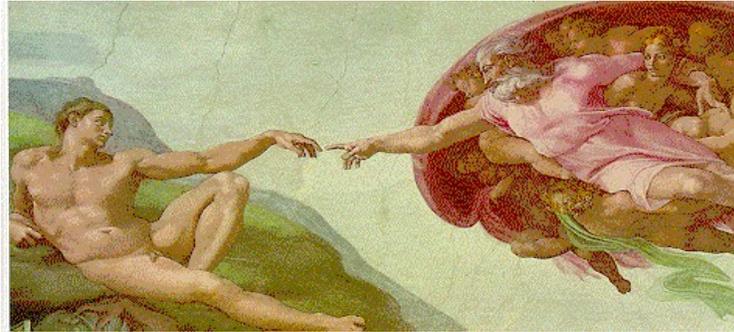


Syllabus R210: Introduction to the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible

This particular course was the subject of a recent dissertation focusing on instructional strategies for blended learning classes. (2 MB PDF)

[Dissertation Download: Improving Blended Learning Environments for Biblical Studies](#)



Instructor: Taylor Halverson
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Summer Session II June 17 – August 12, 2005

Woodburn Hall 119 12:30 – 1:20 pm
Online Learning every Monday, Tuesday, & Friday
In-Class room instruction every Wednesday & Thursday

Introduction

Welcome to the study of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible! Who wrote the Bible? Why was it written? How should we read the Bible? Is the Bible true? The purpose of this course is to give you tools and experiences to answer these questions and to understand the history and literature of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible within its ancient Near Eastern context. **Please note that we meet IN-CLASS each Wednesday & Thursday, the other days of the week will be online learning experiences.** To learn more about online learning see section “Instructional Format” on page 6 below.

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Required Texts

1. *HarperCollins Study Bible*
2. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* by John J. Collins (2004)
3. *Old Testament Parallels* (2nd edition) by V. Matthew & D. Benjamin (1997)

Course Objectives

By the end of this 8 week course you will be able to:

1. **Explain** the distinctive socio-political and religious or ideological issues which distinguish five time periods of ancient Israelite history: (1) Patriarchal age; (2) Exodus from Egypt, conquest & settlement of land of Israel; (3) Monarchy; (4) Exile of the Jews; (5) Postexilic period
 - a. Readings, lectures, and class discussions will provide the information for this objective.
 - b. Study questions, quizzes, tests, papers, and discussions will give you the opportunity to achieve this objective
2. **Describe** the major ideas, stories, literary forms & contexts of the five biblical time periods
 - a. Readings, lectures, and class discussions will provide the information for this objective.
 - b. Study questions, quizzes, tests, papers, and discussions will give you the opportunity to achieve this objective
3. **Demonstrate** ability to analyze and interpret the biblical text, showing an appreciation for the challenges inherent in reading and understanding the bible
 - a. The two formal writing assignments will give you opportunity to achieve this objective
4. **Display** critical thinking skills: (1) Through close reading and analysis of biblical texts; (2) Through thoughtful dialogue and communication with others in the learning community
 - a. The two formal writing assignments will give you opportunity to achieve this objective
 - b. Regular class discussions will give you opportunity to achieve this objective
5. **Improve** communication skills through reading, writing, speaking
 - a. The two formal writing assignments will give you opportunity to achieve this objective
 - b. Regular class discussions will give you opportunity to achieve this objective
6. **Inform** your understanding of by responsible and intelligent use of resources, etc.
 - a. The two formal writing assignments will give you opportunity to achieve this objective
 - b. Regular class discussions will give you opportunity to achieve this objective

Grading & Assignments

The maximum number of points for the class is 1000, which can be translated into the following letter grades.

1000-970	A+	899.870	B+	799.770	C+	699.670	D+
969.930	A	869.830	B	769.730	C	669.630	D
929.900	A-	829.800	B-	729.700	C-	629.600	D-
						599-0	F

Pre-test: 2.5% / 25 pts (Week 0)

The purpose of the pre-test is for the instructor to get to know you better, to understand what you already know about the course topic. This knowledge will help the instructor prepare lessons and assignments more specifically for your learning needs. You will receive full points for completing the “Pre-test.” This pre-test is NOT graded on how much you know or how smart you are.

Learner Action Plan: 2.5% / 25 pts (Week 0)

The learner action plan is completed after the 1st class and confirms that you have read and understood the syllabus. You receive full points simply for completing the “Learner Action Plan.” (note for the future: make it more clear in the future that I want students to share their own objectives)

Active participation: 10% / 100 pts

Learning requires effort, and part of that effort is displayed through active participation. What expectations are there for participation?

