

Fall, 2016

HISTORY OF THE NEAR EAST/JUDAIC STUDIES 131

INTRODUCION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE

THE PROPHETIC AND POETIC BOOKS

Instructor: William H. C. Propp; office: H&SS 4012; office hours Monday 3-5; email: [wpropp@ucsd.edu](mailto:wpropp@ucsd.edu)

Texts:

*Jewish Study Bible*, ed. A. Berlin, M. Z. Brettler (Oxford University Press, 2004) (*JSB*) - NB: You may use a different edition if you confirm with me that it's reliable. (Never rely on *New International Version*!) When syllabus says "Intro," however, you must read the Introduction to the stated biblical book from *JSB*, which will be on reserve.

Michael D. Coogan, *A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament*, (Oxford University Press, 2009, 2012, **2015**)

E-reserves (e-r, libraries.ucsd.edu):

U. Cassuto, "The Israelite Epic," *Biblical and Oriental Studies* (Magnes Press, 1973-75), 2.69-109

W. H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18* (Doubleday, 1999), 554-562, 606-613; 620-622

J. L. González, "How the Bible Has Been Interpreted in the Christian Tradition," *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Abingdon, 1994), 1.83-106

Requirements:

1. Submission of notes for class discussion as indicated in the syllabus below (**write**) (10%). These will be graded by a check-plus/check/check-minus system but not returned. The writing need not be polished, and you are permitted to skip three of these.

2. First 6pp. (ca. 1800 words) essay (20%). If you wish, you may submit a revision within a week after the paper is returned to you;

the two grades will be averaged. *You must submit a marked-up penultimate draft in addition to the final version.* **DUE CLASS 8.**

3. Second 6pp. essay (ca. 1800 words) (20%). *Submit marked-up draft.* **DUE CLASS 16.**

4. Third 7-10pp. essay (ca. 2100-3000 words) (30%). *Submit marked-up draft.* **DUE AT FINAL.**

5. Final examination (20%). This will be multiple-choice; the answers will be names of the biblical books we will have read.

## I. I. UNDERSTANDING THE OLD TESTAMENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES I (9/23)

When (1300-160 BCE); where (Canaan/Israel-Judah/Yehud); who (Israelites, Jews ≠ Israelis); language (Hebrew, some Aramaic); structure of TaNaKh/OT/HB vs. NT; Former Prophets, Latter Prophets, Major Prophets, Minor Prophets; Writings/Hagiographa

HW – Coogan pp. 1-24/**1-27**; **write** two paragraphs on how you imagine two technological innovations have changed attitudes toward canon: the switch from scroll to codex in the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries CE and the invention and refinement of the printing press in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

### 2. INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES II (9/26)

Discussion: How have the codex and printing redefined “canon”; what about the new digital age? (15 minutes)

Lecture: the Ancient Near East – Egypt, Mesopotamia, Sumer, Assyria, Babylon, Persia (35 min.)

HW – *JSB* pp. 2084-96

### 3. ACADEMIC BIBLICAL STUDIES (9/28)

Lecture: the Modern Study of the Hebrew Bible (50 min.)

HW – *JSB* pp. 2048-57

4. BASIC HISTORY (9/30)

Lecture: the Prehistory of the Israelites from Abraham to Solomon (50 min.)

HW - Coogan pp. 162-64/**161-63**, 222-31/**221-29**, 237-45/**235-43**, 255-57/**253-55**; Intro (*JSB*) plus 1 Kings; list (**write**) five places where 1 Kings is historically accurate (i.e., based upon eyewitness sources), five places where it appears to be based upon legend (i.e., oral tradition)

NO CLASS (10/3)

II. PRE-EXILIC PROPHETS

5. ANCIENT ISRAEL AND JUDAH I (10/5)

Lecture: Dtr (15 min.)

Discussion: The Reliability of Dtr (15 min.)

