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Dept. of Religious Studies
College of the Holy Cross

Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

RELS-126, Spring 2014

MWF, 11:00-11:50 AM (Section 1, Stein 217)

MWF, 1:00-1:50 PM (Section 2, Smith Labs 154)

Office hours: M 12:00 Noon – 12:50 PM
W 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM
... and by appointment

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The Hebrew Bible (HB), also called the Old Testament, is arguably the most influential book ever written. Billions of people have held it sacred, and it serves as the foundation of three major world religions. It is not one book, however, but rather an anthology of many smaller works that were composed, edited, and arranged over the course of more than a millennium. Disparate genres such as history, mythology, law, prayer, prophecy, and wisdom intermingle in beautiful and complicated ways.

In this course, we will read the texts of the HB as works of literature from an historical point of view. In other words, we will ask what the texts meant to their ancient authors and audiences, and we will work to understand the social, cultural, economic, political, and historical realities out of which the writings arose. Further, the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah were small and relatively minor compared to other cultures such as the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and peoples of the Levant. The HB often dialogues with writings from other nations, and we will read texts from these neighboring civilizations.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Discuss the canon of the HB, including its sections and organizational structure.
- Identify the genre of various biblical texts and recognize the importance of doing so.
- Summarize the contents and describe the themes of the major biblical books.
- Contextualize the HB in its ancient Near Eastern setting, relating the HB to the history and literature of other ancient cultures.
- Explain the historical-critical method of studying biblical texts and understand its purpose.

Required Books

Coogan, Michael D. *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Coogan, Michael D. *A Reader of Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Sources for the Study of the Old Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Friedman, Richard Elliott. *Who Wrote the Bible?* 2nd ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997.

Study Bibles

All students must purchase a study bible and bring it to each class. I recommended the *Jewish Study Bible* (=JSB) as the best option, available in the bookstore (and on Amazon, where the hardcover is often cheaper than the paperback):

The Jewish Study Bible: Featuring the Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation. Eds. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

However, students may substitute the *Catholic Study Bible* (2nd ed., eds. Donald Senior and John J. Collins [Oxford, 2011]) or *The New Oxford Annotated Bible With Apocrypha* (4th ed., eds. Michael D. Coogan, Marc Z. Brettler, Carol Newsom, and PHEME PERKINS [Oxford, 2010]). Both of these use what I judge to be inferior translations (the New American Bible Revised Edition and the New Revised Standard Version, respectively), but they also include translations of the New Testament.

In this syllabus, I assign book introductions from JSB. However, I mark with a * when you may read corresponding book introductions in CSB or NOAB instead. When the other study bibles do not have a corresponding essay, I will post JSB's text on Moodle. In JSB, feel free to skip sections that relate specifically to post-biblical Jewish practice.

Required Coursework

Attendance and participation. On-time attendance is required at all class sessions, and failure to show up will affect your participation grade (and, more importantly, lessen the impact of your studies). E-mail me beforehand if you will not be able to attend.

I expect each student to participate in class discussion in regular and meaningful ways. Be warned, I will “cold call” students to answer questions about the reading (both factual and philosophical). Please tell me before class if you are unprepared for that day. This will not be a problem—twice. I will take notes each class when you participate. If you are consistently prepared, you will receive full credit. **Please see me privately if you find it difficult to participate actively in class—we can work together on ways for you to become more effective or to feel less nervous.**

Daily reading assignments. Please complete the assigned readings, in the order I list them, for each class before that class begins. This course is reading intensive, but I mark the level of care required for different sections (e.g., ok to skip [if you're running out of time], skim, read with select notes, read carefully with all notes).

In-class quizzes. Six times this semester, we will spend the first 5-10 minutes of our Friday class taking a short quiz, which may take the following forms:

- True/false
- Fill-in-the-blank
- Identify the book and/or author, and explain how you know
- Draw or label a map
- Complete a timeline
- Short essay question (2 paragraphs)
- Annotate 2-3 biblical verses

If you will be absent for a quiz, you must e-mail me in advance and arrange to make it up the following Monday. If you fail to do so, it will automatically count as a zero.

