

EMB 1003 HF

Introduction to the Old Testament I: The Pentateuch and Former Prophets

*This is a preliminary draft of the syllabus. The final version will be available on Blackboard.

Dr. Heather Macumber
Classroom: EM 108
heather.macumber@mail.utoronto.ca

Class (Tuesday): 9-12 am
Office Hours (Tuesday): TBA
Office: TBA

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Introduction to modern historical criticism of the Old Testament, with special attention given to the formation of scripture from ancient traditions and its implications for history of Jewish and Christian interpretation.

II. COURSE MATERIALS:

a. Required Texts:

Michael D. Coogan, *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament*

James L. Kugel, *The Bible As It Was*.

A good translation of the Bible such as the NRSV that includes the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical writings. Other translations may be acceptable (the *New Jerusalem Bible* or the *RSV*). The HarperCollins Study Bible or New Oxford Annotated NRSV with Apocrypha are recommended. If you have questions regarding the acceptability of a particular translation please email or speak with the instructor.

b. Assigned Articles (required reading):

See class schedule for the additional articles. They will either be available online or on reserve at the library.

c. Biblical Texts (required reading):

It is not enough to simply read about the Old Testament, one must also read it. A requirement of this course is to read a major portion of the Old Testament. Please see the class schedule for a list of assigned readings (in addition to those assigned for class discussions).

III. COURSE WEBSITE: <http://portal.utoronto.ca>

The main means of communication for this course will be through Blackboard. Handouts, announcements and sample papers will be made available online. Please register with your utoronto.ca email address as per TST policy.

IV. COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goals: To provide students with:

- An overview of the narrative literature of the Old Testament
- An understanding of the major themes and theology of the first half of the Old Testament
- An awareness of the development of religious traditions in ancient Israel

Objectives: To enable students to:

- Identify the major types of literature and genres of the narrative literature of the Old Testament
- Understand the themes and different streams of traditions present in the Old Testament
- Evaluate the texts within their historical and social contexts with an emphasis on historical-critical methods
- Apply the literature of the Old Testament to their contemporary settings and in modern religious discourse especially with regards to preaching and teaching

V. Summary of Assignments and Grading

Encyclopedia Entry	15%
Noah: Reading Sources Paper	15%
Midterm	30%
A Final Exam	30%
Active Participation/Reading	10%

VI. Assignments and Grading

Encyclopedia Entry (due October 4th, 2016)

The purpose of this paper is to introduce students to library sources useful for biblical studies. Students will choose from a list of biblical terms (available on Blackboard) and write a 1-2 page encyclopedia/dictionary article on its use in the Pentateuch. A variety of sources including commentaries, biblical dictionaries and monographs should be consulted. See Blackboard for sample papers and additional resources. A bibliography of sources used and consulted should be included (in addition to the 1-2 page limit).

Noah: Reading Sources Paper (due October 18th, 2016)

There are several steps to this paper. A more thorough description will be provided for the students. But briefly the steps are as follows:

1. Read Genesis 6-11 and pose 10-20 interpretive questions of the biblical text.
2. Watch the movie *Noah* and make 15 observations where the movie interprets or adds to the biblical story.
3. Read excerpts provided in Kugel pp. 99-130.

4. Write a 1-2 page paper explaining the intersection between the biblical text, the movie and extra-biblical source material. The original questions from step 1 and 2 must be included in the final assignment as an appendix.

Midterm (November 8th, 2016) and Final Exam (date TBA)

Both the midterm and final exam will include both the identification of significant terms and short essay questions. More details will be provided on Blackboard and in class.

Participation/Reading: Students are expected to prepare carefully for class by engaging with the readings both from the course text and the biblical text. Some supplementary required articles are also assigned in the readings and will be made available online. The participation mark will be accessed by a student's active involvement in the larger classroom lectures and in the small group sessions. Presence alone does not count as participation.

VII. COURSE POLICIES

a. Writing Style Guidelines:

All written work must use Canadian spelling and students are advised to consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (7th ed.; revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007). Parenthetical references (such as MLA or APA) will not be accepted. The Chicago Manual of Style is also available online: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/contents.html> Another excellent resource RefWorks is available through the library and the webpage "Advice on Writing at the University of Toronto" at <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/advise.html>

b. Inclusive Language:

All students are expected to use gender-inclusive language both in their written work and class participation (i.e., use "man" or "he" only when referring specifically to males).

c. Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is unacceptable and a zero tolerance policy is adopted in this course. Please see the University Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters which is available online at <http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/behaveac.html>. It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and a claim of ignorance concerning plagiarism is insufficient. More information can be obtained at the following sites: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.html> and <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/%7Ekloppen/plagiarism.htm> .

d. Other Resources:

A variety of course documents are available online through Blackboard. Students are responsible for reading them as they contain important information required for the course especially the papers.

