

BIBHB500 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
Fall Semester 2017
Wednesdays 9:00 am-12:00 pm

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to provide a historical and literary introduction to the writings of the Hebrew Bible, known to Christians as the Old Testament. Special attention will be given to the social, cultural and political background that influenced the authors' theological themes. The class will also focus on methods of interpretation and ways in which the Torah, Prophets and Writings have shaped – and continue to shape – the faith and practices of the church.

Key goals of this course are that students:

- a. Will learn to read the texts of the Hebrew Bible closely and interpret them by utilizing multiple methodologies, including historical-critical, literary, liberationist and post-modern.
- b. Will develop an appreciation for the Ancient Near Eastern context in which the documents of the Hebrew Bible were produced, as well as for the multiplicity of interpretations that surround each text today.
- c. Will be able to interpret (exegete) the Hebrew Bible responsibly and contextually, recognizing the ethical implications of various readings, and communicating relevant information to a broader audience.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 4th Edition (2010) ISBN-13:978-0195289602; \$22.21 at amazon.com. **OR**

The CEB Study Bible (2013) ISBN-13:978-1609260286; \$36.53 at amazon.com.

Michael Coogan, *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in Its Context*, 3rd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) ISBN-13:9780190238599; \$55.70 at amazon.com.

Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch, *Studying the Old Testament: A Companion* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007) ISBN-13:9780687646234; \$25.94 at amazon.com.

RESOURCES:

Michael J. Brown, *What They Don't Tell You: A Survivor's Guide to Biblical Studies*, 2nd Edition (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015).

Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*, 2nd Edition (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012).

John J. Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd Edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998).

Terence E. Fretheim, *About the Bible: Short Answers to Big Questions*, revised and expanded edition (Minneapolis: Augsburg Books, 2009).

Adam Hamilton, *Making Sense of the Bible: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today* (HarperOne 2014).

Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel*, Library of Ancient Israel series (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*, revised and expanded 3rd Edition (New York: Paulist, 2007).

eResources:

Oxford Biblical Studies Online (6-month subscription available with textbook purchase) www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com

Bible Odyssey, by The Society of Biblical Literature <http://bibleodyssey.org>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Regular attendance and participation	
Test #1 (September 27)*	20%
Exegesis Preliminary Report (October 11)	20%
Test #2 (October 25)*	20%
Exegesis paper (November 15)	20%
Test #3 (December 6)*	20%

*Review Sessions will be scheduled prior to each test.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

September 6

Coogan, Chapter 1: What is the Old Testament?
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, ix-xiv

Coogan, Chapter 2: The Promised Land: Geography, History and Importance
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 1-22

September 13

Coogan, Chapter 3: Creations
Genesis 1-3
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 23-31

Coogan, Chapter 4: The Formation of the Pentateuch and Primeval History
Genesis 4-11
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 31-46

September 20

Coogan, Chapter 5: The Ancestors of Israel
Genesis 12-50
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 47-62

Coogan, Chapter 6: Escape from Egypt
Exodus 1-15
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 63-71

September 27

Coogan, Chapter 7: From Egypt to Sinai
Exodus 16-24

Coogan, Chapter 8: Law, Ritual, and Holiness
Exodus 20:22-23:33 and Leviticus
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 71-86

Test #1

October 4

Coogan, Chapter 9: In the Wilderness
Numbers

Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 80-94

Coogan, Chapter 10: The End of the Journey to the Promised Land
Deuteronomy

October 11

Coogan, Chapter 11: Joshua and the Conquest of the Land of Canaan
Joshua

Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 95-108

Coogan, Chapter 12: The Emergence of Israel in the Land of Canaan
Judges

Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 109-127

Exegesis Preliminary Report due**October 18**

Coogan, Chapter 13: The Establishment of the Monarchy
1 Samuel

Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 131-142

Coogan, Chapter 14: The Reign of David
2 Samuel and *1 Kings 1-2*

Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 142-154

October 25

Coogan, Chapter 15: The Reign of Solomon
1 Kings 1-11 and *Psalms 89*

Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 154-158

Coogan, Chapter 16: The Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah
1 Kings 12 to *2 Kings 14*

Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 158-166

Test #2

November 1

Coogan, Chapter 17: The Northern Kingdom of Israel
2 Kings 14-17, Amos, Hosea
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 167-182

Coogan, Chapter 18: The Kingdom of Judah
2 Kings 15-20, 2 Chronicles 29-32, Isaiah 1-39, Micah
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 182-188

November 8

Coogan, Chapter 19: Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem
2 Kings 21-25, 2 Chronicles 33-36, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 196-211

Coogan, Chapter 20: After the Fall
Lamentations, Psalm 137, Ezekiel, Obadiah
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 211-217, 263-265

November 15

Coogan, Chapter 21: Return from Exile
Ezra 1-2, Isaiah 34-35 and 40-55
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 218-226

Coogan, Chapter 22: The Restoration
Ezra 3-10, Isaiah 24-27 and 56-66, Haggai, Zechariah, Joel, Malachi
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 226-236

Exegesis Paper due

November 22 – No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

November 29

Coogan, Chapter 23: Retelling the Story of David
1-2 Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 237-256, 269-275

Coogan, Chapter 24: The Wisdom of the Sages
Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs
Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 256-299
(excluding sections on Ruth, Jonah, Esther and Daniel)

December 6

Coogan, Chapter 25: Heroes in Foreign Lands: Postexilic Literature
Ruth, Jonah, Esther, Daniel

Recommended: Burnette-Bletsch, 256-299

(sections on Ruth, Jonah, Esther and Daniel)

Test #3