- You should log in at least once each day to Oncourse to check for
 - New announcements
 - New discussion topics
 - Updates and responses to ongoing discussions
 - Assignment updates
 - Returned & graded assignments
- Get involved in the discussions & group work
 - Actively read/hear what others write/say
 - Share your reasoned perspectives on topics, questions, issues, etc.
 - Use proper netiquette: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>
 - Be respectful of differences! The world is a much more interesting place when you learn to respectfully hear and understand people different from you.

Short Quizzes: 10% / 100 pts

These short quizzes are designed to help you evaluate your performance in the class and how well you are grasping the key concepts and ideas of the course. This is the way that it works. There will be a short quiz available via Oncourse twice a week, posted right after the lecture (1:00pm) on the day indicated by the assignment sheet. Each quiz will only be available for a 24 hour period. As with all other tests in this course, the quizzes are closed book, open mind. There will be a total of 16 quizzes. You can take as many of the quizzes as you like, but only your top 10 scores will count towards the total grade. Each quiz is worth 10 points each. If you regularly take these quizzes you will be more likely to perform well on the course overall.

Weekly quizzes: 20% / 200 pts

Longer quizzes will be administered immediately before the in-class discussions as noted on the assignment sheet and are worth more points than the short online quizzes. There are 6 weekly in-class quizzes. All of them will be administered in class on the day specified, except for the first weekly quiz which will be administered online (June 24).

How do the quizzes work? Very simply. One the days of the in-class quizzes, at the beginning of class I will hand out a sheet with four (4) questions. You will be given fifteen minutes to answer three (3) questions of your choice (closed book, closed notes of course).

How should you prepare for weekly quizzes? It is quite simple. Do the readings. Answer the study questions listed on the homework page. Pay attention to lectures (take notes etc.). Do the short online quizzes. And participate in the discussions. Weekly in-class quiz questions will be drawn from questions posed for homework (either for personal study or for the online discussion) or major questions posed and answered in the lecture (incidentally, some possible study questions can be found chapter by chapter on the Collins textbook CD-ROM).

The purposes of the weekly quizzes are fourfold: 1. to keep you an active learner in the class; 2. to reinforce learning multiple times of key concepts and ideas; 3. more evenly distribute points and learning requirements across the course so as to avoid pinning your entire grade and memory on a final exam; and finally, 4. to prepare you for the final exam.

There will be a total of six weekly in-class quizzes throughout the semester. As a special bonus, you are allowed to either skip one weekly quiz or drop your lowest weekly quiz score. Thus the five quizzes counting toward your final grade are worth 40 points each.

Short paper: 15% / 150 pts (Week 3)

5-6 PARAGRAPHS persuasive / argumentation paper. You will be graded on organization and strength of argument, clarity of writing, and handling of the biblical material. This is NOT a research paper. It is an exercise to get you to closely read the biblical text and to construct persuasive interpretations of what you read. For more information, see Homework activities for June 28. Additional instructions and guidance will be posted on Oncourse.

Longer paper: 20% / 200 pts (Week 8)

Five (5) PAGE persuasive / argumentation paper. You will be graded on organization and strength of argument, clarity of writing, and handling of the biblical material. This is NOT a research paper. It is an exercise to get you to closely read the biblical text and to construct persuasive interpretations of what you read. The Anchor Bible Dictionary or an instructor approved Biblical commentary may be allowed to guide your argument. For more information on the longer paper, see “Homework Activities” for July 27. Additional instructions and guidance will be posted on Oncourse.

Late Papers

If papers are submitted late, the paper loses ½ grade point per day late. For example, a “B” paper turned in two days late will be marked down to a “C+”. For plagiarism and academic honesty issues, please see “Course Policies” below.

Final exam: 20% / 200 pts (Week 8)

The final exam will administered IN CLASS on the last day of the course at 12:30pm. It will be a 60 minute exam and will follow the general format of the study questions, weekly quizzes, and short quizzes. If you have special needs or scheduling conflicts with the final exam, please notify me by the end of Week 3 (July 1).

