox directory is posted beside the mailboxes). Assignments will be returned here.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a survey of the redemptive story in the three major divisions of the Old Testament (the Law/Torah, the Prophets and the Writings), including an orientation to the historical backgrounds, religious context, literary forms, apocryphal dimensions, prophetic elements, matters of canon, text, interpretation and critical issues.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

A major goal in this course is to become familiar with the contours of Old Testament literature in view of Israel's history and of the literature's historic reception in Jewish and Christian traditions. The impact of the critical tradition will also be broached. Students should acquire a deeper understanding of key OT passages, an awareness of the types of OT literature and some of the types' characteristics, and a sensitivity to the various ways biblical texts can be interpreted. They will also practice the skills of reading, recall, analysis, discussion, charitable criticism, and written argument.

Ultimately, the goal is to show the possibility and desirability of reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture, in keeping with its function as a vital and abiding witness for the Church.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. The Old Testament in a modern English translation. Many scholars use the New Revised Standard Version. A number of other Study Bibles will also do (paraphrastic translations will not!). If you need a Bible, I recommend *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, edited by M. D. Coogan (Oxford, 2001).

2. John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible with CD-ROM* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004). This is the primary course textbook. Abbrev.: **HB**
3. A. J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005 [1st ed. 1951]). A classic of Jewish spirituality and a meditation on the fourth commandment, it is required reading and a main option for your book review.

IV. SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

1. J. L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York/Toronto: Free Press, 2007). This recent survey, by one of Harvard University's most popular professors, is perhaps the only general introduction to discuss the history of traditional Jewish and Christian interpretation. [**BS 1171.3.K84**]
2. J. B. Pritchard with L. M. White, eds., *The HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991). A well-illustrated resource on biblical history, it has been available from the bookstore in the past. [**Ref G 2230.H37**]
3. M. D. Coogan, ed., *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). A more detailed, authoritative collection of essays on the Bible in its historical moment. [**Ref BS 635.2.094**]
4. D. R. Bauer, *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003). A useful starting place for research into a book of the Bible, or for building your own exegetical library. [**Ref Z 7770.B38**]
5. B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979). A somewhat dated but landmark interaction with the history of critical OT scholarship in the modern period, it remains mindful of theological and hermeneutical implications. Note, however, that Introduction (= German *Einleitung*) is a technical genre aimed at scholars as much or more than at beginning students. [**BS 1140.2.C48**]
6. B. S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992). One of the only books of its kind, this magisterial discussion of the entire Christian Bible, OT and NT, attends both to its discrete books and parts as well as to overarching, biblical theological themes. [**BS 543.C453**]

V. COURSE EVALUATION:

1. Each class will commence with a **reading quiz**. These are designed to ensure that you have read the assigned material carefully. Quizzes may not be made up in the case of absence, though in special cases they may be taken in advance. The final exam will also hold you responsible for the content they cover. If you miss a quiz, see a classmate.
2. You have a couple of choices for a **midterm essay**. Consult the handout for full details.
 - a. The first main option is a **book review**. A. J. Heschel's *The Sabbath* is assigned and thus the obvious choice; for the ambitious, other books can be arranged. (Ask why.)
 - b. The second main option, a **film review**, also offers a choice: the task is to examine the interpretation of Exodus in either *The Ten Commandments* (1956) or *The Prince of Egypt* (1998). Unlike option (a), this entails a little extra research in that you are to consult commentaries and DVD extras. Arrange viewings together!
3. Each class will conclude with a **tutorial**, which is a discussion session designed to reinforce major themes and to ensure that everybody actively engages them. For the final hour the class will divide into groups of three. (This is also a chance to get to know your classmates. Mix it up by trying to work with different people every week.) Come

- prepared with *provisional answers written down* on your tutorial sheets; you can and should fill these out with the insights added by your peers, but mind you do not become dead weight. Frankly, you can only *lose* marks here—by not participating. More positively, by investing some thought in advance, and by taking risks in class, you have a great opportunity to take ownership of the course material. Tutorial sheets, which require signatures from your peers, will be collected twice over the semester.
4. In the past I have required students to keep a **notebook**. Although I am not doing so now, I would strongly encourage you to dedicate a spiral-bound notebook—preferably with a front pocket—specifically to this course. Start each class on the front of a new page. Write the date at the top. If you should miss a class, include a page for it and leave it blank until you can copy notes from a friend; you will want to consult a classmate for an overview of any content missed since you will be tested on it, and since I will not repeat lectures. A notebook would be a good place for daily writing prompts (see the instruction slip). Something like it will also become vital in your revisions for the final exam. (A computer notebook will not work: see below.)
 5. The **final exam** will be held during exam week, Wednesday 11 December – Wednesday 21 December 2009 (including Saturday), as scheduled by the Registrar.
 6. The semester's work will be weighted as follows, though the instructor reserves the right to adjust the balance as necessary:

Reading Quizzes	25%
Midterm Essay	25%
Tutorials	25%
Final Exam	25%

Students are responsible to keep a backup print copy of all assignments.