VIII. COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS**Week 1****September 13***Class: Introduction*

1. Introduction: Course Outline and Requirements
2. The Hebrew Bible: What is it and why study it?
3. How did we get the Hebrew Bible?
4. Geography of ancient Israel and the ancient Near East
5. Overview of Biblical Genres: Little Red Riding Hood

Background Readings: (please read before 1st class)

1. Douglas Stuart, "Exegesis," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary. Volume 2: D-G*, editor-in-chief David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 682-88. (available on Blackboard)

Class Workshop:

1. Read the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood" and come prepared with a list of questions raised by the text. Please see Blackboard for the correct version of "Little Red Riding Hood" and bring a paper copy to class.

Week 2**September 20***Class: Primeval History*

1. Epic Sources: The Composition of the Pentateuch
2. The Primeval History: Genesis 1-11
3. Creation Accounts

Readings:

1. Genesis 1-11
2. Coogan pp. 3-59 (chs. 1-4)
3. Kugel pp. 1-49 (ch. 1)

Class Workshop (come prepared to discuss):

1. What indicators are there of two separate creation stories in Gen 1-2? Using the chart provided on Blackboard indicate the differences between both accounts. What do these stories tell us about the ancient Israelite concept of the cosmos?

Week 3**September 27***Class: Primevil History cont'd*

1. Enoch: An Interpretive Tradition
2. Viewing of Aranovsky's *Noah*

Readings:

1. Gen 1-11 (reread)
2. Kugel, pp. 100-107 (sections on Enoch)

Week 4**October 4***Class: Family Origins*

1. The Faith Abraham and Sarah
2. Covenants & Blessings

Readings:

1. Genesis 12-50
2. Coogan pp. 63-79 (ch. 5)
3. Kugel pp. 131-178 (chs. 7-9)

Class Workshop:

1. Read the two stories of Hagar in Gen 16:1-16 and Gen 21:1-20. These accounts are traditionally interpreted as etiologies of the formation of nations and continue the theme of promise-fulfilment. However, today's discussion will focus more on modern interpretive strategies. How are Abraham, Sarah and Hagar portrayed in each story? What do these accounts reveal about gender, race and class distinctions in ancient Israel? How does your own context (or interpretive lens) affect your interpretation?

Week 5**October 11***Class: Exodus & Sinai*

1. The Exodus
2. The Revelation at Sinai & Covenant

Readings:

1. Exodus 1-24, 32-34
2. Deuteronomy 28-30
3. Coogan, pp. 80-108 (chs. 6-7)
4. Kugel, pp. 331-437 (chs. 18-21)
5. Ronald Hendel, "The Exodus in Biblical Memory," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120 (2001): 601-622 (online resource U of T).
6. Steven McKenzie, *How to Read the Bible*, ch. 1 ("Not exactly as it Happened" pp. 23-66, online resource U of T)

Class Discussion:

1. Read and discuss: Ronald Hendel, "The Exodus in Biblical Memory," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 120 (2001): 601-622 and Steven McKenzie's chapter "Not exactly as it Happened" in *How to Read the Bible*.

Week 6:**October 18***Class: The Law & Wilderness Wanderings*

1. The Legal Codes
2. Revelation & Wilderness
3. Purity & Holiness

Readings:

1. Lev 1, 8-11, 16-21, 23
2. Deuteronomy 1, 5-6, 16
3. Numbers 11-14, 16-17, 20-26
4. Isaiah 58
5. Coogan, pp. 109-148 (chs. 8-9)
6. Kugel, pp. 439-460 (ch. 22)
7. Marva Dawn, "Sabbath Keeping and Social Justice," in *Sunday, Sabbath and the Weekend: Managing Time in a Global Culture* (ed. Edward O'Flaherty; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 23-40

Class Discussion:

1. Compare and contrast the two Sabbath laws in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. How is the Sabbath (and by extension the 10 Commandments) still relevant or significant for Christians today? How is keeping the Sabbath related to social justice? (see the Marva Dawn article)

Week 7**NO CLASS: Reading Week****October 25****Week 8****November 1***Class: Deuteronomy & Reform*

1. The Deuteronomic Code
2. Pseudonymous Attribution: Who wrote Deuteronomy?
3. Deuteronomistic History
4. The Theology of Deuteronomy

Readings:

1. Deuteronomy
2. 2 Kings 21-23; Psalm 119
3. Coogan, pp. 149-161 (ch. 10)
4. Kugel, pp. 522-560
5. George Braulik, "Law as Gospel: Justification and Pardon as part of Deuteronomic Torah" *Interpretation* (1984): 5-14.

Class Discussion:

1. How does Deuteronomy understand “torah” or “law”? From the Kugel readings, contrast this with other passages especially those from the New Testament. Should “law” and “gospel” be seen as mutually exclusive? What do you think of George Braulik’s phrase “law as gospel?”