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat.
Week of June 12-18	June 12					Class start	
Week of June 19-25 (Week 1)	June 19	Short quiz #1		Short quiz #2		Weekly Quiz #1	
Week of June 26-July 2 (Week 2)	June 26	Short quiz #3		Short quiz #4	Weekly Quiz #2		
Week of July 3-9 (Week 3)	July 3	4 th of July Holiday	Short paper due	Short quiz #5		Short quiz #6	
Week of July 10-16 (Week 4)	July 10			Short quiz #7 Weekly Quiz #3		Short quiz #8	
Week of July 17-23 (Week 5)	July 17	Short quiz #9		Short quiz #10	Weekly Quiz#4		
Week of July 24-30 (Week 5)	July 24	Short quiz #11		Short quiz #12	Weekly Quiz #5		
Week of August 1-6 (Week 6)	Aug 1	Short quiz #13		Weekly Quiz #6	Short quiz #14		
Week of August 7-13 (Week 8)	Aug 7	Short quiz #15		Short quiz #16	Longer paper due	Final Exam	

Course Policies

Academic honesty:

Cheating, plagiarizing, etc. will not be tolerated. I trust each of you to use your gifted mind to share your own thoughts. If you use the thoughts of others I expect proper references. If you plagiarize you will receive an automatic “0” on that assignment and possible expulsion from the class. To learn more about plagiarism and how to avoid it you can earn ten points towards your final grade for completing this tutorial <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>. To learn more about proper citation please see: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.html>

Academic Conduct

To learn more about IU’s code of academic conduct please see: <http://www.dsa.indiana.edu/Code/index1.html>

Instructional Format—Online learning

General

Most of us are accustomed to sitting in a classroom while a professor talks at us. This course will be different in that regard. We will still cover all of the same material that is found in a traditional course. However, much of our interactions in our community of learners will be over the internet using Oncourse (<http://oncourse.iu.edu/Default.asp?action=login>). For some of you, this may be a new learning experience, and it promises to be an exciting one. Lectures will be delivered through audio lectures with accompanying Powerpoint presentations. These will be accessible each day either through Oncourse, or on CD-ROMs that I will provide for each of you if Oncourse is down (see also the document posted on Oncourse entitled “Learning Tips for the Old Testament Lectures”). All material is copyrighted, so please do not copy or distribute it. It is for this class’s learning purposes only.

Now, online learning is not necessarily easier than a regular class. It requires the same amount of effort to perform well, and sometimes more if you need to learn how to use the electronic tools. Please note that although the internet is available 24/7, I as an instructor am not. I will be regularly available during office hours M, Tu, F 1:20pm-2:00pm. I will make a concerted effort to respond to all emails or other electronic communication within 48 hours.

Are you new to online learning environments? Have no fear, for they are friendly places to interact, learn, discuss and grow. If you want to become a good online learner, please refer to the document entitled “Distance Education Student Primer: Skills for Being a Successful Online Learner” by Paul Alford & Amy Lawson.

Oncourse

What is Oncourse? Oncourse is a user-friendly, online learning environment. Think of it as a classroom, library, coffee-house, student lounge, and instructor office all rolled into one. If you have never used Oncourse before, it is a simple tool to use. Become familiar with this environment by reading the document entitled “Student Guide to Oncourse.” I also invite you to take the easy Oncourse tutorial which can be found here: <https://oncourse.iu.edu/help/studenthelp.html>. Please also note that Oncourse is *offline* and inaccessible everyday from 5:00am – 6:00am.

Learning Tips for This Course

We have a condensed time frame during the summer session to cover all the material from a 16-week course. To maximize your learning experience you should plan to spend 3 hours per day Monday-Friday on this class: one hour in class time and two hours with homework

- *Before class* (1 hour): Do all assigned readings *before* class time
- *During class* (1 hour): Participate in the interactive lectures and bring your NRSV Study Bible
- *After class* (1 hour): Complete study questions, do short quizzes, and participate in discussions.
- Be willing to ask questions of me thalver@indiana.edu or others class members.
- If you are looking for general support with college study skills and habits please contact the SAC (Student Academic Center). They have many resources to support good study skills and habits: <http://www.indiana.edu/~sac/>

Learning Resources

- Course website—Oncourse: <http://oncourse.iu.edu/Default.asp?action=login>
- IU Library website: <http://www.libraries.iub.edu/>
- How to engage in respectful communication on the internet: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>
- Searching for Information on the Internet: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html>
- Citing sources from the internet: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.html>
- ABZU: “Abzu is a guide to the rapidly increasing, and widely distributed data relevant to the study and public presentation of the Ancient Near East via the Internet” <http://www.etana.org/abzu/>

Technical Difficulties: Contact UITS (University Information Technology Services)