On writing: Good writing, like good reading, is a skill that must be honed in the practice. It takes work. It also involves revision: the *reworking* of first and second attempts. Alan Jacobs underscores the difference between *editing*—tidying up around the house—and *revising*—the remodeling of your house. There are a number of excellent resources available to help you with this task, and I strongly urge you to use them. One is Tyndale's Writing Centre. Others are freely available online. Jacobs, for instance, lists a number of questions to which you should have good answers. I augment them here:

Do you have a thesis? What is it?
Do your sub-theses support it? Do you explain how?
Are your paragraphs well-organized?
Are they healthy (supported, well-illustrated) and not anemic?
Do you know what a comma splice is and how to avoid it?
Is your writing clear and vivid?

For more, see Prof. Jacobs' page, here: http://ayjay.jottit.com/on_revising
Or go here: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/bedfordresearcher/links/writingprocess.asp#revising>
Also excellent, and currently being updated: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Remember, Tyndale offers a *free* tutoring service: <http://www.tyndale.ca/writingcentre/>

VI. COURSE OUTLINE & SCHEDULE OF READINGS:

Week 1 (8 Jan)	Introductions; HB Intro; Whose Bible is it, anyway?; <i>First Tutorial*</i>
Week 2 (15 Jan)	Gen 1–11; Psalms 46, 74, 93; HB 1–3; <i>Gen 1–3</i>
Week 3 (22 Jan)	Gen 12–50; HB 4; <i>2 Sam 11–14</i>
Week 4 (29 Jan)	Exod 1–24, 31–34, 40; Heschel Intro–Pt 1; <i>Film</i> (in class); <i>Exod 1–20</i>
Week 5 (5 Feb)	Psalms 105–106; HB 5–6; Heschel Pt 2; <i>Seitz, “Call”</i> ; <i>Exod 3, 6</i>
Week 6 (12 Feb)	Deut 1–34; HB 8; Heschel Pt 3; <i>TAL</i> ; <i>Deut 5 // Exod 20</i> ; Tutorials 1–6 Due
Week 7 (19 Feb)	Essay Due ; Josh 1–12, Judg 1–3; HB 9–10; <i>Josh 1–12, Judg 1–3</i>
Week 8 (26 Feb)	READING WEEK (22–26 February): Catch up on any back reading
Week 9 (5 Mar)	1 Sam 1–2 Sam 24; HB 11–12; <i>Psalms 51, 60, and titles of Pss in between</i>
Week 10 (12 Mar)	1 Kgs 1–2 Kgs 8, 17–25; HB 13–14; <i>1 Kgs 17–19 and 2 Kgs 2–4</i>
Week 11 (19 Mar)	Hosea–Joel–Amos; HB 15, 20; <i>Hosea</i>
Week 12 (26 Mar)	Isaiah 1–12, 36–40 // 2 Kgs 18–20; HB 16, 19; <i>Wellhausen</i> ; <i>Amos, Deut</i>
Week 13 (2 Apr)	Good Friday: No class
Week 14 (9 Apr)	Tutorials 7–11 Due ; Psalms 1, 89, 90; Ezra 1–10; HB 21, 23, 29; <i>Evaluations</i>
Week 15 (TBA)	READING DAYS (13–14 April): The final exam will be held during exam week, 15–22 April 2010 (including Sat.), as scheduled by the Registrar.

**Italics indicate tutorial readings, which will be essential in tutorial discussion and assessment.*

VII. FURTHER BIBLIOGRAPHY:

In addition to the titles and resources listed under headings III and IV, the following materials are assigned at certain points in the semester (underlined in schedule, above).

1. C. R. Seitz, “The Call of Moses and the ‘Revelation’ of the Divine Name: Source Critical Logic and its Legacy,” pages 229–247 in Seitz, *Word Without End* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998). [= Seitz, “Call” in Week 5]
2. This American Life, Episode # 332: “The Ten Commandments,” available online at http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?episode=332 (with outline and bonus interview). Free stream; MP3 download costs \$0.95. [= TAL in Week 6]
3. J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: A&C Black, 1885). The full text of this important text, which set the course for critical Old Testament scholarship for decades, is public domain and is available for download at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/4732>. Read the introduction (pgs. 12–21 after you click the “Read Online” link, top). [= Wellhausen in Week 12]
4. Film Option 1: Cecil B. DeMille, *The Ten Commandments* (1956). [library reserve]
5. Film Option 2: Brenda Chapman et al., *The Prince of Egypt* (1998). [library reserve]

A word of caution: much as I value the internet as a resource, it can be a trap for the unwary student, particularly in biblical studies. Please think twice before citing an internet source.

Also, I request that you not make audio or video recordings of the lectures for any reason.

Finally, because Tyndale provides wireless access, and because research shows multitasking inhibits learning (see [here](#) and [here](#)), all **laptops / PDAs / über-phones are not allowed**. If I catch you surfing, facebooking, tweeting, texting, etc., I will either gently remind you, or dramatically eject you from the room on the spot. I am a big fan of the way technology (starting with pencils, paper and cheap printing) enhances learning, but not when it becomes disruptive.