

Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (BIBHB500-X)

Online, asynchronous (no required synchronous sessions)

Fall 2021 (September 7 - December 14)

Instructor: Dr. G. Brooke Lester (Associate Professor of Hebrew Scriptures; he/him)

Teaching Assistant: Thehil Singh (she/her)

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Contact Information:

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Dr. Lester may be reached by email. He checks email twice/day, and will respond within 36 hours. (See "Emergencies" in this syllabus.) Until September 7, Dr. Lester is on research leave (sabbatical), and responses will be slower.

Office location: Shaffer 731. Office hours TBA.

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Course Description and Objectives:

This course will introduce the learner to the texts of the Hebrew Scriptures--Torah, Prophets, and Writings--with emphasis on their order and contents, the historical and cultural settings from which they arise, their literary forms, their religious themes, and the kinds of interpretive approaches that communities of readers have taken since the advent of modernity.

Learning Goals:

- Students will develop basic historical understanding about the Hebrew Bible, the authors and settings of its writings, and its socio-cultural, political, and ideological environment in the ancient Near East.
- Students will gain acquaintance with interpretations from multiple perspectives.
- Students will acquire basic skills in exegesis of Hebrew-Bible texts.
- Students will develop skills in expressing and contextualizing what they have learned to broader audiences.

Required Textbooks:

- Coogan, Michael D. and Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 4th Edition. Oxford University, 2017. ISBN-10 : 019060865X. ISBN-13 : 978-0190608651. Amazon Paperback \$84.34 (as of 2021-04-16; learners are encouraged to shop used, but please find this 4th edition).
- Common English Bible and Joel B. Green. *The CEB Study Bible with Apocrypha*. Common English Bible, 2013. ISBN-13: 978-1609260293. ISBN-10: 1609260295. Amazon hardcover new \$79.99 (as of 2021-04-16; learners are encouraged to shop for used copies).

Delivery:

This course will require you to create and use a blog (probably on WordPress; or, you may use an already-existing blog on any platform if you already have one), and to create and use a Twitter account.

You may create these using a pseudonym if you prefer. For many reasons, a learner may choose for her publicly-performed course work not to be associated with her given name. Your classmates and instructor will know who you are, and (as in any face-to-face or online class) we agree to respect one another's confidentiality.

We will instruct you on how to do these things! And it will be a lot of fun.

You may reach the instructor with any questions about the course as you consider registration. Use his email address in the contact information above.

Accommodations Policy:

Garrett-Evangelical is committed to providing a quality theological education and will provide reasonable accommodations for documented conditions. Students requiring specific assistance such as classroom changes, alternative ways of note-taking, different classroom procedures, or alternative testing formats are urged to request the appropriate accommodations from the director of academic studies/registrar. The director of academic studies/registrar can advise students on other support services and resources, for example, diagnostic testing. Students must complete a request for accommodations using the form available from the director of academic studies/registrar or through MyGETS documenting their condition(s) through appropriate verification methods.

Participation Policy:

- *All first-week assignments and activities must be completed, as assigned and on deadline, in order for a student to continue in the course.*
- All collaborative activities and all peer-review-related assignments must be completed, as assigned and on deadline, in order to receive any credit. *(No one can do a collaborative process late: you can't board a train that has left the station.)*
- Individual writing assignments may receive partial credit if late: a full letter grade will be deducted during each 24-hour period after deadline. (So, an "A" assignment will receive a B if it is slightly late; a C if 24 hours late; a D if 48 hours late; etc.)
- Please see below regarding emergencies.

Emergency:

Students may sometimes find themselves beset by an emergency that is likely to threaten progress in this course. In such a case, the student should contact the office of the Registrar without delay to document their emergency. Depending on the nature of the emergency, it may not be possible for the student to complete the course; however, the instructor will work with the Registrar to determine what options are available (including an Incomplete for the course, an Extension for missing work, or other options).

Assignments:

Each week will include an assignment. This may be individual writing assignments of about 1000 words; or, the assignment may be one or more collaborative activities pursued either in small groups or in plenary. (All collaborative activities will be asynchronous in structure.) Several weeks will include staged progress toward a final exegesis paper.

Grading:

Weekly assignments/activities: 35%

Peer Review: 35%

Final Paper: 30%

Evaluation rubrics will be available on course Moodle site when the semester begins.

Some details may change before the first day of class.

Schedule (tentative as of 2021-06-28): This course is on a weekly schedule. Our "week" begins and ends Tuesday mornings at 9:00 am Central Time.

Week One, 09/07-14:

Read: TOT Part One

View or listen to lecture: Introducing the TNK (*Sound quality is uneven on some of these early Lectures, but they are audible, and it gets better.*)

View: Amy-Jill Levine, "What is the Difference..."

<http://bibleodysey.org/en/tools/bible-basics/what-is-the-difference-between-the-old-testament-the-tanakh-and-the-hebrew-bible>

Actions for the Week: Create your blog; create your Twitter account; participate in icebreaker activity via your blog and Twitter. (*All first-week activities must be completed on deadline and as assigned in order to continue in the course.*)

Week Two, 09/14-21:

Read: TOT Chapters 3-5

View or listen to lecture: Documentary Hypothesis (parts A and B)

View: Sarah Shecktman, "Who Wrote the Bible?"

<http://bibleodysey.org/tools/bible-basics/who-wrote-the-bible-test>

View: Dexter Callender, "Noah and Gilgamesh"

<http://bibleodysey.org/tools/video-gallery/n/noah-and-gilgamesh-callender>

Weekly Activity: Independent blogging on Questions for Review.

Peer Review: "Choose a Passage" Discussion Forum this week.

Week Three, 09/21-28:

Read: TOT Chapters 6-8

View or listen to lecture: Covenant (parts A and B)

View: Carol Myers, "What Can We Know...?"