- Consulting for IU computer users, problem resolution, computer accounts
 - Phone support: 812-855-6789
 - Phone support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Walk-in support: Indiana Memorial Union, room M084
 - Monday-Friday 8am-5pm
- Walk-in support: Main Library, Information Commons
 - Monday-Thursday 8am-midnight, Friday 8am-9pm, Saturday noon-5pm, and Sunday noon-midnight
- Email support: ithelp@iu.edu; Please allow one business day for a reply.
- Need training on Powerpoint or other educational technologies used in this course? Go to the online tutorials at: <http://ittraining.iu.edu/online/>

Office Hours

I will be available Monday, Tuesday & Friday for 40 minutes from 1:20 pm - 2:00 pm. You can reach me at thalver@indiana.edu or via a designated chat room on Oncourse.

Special Needs

If you have learning disabilities or any special needs please inform me immediately so that we can make appropriate arrangements for this to be a successful learning experience for you.

Schedule Conflicts

If you have any time conflicts with any assignments, exams, or classes, you must notify me by June 24. Arrangements can be made to accommodate for religious observances, IU sponsored extracurricular events (such as if you are an athlete) etc. But again, you must notify me by the June 24 to make arrangements.

Course Changes

This syllabus and the assignment document represent the master plan of how the instruction and learning for this course will proceed. However, these documents are subject to change. You are welcome to suggest changes at any time which may be negotiated for implementation, although there is no guarantee that suggested changes will be implemented. If any major changes will be introduced into the instruction or syllabus, all students will be promptly notified by the instructor.

Important Court Notice

“Religious Studies Courses in a State University: The U.S. Supreme Court ([Abington v. Schempp](#)) in 1963 encouraged the objective study of religion and the Bible. This is why we teach an introductory course to the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at [IU]. However, the approach here is different from that taken in a religious group. We will concentrate on what the text originally meant in the light of its ancient Near Eastern setting rather than on what the text means for us today. You do not have to have a faith commitment in this course, nor will you be asked to abandon your faith. My purpose is to increase your knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible, and to help you think carefully and in new ways about what it originally meant. You will earn a good grade in this class the same way you do in other courses, not by being more religious.”¹

¹ Victor H. Matthews, Religious Studies 101 (Honors)—Fall Semester 2005 syllabus, retrieved 3/30/2005 at: http://courses.smsu.edu/vhm970f/courses/101sy_web.html

Schedule

[1] Friday, June 17: Introduction to the Academic Study of the Old Testament

Learning Activities:

1. Practice using Oncourse:
 - a. Read the student guide to Oncourse
 - b. Download the first assignment (short pre-test) and then submit it via electronic drop box
 - c. Post a message in the discussion area
 - d. If you wish, update your profile, tell us more about you
2. Review the syllabus & complete the "Learner Action Plan"
3. Take plagiarism tutorial
4. Read about internet etiquette

[2] Monday, June 20: What is the Bible? How Do We Read the Bible?

Readings: *Collins*: Introduction, pp. 1-22

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. How does the Protestant Old Testament differ from the Hebrew Bible?
2. How does the Catholic Old Testament differ from the Protestant canon?
3. According to modern scholars, when was the Torah or Pentateuch completed?
4. What is form criticism?
5. What is redaction criticism?

Take Short Quiz #1

[3] Tuesday, June 21: The Near Eastern Context for the Bible

Readings: *Bible*: Genesis 1-11

Collins: The Near Eastern Context, pp. 25-46

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. Who were the Sumerians?
2. What is Akkadian? What is Ugaritic?
3. For what was Hammurabi famous? When did he live?
4. When were the Egyptian pyramids built?
5. Identify: Atrahasis, Tiamat, Enkidu, Utnapishtim.

Online discussion questions:

What can ancient texts tell us about social or political values from the ancient world?
How do they differ from today's social or political values?

[4] Wednesday, June 22: Who Wrote the Bible?

Readings: *Bible*: Genesis 12:10-20 & Genesis 20; Numbers 12:13; Deuteronomy 34:5-8

Collins: The Nature of the Pentateuchal Narrative, pp. 47-66

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. Why do scholars distinguish different sources in the Pentateuch?
2. Identify some of the main stages in the development of the documentary hypothesis, up to the end of the nineteenth century

Take Short Quiz #2

[5] Thursday, June 23: Ancient Creation Stories and Ancient Flood Stories

Readings: *Bible*: Review Genesis 1-11; Psalm 89:5-14

Collins: The Primeval History, pp. 67-82

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): Enuma Elish, Atrahasis Story, The Story of Ra and the Serpent, The Memphis Creation Story, The story of Gilgamesh

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. How should we understand the role of the serpent in the story of Adam and Eve?
2. How do the various creation stories compare? Differ?
3. What might the differences and similarities suggest about Israelite culture and religion?

