

NARRATIVE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 277, SECTIONS 4 & 5

Spring Semester 2007

Prof. John Kaltner, Religious Studies

413 Clough Hall (x3407)

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 11-12; Fri 2-3

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (London: T & T Clark, 2004).

The New Oxford Annotated Bible (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Narrative is the most common type of writing found in the Hebrew Bible, and many of the most well-known biblical texts are written in story form. This course is an introduction to how to study and interpret biblical narratives. Employing the method of narratology, we will examine a variety of texts in order to better understand the characteristics and aims of narrative in the Hebrew Bible. The course will enable the development of the skills necessary to engage in literary analysis of stories both within and outside the Bible.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Attendance and class participation/preparation

Attendance is expected. Only through class attendance will you gain sufficient mastery of the course material to succeed on exams. More than three unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade.

Active class participation is also expected. The Life program is built on guided discussion of common readings. The readings on the attached schedule are to be completed prior to each class. Students are to come to class with the text, having read the material and being prepared to discuss and/or briefly write about it. **Attendance/participation will account for 10% of your final grade.**

2) Daily writing assignments

There will be an on-line quiz for most class periods. This will be a multiple choice quiz that will be related to the day's reading and must be completed prior to the class meeting.

The course has a website where the quizzes and other information can be found. Details about this website and how to access it will be given during the first few classes of the semester. **On-line quizzes will account for 10% of your final grade.**

3) Exams

There will be three exams during the semester (February 6, March 6, and April 24). **Each exam will be worth 20% of your final grade.**

4) Final Paper

Each student will write a paper that analyzes a particular biblical text. This paper will be due at the end of the semester, and the details of the assignment will be explained in class. **The paper and presentation will be worth 20% of your final grade.**

GRADING

Your final grade will be determined based on the following scale:

A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), F (below 60)

Schedule of Topics and Readings

January 11 Introduction

January 16 Reading Biblical Narrative
Read: Gunn & Fewell, "Strategies for Reading" (handout)

Narratology: How to Study Stories

January 18 Text: Narrator
Read: Bal, pp. 3-43

January 23 Text: Levels of Narration
Read: Bal, pp. 43-77

January 25 Story: Sequence, Rhythm, Characters
Read: Bal, pp. 78-132

January 30 Story: Place, Focalization, Visual Stories
Read: Bal, pp. 132-74

February 1 Fabula: Events, Actors, Time
Read: Bal, pp. 175-219

February 6 Exam #1

Studying Biblical Stories

- February 8 Narrator
 Read: Bar-Efrat, Chapter 1
- February 13 Direct Characterization
 Read: Bar-Efrat, pp. 47-64
- February 15 Indirect Characterization
 Read: Bar-Efrat, pp. 64-92
- February 20 Plot
 Read: Bar-Efrat, Chapter 3
- February 22 Time and Space
 Read: Bar-Efrat, Chapter 4
- February 27 Style
 Read: Bar-Efrat, Chapter 5
- March 1 The Story of Amnon and Tamar
 Read: Bar-Efrat, Chapter 6
- March 6 Exam #2

The Structure of Biblical Stories

- March 8 Organization: Reverse Symmetry
 Read: Numbers 12:13; Leviticus 24:13-23; 2 Chronicles 25:1-28;
 Genesis 2:4b-3:24; 1 Kings 1:1-2:12a; Genesis 12:16b; Genesis 9:6a; 1
 Kings 21:1-16; Genesis 25:12-35:26
- March 13 Spring Break
 No Class
- March 15 Spring Break
 No Class
- March 20 Organization: Forward Symmetry & Alternating Repetition
 Read: Genesis 1:1-31; 1 Kings 11:1-8; Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Kings 11:31-
 39; 1 Kings 2:36-46a; 1 Samuel 1:12-13; 1 Kings 20:16-21; 2 Kings
 17:6-41; 1 Samuel 8:1-12:25
- March 22 Organization: Multiple Symmetry & Assymetry
 Read: 1 Kings 5:1-12; Ruth 1-4; Genesis 11:27-22:24; 1 Kings 1-11;
 Genesis 11:1-9; 2 Kings 21:19-26; Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 21:1-7; 2
 Kings 2:25; 1 Kings 11:31-39

- March 27 Disjunction: Change in Narrative Components
Read: 1 Kings 2:1-10; 1 Kings 1:15-37; 2 Kings 10:12-17; 1 Kings 18:6-16; 1 Kings 2:39; Genesis 22:4; 1 Kings 18:3-4; 1 Kings 3:16-28
- March 29 Disjunction: Repetition
Read: 2 Kings 8:28-9:2; 2 Kings 9:14-16; 1 Samuel 17:12a; Genesis 21:25; 1 Chronicles 14:3b; Exodus 5:4-5; Exodus 3:14-15; 1 Kings 22:28b
- April 3 New Testament Narrative
Read: Matthew 27-28; Mark 15-16; Luke 23-24; John 18-21
- April 5 Easter Recess
No Class
- April 10 Disjunction: Narrative Sequence
Read: Genesis 3:1; Genesis 18:17; Jonah 1:4; Genesis 39:1-6; Genesis 2:25; 1 Samuel 15:34; 1 Kings 18:6b; 2 Samuel 18:18; Ruth 1:14b; 1 Kings 13:1-10; Genesis 41:47-42:5
- April 12 Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society Annual Meeting
No Class
- April 17 Conjunction: Threads & Links
Read: Genesis 2:4b-3:24; Genesis 4:1-16; Judges 17-21; 1 Kings 13; Genesis 18-19; Genesis 2:25//3:1; 1 Kings 20:43//21:4; 2 Kings 2:25//3:1; Judges 8:33//9:4; Ezra 3:13//4:1; Genesis 16:16//17:1
- April 19 Conjunction: Linked Threads & Hinges
Read: 1 Kings 12:25; Ruth 1:22; 1 Kings 1-2; Genesis 2:4; Genesis 23:1-25:11; 2 Kings 2:15b; 1 Kings 11:26-43
- April 24 Exam #3
- April 26 Evaluation