

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLICAL TRADITION

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 101, SECTIONS 2 & 5 FALL SEMESTER 2004

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Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 3-4:30, Fri 2-3

REQUIRED TEXT

The New Oxford Annotated Bible (3rd edition; Oxford University Press, 2001).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will be an introduction to the academic study of the Bible. Particular attention will be paid to the importance of understanding biblical texts within their own historical and cultural contexts. A diverse selection of readings will be studied under the general theme “images of God.” The primary objective of the course is to enable the student to appreciate the wide range of understandings of the deity present in the biblical tradition and to develop an awareness of the important role a text’s context plays in shaping its presentation of God.

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 four 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 20% of your final grade.

2) Daily writing assignments

In place of a term paper, there will be a writing assignment for each class period. This will be a response to a particular question that will be related to the day’s reading that must be completed prior to the class meeting.

The course has a website where the writing assignments 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. **Writing assignments will account for 20% of your final grade.**

3) Exams

There will be two exams during the semester (September 27 & November 5) and a final exam that will be taken during finals week. **Each exam will be worth 20% with the total accounting for 60% 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

- August 25 Introduction – Academic Study of the Bible
READ: Brown, pp.1-4, 36-39 (handout)
- August 27 Rules of Thumb/Terms to Remember
READ: Brown, pp.41-56 (website); "Translation of the Bible into English" in NOAB, pp.466-471 [Essays]
- August 30 Rules of Thumb/Terms to Remember II
READ: Brown, pp.57-69 (website); "The Canons of the Bible" in NOAB, pp.453-460 [Essays]

GOD AS CREATOR

- September 1 Creating the World
READ: NOAB, pp.3-10 [Hebrew Bible]; "Beginnings" in NOAB, pp.507-508 [Essays]; Genesis 1-3
- September 3 Another Creation Account from the Ancient Near East
READ: "The Enuma Elish Story" (handout)
- September 6 Labor Day – No class
- September 8 Recreating the World
READ: Genesis 6-9

GOD AS COVENANT MAKER

- September 10 Establishing the Covenant
READ: "The Historicity of the Ancestral Narratives in Genesis" in NOAB, pp. 508-509 [Essays]; Genesis 12-22
- September 13 Extending the Covenant
READ: Genesis 25-35

September 15 Experiencing the Covenant
READ: NOAB, pp.82-84 [Hebrew Bible]; "The Historicity of the Exodus from Egypt" in NOAB, pp.509-510 [Essays]; Exodus 1-15

GOD AS LAWGIVER

September 17 Narrative Material
READ: Exodus 19-20, 24, 32-34

September 20 Legal Material
READ: NOAB, pp.142-143 [Hebrew Bible]; Exodus 21-23, 25-31; Leviticus 18; "The Code of Hammurabi" (handout)

GOD AS DIVINE WARRIOR

September 22 A Quick Invasion?
READ: NOAB, pp.309-316 [Hebrew Bible]; "The Early History of Israel in the Land of Canaan" in NOAB, pp.510-511 [Essays]; Joshua 1-12

September 24 A Slow Infiltration?
READ: NOAB, pp.353-354 [Hebrew Bible]; Judges 1-5, 10-16

September 27 **EXAM #1**

GOD AND KINGSHIP

September 29 The Rise of the Kingdom: Samuel & Saul
READ: NOAB, pp.398-399 [Hebrew Bible]; 1 Samuel 1-15

October 4 The United Kingdom: David
READ: NOAB, p.446 [Hebrew Bible]; "The United Monarchy" in NOAB, pp.511-512 [Essays]; 1 Samuel 16-19; 2 Samuel 6-7, 11-12

October 6 The United Kingdom: Solomon
READ: NOAB, pp.487-489 [Hebrew Bible]; 1 Kings 1-11

October 8 The Divided Kingdom
READ: "The Divided Monarchies" in NOAB, pp.512-513 [Essays]; 1 Kings 12-22

GOD AND PROPHECY

October 11 Prophecy in the North
READ: NOAB, pp.969-973, 1302-1303 [Hebrew Bible]; Amos 1-9

October 13 Prophecy in the South
READ: NOAB, pp.974-977 [Hebrew Bible]; Isaiah 1-11

October 15 Exilic Prophecy
READ: "The End of the Kingdom of Judah" in *NOAB*, pp.513-514 [Essays]; Isaiah 40-55

October 18 Fall Recess - No Class

October 20 Exilic Prophecy
READ: *NOAB*, pp.1180-1182 [Hebrew Bible]; "The Persian Period" in *NOAB*, pp.514-515 [Essays]; Ezekiel 1-11, 36-37, 40, 47

GOD AND WISDOM

October 22 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.721-727 [Hebrew Bible]; Job 1-11, 38-42**

October 25 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.944-945 [Hebrew Bible]; Ecclesiastes 1-11**

October 27 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.904-905 [Hebrew Bible]; Proverbs 1-9, 30-31**

OTHER IMAGES OF GOD

October 29 Short Story
READ: *NOAB*, p.391 [Hebrew Bible]; Ruth 1-4

November 1 Erotic Literature
READ: *NOAB*, pp.959-960 [Hebrew Bible]; Song of Solomon 1-8

November 3 Apocalyptic
READ: *NOAB*, pp.1253-1254 [Hebrew Bible]; "The Hellenistic Period" in *NOAB*, pp.515-519 [Essays]; Daniel 1-12

November 5 **EXAM #2**

November 8 The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls
READ: Hershel Shanks, "The Qumran Settlement: Monastery, Villa or Fortress?" (handout)

November 10 Contextualizing Christianity
READ: "The Roman Period" in *NOAB*, pp.519-525 [Essays]; Gabriele Boccaccini, "Multiple Judaisms" (handout)

TRADITIONS ABOUT JESUS' LIFE

November 12 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.3-6, 56-57 [New Testament]; Mark 1-16**

November 15 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.7-8 [New Testament]; "The New Testament Interprets the Jewish Scriptures" in *NOAB*, pp.474-478 [Essays]; Matthew 1-10, 24-28**

November 17 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.93-95 [New Testament]; Luke 1-10, 19-24**

November 19 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.146-147 [New Testament]; John 1-11, 18-21**

November 22 Special Session - Topic TBA

November 24 Thanksgiving Recess - No Class

November 26 Thanksgiving Recess - No Class

PAUL AND THE EARLY CHURCH

November 29 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.183-185 [New Testament]; Acts 1-10, 18-28**

December 1 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.242-243 [New Testament]; Romans 1-16**

December 3 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.267-268 [New Testament]; 1 Corinthians 1-16**

December 6 **READ: *NOAB*, pp.420-421 [New Testament]; Revelation 1-22**

December 8 Evaluation