Online discussion questions:

Imagine a late night conversation at the dorms. Someone asks the following questions. How would you respond?

1. Does the story of Adam and Eve imply a doctrine of original sin?
2. Does it imply that women should be subordinate to men?

[6] Friday, June 24: Discussion “Who Wrote the Bible?”

Learning Activities:

In-class discussion:

- Based on our study, who do you think wrote the bible?
- What are your reasons and evidence?

Take Weekly Quiz #1 (online)

[7] Monday, June 27: The Historical Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac & Jacob

Readings: *Collins*: The Patriarchs, pp. 83-106

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What was the contribution of Hermann Gunkel to the understanding of the patriarchal stories?
2. How do we determine the historical accuracy of Biblical texts?

Take Short Quiz #3

[8] Tuesday, June 28: The Religion of the Patriarchs

Readings: *Bible*: Genesis 12-30

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What is our evidence for patriarchal religion?
2. What are the features of patriarchal religion?

Short paper assignment (5-6 paragraphs), choose only option 1 or 2!

1. Discuss the role of deception in the stories of Abraham and Jacob. How would you address the ethical problems presented by these stories?
 - a. Abraham (Genesis 12:10-12)
 - b. Jacob (Genesis 29:1-30; 30:25-43)
2. Discuss the three wife-sister stories of Genesis. How do you explain the similarities and differences?
 - a. Abraham & Sarah in Egypt (Genesis 12:10-12)
 - b. Abraham & Sarah in Gerar (Genesis 20)
 - c. Isaac & Rebekah in Gerar (Genesis 26:1-11)

****paper is due on Tuesday, July 5th at 9am in my electronic drop box****

[9] Wednesday, June 29: The Joseph Story

Readings: *Bible:* Genesis 37-47, 50

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Story of Anubis and Bata (“The Tale of Two Brothers”), Annals of Dedumoses

Learning Activities:

In-class Discussion:

On the bus you hear two people arguing: Genesis is history! No, Genesis is fiction! How do you respond to this issue and with what evidence & reasons?

Study Question:

What purposes are served by the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38?

Take Short Quiz #4

[10] Thursday, June 30: Discussion: Abraham’s Sacrifice

Readings: *Bible:* Review Genesis 19 & 22 in preparation for class discussion

Learning Activities:

In-class discussion: Why didn’t Abraham protest the command to sacrifice Isaac? (compare Genesis 18 with Genesis 22)

Take Weekly Quiz #2

[11] Friday, July 1: Israelite Exodus from Egypt

Readings: *Bible:* Exodus 1-15

Collins: The Exodus from Egypt, pp. 107-120

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Story of Sargon’s Birth, El Amarna Letters, The Stele of Merneptah

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What is the stele of Merneptah, and what is its importance for the history of Israel?
2. What is the importance of the Amarna letters for discussions of the origin of Israel?
3. How do you understand the encounter between Moses and YHWH at the burning bush?

[12] Monday, July 4: Holiday! No class

[13] Tuesday, July 5: Covenant Patterns and Ancient Treaties

****Paper #1 due today at 9am in my electronic drop box****

Readings: *Bible*: Exodus 16-24

Collins: The Revelation at Sinai, pp. 121-138

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Treaty of Ramses II and Hattusilis III

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What are the six key features of ancient suzerain-vassal treaties?
2. How does this treaty form help us to understand the laws/covenants found in Exodus?

[14] Wednesday, July 6: Israel's Wilderness Journey

Readings: *Bible*: Exodus 32-34; Leviticus 16; Numbers 9-12

Collins: The Priestly Theology: Exodus 25–40, Leviticus, and Numbers, pp. 139-158; reread pp. 134-136

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Story of Balaam

Learning Activities:

In-class discussion:

1. As a leader, what types of problems did Moses encounter with his people
2. How do you address the ethical issues raised by the story of Phinehas in Numbers 25? Is Phinehas an exemplary hero, a deluded fanatic?

Study Questions:

1. Name some sacrifices listed in Leviticus?
2. What are the functions of these sacrifices?
3. How do you understand the ritual for the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16?

