INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLICAL TRADITION

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 101, SECTIONS 11 & 12
FALL SEMESTER 2006

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413 Clough Hall (x3407)
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 3-4:30, Fri 2-3

REQUIRED TEXT

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 6) 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 23   Introduction – Academic Study of the Bible

August 25   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 28   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
August 30   Creating the World
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “The Beginning” and “Adam and Eve”; Genesis 1-3 in NOAB

September 1  Another Creation Account from the Ancient Near East
READ: “The Enuma Elish Story” (handout)

September 4  Labor Day – No class

September 6  Recreating the World
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “After the Garden”; Genesis 6-9 in NOAB

GOD AS COVENANT MAKER
September 8  Establishing the Covenant
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Abraham”; Genesis 12-22 in NOAB
September 11  Extending the Covenant  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Jacob”; Genesis 25-35 in NOAB

September 13  Experiencing the Covenant  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Exodus”; Exodus 1-15 in NOAB

GOD AS LAWGIVER  
September 15  Narrative Material  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Wilderness Traditions”; Exodus 19-20, 24, 32-34 in NOAB

September 18  Legal Material  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “The Law”; Exodus 21-23, 25-31; Leviticus 18 in NOAB

GOD AS DIVINE WARRIOR  
September 20  Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Deuternomy”; Deuteronomy 4, 7, 10, 12, 28 in NOAB

September 22  A Quick Invasion?  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Joshua”; Joshua 1-12 in NOAB

September 25  A Slow Infiltration?  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Judges”; Judges 1-5, 10-16 in NOAB

September 27  EXAM #1

GOD AND KINGSHIP  
September 29  The Rise of the Kingship: Samuel and Saul  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “The Beginning of Monarchy in Israel”; 1 Samuel 1-15 in NOAB

October 2  The United Kingdom: David  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “The Rise of David”; 1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 5 in NOAB

October 4  The United Kingdom: Solomon  
   READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “The Reigns of David and Solomon”; 1 Kings 1-11 in NOAB
October 6  The Divided Kingdom
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “The Division and its Consequences”; 1 Kings 12-22 in NOAB

GOD AND PROPHECY
October 9  Prophecy in the North
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Amos”; Amos 1-9 in NOAB

October 11  Prophecy in the South
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Isaiah”; Isaiah 1-11 in NOAB

October 13  Jeremiah
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Jeremiah”; Jeremiah 1, 7, 26, 31 in NOAB

October 16  Fall Recess – No Class

October 18  Exilic Prophecy

October 20  Exilic Prophecy
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Ezekiel”; Ezekiel 1-11, 36-37, 40, 47 in NOAB

GOD AND WISDOM
October 23  READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Job”; Job 1-11, 38-42 in NOAB

October 25  READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Qoheleth”; Ecclesiastes 1-11 in NOAB

October 27  READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Proverbs”; Proverbs 1-9, 30-31 in NOAB

OTHER IMAGES OF GOD
October 30  Short Story
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Ruth”; Ruth 1-4 in NOAB

November 1  Erotic Literature
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Song of Songs”; Song of Solomon 1-8 in NOAB

November 3  Apocalyptic
READ: McKenzie & Kaltner, “Daniel”; Daniel 1-12 in NOAB
November 6   EXAM #2

TRADITIONS ABOUT JESUS’ LIFE
November 8   READ: *NOAB*, pp.3-6, 56-57 [New Testament]; Mark 1-16
November 15  READ: *NOAB*, pp.146-147 [New Testament]; John 1-11, 18-21
November 17  Special Session – Topic TBA
November 20  Thanksgiving Recess – No Class
November 22  Thanksgiving Recess – No Class
November 24  Thanksgiving Recess – No Class

PAUL AND THE EARLY CHURCH
November 29  READ: *NOAB*, pp.242-243 [New Testament]; Romans 1-16
December 1   READ: *NOAB*, pp.267-268 [New Testament]; 1 Corinthians 1-16
December 6   Evaluation