

BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT/TANAKH

RLST 245-L01
 Winter 2015
 11:30 am - 12:45 pm TR
 Room 208, Luther College

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Office Hours: I am generally available in my office during the week. Please make a prior appointment if possible. Phone or e-mail is a good way to contact me.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course we will study, from a variety of perspectives, what is known as the Old Testament, Tanak or Hebrew bible. The Hebrew bible is a library of books that emerged out of concrete historical situations and also purports to describe historical happenings, so one perspective engaged in this course is the historical. The Hebrew bible, however, is also a body of literature that can be studied for its literary form and effect, and so another perspective engaged is the literary. Thirdly, the Hebrew bible not only has the status of holy scripture for a variety of religious communities, but it also influences western civilization, so the third perspective engaged is the contemporary and theological. From all three perspectives, we will particularly look at how the Hebrew bible intersects with issues of identity and power.

We focus on different perspectives, approaches and issues because the questions we address to a text like the Hebrew bible influence the type of answers we find. Part of the reason for introducing you to this variety is to enable you to discern some of the (often implicit) purposes behind various ways in which the Hebrew bible is read and used, and to provide you with the opportunity to shape, test and understand your own reading of the Hebrew bible.

We will touch briefly on most parts of the Hebrew bible, but will focus in greater detail on certain sections. It should go without saying that you are expected to actually read large sections of an English translation of the Hebrew bible during this course.

COURSE GOALS:

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Examine a text from the Hebrew bible from at least three perspectives: historical, literary and contemporary/theological.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how the Hebrew bible developed in its various contexts.
- Show how the Hebrew bible both portrays, and is itself used in, various strategies of identity and power, both in the past and today.
- Critically analyze the forms and functions of individual texts, and larger narratives, in the Hebrew bible.

COURSE PREREQUISITE:

Completion of 12 credit hours or RLST 100.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach*, by Sandra L. Gravett, Karla G. Bohmbach, F.V. Greifenhagen, & Donald C. Polaski. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.
- At least one modern English translation of the Hebrew bible. (In this course you will learn the advantage of being able to consult a variety of translations). The following two translations are recommended and have been ordered by the University of Regina bookstore:
 - *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha, Fully Revised Fourth Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
 - *The Jewish Study Bible, Student Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, by Zora N. Hurston. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008.

Class handouts (including this course outline!) are also considered required reading.

UR COURSES CLASS WEBSITE

You will need to access the course website for at least four purposes:

- To participate in on-line discussions and to ask questions.
- To find up-to-date information on readings and other assignments.
- To access various course materials.
- To check your marks.

Log in at <http://urcourses.uregina.ca>. If you experience technical difficulties, contact the IT Support Centre at IT.Support@uregina.ca or 585-4685.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. *Participation*: You are expected to attend class regularly and punctually, to have completed the readings and assignments for each class period, and to participate in discussions on-line and in class. Your performance in these areas will determine your class participation mark. Please note the academic regulation concerning class attendance in the *U of R Undergraduate Calendar* 5.3 (http://www.uregina.ca/gencal/ugcal/attendanceEvaluation/ugcal_58.shtml). Persistent absenteeism and/or tardiness will jeopardize your ability to pass this course.

****Please bring a Bible to each class session****

2. *Quizzes*: Twelve short quizzes (10 minutes) will be given, one every week, usually on Tuesday. These quizzes will be based on the assigned readings. Only the ten quizzes in which you earned the highest marks will count towards your final class mark. These quizzes are meant to motivate you to keep up with the material and to provide you with a measure of your progress. Missed quizzes due to unexcused absences cannot be made up. It is your responsibility to apply with the instructor for permission to write a make-up quiz if you miss a quiz due to circumstances beyond your control (e.g. medical reasons, family emergency) – see form attached to this syllabus.

3. *Introductory Assignment*: You will complete an introductory assignment (5-6 pages) on an assigned text from the Hebrew Bible. Further details will be made available in class. This assignment is due on Thursday, Jan 22.