Writing assignments. You will have two papers to complete. The first will be analytical (7-8 pages, due 3/28) on a topic of your choosing, and the second will be creative where you compose in the style and explore the themes of one of the poetic biblical books (3-5 pages, due 5/4). More details on both papers will follow later in the semester.

Please use 12-point Times New Roman font for everything (including any footnotes), double-space everything (including footnotes), and set your margins to 1". Proper citation is always required. Turn in printed and stapled copies of your papers at the beginning of class on their due dates. Each calendar day a paper is late will result in half a letter grade deduction. I will not give extensions except in extraordinary circumstances.

Extra Credit. Under class sessions 7 (2/5) and 12 (2/17), I list two “recommended” articles by Albrecht Alt. These essays were groundbreaking, and I consider them especially well-written and fascinating. At any point in the semester up to April 14, you may write a three-page summary, critique, and response to these articles. Each paper may earn up to 3 points extra credit on your final grade.

Grading Policies

- 5% Attendance
- 5% Participation
- 35% In-class quizzes (6 quizzes, lowest quiz score is dropped)
- 18% Analytical writing assignment (5-7 pages, due 3/28)
- 13% Creative writing assignment (3-5 pages, due 5/4)
- 25% Final exam
- +6% Possible extra credit

Policies

Electronic devices. Please be aware that I do not allow laptops, tablets, or cell phones in class. Please plan to take notes on paper and, in advance, to print any articles.

Academic honesty. The college and I require the highest level of academic integrity. The school’s official policy states: “All education is a cooperative enterprise between teachers and students. This cooperation requires trust and mutual respect, which are only possible in an environment governed by the principles of academic honesty. As an institution devoted to teaching, learning, and intellectual inquiry, Holy Cross expects all members of the College community to abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any violation of academic honesty undermines the student-teacher relationship, thereby wounding the whole community. The principal violations of academic honesty are plagiarism, cheating, and collusion.”

Documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability, please see me so that I may arrange for necessary and reasonable accommodations.

E-mail. Please check your campus e-mail regularly, as I will occasionally send important information to your @g.holycross.edu address.

Books of Possible Interest

- For “official” Catholic Church doctrine on historical-critical study of the Bible, see “The Interpretation of Bible in the Church” by the Pontifical Biblical Commission (presented on March 18, 1994; available online), with a preface by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.
- For those interested in feminist biblical interpretation, I recommend the *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 3rd ed., eds. Carol A. Newsome, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2012).
- The following volume offers Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant perspectives on reading the Bible both as sacred scripture and as an historical and literary text: Marc Zvi Brettler, Peter Enns, and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Bible and the Believer: How to Read the Bible Critically and Religiously* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- On the Bible and issues relating to homosexuality, I recommend Daniel A. Helminiak, *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*, expanded ed. (Estancia, N.M.: Alamo Square, 2000); and Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Class Schedule (subject to change, as needed)

1. Wednesday, Jan. 22 – First Day!

2. Friday, Jan. 24 – Canon and Canaan

Readings:

1. Coogan, *The Old Testament (TOT)*: Chapters 1-2, pgs. 3-29
2. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*: Introduction and chapter 1, pgs. 15-49

Questions:

- Does any of the information you read about the biblical canon and/or ancient Israel surprise you? Does anything differ from what you have learned previously?
- How do the chapter and verse numbers in the Hebrew Bible affect our reading of the texts?
- Is the “Hebrew Bible” the same as the “Old Testament”?

3. Monday, Jan. 27 – Creation, Mesopotamian Style

Readings:

1. *Jewish Study Bible (JSB)*: Jon D. Levinson, “Genesis,” pgs. 8-11*
2. Hebrew Bible (HB): Genesis 1:1-2:4a (skim)
3. Coogan, *TOT*: ½ of chapter 3, pgs. 33-40 (stop at “The Second Account of Creation”)
4. Coogan, *A Reader of Ancient Near Eastern Texts (RANET)*: Enūma Eliš, pgs. 9-15
5. HB: Genesis 1:1-2:4a (carefully w/ notes)

Questions:

- Have you read creation stories from other cultures before this class? How are they similar or different? Are any themes common among all the creation stories you have encountered?
- What differences and affinities can you identify between the Mesopotamian and biblical creation accounts?

