

**INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE I:  
TORAH AND PROSE  
FALL 2017**

Miller Hall, room 115  
Tues/Thurs 4th period, 1:10 – 2:30

Department of Religion (01:840:205)  
Department of Jewish Studies (01:563:205)

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office hours:  
Tues 3:30 – 4:30 / Thurs 11:30 – 12:30  
(or by appointment)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is the first course of a two-semester sequence. The main goal is to introduce students to the literature of the Bible – by which is meant the Bible as defined by the Jewish canon, what Christians refer to as the Old Testament. This course focuses on the early biblical books, that is, the Torah or Pentateuch, plus Joshua-Judges-Samuel, covering the period of Israel's origins through the reign of King David. Emphasis is placed on literary, historical, and theological matters. Special use is made of the numerous archaeological discoveries that have advanced our knowledge of ancient Israel. As such, the Bible is studied against the backdrop of ancient Near Eastern literature, history, religion, mythology, and law.

## COURSE PACKET:

The extensive Course Packet is available for download via the Sakai course website.

## TEXTBOOKS:

Prices listed are those given at [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com):

- Adele Berlin and Marc Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible*, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press) ISBN: 9780199978465  
hardcover – B&N price: \$38.10 / Nook Book: \$23.79
- John Collins, *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd edition (Fortress Press) ISBN: 9781451472943  
paperback – B&N price: \$38.18 / Nook Book: \$25.99

## LEARNING GOALS: (i, k, p)

### **B:** *Social and Historical Analysis*

**i.** Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.

### **B1:** *Historical Analysis [HST]*

**k.** Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.

### **C:** *Arts and Humanities (AH)*

**p.** Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Please note the University's academic integrity policy:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers>

I personally endorse the policy and enforce its guidelines. In short, no cheating of any sort will be tolerated in my course; and such actions are grounds for probation and potential dismissal from the University.

## ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING:

There are three exams in the course, each covering one-third of the course and each worth one-third of the final grade.

The exact dates for the exams will be announced early in the semester.

The final exam is not cumulative.

N.B.: The course grade can be adjusted slightly based on class participation, attendance, progress, engagement with the material, and other subjective factors.

## ATTENDANCE:

A major portion of the educational experience in this course takes place in the classroom. While attendance *per se* is not an official component of your course grade, you will be at a great disadvantage if you are not present in class on a regular basis.

If you expect to miss a class session, kindly use the University self-reporting system for absences: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> An email is automatically sent to me to apprise me of your absence.

In addition, please make every effort to arrive in time for the start of class. Late arrival is disruptive to the class discussion and in general disrespectful to me and your classmates.

#### ONLINE MINI-COURSE:

In addition to the regular flow of the course (class sessions, readings, etc.), each student is responsible for completing the online course “The Bible and History,” offered via the Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life, available online at <http://jewishstudies.rutgers.edu/online-studies/bible-and-history>. The program is free, but you must register. As you will see, it runs via the Sakai platform.

#### SCHEDULING NOTES

Class will not be held on the following dates, due to the Jewish holidays:

- Thursday, Sept 21 – Rosh HaShana
- Thursday, Oct 5 – Sukkot
- Thursday, Oct 12 – Shemini ‘Atzeret

We will compensate for missed class time by the aforementioned Online Mini-Course and several video lectures which I will assign during the semester.

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#### COURSE SCHEDULE

Specific dates or weeks are not provided here, but regular announcements will be made to apprise you when to read which sections below.

#### Introduction:

- Collins, pp. 1-40
- Jack Sasson, “On the Bible and the Ancient Near East,” *JSB*, pp. 2137-2144
- Rendsburg, “JEDP Theory” (Sakai)

## The Religion of Ancient Israel

- Moshe Weinfeld, "Israelite Religion" (Sakai)
- Gary Rendsburg, "An Essay on Israelite Religion" (Sakai)
- Stephen Geller, "The Religions of the Bible," *JSB*, pp. 1978-1997
- James Allen, "The [Egyptian] Gods" (Sakai)

## Genesis 1-11: The Primeval History

- Collins, pp. 41-48
- Rendsburg, "Reading Creation" (Sakai)

## Genesis 12-50: The Patriarchs

- Collins, pp. 51-62
- Yair Zakovitch, "Reading Biblical Narrative," *JSB*, pp. 2191-2201
- Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (selected pages) (Sakai)
- Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses* (selected pages) (Sakai)

## Exodus 1-15: The Exodus Narrative

- Collins, pp. 63-72
- Rendsburg, "Moses as Equal to Pharaoh"
- Rendsburg, "Moses the Magician"

## Exodus 20 – Numbers 10: Revelation at Sinai

- Collins, pp. 73-94
- Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (selected pages) (Sakai)
- Jonathan Klawans, "Concepts of Purity in the Bible," *JSB*, pp. 1998-2004
- Sacha Stern, "Biblical Calendars," *JSB*, pp. 2021-2025
- Baruch Levine, "Biblical Festival and Fast Days," *JSB*, pp. 2025-2034
- Shalom Holtz, "Reading Biblical Law," *JSB*, pp. 2201-2207
- Rendsburg, "The Two Screens" (Sakai)
- Rendsburg, "The Vegetarian Ideal in the Bible" (Sakai)

## Numbers 11-36: Wandering in Sinai

- Collins, pp. 94-95
- Jacob Milgrom, "Tzitzit" (Sakai)
- Rendsburg, "The Early History of Israel" (Sakai)

## Deuteronomy

- Collins, pp. 97-112
- Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (selected pages) (Sakai)
- Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy* (selected pages) (Sakai)

## Joshua

- Collins, pp. 113-126
- Aren Maeir, "Archaeology and the Hebrew Bible," *JSB*, pp. 2124-2137

## Judges

- Collins, pp. 129-138

## Samuel – Saul – David – Solomon

- Collins, pp. 139-166

## Canonization of the Bible

- Collins, pp. 365-368
- Marc Brettler, "Canonization of the Bible," *JSB*, pp. 2153-2158
- William Schniedewind, "Origins of the Written Bible" (Sakai)

## Transmission of the Biblical Text

- Jordan Penkower, "The Development of the Masoretic Bible," *JSB*, pp. 2159-2165
- Matti Friedman, "The Aleppo Codex" (Sakai)