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


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)

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**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

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 & Asymmetry
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

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