4. Wednesday, Jan. 29 – A Garden in the East

Readings:

1. HB: Genesis 2:4b-3:24 (skim)
2. *TOT*: Finish chapter 3, pgs. 40-48

3. *RANET*: The Epic of Gilgamesh, pgs. 39-44
4. HB: Genesis 2:4b-3:24 (carefully w/ notes)

Question:

- What elements are common to both the Genesis and Gilgamesh myths?

5. Friday, Jan. 31 – Source Criticism

Readings:

1. HB: Genesis 1:1-3:24 (reread quickly)
2. *TOT*: Chapter 4, pgs. 49-58
3. *Who Wrote?*: Pgs. 50-216

Questions:

- What evidence supports seeing two creation stories in Genesis 1-3?
 - Compare the two creation myths in Genesis 1-3. Make a list of the differences in language, vocabulary, tone, and theme. What are the characteristic differences between P and J?
- In-class quiz on class sessions 2-5.

6. Monday, Feb. 3 – The Primeval History

Readings:

1. HB: Genesis 4:1-11:32 (carefully w/ notes, but skim genealogies)
2. *TOT*: Chapter 5, pgs. 59-68
3. *RANET*: Atra-ḥasīs, pgs. 44-48

Assignment and questions:

- On the handout of Genesis 6:5-9:17, use highlighters to identify J and P material. What language or themes do you see in which source?
- How might you explain the similarities and differences between the Epic of Gilgamesh, Atra-ḥasīs, J's flood story, and P's flood story? Do you think that any of the authors had direct access to any of the other stories?

7. Wednesday, Feb. 5 – The Patriarchs and Matriarchs

Readings:

1. HB: Genesis 12:1-50:26 (w/ notes for sections you find interesting or confusing)
2. *TOT*: Chapter 6, pgs. 73-93
3. *RANET*: Kirta, pgs. 48-52
4. RECOMMENDED, on Moodle: Albrecht Alt, "The God of the Fathers," *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 3-86.

Questions:

- What themes and motifs appear in the Patriarchal Narratives?
- What are the similarities between the Ugaritic Kirta epic and the Hebrew Bible?

8. Friday, Feb. 7 – Form Criticism of Genesis

Readings:

1. Moodle: Hermann Gunkel, *The Stories of Genesis*, trans. John J. Scullion, ed. William R. Scott (Oakland, Calif.: BIBAL, 1994), 1-62 (read pgs. 1-26, skim pgs. 27-62).
2. HB: Genesis 1:1-50:26 (skip around and skim, reread noteworthy or compelling sections)

3. Moodle: Marc Zvi Brettler, "The Ancestors as Heroes," *How to Read the Bible* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2005), 49-59.
4. *Who Wrote??:* Chapters 13-14, pgs. 217-45

Question:

- What are the differences between a story, a myth, and history?

9. Monday, Feb. 10 – The Israelites in Egypt

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Jeffrey H. Tigay, "Exodus," pgs. 102-105*
2. *RANET*: The Birth Legend of Sargon, pgs. 66-67
3. HB: Exodus 1:1-15:27 (skim)
4. *TOT*: Chapter 7, pgs. 94-113
5. HB: Exodus 1:1-15:27 (carefully w/ notes)
6. *RANET*: The Amarna Letters, pgs. 117-19

Questions:

- Was the exodus an historical event?
- What similarities and differences do you see between the Birth Legend of Sargon and Moses' birth narrative?
- What can the Amarna Letters tell us about politics, religion, and culture in ancient Canaan?

10. Wednesday, Feb. 12 – God's Mountain

Readings:

1. HB: Exodus 16:1-24:18 (skim)
2. *TOT*: Chapter 8, pgs. 114-27
3. HB: Exodus 16:1-24:18 (carefully w/ notes)
4. *RANET*: Ba'al, pgs. 18-28

Questions:

- Can you identify the traditional Pentateuchal sources (J, E, P) in Exodus 19?
- What is a suzerainty treaty?
- What conclusions might you draw about the social and religious make-up of ancient Israelite communities based on reading the Decalogue?

