

Wesley Theological Seminary
Weekend Course of Study
August 1-12 (on line) and September 16-17 (at Wesley), 2016

CS-221: Bible II: Torah and Israel's History

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Objectives:

This course interprets the critical events, developing institutions, and traditions of Israel. Attention is given to the earliest Covenants, to the Exodus, to the rise of the monarchy, and to other events up to the eighth century prophets.

Goals:

1. Articulate a historical overview of the experience and faith of ancient Israel.
2. Exegete selected passages that illustrate crucial turning points in the history of Israel.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

Textbooks: To obtain textbooks or view the list go to **My Wesley** on the website (<https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/MyWesley>) and click on the button that says "Textbooks" From there select your program (Course of Study Summer Intensive), then select your course number. You may order books on-line directly from our e-store.

You may also order your books from Cokesbury or any other bookseller or borrow from friends.

REQUIRED:

Birch, Bruce, Walter Brugemann, Terence Fretheim, David Peterson. A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, 2nd edition.

Coogan, Michael. The Old Testament: A Historical & Literary Introduction

Fretheim, Terrence. The Pentatuch

****Also see documents posted on blackboard by the professor****

Assigned Reading:

It is expected that you will have completed all of the assigned reading before the first day of class in order to complete your pre-class assignments.

Please read: All of Fretheim; Coogan, chapters 7-18 (From Exodus to 2 Kings 14 for those of you with different editions of Coogan; Birch et al., chapters 4-8

Instructions for On Line (OL) class, August 1-12:

- Please look under Assignments on Blackboard for complete instructions.
- Set aside August 1-12 for OL work that involves discussion boards and podcasts for you to view.

Instructions for Written Assignments (due August 12 and September 16):

- Please type your papers, double-spaced, 12 font, Calibri.
 - **Be sure to refer to all textbooks and reference books** in your answers.
 - Don't use footnotes when you quote but simply give the author and page number in parentheses after the quote, e.g. (Coogan, 49).
 - Pay attention to page limits; I will stop reading once I've reached the posted limit.
 - Essay will be marked down 5 points for each day that it is late (unless you have permission from me for an extension).
 - Please submit your essay to Blackboard. To submit, click on Assignments in the categories box on the left of the page, then under PreClass 1 click on the underlined PreClass1, click on Browse your computer, attach your document, then click Submit at the bottom right corner of the page.
 - Put your name on your submission, either on top of the first page or in a header (Mac users). Please use numbers and letters only in your doc names; number signs or symbols will prevent me from opening your document.
 - Put your name in the file name of your document. Points off for not following directions.
 - Answer all questions in a single document instead of separate files for each question.
 - I will only accept .docx, .doc, or .rtf formats.
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Essay #1: Due August 1 on Blackboard

1. Discuss the account of Moses' call in Exodus 3, noting both its form (structure) and content. Don't just list the parts of the call narrative but also comment on the significance of each part in terms of what it says about God and about Moses. How does this call narrative express Israel's view of God and of the relationship between God and prophet? How is your call like or unlike the call of Moses? (2 pages, 20 points)
2. What are the basic themes of the story about Israel in the wilderness? How does the wilderness theme function in the faith life of ancient Israel? Reflect also on 'wilderness' as a metaphor for your life before God. (2 pages, 20 points)
3. The Decalogue expresses the essence of the Sinai covenant. Define the word "covenant,"

showing that you have consulted all of the textbooks and the reference books. Discuss the form and content of the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments). How is the Decalogue significant today? How do Exodus and Leviticus understand the nature of 'holiness'? (3 pages, 30 points)

4. Reflect upon the biblical accounts (in Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Judges) of Israel's settlement in Canaan. How do these books understand Israel's entry into the land of Canaan? How do you understand Israel's settlement? How do you explain the violence of conquest? Be sure to reflect upon Robert Warrior's article here: "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians" and Mark Twain's "War Prayer" in your answer (I have posted these article on Blackboard under **Course Documents**). What message does Israel's settlement in the land have for us today? (3 pages, 30 points)

Essay #2: Due September 15 on Blackboard

1. Describe the rise of the monarchy leading to the first king, Saul. What brought about the emergence of the monarchy and what theological and political tensions surfaced in the process? Draw upon at least 5 texts (don't quote; just cite chapter and verse) from the books of Judges through Samuel to support your answer. (4 pages, 40 points)
2. Discuss the rise of David as king (1 Sam 16:1 – 2 Sam 7) and the development of a royal covenant theology, being sure to treat 2 Sam 7 and the tension between conditional and unconditional covenant. Discuss also the concerns of the Succession Narrative in 2 Sam 9-12 and 1 Kings 1-2. What are the good and bad aspects of David's kingship? What human vulnerabilities of David do these chapters reveal? (3 pages, 35 points).
3. According to Brueggemann (please see the chapter from Brueggemann's Prophetic Imagination that I have posted on Blackboard under **Course Documents**), what are the 3 dimensions of the Solomonic achievement (or enlightenment) that summarize the dominant culture of Solomon? How are these 3 dimensions countered by the culture of Moses and the Sinai Covenant? What is the prophetic task in light of Solomon? Should pastors be prophets? (2 pages, 25 points).

Course Outline:

August 1-12: Exodus and Moses; Guidance in the Wilderness; Sinai and Covenant; The Ten Commandments; Israel in Canaan

September 16-17: Rise of the Monarchy: Samuel and Saul; David and 2 Sam 7; The Succession Narrative; Solomon and the Divided Monarchy

Grading:

The instructor assumes that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a “B” grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members review their work to identify strengths and problems.

A “B” means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.

A “B+” means the assignment is also well crafted.

An “A-“ means that the assignment is not only well crafted, but it also probes the issues with considerable insight.

An “A” means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student’s prior knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student’s imagination at work; it has a creative edge.

A “C+” means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus, tends to reveal more the writer’s opinions than the results of the writer’s analysis, and lacks reflective insight into the issues being discussed.

A “C” means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.

A “C-“ means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.

A “D” means the individual needs to see me.

An “F” means the individual needs to see me immediately.

Grades will be reduced a step (e.g. from B to a B-) for assignments handed in after the start of class, and a full letter grade for any assignments 24 hours past due. Assignments over 48 hours past due will be lowered two letter grades. We need to talk if an assignment is over 72 hours past due. Please note only two unexcused absences are allowed before grade is lowered one step.

Final course grades are mailed to the student, GBHEM in Nashville and the student’s conference representative by September 30. Grades are not posted on-line.

Inclusive Language

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and God expresses values and impacts theological ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and

race are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

Academic Policies

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Faculty member have the authority to set attendance policies for particular courses and those policies will be included in the course syllabus. Deviation from the attendance policy may result in reduction of grade or loss of credit for the course.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:

- Copying from another students paper
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination
- Using unauthorized material during an examination
- Borrowing or presenting as one's own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.

Please refer to your Wesley Student Handbook (on-line) for more information about Wesley's academic policies or contact the Course of Study office 202-885-8688.