Take Short Quiz #5

[15] Thursday, July 7: Biblical Law Codes, Rituals, and Festivals; Deuteronomy

Readings: *Bible*: Exodus 21-23 (skim); Leviticus 17-26 (skim); Deuteronomy 1, 4, 17-18, 26-27, 34

Collins: Deuteronomy, pp. 159-179

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): Code of Ur-Nammu, The Sumerian Code, The Code of Hammurabi, The Hittite Code, The Middle Assyrian Code

Learning Activities:

In-class discussion:

The death penalty is a contentious social and political issue today.

- Is biblical law relevant to the discussion?
- How does an understanding of Suzerain-Vassal treaties affect the conversation?

Study Questions:

1. What are the vassal treaties of Esarhaddon?
2. What is the role of prophets according to Deuteronomy?
3. What is the role of the king in Deuteronomy?
4. Share two similarities or differences that you notice between laws in Deuteronomy and other ancient law codes that we read for today. Explain why this is significant

[16] Friday, July 8: Deuteronomistic History; Conquest & Settlement of the Land of Israel

Readings: Bible: Joshua 1-6; Judges 1

Collins: Joshua, pp. 183-202

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What are the key proposals for the emergence of Israel in the land of Canaan?
2. What is the understanding of holy war in Joshua?
3. How do you address the moral problem of the commands for the Israelites to slaughter the Canaanites?

Take Short Quiz #6

[17] Monday, July 11: Israel in the Time of the Judges: Do They Need a King?

Readings: Bible: Judges 2-5, 10-11, 21

Collins: Judges, pp. 203-216

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Story of Aqhat, El Amarna Letters, The Gezer Calendar

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What attitudes toward kingship do we find in the stories in Judges?
2. How does the Story of Aqhat inform our understanding of the history and culture during the period of the judges?
3. What do the El Amarna Letters tell us about the political situation of Canaan during the Judges?

Online discussion questions:

- What can the Gezer calendar tell us about the ancient past and the person who used it?
- How does this compare or contrast to calendars today and our use of them?

[18] Tuesday, July 12: Rise of the Israelite Monarchy

Readings: Bible: 1 Samuel 1, 3, 8-10, 15-17, 31

Collins: First Samuel, pp. 217-230

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): (Optional) The Diary of Wen-Amun (pp.323-330)

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. How does the Bible portray the relationship between Saul and Samuel? Is the portrayal consistent? Or is there evidence of multiple perspectives?
2. Why did Saul fall from power? Do you think that Saul did something worthy of losing kingship? How do you address the ethical issues raised by David's early career as an outlaw and mercenary?

Take Short Quiz #7

[19] Wednesday, July 13: Discussion of Judges

Readings: Bible: Review the following stories: Judges 4 (Sisera & Jael); Judges 11 (Jephtha)

Learning Activities:

Take Weekly Quiz #3

In-class discussion:

How do you address the ethical problems presented by such stories as the killing of Sisera by Jael, or the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter?

[20] Thursday, July 14: Reign of King David

Readings: Bible: 2 Samuel 1, 7, 11-12, 24; 1 Kings 1-2

Collins: Second Samuel, pp. 231-244

Learning Activities:

In-class discussion questions:

- Why was Saul rejected as king (1 Samuel 15)?
- How did David avoid losing the throne (2 Samuel 11-12)?
- If Saul & David were two modern day leaders, would you agree with the rationale expressed in the Bible of why one leader should be deposed and the other retained?

Study Questions:

1. What is the royal ideology of Judah? Where in the Bible is it attested?
2. What is the relation of the Davidic king to God in the royal ideology?

[20] Friday, July 15: King Solomon & the Divided Israelite Kingdoms

Readings: Bible: 1 Kings 2-4, 11-12

Collins: 1 Kings 1-16: Solomon and the Divided Monarchy, pp. 245-260

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Karatepe Annals of Azitiawada

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. According to the Bible, what are the main accomplishments of King Solomon?
2. How does the Bible assess King Solomon's reign? Do you think that Solomon was a good king?

Take Short Quiz #8

[21] Monday, July 18: Prophets & Kings

Readings: Bible: 1 Kings 17-19; 2 Kings 4-5, 23-25

Collins: 1 Kings 12-2 Kings 25: Tales of Prophets and the End of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, pp. 261-279

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts) (Before you read, see "Learning Activities" below): The Annals of Shalmaneser III; The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III; Annals of Sargon II; The Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III; Siloam Inscription; Yavne-Yam inscription; The Annals of Sennacherib; The Annals of Nebuchadnezzar II

Learning Activities:

Study Question:

What interesting comparisons and contrasts do you find between the stories about Elisha and Elijah?