Week 9**November 8***Class: Early Israel*

1. Israelite Origins and Establishment in the Land: Exodus, “Conquest,” Settlement
2. The Religion of Early Israel
3. Deuteronomistic History: Joshua & Judges
4. Mid-term 1 hour

Readings:

1. Joshua 1-12
2. Judges 1-21
3. Coogan, pp. 162-192 (chs. 11-12)
4. John L. McLaughlin, “From Many to One: The Development of Monotheism in the Old Testament,” *Cardinal Perspectives* (1998-99) pp. 2-11 (Blackboard).
5. Richard S. Hess, “Early Israel in Canaan, A Survey of Recent Evidence and Interpretations,” in *Israel’s Past in Present Research, Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography* (ed. V. Philips Long; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999) pp. 492-518. Available online at: <http://individual.utoronto.ca/mfkolarcik/jesuit/richardhess.htm>
6. Niditch, “Historiography, ‘Hazards,’ and the Study of Ancient Israel,” *Interpretation* 57.2 (2003): 138-150 (Recommended)

Class Workshop/Debate

1. Evaluate the biblical and extra-biblical evidence for and against the four theories of Israelite origins. Which do you agree with? What are the implications of that theory for interpreting the Old Testament? How should we handle discrepancies between the biblical and extra-biblical evidence?

Week 10**November 15***Class: The Period of the Monarchy & Emergence of Prophecy*

1. A United Israel
2. Political & Social Organization in Early Israel
3. Rise of the Prophet

Readings:

1. 1 Samuel; 2 Samuel 1-2
2. Coogan, pp. 195-208 (ch. 13)

Class Workshop: "David's Rise to Power"

1. The class will break into two groups ("pro-David" and "anti-David") and come up with two different "political" campaigns either to support or challenge his reign (based on 1 Sam 15 – 2 Sam 2). More details in class.

Week 11

November 22

Class: Zion Covenant & A Divided Kingdom

1. Building the Temple & Zion Theology
2. Northern & Southern Israel
3. The Assyrian Invasion

Readings:

1. 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-12, 16-19, 21-22; 2 Kings 1-5, 16-20
2. Psalms 2, 51, 89, 132
3. Coogan, pp. 209-236 (ch. 14-15); pp. 237-257, 272-274, 280-287, 288 (chs. 16-18)

Class Discussion:

1. Print out 2 Sam 7:1-29 (available on Blackboard). What is the meaning of "house" in the oracle? What promises are made to David? What are the implications of God living in the temple in Jerusalem? How does this compare to the Mosaic covenant? How do you reconcile this covenant with the history of Israel?

Week 13

November 29

Class: The Babylonian Exile & its Aftermath

1. The Road to Exile & Life in Babylon
2. "Remembering" the Exile
3. The Deuteronomistic Historian

Readings:

1. 2 Kings 21-25
2. Psalm 137; Lamentations
3. Coogan, pp. 291-301, 311-313 (ch. 19)
4. William Morrow, "Comfort for Jerusalem: The Second Isaiah as Counselor to Refugees," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 34/2 (2004): 80-86. Online through U of T library.

Class Discussion:

1. Read Psalm 137 and Lamentations. How would you characterize the experience of exile for the Israelites? In light of William Morrow's article "Comfort for Jerusalem" compare and contrast the experience of the Babylonian Exile with the present day refugee crisis. Finally, discuss Rainer Albertz' comment, "With it [the Babylonian Exile] the previous religion of Israel became involved in its most serious crisis, but in it the foundations for the most far-reaching renewal of this religion was also laid."

Week 13**December 6***Class: The Book of Ruth & Hebrew Short Stories*

1. The Hebrew Short Story
2. Comedy & Satire in the Bible

Readings:

1. Ruth
2. Tobit
3. Jonah
4. Coogan, pp. 190-191
5. Adele Berlin, "Character and Characterization," in *Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 23-42. **(available on Blackboard)**

Class Discussion:

1. Using Adele Berlin's terminologies of round/flat characters and agents, identify the main characters in Ruth and their roles in the narrative. Why is the story of Ruth preserved? Is God active in the story? Additionally, read the short poem "The Book of Ruth and Naomi" (available on Blackboard) and consider how it embellishes or complements the biblical narrative.

Evaluation of Papers

Below is the grading scale for Basic Degree Students (TST website). Papers in this course must go beyond simply summarizing an author's work. Students are expected to analyze, synthesize and evaluate both the primary and secondary literature. A paper should never be mainly a string of quotations or simply repetition of secondary literature. Students are expected to be creative and to advance their own arguments. Finally, stylistic format (spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, page layout (1 inch margins), font (12 point Times New Roman), footnote and bibliographical citations) is very important and papers will be graded accordingly.

Letter Range	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter	Other qualities expected of students
A Range				Excellent: Student shows original thinking, analytic and synthetic ability, critical evaluations, broad knowledge basis.
A+	90-100	4.0	Profound and Creative	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; master of an extensive knowledge base.
A	85-89	4.0	Outstanding	Strong evidence of original thought, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound and penetrating

				critical evaluations which identify assumptions of those they study as well as their own; master of an extensive knowledge base.
A-	80-84	3.7	Excellent	Clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations; broad knowledge base.
B Range	Good: Student shows critical capacity and analytic ability, understanding of relevant issues, familiarity with the literature.			
B+	77-79	3.3	Very good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B	73-76	3.0	Good	Good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; good familiarity with the literature.
B-	70-72	2.7	Satisfactory at a post-baccalaureate level.	Adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues; some familiarity with the literature.
FZ	0-69	0	Failure	Failure to meet the above criteria.

