

Bible II: Torah and Israel's History (221)

This class invites us to be curious, interested, and imaginative readers of the first half of the Hebrew Bible: the Torah and the Former Prophets.

Course Description:

This course interprets the critical events, developing institutions, and traditions of Israel as portrayed in the Torah and Former Prophets. Attention is given to the earliest Covenants, to the Exodus, to the rise of the monarchy, and to other events up to the eighth century prophets. We will focus on the content and message as well as the historical and theological perspectives of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. We will also explore the important concept of hermeneutics and the practice of exegesis.

Objectives of the Course:

The student will be able to

1. Articulate a historical overview of the story of ancient Israel.
2. Outline the connection(s) between significant experiences in the story and the formation of Israel's faith.
3. Define key terms for the study of Hebrew Bible and the History of Ancient Israel.
4. Summarize course readings on interpretive approaches to the Hebrew Bible.
5. Exegete selected passages that illustrate crucial turning points in the history of Israel.
6. Apply exegesis to preaching, pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

Required Texts:

*indicates book is available electronically

*John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible, 2nd Edition*. ISBN: 9781540960214

*Bill T. Arnold, *Introduction to the Old Testament*. ISBN: 9781139025546

One of the following Bible Dictionaries:

**Harper Collins Bible Dictionary: Revised and Updated* by Mark Allan Powell.
ISBN: 9780061469060

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary: New and Enhanced Edition. Edited by Ronald F. Youngblood. ISBN: 9780529106223

**Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary III Edition* by J. D. Douglas & Merrill C. Tenney.
Revised by Moises Silva. ISBN: 9780310229834

Eerdmans' Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by David Noel Freedman. ISBN: 9780802877437

Supplemental Readings (not required):

The Old Testament: A Historical & Literary Introduction by Michael Coogan

A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2nd Edition by Walter Brueggemann and Bruce Birch

Requirements:

Pre-class Assignments	40%
Class Participation	10%
Library Work	
Online Participation	20%
Exegesis Paper Draft	10%
Exegesis Final Paper	20%

Pre-Class Assignments

Prior to the beginning of the course you are required to submit the following written work. Please note the deadline for submission of pre-class assignments. If you have any questions as you get started, just send me an email, and I'm happy to talk through it with you!

1. Glossary: Definitions and Significance of Key Terms and Concepts

Consult your textbooks to find the definitions/significance of these 40 terms and concepts. Create a word document with entries for each item. Some will be longer than others. Note: Do not simply search the internet for these terms. Not all sources are equal. Make sure you are consulting your textbooks or other recommended resources for this class. If you quote an author, be sure to cite them with an in-text citation. For example: (Powell, 104).

Sample Glossary entry:

Deuteronomistic reform: changes made during the reign of King Josiah in his attempt to return Israel to following the Law, especially as outlined in Deuteronomy 12. These changes included tearing down the "high places" dedicated to other gods.

Terms for Glossary:

Tanak (or Tanakh)	Canon	Historical criticism	Ark of the Covenant
YWHW	Neviim	Targum	Casuistic law
Henotheism	Ketuvim	Mishnah	Code of Hammurabi
Monotheism	Septuagint	Talmud	Amarna Letters
Torah/Pentateuch	Apocrypha	Shema	Epic of Atrahasis
Deuteronomistic History	Masoretic Text	Cities of Refuge	Enuma Elish
Documentary Hypothesis	Qumran	Day of Atonement	Gilgamesh Epic
Source criticism	Essenes	Scapegoat	Form criticism
Primeval History	Dead Sea Scrolls	Tithe	Mount Sinai
Table of Nations	Textual criticism	Apodictic law	<i>Sitz im Leben</i>

2. Short essays on your reading of Arnold:

These answers should be in full sentences and should address all the questions listed. Please reference the text using in-text citations. For example, (Arnold, 22).

A. Chapters 1-2 of Arnold: Write a 1 page essay that addresses the following questions: What have you learned about the formation of the canon? (Think about the questions who, what, where, when, how.) Are there things you see here that are different from what you have learned previously? How does understanding the formation of the canon help in your ability to lead your congregation in studying the Bible?