Online discussion:

- You will be divided into pairs and assigned one of the ancient texts from today's readings
- You and your partner will need to read the assigned text and then collaborate to produce a two-three paragraph explanation of how your text informs our understanding of the Bible or ancient Israel during the time of the Monarchy.
- Post your findings on Oncourse to share with the rest of the class.

Take Short Quiz #9

[22] Tuesday, July 19: Biblical Prophecy—Part 1

Readings: *Bible:* Amos 1-3; Hosea 1-3

Collins: Amos and Hosea, pp. 283-306

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): Annals of Tigalath-Pileser I; The Mari Prophecies

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What evidence is provided by the Book of Amos about the career of the prophet?
2. What is the attitude of Amos toward the sacrificial cult?
3. What are two ways that the Mari prophecies compare and contrast with Israelite prophecy

Online discussion questions:

- How do you understand the accounts of Hosea's marriage to Gomer?
- Should we read literally or metaphorically?
- Do you find Hosea's character praiseworthy or questionable?

[23] Wednesday, July 20: Biblical Prophecy—Part 2

Readings: *Bible:* Isaiah 1, 6; Micah 1; Nahum 1; Zephaniah 1

Collins: Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, and Zephaniah, pp. 307-330

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What are the main themes in the prophecy of Isaiah?
2. Who might Isaiah refer to in his oracles of future kingship in Isaiah 9 & 11?
3. What are the main themes in the prophecy of Micah?
4. What are the main themes in the prophecy of Nahum?
5. What are the main themes in the prophecy of Zephaniah?

Short Quiz #10

[24] Thursday, July 21: Discussion of "The Golden Calf" and Jeroboam

Readings: *Bible:* Review Exodus 32; 1 Kings 12

Learning Activities:

Take Weekly Quiz #4

In-class discussion:

- How are the actions of Jeroboam in setting up sanctuaries in northern Israel portrayed in 1 Kings?
- How might this relate to *The Golden Calf* incident of Exodus 32?
- Was *The Golden Calf* story "invented" as a way to discredit Jeroboam and his religion?

[25] Friday, July 22: Fall of Judah and Jerusalem

Readings: Bible: Habbakkuk; Jeremiah 1, 7-8, 11-12, 30

Collins: The Babylonian Era: Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Lamentations, pp. 331-352

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Lachish Letters; The Arad Ostraca

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What do the Lachish letters tell us about the Kingdom of Judah at the time of the Babylonian conquest?
2. How do the Arad Ostraca inform us of Judah's security situation ca. 600 BCE?

[26] Monday, July 25: Exilic Prophets—Part 1

Readings: Bible: Ezekiel 1-2, 40; Obadiah

Collins: The Exilic Period: Ezekiel and Obadiah, pp. 353-378

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What is the purpose of Ezekiel's temple vision in chapters 40-48? How does it relate to his exilic situation?
2. What is the main theme of the Book of Obadiah?
3. Compare and contrast the call vision of Ezekiel with those of Isaiah and Jeremiah. What do these differences and similarities signify?

Take Short Quiz #11

[27] Tuesday, July 26: Exilic Prophets—Part 2

Readings: Bible: Isaiah 40, 42, 44, 51, 53, 66

Collins: The Additions to the Book of Isaiah, pp. 379-400

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Cylinder of Cyrus

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What is the attitude of Isaiah 44-46 to idols?
2. What is the vision of the future in Isaiah 56-66?

Prepare for Thursday's discussion

In preparation for Thursday's open discussion, please submit a question about a Biblical topic that interests you. Remember, good questions are precise and to the point.

[28] Wednesday, July 27: Postexilic History

Readings: Bible: 2 Chronicles 34-36

Collins: The Books of Chronicles, pp. 445-460

Learning Activities:

Longer paper assignment, 5 pages

Due Thursday, Aug. 11 at 9am in my electronic drop box

- Option 1: In what ways does the portrayal of David in 1 Chronicles differ from that in the books of Samuel? How do you explain these differences?
- Option 2: How does the portrayal of Solomon in 2 Chronicles differ from the account in 1 Kings? How do you explain these differences?

Take Short Quiz #12

[29] Thursday, July 28: Open Class Discussion Bring Your Written Questions)

Learning Activities:

Take Weekly Quiz #5

In-class discussion:

Open discussion on questions and topics of interest to you.

[30] Friday, July 29: Postexilic Prophets

Readings: Bible: Haggai; Zechariah 1-2; Malachi 3-4; Joel 3

Collins: Postexilic Prophecy: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Joel, pp. 401-424

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What are the main themes in Zechariah 1–6?
2. Read Malachi 2:10-16. What does he have to say about divorce?

