

01:563:433 / READINGS IN BIBLICAL HEBREW PROSE

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COURSE GOALS:

This is an advanced course in reading selected prose texts in the Hebrew Bible. We will focus mainly on material from Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. The greatest emphasis will be placed on the literary devices utilized by the ancient Israelite prose writers, including characterization, point-of-view, naming, alliteration, wordplay, allusion, and intertextuality. But we also will pay attention to other issues, such as grammatical and historical concerns.

LEARNING GOAL:

This course meets the following SAS Learning Goal:

Area of Inquiry / Arts and Humanities / goal (p):

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

ASSESSMENT METHOD:

(forthcoming)

STUDENTS:

From past experience, I expect students in the course to have varied abilities in reading and understanding biblical Hebrew. Each student will be judged at his or her own level and by individual progress made during the semester.

TEXTBOOKS:

Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Basic Books)

ISBN 0-465-00427-X (paperback); Retail: \$16.50

Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Eisenbrauns)

ISBN 1-57506-002-7 (paperback); Retail: \$22.95

OPTIONAL PURCHASE:

If you already own a complete Tanakh (Hebrew only, without English), you do not need to purchase this book. But if you are looking to obtain a complete Tanakh, this is the volume of choice, a superb edition, especially given the special sale price noted here (which seems to be a permanent sale offered by the bookseller).

Aron Dotan, *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia* (Hendrickson)

ISBN 1-56563-089-0 (cloth); Retail: \$49.95

Sale: \$14.99 at www.christianbook.com

REQUIREMENTS:

The course is conducted as a seminar. I expect you to prepare the readings from the Bible for each class; to be able to read aloud and translate, both literally and idiomatically; and to be able to identify grammatical issues as they occur in the text.

As early as possible in the semester, read in its entirety the textbook by Robert Alter and then chapters 1-3 in the textbook by Adele Berlin. These volumes provide excellent surveys of the literary devices that we will be discussing during the course.

A term paper will be due towards the end of the semester, with the exact date to be announced. You will select a biblical story that we are not reading in class, and then write a paper detailing the literary devices and other issues central to the story.

In addition, from time to time during the semester, a particular question may arise that requires some independent research. In such cases, I will ask for a volunteer (or volunteer someone!) to conduct the research (not to worry, I'll guide you along the way).

GRADING:

In-class performance is worth 65% of your grade, the term paper is worth 25% of your grade, and the additional 10% will be based on subjective elements such as progress, enthusiasm, etc.