

CS-221 Bible 2: Torah and Israel's History

March 13-14, April 17-18

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Course Description: 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.

Students will be able to:

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.
2. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

Required Textbooks:

Michael Coogan and Cynthia Chapman, *A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 4th ed. (Oxford U. Press, 2017).

Birch, B., Brueggemann, W., Fretheim, T., and Petersen, D. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed., (Abingdon, 2005).

Required Web Site:

bibleodyssey.org—the latest historical and literary research on the people, places, and passages of the Bible by scholars from the Society of Biblical Literature. I have an entry on Judith.

Pre-Class Assignment Instructions:

- Please type your papers, double-spaced, 14 font, Calibri.
- **Be sure to refer to both textbooks and bibleodyssey.org** 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 content 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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Due March 13 by 12 noon. Please post on Blackboard under Assignments

1. How do God's promises to Abraham of land and descendants play out in the lives of the matriarchs and patriarchs in Genesis 12-50? That is, what are the threats to these promises and how are these threats overcome? Look at the Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph stories to answer the question. Be sure to include reflection upon all assigned readings in your answer, including Weems and Tamez. (3 pages, 30 points)
2. What do Moses' objections to his call in Exodus 3 and 4 say about the way Israel sees the relationship between the prophet and God? How is your call like or unlike the call of Moses? (2 pages, 20 points)
3. The Decalogue (Ten Commandments) expresses the essence of the Sinai covenant. Define the word "covenant," showing that you have consulted both textbooks and bibleodyssey.org. Choose one commandment and tell why it is important today. (2 pages, 25 points)

4. How do you explain the violence of conquest in the book of Joshua, that is the genocide of the Canaanites? Be sure to reflect upon Robert Warrior's article here: "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians" (I have posted it on Blackboard under Course Documents). What are the dangers of claiming 'God is on our side'? (2 pages, 25 points)

Due first day of class, April 17 by noon. Please post on Blackboard under Assignments.

1. Describe the rise of kingship in Israel, starting from the time of the period of the judges leading up 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, 50 points)
2. What are the good and bad aspects of David's kingship in the Succession Narrative in 2 Sam 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2? What weaknesses does David show in these stories? (2 pages, 25 points)
3. According to Walter Brueggemann (please see the chapter from Brueggemann's *Prophetic Imagination* that I have posted on Blackboard under Content), what are the 3 aspects or dimensions of the Solomonic achievement (or enlightenment) that summarize the dominant culture of Solomon's kingship? How are these 3 dimensions challenged by the culture of Moses and the Sinai Covenant? (2 pages, 25 points)

Course Outline:

March 13: Covenant with Abraham, Matriarchs and Patriarchs, Exodus and Moses

March 14: Guidance in the Wilderness, Sinai and Covenant, the Ten Commandments

April 17: Israel Enters Canaan, the Judges

April 18: Rise of the Monarchy: Samuel and Saul; 2 Sam 7, the Succession Narrative, Divided Monarchy