Online discussion questions:

- What does “the day of the Lord” mean?
- How is this phrase used by different prophets?

[31] Monday, August 1: Issues and Problems of Judah Returning From Exile

Readings: Bible: Ezra 1, 3-6, 9-10; Nehemiah 13

Collins: Ezra and Nehemiah, pp. 427-444

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What problems did the Jews encounter when returning from exile?
2. Compare and contrast Ezra & Nehemiah’s response to mixed marriages (see Ezra 9 & Nehemiah 13:23-31)

Take Short Quiz #13

[32] Tuesday, August 2: Psalms

Readings: Bible: Psalms 1-2, 23-24, 50-51

Collins: The Psalms and Song of Songs, pp. 461-486

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts): The Hymn to the Aton; The Stories of Ba’al and Anat

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What are the different kinds of psalms?
2. How is the kingship of God portrayed in the Psalms?
3. How do Biblical psalms relate to psalms from the Ancient Near East
4. How do the stories of Ba’al and Anat relate to creation ideas in Psalms?

[33] Wednesday, August 3: Discussion “Jewish Post-exilic Identity”

Readings: Bible: Review Ezra 1, 3-6, 9-10; Nehemiah 13 for today’s discussion (passages about Jewish religious distinctiveness in post-exilic Judah)

Learning Activities:

Take Weekly Quiz #6

In-class discussion:

- Why do you think that Ezra & Nehemiah worked for Jewish religious distinctiveness after returning from Babylon?
- What did they do to ensure religious distinctiveness?

[34] Thursday, August 4: Traditional Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom

Readings: Bible: Proverbs 1-9

Collins: Proverbs, pp. 487-504

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts) (read only one): The Teachings of Ahiqar; The Teachings of Ptah-Hotep; The Teachings of Amen-em-ope

Learning Activities:

In-class discussion:

Come prepared to talk about similarities and differences between Proverbs and other ANE wisdom literature

Study Questions:

1. What kind of ethic do the proverbs typically advocate?
2. What is meant by the figure of the “strange woman” in Proverbs 7?
3. How do you understand the personification of wisdom in Proverbs 8?

Take Short Quiz #14

[35] Friday, August 5: Traditional Wisdom Questioned by Other Wisdom Genres

Readings: Bible: Job 1-4, 42; Ecclesiastes 1-4

Collins: Job and Qoheleth, pp. 505-528

Matthew & Benjamin (Ancient Texts) (read only one): The Story of Keret; The Sufferer and the Soul; The Farmer and the Courts; The Sufferer and the Friend

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What is a theodicy?
2. What kind of approach to life does Ecclesiastes advocate?

Online discussion:

Choose one of the Ancient Texts for today: Read it and explain to the rest of us via the online forum how your text compares and contrasts with either Job or Ecclesiastes. What might these similarities and differences indicate?

[36] Monday, August 8: The Hebrew Short Story

Readings: *Bible:* Ruth; Jonah

Collins: The Hebrew Short Story: Ruth, Jonah, Esther, Tobit, Judith, pp. 529-552

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What does the Book of Ruth suggest about Israelite relations/interactions with non-Israelites?
2. What does the Book of Jonah suggest about Israelite relations/interactions with non-Israelites?

Take Short Quiz #15

[37] Tuesday, August 9: The Development of Judaism

Readings: *Bible:* Daniel 1-4, 11-12

Collins: Daniel, 1–2 Maccabees, pp. 553-580

Learning Activities

Study Questions:

1. What does Daniel 1-6 suggest about how to live among gentiles?
2. Why do scholars think that Daniel 7-12 comes from the Maccabean time period (c. 167 BCE)?

Online discussion questions:

- Do you think that the author of Daniel and Ruth would agree on how to be a Jew among Gentiles?
- What is the evidence for your answer?

[38] Wednesday, August 10: What is the Bible and How Did it Come to Be?

Readings: *Collins:* From Tradition to Canon, pp. 599-605

Learning Activities:

Study Questions:

1. What are the three main sections of the Hebrew Bible?
2. How did the traditions in the Bible become canon (normative, the standard)?

Take Short Quiz #16

Start reviewing for the final exam

[39] Thursday, August 11: Test Review

Learning activities:

****Long paper due today at 9am in my drop box!****

Review for Test

[40] Friday, August 12: Final Exam

Enjoy the rest of the summer