Lecture: The History of Israel and Judah 10<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE

HW - 2 Kings 1-17

6. ANCIENT ISRAEL AND JUDAH II (10/7)

HW - Coogan pp. 101-5/**100-4**, 246-53/**243-52**, 257-64/**255-62**; Intro (*JSB*) plus Amos; write a page on what Amos tells us about Israelite society

**ESSAY 1** (5-6 pp.; 1500-1800 words): Coogan (p. 249/**249**) calls the biblical prophets "king-makers" and "king-breakers." Document this assertion from 1-2 Kings. No further research necessary. **DUE CLASS 8**

7. AMOS AND JUSTICE (10/10)

Discussion: How does Amos add detail to our picture of Israelite society beyond what we learn from 1-2 Kings? (25 min.)

Lecture: Amos as Stereotypical Prophetic Book (25 min.)

HW - Coogan 264-70/**262-69**; Intro (*JSB*) plus Hosea

NO CLASS (10/12)

8. HOSEA AND FIDELITY (10/14)

Discussion: Why does Hosea marry a prostitute? (25 min.)

Lecture: Monotheism and Polytheism in Ancient Israel (25 min.)

HW - Coogan pp. 272-89/**270-89**; 2 Kings 18-20; Intro (*JSB*) plus Isaiah 1-12; **draw** a picture of Isaiah 6; list (**write**) crimes of Israel.

9. ISAIAH'S INDICTMENT OF ISRAEL (10/17)

Lecture: The Composition of the Book of Isaiah (10 min.)

Discussion: We draw the Call of Isaiah (20 min.)

Discussion: We list the crimes of Israel (20 min.)

HW - Coogan pp. 231-35/**229-33**; 2 Samuel 7; 1 Kings 8; Isaiah 19:16-24; chh 26-27; 32:1-8; ch 33; Micah 4; Psalms 2; 48; 50; 72; 89; 132

10. ZION THEOLOGY (10/19)

Lecture: The Myth of Zion and the Davidic Covenant (30 min.)

Lecture: The Day of Yahweh (20 min.)

HW- Coogan pp. 291-312/**290-311**; 2 Kings 21-25; Intro (*JSB*) plus Jeremiah chh 15-16; 19-21; 25-29; 34; 37-40. Team A and B prepare (**write**) notes for legal briefs accusing and defending Jeremiah from the charge of treachery.

11. JEREMIAH AND POLITICS (10/21)

Discussion: After 15 minutes to coordinate your cases, we put the prophet on trial for patriotism/treachery (35 min.)

HW - Jeremiah chh 7-13

12. JEREMIAH AND THEOLOGY (10/24)

HW - Jeremiah chh 1-6; 9:1-5; 10:19-25; 11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-13; 20:14-18; develop (**write**) a 1-2 pp. case for

committing Jeremiah to an insane asylum for a split-personality disorder

13. JEREMIAH THE MAN (10/26)

Discussion: a psychological profile of the prophet Jeremiah (whole class)

HW - Coogan pp. 317-31/315-30; Intro (*JSB*) plus Ezekiel chh 1-12; Psalm 137; **draw** what Ezekiel sees

**ESSAY 2** (5-6 pp): Were the prophets pro-worship, anti-worship or ambivalent? Your starting point should be Coogan p. 265/263. No further research necessary. **DUE CLASS 16**

III. JUDAH IN EXILE

14. EZEKIEL THE VISIONARY (10/28)

Discussion: we share our drawings (10 min.)

Lecture: the Cherub Throne (40 min.)

HW - Exodus 20:4-6; 34:6-7; Jeremiah chh 30-31; Ezekiel chh 18

15. THE EXILE AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY (10/31)

HW - Coogan pp. 333-65/331-65; Isaiah chh 40-55; 66; Ezekiel chh 40; 44; 47; Intro (*JSB*) plus Ezra; Intro (*JSB*) plus Nehemiah ch 8; Intro (*JSB*) plus Haggai; be prepared (**write** notes) to explain why it's hard to identify Yahweh's servant in Second Isaiah.

IV. THE PERSIAN RESTORATION

16. SCRIBES, PROPHETS AND RESTORATION (11/2)

Discussion: Who is Yahweh's servant? (20 min.)

Lecture: The Sequence of Events (20 min.)

Discussion: Nehemiah ch 8 as the Birthday of Judaism (?) (10 min.)

