

Wesley Theological Seminary
New England Satellite School
April 21-22; May 12-13, 2017

CS-221: Bible II Torah and Israel's History
Rev. Dr. Sarah Mount Elewononi
Email: revdrelewononi@gmail.com

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: Textbooks are available from Cokesbury or any other bookseller or borrow from friends.

REQUIRED:

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

Terrence Fretheim, *The Pentatuch*

Birch, Brugemann, Fretheim, and Peterson. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd edition.

The Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers Deuteronomy History: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles 8th Century Prophets: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. *Harper Collins Study Bible*

Also see documents posted on blackboard by the professor.
Robert Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians"

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 bring your Bible to class.

Pre-Class Assignment Instructions:

- Please type your papers, double-spaced, 12 font. Make sure your name, the assignment and page number are in the heading of each page, and all pages of an assignment are

stapled together. Be ready to submit a paper copy of your assignment at the start of the class on which it is due.

- Be sure to refer to all textbooks and reference books in your answers.
- Don't use footnotes or endnotes 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. Anything over the posted limit may be discounted.

Course Outline:

April 21-22, 2017

Genesis Blessing and Covenant

Moses and Exodus

Guidance in the Wilderness

Sinai Covenant and the Ten Commandments

Crossing Jordan: Entering the Land

May 12-13, 2017

Israel in Canaan without a King

Rise of the Monarchy: Samuel and Saul

David: Succession, Success, Failure and Grace

Solomon and the Divided Monarchy

The Rise of Prophets

Due April 21, 2017

1. **Wrestling for a Blessing** After considering what the required reading and Charles Wesley's hymn #387 UMH have to say, write a sermon for your congregation on Genesis 32:22-31 (August 6 for this year's lectionary). In the sermon summarize the events of Jacob's life that led up to this dramatic moment, explain what kind of blessing Jacob is asking for, and invite your congregation to consider themselves and their relationship with God in light of this paradigm. (4 pages please bring two copies, one for me and one for a classmate)
2. **God Calls a Leader** Describe the call narrative of Moses in Exodus 3. List the parts of the call narrative and comment on the significance of each part in terms of what it says about God and about Moses. What does this call narrative say about the relationship between God and Moses? How is your call to lead God's people like or unlike the call of Moses? (2 pages)
3. **Being Sons and Daughters of a Covenant** The Ten Commandments (Decalogue) has been seen as the heart of the covenant from Sinai. Define the word "covenant" showing that you have consulted all of the readings. Discuss the form and content of the Decalogue. Choose one commandment and describe how living by it today will impact the life of a professing member of the Church. (2 pages)
4. Choose one:

- a. **Being in the Wilderness** What does Israel remember about God and itself in the wilderness, that is, what are the basic themes of the story about Israel in the wilderness? Illustrate each theme you list with texts from Exodus and Numbers. Reflect on ‘wilderness’ as a metaphor can be used as a tool for pastoral care. Be ready to present these ideas in class. (2 pages)

- b. **The Old Testament God is “Angry and Violent”?** Many Christians avoid reading the Old Testament on account of the violence. Prepare yourself to invite such Christians to consider the matter more deeply. What are some different ways of interpreting Israel’s entry into the land of Canaan as presented in Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges? How do you understand Israel’s entry into the land? How do you explain the violence of conquest in the book of Joshua? Be sure to reflect upon Robert Warrior’s article here: “Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians” (look on Blackboard under Content). Be ready to present your persuasive arguments in class. (2 pages)

Due May 12, 2017

1. **Collaborate with your Colleague:** Read your colleague’s sermon on Genesis 32:22-31. In the first third of your essay affirm what is “right on” about this sermon. Use the rest of the essay to suggest how this sermon could be strengthened so that the congregation understands the significance of God’s blessing to Jacob and to their own lives. (2 pages)
2. **Religion and Politics:** Address the theological and political tensions that surface from the time Israel enters The Promised Land to the first king, Saul. Draw upon at least 5 scripture texts (don’t quote; just cite chapter and verse) from the books of Judges through Samuel to support your answer. (3 pages)
3. **Bible Study on King David:** Create an outline of a Bible Study about King David that you could teach to people where you are pastor. Focus on 1 Samuel 16:1- 2 Samuel 7. In the outline address: the theology of having a king, or not; the tension between conditional and unconditional covenant; concerns of the Succession Narrative in 2 Samuel 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2; the good and bad aspects of David’s kingship; David’s human vulnerabilities. Be ready present any portion of your outline in class. (2 pages)
4. **The Work of the Prophets:** New England Methodists have a long history of claiming a prophetic streak to our ministry. After consideration of the scriptures and readings write a column for the *e-Clergy Connection* comparing and contrasting the 8th century prophets’ messages and work to issues facing Christians today. In what ways is God calling us to be prophetic today? If we take the 8th century prophets as our models, how should we best go about it? (3 pages)