11. Friday, Feb. 14 – The Covenant Code

Readings:

1. HB: Exodus 20:22-23:33 (reread carefully, reviewing notes)
2. *TOT*: Part of chapter 9, pgs. 128-34 (stop before "The Ark, the Tabernacle...")
3. *RANET*: The Code of Hammurabi, pgs. 87-90
4. *RANET*: Hittite Laws, pgs. 90-93
5. Moodle: David P. Wright, "The Laws of Hammurabi as a Source for the Covenant Collection (Exodus 20:23-23:19)," *Maariv* 10 (2003): 11-87.

Question:

- How would you summarize Wright's argument, in three sentences?
- In-class quiz on class sessions 6-11.

12. Monday, Feb. 17 – Israelite Laws and the Tabernacle

Readings:

1. HB: Exodus 25:1-40:38
 - a. 25:1-34:35 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 35:1-39:43 (skim)
 - c. 40:1-38 (carefully w/ notes)
2. *TOT*: Finish chapter 9, pgs. 134-45
3. RECOMMENDED, on Moodle: Albrecht Alt, “The Origins of Israelite Law,” *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, 103-171.

Questions:

- Separate the sources in the Golden Calf narrative (Exod 31:18-33:23). What are the differences between the Priestly and non-Priestly accounts? Why does P deflect blame from Aaron?

13. Wednesday, Feb. 19 – Priestly Ritual

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Baruch J. Schwartz, “Leviticus,” pgs. 203-06*
2. HB: Leviticus 1:1-16:34 (carefully w/ notes)
3. *TOT*: Part of Chapter 10, pgs. 146-152
4. Moodle: Jacob Milgrom, “Israel’s Sanctuary: The Priestly ‘Picture of Dorian Gray,’” *Revue Biblique* 83 (1976): 390-99.

Assignment and questions:

- Make sure you can summarize Milgrom’s famous argument. Do you find it convincing?
- What are the differences between being “impure” and being “unclean”?

14. Friday, Feb. 21 – The Holiness Legislation

Readings:

1. HB: Leviticus 17:1-27:34 (carefully w/ notes)
2. *TOT*: Finish chapter 10, pgs. 153-59
3. Moodle: Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1995), 1-45.

Questions:

- What differences in content and tone can you detect between P and H?
- How do the laws in Leviticus provide for individuals of low status or wealth?

15. Monday, Feb. 24 – In the Wilderness

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Nili S. Fox, “Numbers,” pgs. 281-84*
2. HB: Numbers
 - a. 1:1-5:10 (skim)
 - b. 5:11-6:27 (carefully w/ notes)
 - c. 11:1-36:13 (w/ notes for sections you find interesting or confusing)
3. *TOT*: Chapter 11, pgs. 160-77
4. *RANET*: The Deir ‘Allā inscription, pgs. 180-81

5. James G. Frazer, "Sympathetic Magic," *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, 4th ed., eds. William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 300-15.
6. Mischa Titiev, "A Fresh Approach to the Problem of Magic and Religion," *Reader in Comparative Religion*, 316-19.

Questions:

- What is "magic"? How does it differ from "religion"?
- What acts would you characterize as "magical" in Numbers?

16. Wednesday, Feb. 26 – The Second Law

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Bernard M. Levinson, "Deuteronomy," pgs. 356-63*
2. HB: Deuteronomy 1:1-34:12 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
3. *TOT*: Chapter 12, pgs. 178-95
4. *RANET*: The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon, pgs. 106-108
5. Moodle: Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 23-52.

Questions:

- How does Moses' personality evolve over the course of the Pentateuch?
- How do the laws in Deuteronomy resemble and differ from laws in the Covenant Collection (Exodus 20:22-23:33)?

17. Friday, Feb. 28 – Conquest/Settlement

Readings:

1. *JSB*, also on Moodle: Marc Zvi Brettler, "Nevi'im," pgs. 451-61
2. *JSB*: Carol Meyers, "Joshua," 462-64*
3. HB: Joshua 1:1-24:33
 - a. 1:1-13:7 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 14:1-19:51 (skip)
 - c. 20:1-24:33 (carefully w/ notes)
4. *TOT*: Chapter 13, pgs. 196-214

Assignment:

- Familiarize yourself with maps of ancient Canaan, either in a bible atlas online at <http://moses.creighton.edu/vr/>.