HW - Coogan pp. 402-3/406-7, 408-9; Intro (*JSB*) plus Jonah; *Moby Dick* chapter nine ("Father Mapple's Sermon")

<http://www.americanliterature.com/author/herman-melville/book/moby-dick-or-the-whale/chapter-9-the-sermon>;

prepare for class discussion on how Melville elaborates on details in Jonah (**write** notes)

V. TALES OF THE “DARK AGE”

17. JONAH AS EDIFYING TALL TALE (11/4)

Lecture: the Date of Jonah (10 min.)

Discussion: How does a great writer such as Herman Melville read the Bible? (15 min.)

Debate: Team A argues that Jonah is a comedy; Team B argues its message is serious. (35 min.)

HW – Coogan pp. 403-5/**409-11**; Intro plus Esther; prepare (**write** notes) for class discussion on whether Esther has a serious message or is farcical.

**ESSAY 3** (7-10pp.): pick one of the topics for class discussion and make an argument. Cite 3-5 secondary sources, plus Bible. **DUE AT FINAL**. N.B.: *I must approve your choice of topic.*

18. ESTHER AS SITCOM (11/7)

Lecture: Esther and History (10 min.)

Debate: Team A argues that Esther has a serious message; Team B argues that it is a farce about gender (male, female, neuter) (40 min.)

HW – Coogan pp. 387-96/**388-96**; Intro (JSB) plus Job chh 1-14; 32-34; 37-42; prepare (**write** notes) for class discussion.

19. JOB: WHAT’S FUNNY ABOUT TRAGEDY? (11/9)

Discussion: Team A argues that Job is a tragedy; Team B argues that it is a comedy

HW – Anon., “Biblical Poetry”

<http://www.westminster.edu/staff/nak/courses/BibPoetry.htm>

20. HOW TO READ A BIBLICAL POEM (11/14)

Discussion: We analyze Psalm 114 and Exodus ch 15.

HW - Coogan pp. 373-81/**373-81**; Psalms 3; 19; 23; 44; 48; 65; 97; 89; 122; consider (**write** notes): to what genre(s) you would assign Psalm 89?

21. VARIETY IN THE PSALTER (11/16)

Discussion: We analyze Psalm 89 with attention to genre.

HW - Coogan pp. 396-99/**397-99**; Intro (*JSB*) plus Ecclesiastes; consider how Qohelet (dis)agrees theologically with other parts of the Hebrew Bible. Prepare (**write** notes) for class discussion.

22. THE ENIGMA OF ECCLESIASTES (11/18)

Lecture: Qohelet and the Birth of Capitalism (15 min.)

Discussion: Team A argues that Ecclesiastes is pessimistic; Team B argues it's optimistic (35 min.)

HW - Coogan pp. 401-2/**401-3**; Intro plus Song of Songs; try to figure out what it's about.

23. LOVE AND LUST IN CANTICLES (11/21)

Discussion: We read the Song of Songs aloud, with attention to gender roles.

HW - Isaiah 51:9-11; Habakkuk chap. 3; Psalms 29; 74, 77, 89, 104:5-9, 114, 144; Job chaps. 40-41; Cassuto, "The Israelite Epic" (e-r); Propp, *Exodus*, 554-562, 606-613; 620-622 (e-r)

24. THE ISRAELITE CREATION EPIC (11/23)

Lecture: the Myth of the Eternal Return

HW - J. L. González, "How the Bible Has Been Interpreted in the Christian Tradition," pp. 1.83-106 in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Abingdon, 1994) (e-r)

VII. AFTER THE HEBREW BIBLE

26. CHRISTIAN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION (11/28)

Lecture: Prophecy, Allegory, Typology

HW - JSB 1863-1900

27. JEWISH BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION (11/30)

Discussion: We read sample commentary from ENGLISH MIKRAOT GEDOLOT.

HW - Think about what you learned from the class; be prepared to share.

28. SUMMATION (12/2)

**FINAL EXAM (12/7 3:00-6:00 pm) *Please arrive on time; the exam itself will take around an hour; I will leave when the last student has finished.***