<http://bibleodysey.org/tools/video-gallery/w/woman-role-israel-meyers>

View: Dora Mbuwayesango, "Sex and Reproduction in Genesis"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/s/sex-and-reproduction-in-genesis---mbuwayesango>

Weekly Activity: Collaborative writing on QfR Chapter 8 Question 2 (covenant).

Week Four, 09/28-10/05:

Read: TOT Chapters 9-11

View or listen to lecture: Law (parts A and B)

View: Timothy Beal, "Moses in America"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/m/moses-in-america>

View: _____, "Law and the Bible"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/l/law-and-the-bible-anderson>

Weekly Activity: Twitter thread on resources for this week. Theme: What do you already know? What do you hope to learn? What did you learn?

Peer Review: Draft Thesis Statements Discussion Forum this week.

Week Five, 10/05-12:

Read: TOT Chapters 12-13

View or listen to lecture: Deuteronomy and the DtrH (parts A and B)

View: Frank Yamada, "Rape in the Hebrew Bible"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/r/rape-in-the-hb>

View: Kristin Swenson, "Homosexuality and the Bible"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/h/homosexuality-and-the-bible>

Weekly Activity: Independent blogging on Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History.

Week Six, 10/12-19:

Read: TOT Chapters 14-15

View or listen to lecture: Emergence (parts A and B)

View: Ann Killebrew, "Archaeology and Conquest"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/a/archaeology-and-conquest-killebrew>

View: Israel Finkelstein, "Israelite Origins"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/i/israelite-origins-finklestein>

Weekly Activity: Share Your Learning with a relative or (non-Garrett) friend.

Week Seven, 10/19-26:

Read: TOT Chapters 16-17

View or listen to lecture: Royal Theology (parts A and B)

View: Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, "Portrait of King David"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/c/portrait-of-king-david>

Weekly Activity: Twitter thread on resources for the week. Theme: The Twitter Story.

Peer Review: Complete Draft of Final Paper Due 10/26 at 9:00 am Central Time.

Week Eight, 10/26-11/02:

Read: TOT Chapters 18-20

View or listen to lecture: Prophecy (parts A and B); Divided Monarchies (parts A and B)

View: Roger Nam, "Prophets and Wealth"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/p/prophets-and-wealth>

Weekly Activity: Independent blogging on Prophecy.

Week Nine, 11/02-09:

Read: TOT Chapters 21-23

View or listen to lecture: Responses to Exile (parts A and B)

View: Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, "Feminist Criticism"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/f/feminist-criticism>

Weekly Activity: Collaborative project: Annotating analysis of Dr Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

Peer Review: Peer Reviews are Due 11/09 at 9:00 am Central Time.

Week Ten, 11/09-16:

Read: TOT Chapters 24-26

View or listen to lecture: Post-exilic Prophecy (parts A and B)

View: Frank Yamada, "Asian Hermeneutics"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/a/asian-hermeneutics---yamada>

Weekly Activity: Twitter conversation on resources for the week. Theme: Format Tweets and memes (tentative).

Week Eleven, 11/16-30 (note two-week span):

Read: TOT Chapter 27

View or listen to lecture: Psalms (parts A and B)

View: Dora Mbuwayesango, "African Hermeneutics"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/a/african-hermeneutics>

Weekly Activity: Independent blogging on resources for the week.

THANKSGIVING WEEK. "WEEK ELEVEN" RUNS 11/16-11/30.

Week Twelve, 11/30-12/07:

Read: TOT Chapter 28

View or listen to lecture: Wisdom (parts A and B)

View: David J A Clines, "Job's Last Words"

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/j/jobs-last-words-clines>

Weekly Activity: Collaborative writing TBD.

Final Paper: Due 12/07 at 9:00 am Central Time.

Week Thirteen, 12/07-14:

Read: TOT Chapter 29-30

View or listen to lecture: Daniel (parts A and B)

View: Paula Fredriksen, Judaism and Hellenism

<http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/j/judaism-and-hellenism>

Weekly Activity: Twitter activity TBD.

Institutional Academic Policies

All students are required to abide by the academic policies detailed in the Academic Handbook for the current academic year. The following policies are of particular importance to the successful completion of one's coursework:

Writing

- Academic integrity and plagiarism: (See 19-20 Handbook, 12, 78-83) All professors are required to respond to all suspected incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism. Repeated incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the school.
- Writing and citations: The Turabian Manual for Writers and the Chicago Manual of Style footnote/bibliography format provide the standard formats for all introductory courses. Basic information on these formats is available online here. In advanced courses an instructor may require another style guide appropriate to the discipline (such as APA). (19-20 Handbook, 84)
- Writing Support: The Writing Center at Garrett-Evangelical offers programs to support all students' theological research and writing. See <https://www.garrett.edu/student-life/student-services> "Writing Center" for more detailed information.

Attendance and Class Participation

- Inclusivity/Diversity: The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed.... All participants in the teaching- learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues. (See 19-20 Handbook, 9)
- Attendance and lateness policies: Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class. (19-20 Handbook, 19)
- Some faculty may limit on the usage of electronic devices such as cell phones during class. At the least, all cell phones should be silenced during the whole of a class session.

Academic Accommodations

- Student accommodations for documented conditions should be developed and requested before the beginning of the semester. See the Accessibility, Special Needs, and Disabilities policy and process set out in the Academic Handbook (19-20 Handbook, 12). Such accommodations are developed in consultation with the Registrar.
- Extensions: For Masters students, extensions, if granted, are normally for four weeks following the last day of class in spring and fall semesters or the final due date for coursework for January and summer terms. Extensions may not exceed three months following the end of the term. (19- 20 Handbook, 20)