Questions:

- How does the Torah end? Is this ending satisfying? How *should* it end?
- According to Joshua, what words best describe the conquest of Canaan?

In-class quiz on class sessions 12-17.

18. Monday, Mar. 10 – The Chieftains

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Yaira Amit, "Judges," pgs. 508-10*
2. HB: Judges 1:1-21:25
 - a. 1:1-5:31 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 6:1-12:15 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
 - c. 13:1-19:30 (carefully w/ notes)

- d. 20:1-21:25 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
- 3. *TOT*: Chapter 14, pgs. 215-232
- 4. *JSB*: Adele Reinhartz, “Ruth,” pgs. 1578-79*
- 5. HB: Ruth 1:1-4:22 (carefully w/ notes)

Questions:

- How are the narratives in Judges arranged?
- What genre is Judges? Are the stories historical?
- How do the presentations of Israel’s settlement of the land differ between Joshua and Judges?

19. Wednesday, Mar. 12 – Saul and David

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Shimon Bar-Efrat, “1 Samuel,” pgs. 558-61*
2. HB: 1 Samuel 1:1-31:13 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
3. *TOT*: Chapter 15, pgs. 235-51

Questions:

- How does the text portray David’s rise to power? Does David ever do anything wrong? Does he ever sound “too good to be true”?

20. Friday, Mar. 14 – “Appoint for us a king!”

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Shimon Bar-Efrat, “2 Samuel,” pg. 619*
2. HB: 2 Samuel 1:1-24:45 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
3. HB: 1 Kings 1:1-2:46 (carefully w/ notes)
4. *TOT*: Chapter 16, pgs. 252-69
5. *RANET*: The Tel Dan Stela, pgs. 77-78
6. HB: Psalm 132 (carefully w/ notes); refer to Box 16.3 in *TOT*, pg. 267

Question:

- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all revere David. Does he deserve to be regarded as a hero?

21. Monday, Mar. 17 –Solomon

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Ziony Zevit, “1 Kings,” pgs. 668-71*
2. HB: 1 Kings 1:1-11:43 (carefully w/ notes)
3. *TOT*: Chapter 17, pgs. 270-89
4. HB: Psalm 89 (carefully w/notes)

Question:

- What one word would you use to describe Solomon? Be ready to defend your choice.

22. Wednesday, Mar. 19 – Divided Kingdoms, 928-700 BCE; Introduction to Prophecy

Readings:

1. HB: 1 Kings 11:29 – 2 Kings 14:29 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
2. *TOT*: Part of chapter 18, pgs. 290-299 (stop before “Prophets and Prophecy”)
3. *RANET*: The Mesha Stela, pgs. 76-77
4. *TOT*: Finish chapter 18, pgs. 299-309

Questions:

- What biases does DtrH evince? Which kings do its authors extoll and which do they vilify?

- How would you characterize the relationship between Israel and Judah?
- What would you do if someone standing in the lobby of Hogan started acting like a prophet?

23. Friday, Mar. 21 – The Northern Kingdom, 788-722 BCE; Amos

Readings:

1. HB: 2 Kings 14:1-17:41 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
2. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Amos,” pgs. 1176-77*
3. HB: Amos 1:1-9:15 (carefully w/ notes)
4. Ehud Ben Zvi, “Hosea,” *JSB*, pgs. 1143-44*
5. HB: Hosea 1:1-5:15 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections; the rest of Hosea is beautiful, and I recommend reading it sometime)
6. *TOT*: Chapter 19, pgs. 310-28

Questions:

- What are the main goals of the book of Amos? What message does the prophet want the people to receive?
 - What differences in tone do you detect between Amos 1-8 and Amos 9?
- In-class quiz on class sessions 18-23.

