

Hartford Seminary
Hebrew Bible Survey SC-522
Spring 2021
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Course Description:

This course will examine the content and theology expressed in the Hebrew Bible. We analyze scripture using historical-critical methodologies that consider the biblical material in light of its ancient Near Eastern context. We also investigate how the Hebrew Bible has been interpreted by different faith communities.

Course Objectives:

In this course students will:

1. Attain an in-depth knowledge of the content and critical questions involved in studying the major portions of the Hebrew Bible.
2. Analyze how the Ancient Near Eastern context of the Hebrew Bible informs its content.
3. Develop an awareness of the multiple theological perspectives operative in the Hebrew Bible.
4. Differentiate between biblical theology and ancient Israelite beliefs and practices.
5. Articulate how diverse faith perspectives influence biblical interpretation and how they generate distinct religious beliefs and spiritual practices.

Learning Outcomes:

1. To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one's own religion (MARS # 1)
2. To demonstrate knowledge of the practices of one's own religious tradition and the capacity to appreciate the practices of other religious traditions (MARS #3)
3. To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage the religious pluralism of contemporary American society through exposure to the teachings of other faiths and those who practice those faiths (DMIN # 3)

Required Texts & Readings:

1. An English translation of the Hebrew Bible (This should be brought every class.)
I will be using Michael Coogan, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible. New Revised Standard Version* (Third Edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). ISBN: 978-0195284850. However, students are not required to use this particular version. Nonetheless, please consult with me regarding the version which you prefer to use.
2. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament. An Introduction by Lawrence Boadt. Revised and Updated by Richard Clifford and Daniel Harrington.* ISBN-13: 978-0809147809; ISBN-10: 0809147807
3. Materials on Canvas

Recommended Readings:

1. Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* (Second Edition; New York, Paulist Press, 2012).
2. Marc Brettler, *How to Read the Bible* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2005).
3. Philip Cunningham, *Sharing the Scriptures* (World Set Free v. 1; Stimulus Book: New York, 2003).
4. Andre Lemaire, *The Birth of Monotheism: The Rise and Disappearance of Yahwism* (Biblical Archaeology Society, 2007).
5. Jon Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012).
6. Steven McKenzie, *Introduction to the Historical Books: Strategies for Reading* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).
- Ronald Troxel, *Prophetic Literature: From Oracles to Books* (New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell, 2012).

Course Requirements and Assessment:

There is one module for each week of the course. The module will appear the Friday before each instructional week begins. The module will include the week's Content Material and Assignments.

Weekly Content Material (inclusive of some/all of the following): **Provided by Friday 11:59pm.**

1. A page summarizing the week's material
2. A short lecture
3. Reading assignment from the book *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* by Lawrence Boadt (make sure you are using the version Revised and Updated version)
4. Provided Reading and/or Viewing, which focuses on our topic for the week

Weekly Assignments:

1. **Discussion** (50%)

a. **Raising Questions and Comments** (20%): Students will post a significant question, comment or analysis which responds to aspects the **Weekly Content Material**. This original post should comprise about 1-2 paragraphs. **Due Tuesday 11:59pm.**

b. **Responding to Questions and Comments** (20%): Students will substantively engage with original posts (**Raising Questions and Comments**) of two different students. Responses should reflect knowledge of the week's course material. **Due Thursday by 11:59pm.**

**Creating original discussion posts and responding robustly to one another is an important form of "attendance" for this course. Substantive engagement may*

involve responding to those who comment on one's original post, as well as posting more than one comment on an original post.

2. **Reaction Paper or Quiz** (50%) – I will pose one or more questions. Students are required to submit to me a paper responding to one of these questions. The papers should be approximately 1.5 pages in length, and should demonstrate that students are thinking carefully about the readings and materials covered. *Due Thursday by 11:59pm.*

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will be reduced by 1/2 letter grade. Extensions will be given for illnesses or family emergencies only in consultation with the instructor.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Plagiarism exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one's own previous work used in another course. See "Plagiarism" at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>.

Inclusive Language:

Hartford Seminary is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another's images of God.

Grading Scale:

A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

B+(87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.

B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.

B-(80-82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.

C+(77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.

C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.
F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

Grades range from A to C and F; A+'s and C-'s are not part of the grading system.
On a 4.0 GPA scale -- A(4.00), A-(3.66), B+(3.33), B(3.00), B-(2.66), C+(2.33), C(2.00) and F(0.00). A grade point average of no less than B- (2.66) is required to maintain good standing. The minimum G.P.A. required for graduation is 2.75.

The DMIN Grading Scale: High Pass(95-100), Pass (83-94), Low Pass(70-82), and Fail(below 70)

Other Policies:

For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the student handbook <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/> and seminary policies at Academic policies are listed at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>

Schedule of Topics

(Readings and Dates Subject to Change)

- 1) Introducing Ourselves
- 2) Introducing the Hebrew Bible Canon
- 3) Who Wrote the Bible? Creation
- 4) The Flood and the Ancient Near East
- 5) Abraham, the Covenant Tradition, and Sinai
- 6) Exodus from Egypt and Passover Traditions
- 7) Settling Israel in Joshua and Judges
- 8) David, Solomon and the Golden Age of Israel: Archaeology and Historicity
- 9) The Divided Kingdom and Jeroboam's Sin
- 10) "Good" and "Bad" Kings of Israel and Judah
- 11) Introducing the Prophets
- 12) Ezekiel
- 13) Psalms
- 14) A New Religious Path: Ezra, Nehemiah and Ruth
- 15) Faith and Academic Biblical Scholarship