B. Chapters 3 and 4 of Arnold: Write a 1 page essay describing the Israelite understanding of history and the various “histories” that make up the Hebrew Bible. Also include an answer to the following: Arnold believes that the Israelite view of history is related to their monotheism. Do you agree or disagree and why or why not?

C. Chapter 5 of Arnold: Write a 1 page essay discussing the themes that Arnold sees in the Primeval history. How might a deeper engagement with these themes help you to do pastoral work?

3. Short answers on your reading of Walton:

Note: You do not have to read this entire book; only pages 1-30 are necessary for these questions.

These answers should be in full sentences and should address all the questions listed. Please reference the text using in-text citations. For example, (Walton, 19). Your answers should be 3-5 sentences each; the total content for all three questions should not exceed 1 page.

A. Describe in your own words what you think Walton means when he speaks of a “cognitive environment.” What is the significance of the cognitive environment for the study of the Hebrew Bible?

B. Define Comparative Study. How is comparative study used differently by “critical scholars” and “confessional scholars?” Explain how comparative study challenges critical scholarship. Explain how confessional scholars can feel threatened by comparative study? What is at least one way that comparative study can help confessional scholars in their study and preaching?

C. List and describe the three roles for which Comparative Study can be used (according to Walton). Do you see one as most important, or should they all work together? Explain your answer.

4. Notes on the Biblical History of Israel (12 pages total):

- Read (or listen to an audio version of) the biblical text of each of the biblical books covered in this class: Gen, Exod, Lev, Num, Deut, Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings. To help with the large amount of material, check out the website My Bible Plans to create a reading plan (<https://www.mybibleplans.com/>). If you create a plan to read these books over the course of 6 months, you’ll only need to read about two chapters a day.
- As you read each book, create a 1 page overview of that book outlining the main characters and events. You should have one page on Genesis, one on Exodus, and so on. You will also create a one page overview of Israel’s history as recorded in these books all together. This should give you a summary timeline of the Biblical history of Israel. This assignment should be 10 pages (1pg for each book and 1pg for Genesis-Kings together). **Note: You won’t have space to be overly detailed, but creating these overviews will help you to read actively and maintain a “birds-eye” view of the biblical history of Israel as recounted in these texts. These will also be good resources for you to keep in your files!**

Guidelines and Grades

Guidelines

Guidelines for writing and submitting pre-class assignments and information on academic dishonesty are provided in the Course of Study catalog, available on the website. For all pre-class assignments, please use the cover sheet provided there. Assignments should be typed using **12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins on all sides and double spacing**. Submit your assignments in four parts:

- 1) Your **Glossary**
- 2) Three **short essays from your reading of Arnold**. Submit these together as one document, and use appropriate headings to divide sections within your submission.
- 3) Three **short answers from your reading of Watson**. Submit these as one documents, and use appropriate headings to divide sections within your submission.
- 4) **Reading notes on the biblical history of Israel**. This submission should include ten 1-page entries providing an outline/overview of the main content, characters, and themes from each of the books covered: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings – as well as a 1 page overview of the content covered in Genesis-Kings all together. For full credit, please stay within the 1 page limit for each.

Criteria for Evaluation: Your Pre-Class Assignments are graded on a completion basis. If you meet the length requirements and demonstrate engagement with the reading, you will get full credit. If your answers appear to be unrelated to the reading, drawn from other sources, or fall short of the length requirements, you will get partial credit.

Grades

Pre-class Assignments	350 points
Canvas Introductory Video (20 points)	
Glossary (80 points)	
Short Essays on Arnold (90 points [30 per essay])	
Short Answers on Watson (60 [20 per question])	
Reading Notes on Biblical texts (100 points [10 per entry])	
Class Participation	100 points
Online Participation	250 points
World Behind the Text Outline/Notes (25 points)	
World Within the Text Outline/Notes (25 points)	
Group Chat for Rough Draft (25 points)	
Peer Review for Exegesis Paper Draft (100 points)	
Paper Summary Video (50 points)	
Group Chat for Course Conclusion (25 points)	
Online Meet-ups (up to 25 points extra credit)	
Exegesis Paper Draft	100 points
Exegesis Final Paper	200 points
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TOTAL	1000 points