4. *Research Paper*: You will write a research paper of 10-12 pages. Your topic must be approved by the instructor.

You will write the paper in three stages:

- A proposal explaining the topic you have chosen, and raising possible questions and issues for investigation, with a bibliography of at least 5 items. Due on Thursday, Feb 13.
- The first two pages of your paper and a complete and annotated bibliography. Due on Thursday, Mar 12.
- The final complete version of your paper. Due on Thursday, April 2.

Your paper may result in a creative form such as a short drama or other art form, a set of lesson plans or other practical expressions; please consult the instructor. Bonus marks will be awarded.

5. *Final Exam*: A final exam will cover the material from the assigned readings and lectures. The date of the final exam is Tuesday, April 21, at 2:00 – 5:00 pm.

****Note: You must complete all of the above requirements in order to pass this course. For written assignments, see the section on “Written Work” below.**

EVALUATION:

Class participation: attendance, readings, assignments, on-line participation		10%
Written Work:		
Introductory Assignment	15%	
Paper - Proposal & Initial Biblio – 5%		
- First Pages & Biblio – 5%		
- Completed Paper – 20%	30%	45%
Quizzes		25%
Final Examination		20%

WRITTEN WORK

All formal written assignments for this course must be typewritten, double-spaced, on 8 1/2" by 11" white paper, provided with a cover page with your name and student number, and stapled in the upper left-hand corner. No binders or report covers, please! Written work should follow a consistent style format; for example, the *Style Sheet* of the University of Regina English Department (<http://www.uregina.ca/arts/english/stylesheet.pdf2.html>) outlines a simple MLA style. For further guidance, consult the *MLA Handbook* or Turabian's *A Manual for Writers*. Do not use APA style.

Written work is due on the deadlines specified in the class schedule above. If, because of circumstances beyond your control (e.g. medical reasons, family emergency), you are unable to complete the written work on time, it is your responsibility to apply, in advance if possible, with the instructor for an extension – see form attached to this syllabus. Assignments submitted late without permission of the instructor will be penalized 10% for every day overdue.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will result in severe academic penalties that can include a failing mark or even expulsion from the university. See the academic regulations concerning plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic misconduct in the *U of R Undergraduate Calendar* section 5.13.2 (http://www.uregina.ca/gencal/ugcal/attendanceEvaluation/ugcal_76.shtml#academicMisconduct).

STUDENT PRIVACY

To protect your privacy, you will provide the instructor with a standard 9" by 12" envelope labeled with your name (last name first!). This envelope will be used to return your quizzes and assignments after they have been marked.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

It is your responsibility to keep informed on assignments and their due dates. We will begin with the following schedule in terms of reading assignments and classroom topics, but will be free to alter or modify things along the way. Please watch for announcements in class and on the course website. Note that required readings of texts from the Hebrew Bible will be announced in class.

- Week 1:* Jan 6, 8 Introduction & Reading the Hebrew Bible
Read: Gravett et. al., introduction, chapter 2
- Week 2:* Jan 13, 15 The Geographical & Historical Context of the Hebrew Bible
Reading: Gravett et. al., chapter 1
- Week 3:* Jan 20, 22 Who Are You? Identity: The Story of Moses
Read: Gravett et. al., chapter 3, and Hurston, chapters 1-18

Introductory Assignment Due on Jan 22

- Week 4:* Jan 27, 29 Family Identity & the Hebrew Bible
Read: Gravett et. al., chapter 4, and Hurston, chapters 19-25
- Week 5:* Feb 3, 5 Ethnic Identity & the Hebrew Bible
Read: Gravett et. al., chapter 7, and Hurston, chapters 26-31
- Week 6:* Feb 10, 12 Gender Identity & the Hebrew Bible
Read: Gravett et. al., chapter 5, and Hurston, chapters 32-36

Paper Proposal Due on Feb 12

[MID-TERM BREAK: Feb 16-20]