24. Monday, Mar. 24 – The Southern Kingdom, 750-687 BCE

Readings:

1. HB: 2 Kings 15:1-20:21
 - a. 15:1-17:41 (glance at to remind yourself)
 - b. 18:1-20:21 (carefully w/ notes)
2. *JSB*: David Rothstein, “1 Chronicles,” pgs. 1712-17*
3. HB: 2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33 (skim)
4. *JSB*: Benjamin D. Sommer, “Isaiah,” pgs. 780-84*
5. HB: Isaiah 1:1-39:8
 - a. 1:1-12:6 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 13:1-23:18 (skim; ok to skip)
 - c. ~~24:1-27:13~~ (skip)
 - d. 28:1-33:24 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
 - e. ~~34:1-35:10~~ (skip)
 - f. 36:1-39:8 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing sections)
6. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Micah,” pgs. 1205-06*
7. HB: Micah
 - a. 1:1-2:13 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 3:1-5:14 (ok to skip)
 - c. 6:1-8 (carefully w/ notes; often cited as favorite verses in the entire Bible)
 - d. 6:9-7:20 (ok to skip)
8. *TOT*: Chapter 20, pgs. 329-49 (make sure to read carefully Box 20.4, Sennacherib’s Third Campaign)

Questions:

- How reliable are the Deuteronomistic Historians as narrators? Are the Assyrians any more reliable? How do scholars and students figure out what really happened?
- Why is Isaiah 7:14 important in Christianity? How do scholars interpret this verse?
- In what ways is First Isaiah a Classical prophet, and in what ways is he unique?

25. Wednesday, Mar. 26 – Judah under Assyrian Domination, 698-598 BCE

Readings:

1. HB: 2 Kings 21:1-23:37 (carefully w/ notes)
2. HB: 2 Chronicles 33:1-35:27 (skim)
3. *TOT*: Chapter 21, pgs. 350-59
4. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Zephaniah,” pg. 1234-35*
5. HB: Zephaniah 1:1-3:20 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
6. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Nahum,” 1219-20*
7. HB: Nahum 1:1-3:19 (carefully w/ notes)

Questions:

- What qualities and actions make Josiah the epitome of a successful king in DtrH?
- Why would Zephaniah’s prophecies have been important to Josiah?
- How is the subject of Nahum’s wrath unusual?

26. Friday, Mar. 28 – Jerusalem Falls, 604-586 BCE

Readings:

1. HB: 2 Kings 23:31-25:30 (carefully w/ notes)
2. HB: 2 Chronicles 36:1-23 (skim)
3. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Habakkuk,” pgs. 1226-27*
4. HB: Habakkuk 1:1-3:19 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
5. *JSB*: Marvin A. Sweeney, “Jeremiah,” pgs. 917-20*
6. HB: Jeremiah 1:1-52:34
 - a. 1:1-3:25 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 4:1-13:27 (skim)
 - c. 14:1-17:27 (carefully w/ notes)
 - d. 18:1-19:15 (skim)
 - e. 20:1-29:33 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
 - f. ~~30:1-35:19~~ (skip, but it’s good)
 - g. 36:1-32 (carefully w/ notes)
 - h. ~~37:1-52:34~~ (skip, but also pretty good)
7. *TOT*: Chapter 22, pgs. 360-77

Questions:

- Is the narrative of Judah’s downfall in 2 Kings historical?
 - According to the Deuteronomistic Historians, why does Jerusalem fall?
 - How does Jeremiah’s rhetorical style differ from that of Amos, Hosea, and First Isaiah? Which style do you find most effective?
 - What is the relationship between Jeremiah the book and Jeremiah the man?
- ➔ Analytical paper due.

27. Monday, Mar. 31 – During the Babylonian Exile, 597-538 BCE

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Daniel Grossberg, “Lamentations,” pgs. 1587-89*
2. HB: Lamentations 1:1-5:22 (carefully w/ notes)
3. *RANET*: Lament for Ur, pgs. 133-37 (inc. “City Laments” intro)
4. HB: Psalm 137:1-8 (carefully w/ notes)
5. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Obadiah,” pgs. 1193-94*

6. HB: Obadiah 1:1-21 (carefully w/ notes)
7. *TOT*: Part of chapter 23, pgs. 381-86 (stop before “Book of Ezekiel”)
8. *JSB*: Marvin A. Sweeney, “Ezekiel,” pgs. 1042-45*
9. Ezekiel 1:1-48:35
 - a. 1:1-11:25 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 12:1-32:32 (skip)
 - c. 33:1-39:29 (carefully w/ notes)
 - d. 40:1-48:35 (skim)
10. *TOT*: Finish chapter 23, pgs. 386-99

Questions:

- What happened in Judah after 586 BCE?
- What do you make of Ezekiel’s first visions? If it helps, and I’m not kidding, try to draw the scene the prophet describes in Ezek 1:1-28 (and don’t Google it first).
- Is the Israelite deity a “loving God” in Lamentations and Ezekiel?