- Week 7:* Feb 24, 26 Class Identity & the Hebrew Bible
Reading: Gravett et. al., chapter 8, and Hurston, chapters 37-40
- Week 8:* Mar 3, 5 Body Identity & the Hebrew Bible
Read: Gravett et. al., chapter 6
- Week 9:* Mar 10, 12 What Can You Do? Power and the Hebrew Bible
Reading: Gravett et. al., chapter 9

Paper: First Pages Due on Mar 12

- Week 10:* Mar 17, 19 State Power & the Hebrew Bible
Reading: Gravett et. al., chapter 10

Week 11: Mar 24, 26 Deity Power & the Hebrew Bible
Reading: Gravett et. al., chapter 13

Week 12: Mar 31, Apr 2 Ideological Power & the Hebrew Bible
Reading: Gravett et.al., chapter 11

Completed Paper Due on Apr 2

Week 13: Apr 7, 9 Media Power & the Hebrew Bible
Reading: Gravett et.al., chapter 12.

FINAL EXAM: 2:00. – 5:00 pm, Tuesday, April 21.

HELPFUL STUFF

If, because of a disability, you have need for accommodations in this course, please discuss this matter as soon as possible with the instructor, and also contact the Coordinator of the Centre for Student Accessibility at 585-4631 (Riddell Centre 251). See <http://www.uregina.ca/studserv/disability/index.shtml>.

The University of Regina Counselling Services at 251 Riddell Centre (585-4491) provides personal counseling, educational and career planning, and training in skills for academic success. See <http://www.uregina.ca/counselling/facts.shtml>.

The Religious Studies Students Association (RSSA) is an organization of students interested in the study of religion, and welcomes you to participate in their activities. The RSSA will sponsor various events during the year - watch for posters and announcements.

PROFESSIONAL STUDENT CONDUCT

The overwhelming majority of future employers believe that universities should develop professionalism in students regardless of their field of study. A job applicant's professionalism has a huge impact on the likelihood of being hired. Therefore, it is well worth the effort for you to cultivate a professional attitude and behavior as a student. Aspects of professional student conduct have already been touched on above, but here is a list of some things to which you will want to pay attention in order to develop your sense of professionalism:

1. Be on time for classes. If you are late try to slip in without disrupting the class.
2. Stay for the whole class. Do not start packing up your things until the instructor has indicated that the class is over.
3. During class, be attentive to the instructor. Do not talk during class unless asking the instructor a question or unless the instructor wants a time of discussion or is requesting responses from the students.
4. Turn cell-phones off or set them to vibrate.
5. Do not distract other students by texting or surfing the web during class.

6. Hand in assignments on time, at the beginning of class, clearly printed, stapled and with your name.
7. Respect the opinions of other students in the class; avoid rudeness.
8. Use a formal approach to communicating with your instructor; do not assume familiarity unless the instructor permits or encourages it.
9. Never ever plagiarize! It is stealing and unprofessional and not worth it in the long run.

TEACHING AND LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

You, as a student, are responsible for your own learning; I, as an instructor, am responsible to assist you with your learning. I do not claim to have all the answers on the subject matter; rather, together we will generate productive questions and explore possible answers. Instead of competing with other students in class, make friends and collaborate.

I will strive to be prepared each class; I expect you also to be prepared. I will work hard, be involved and enthusiastic; I expect the same from you. I expect you to read the required readings, take notes, ask questions and talk about what you are learning. I will respect your contributions and alternative views of the material.

I will maintain standards to ensure learning. I will endeavor to inform you of your standing in the class in an ongoing manner.

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor about any questions or problems connected with the course. See the next page of academic announcements for helpful information on student responsibilities, and various procedures and deadlines.

SOME ADVICE FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Ask questions.
2. Sit in the front.
3. Take good notes.
4. Read the required readings.
5. Talk with others about what you are learning.
6. Manage your time.
7. Make friends.

“A mind is not a vessel to be filled. It is a fire to be kindled”
Plutarch