28. Wednesday, April 2 – Ending the Exile, 559-530 BCE

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Hindy Najman, “Ezra,” pgs. 1666-71*
2. HB: Ezra 1:1-2:70 (make sure you understand the text, but skim the lists)
3. Moodle: Richard J. Clifford, “Second Isaiah,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 490-50.
4. HB: Isaiah 34:1-35:10 (carefully w/ notes)
5. HB: Isaiah 40:1-55:13
 - a. 40:1-44:5 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 44:6-55:13 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
6. *TOT*: Chapter 24, pgs. 400-414
7. *RANET*: The Cyrus Cylinder, pgs. 84-85

Questions:

- Why is Cyrus successful as a conqueror and as a leader?
- What Israelite rituals or beliefs change as a result of the Babylonian exile?
- What are the major themes of Deutero-Isaiah?

29. Friday, April 4 – Building the Second Temple, 539-515 BCE

Readings:

1. HB: Ezra 3:1-6:22 (carefully w/ notes)
2. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Haggai,” pgs. 1243-44*
3. HB: Haggai 1:1-2:23 (carefully w/ notes)
4. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Zechariah,” pgs. 1249-59*
5. HB: Zechariah 1:1-8:23 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
6. Moodle: Christopher R. Seitz, “Third Isaiah,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, pgs. 501-07.
7. HB: Isaiah 56:1-66:24 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
8. *TOT*: Chapter 25, pgs. 417-427

Questions:

1. What problems did those returning from exile encounter back in Jerusalem?
2. How does prophecy change after the exile?

In-class quiz on class sessions 24-29.

30. Monday, April 7 – Yehud Province, 400s BCE; Apocalyptic Literature

Readings:

1. HB: Ezra 7:1-10:44 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
2. HB: Nehemiah 1:1-13:31 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses; skip ch. 7)
3. *TOT*: Part of chapter 26, pgs. 428-36 (stop before “The Isaiah Apocalypse”)
4. HB: Isaiah 24:1-27:13 (carefully w/ notes)
5. HB: Zechariah 9:1-14:21 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
6. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Joel,” pgs. 1166-67*
7. HB: Joel 1:1-4:21 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
8. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Malachi,” pgs. 1268-69*
9. HB: Malachi 1:1-3:24 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
10. *TOT*: Finish chapter 26, pgs. 436-43

Questions:

- How do Ezra and Nehemiah feel about foreign women?
- How does the dominant literary style change in Judah after the exile, and why?

31. Wednesday, April 9 – The Chronicler

Readings:

1. *TOT*: part of chapter 27, pgs. 444-52 (stop before “The Book of Psalms”)
2. HB: 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 (carefully w/ notes)
3. HB: 2 Kings 21:1-18 (carefully w/ notes)

Assignment:

- On the handout provided:
 - Highlight text in 2 Kings 21 that is missing in the synoptic passages of 2 Chron 33 (e.g., “his mother’s name was Hephzibah” in 2 Kings 21:1).
 - Underline text in 2 Kings 21 that is entirely different in 2 Chron 33 (e.g., 1 Kings 21:12).
 - Highlight text in 2 Chron 33 that is absent (or entirely rewritten) from 2 Kings 21.

Questions:

- What sources did the Chronicler use?
- What was the Chronicler’s purpose in writing?

32. Friday, April 11 – The Psalms and Biblical Poetry

Readings:

1. *JSB* and on Moodle: Adele Berlin, “Reading Biblical Poetry,” pgs. 2097-2104
2. *JSB*: Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, “Psalms,” pgs. 1280-84*
3. HB: Psalms (choose 15 to read carefully w/ notes)
4. *TOT*: Part of chapter 27, pgs. 452-63 (stop before “Wisdom Literature”)

Questions:

- What are the major features of Biblical Hebrew poetry?
- How could form criticism be useful in reading Psalms? What might the original “setting in life” have been for the psalms you read?

33. Monday, April 14 – Wisdom Literature

1. *TOT*: Part of chapter 27, pgs. 463-67 (stop before “The Book of Proverbs”)
2. *JSB*: Michael V. Fox, “Proverbs,” pgs. 1447-49*

3. HB: Proverbs 1:1-31:31
 - a. 1:1-9:18 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
 - b. 10:1-31:9 (skip around, choose 3 chapters to read carefully w/ notes)
 - c. 31:10-31 (carefully w/ notes)
4. *RANET*: Aḥiqar, pgs. 207-09
5. *RANET*: The Instruction of Amenemope, pgs. 191-93
6. *TOT*: Finish chapter 27, pgs. 467-71

Question:

- What themes of wisdom literature are present in Proverbs, Aḥiqar, and Amenemope?
- ➔ Extra credit assignments due.

Wednesday, April 16 – PASSOVER, NO CLASS

34. Wednesday, April 23 – Job and Ecclesiastes

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Mayer Gruber, “Job,” pgs. 1499-1505*
2. HB: Job 1:1-42:17
 - a. 1:1-7:21 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 8:1-37:24 (skip around, choose 4 speeches to read carefully w/ notes)
 - c. 38:1-42:17 (carefully w/ notes)
3. *TOT*: Part of chapter 28, pgs. 475-85 (stop before “The Book of Ecclesiastes”)
4. *RANET*: “I will praise the lord of wisdom,” pgs. 198-203 (note: the cool kids call it “Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi”)
5. *JSB*: Peter Machinist, “Ecclesiastes,” 1603-06*
6. HB: Ecclesiastes
 - a. 1:1-3:22 (carefully w/ notes)
 - b. 4:1-6:12 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
 - c. 7:1-8:17 (carefully w/ notes)
 - d. 9:1-12:14 (w/ notes for interesting or confusing verses)
7. *TOT*: Part of chapter 28, pgs. 485-90 (stop before “The Song of Solomon”)

Questions:

- Why would a character like Job have been popular in ancient Near Eastern literature?
- In Job, how would the different characters answer the question, “Why do good people suffer?”

35. Friday, April 25 – Love and Lust in the Ancient Near East

1. *JSB*: Elsie Stern, “Song of Songs,” pgs. 1564-66*
2. HB: Song of Songs 1:1-8:14 (carefully w/ notes)
3. *TOT*: Part of chapter 28, pgs. 490-93
4. *RANET*: Love poetry, pgs. 167-71
5. Selections (on Moodle) from Carey Ellen Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2000).

Question:

- What genre is the Song of Songs, and how did it ever make it into the Bible?
- In-class quiz on class sessions 30-35.

36. Monday, April 28 – Esther

Readings:

1. *JSB*: Adele Berlin, “Esther,” pgs. 1623-25*
2. *HB*: Esther 1:1-10:3 (carefully w/ notes)
3. *TOT*: pgs. 520-25 (stop before “The Book of Judith”; we will return to Jonah soon)

37. Wednesday, April 30 – Two Prophetic Narratives: Jonah and Daniel

Readings:

1. *TOT*: Part of chapter 29, pgs. 494-503 (stop before “1 Maccabees”)
2. *JSB*: Ehud Ben Zvi, “Jonah,” pgs. 1198-99*
3. *HB*: Jonah 1:1-4:11 (carefully w/ notes)
4. *TOT*: Part of chapter 30, pgs. 520-21 (stop before “The Book of Esther”)
5. *JSB*: Lawrence M. Wills, “Daniel,” pgs. 1640-42*
6. *HB*: Daniel 1:1-12:13 (carefully w/ notes)
7. *TOT*: Part of chapter 30, pgs. 531-38
8. *RANET*: Aqhat, pgs. 52-56

Question:

- Were the books of Jonah and Daniel actually written when the claim to have been?

38. Friday, May 2 – TBD based on the interests of the class

39. Monday, May 5 – Review for Final Exam

→ Creative writing assignment due.