

HEBREW SCRIPTURES – STMM 526-01

*Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry
Fall Quarter 2013 • Hunthausen 100 • Monday 9:00-11:50 am*

Instructor: Andrew R. Davis, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Mon 1-2 pm (and by appointment) Phone: 206-296-5339

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Through working with a variety of Old Testament texts, students are exposed to the formation of the Hebrew Bible as Pentateuch, Prophets and Writings. The course examines tensions, strengths, and limits in the pluralism of viewpoints that come to expression in the biblical texts. Practical consequences for belief and practice will be developed.

This course is designed to provide students with a historical, literary and theological introduction to the Hebrew Bible. We will read various biblical texts that have been selected as a sampling of its rich diversity of form, style, theological concern, historical background, etc., and we will ask questions of these texts. Some questions will arise from our use of standard methodologies in the field; others will arise from the unique experience each of us brings to this course. All of these questions are valuable and integral to the success of our class. I hope that by the end of the course you will be familiar with the basic shape of the Hebrew Bible, that you will be hungry for more Scripture courses, and that you will have found creative new ways to infuse your ministry with the Bible.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Ability to read scriptural texts critically (MDiv, MAPS, MATS).
- Ability to use biblical tools and resources as a way to inform their own exegesis for the purpose of doing their ministry (MDiv).
- Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can enter another's worldview [whether ancient or modern] (MDiv, MAPS, MATS).
- Awareness of their own social location/assumptions/hermeneutics as they engage the text in their own lives, their communities, and the larger world (MDiv).

III. TEXTBOOKS

A. Required

1. One of the following annotated Bibles: *The HarperCollins Study Bible*; *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (which I will use in class); *The Catholic Study Bible* (2d ed.); *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*; *The Jewish Study Bible*.
 - Avoid the following translations: *The King James Version*; *The Message*; *The Living Bible*; *The Way*.
2. Michael Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (**2d ed.**; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
3. Marvin Sweeney, *Reading the Hebrew Bible After the Shoah: Engaging Holocaust Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008).

B. Recommended (for personal enrichment)

1. C. DeYoung, W. Gafney, L. Guardiola-Sáenz, G. Tinker, F. Yamada, eds., *The Peoples' Companion to the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010).
2. M. Gorman, ed., *Scripture: An Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005).
3. A. Rainey and R. Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2006).

IV. SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS AND DUE DATES

Mon 9/30 *Ancient Israel, the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Canon*

Recommended: Coogan, pp. 3-27; Sweeney, pp. 1-22.

Mon 10/7 *Genesis: Origins of the World (chs. 1-11) and Israel's Ancestors (chs. 12-50)*

Assignment: Genesis 1, 2-3, 12, 15, 17, 22; Coogan, pp. 31-56, 71-91; Sweeney, pp. 23-41.

Mon 10/14 *Exodus: Formation of Israel, Law and Covenant (First Paper Due)*

Assignment: Exodus 1-3, 14-15, 17, 19-20, 32-34; Coogan, pp. 92-103, 112-25, 135-43; Sweeney, pp. 42-63.

Mon 10/21 *Priestly Ritual and the Deuteronomical Code (Parts 1 & 2 of Second Paper Due)*

Assignment: Leviticus 1, 16, 19; Deuteronomy 12-26, 34; Coogan, pp. 144-45, 150-53, 177-93.

Mon 10/28 *Conquest, Kingship and Royal Theology (Part 3 of Second Paper Due)*

Assignment: Joshua 1-6, 24; Judges 4-5, 13-16; 1 Samuel 1-2, 15-16; 2 Samuel 7; Psalms 2, 89; Coogan, pp. 194-96, 203-23, 233-41, 250-67, 279-87.

Mon 11/4 *The Prophets (Part 4 of Second Paper Due)*

Assignment: 1 Kings 22; Isaiah 1-2, 6-9, 11, 36-39; Coogan, pp. 327-47; Sweeney, pp. 84-103.

Mon 11/11 CLASS CANCELLED – VETERAN'S DAY HOLIDAY

Mon 11/18 *Exile and Restoration (Part 5 of Second Paper Due)*

Assignment: Isaiah 40-42, 53, 55-56, 60, 65; Coogan, pp. 358-64, 404-12, 422-24.

Mon 11/25 CLASS CANCELLED – SBL MEETING

Mon 12/2 *Wisdom Literature (Part 6 of Second Paper Due)*

Assignment: Proverbs 1-9; Job 1-3, 19, 28, 38-42; Ecclesiastes 1-3; Coogan, pp. 459-89; Sweeney, pp. 188-207.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A. *Completion of reading assignments.* They should be completed prior to the class on which they are assigned.
- B. *Attendance and participation in class.* I expect you to arrive on time to each class. Since absence and tardiness, even when they are "excused," diminish your participation in class, they will likewise diminish your participation grade. Moreover, because your classmates and I deserve your full attention, I expect you to keep food and smart phones packed away during

class time (not counting breaks). If you take notes on a laptop, I expect you to refrain from social media during class. Any of these activities may diminish your participation grade.

In addition, you are required to participate in a weekly on-line discussion board before each class. The purpose of the discussion board is for you to share with me and the class your response to the week's reading assignments. What did you find interesting, confusing, disturbing, exciting in the readings? What questions do you bring to that week's class? Your posts will be graded on a check-plus (95), check (85), check-minus (75) basis, unless you fail to post, in which case you will receive a zero.

C. *Completion of two papers.* They are described in detail below:

The **First Paper** should respond to the argument made by Marvin Sweeney in ch. 1 of his book, *Reading the Hebrew Bible After the Shoah*. There he argues that the narrative structure of Gen 11:27-25:11 raises doubts about the fidelity of Yahweh.

Your assignment in this paper is twofold. **First**, describe the main point(s) of his argument and evaluate its persuasiveness. To what extent are his interpretations of various episodes in Genesis convincing? How else might they be interpreted?

Secondly, examine another passage in the Pentateuch (one not addressed by Sweeney) where the fidelity of Yahweh is a central concern. After demonstrating that Yahweh's fidelity is at issue in your selected text, discuss how the text supports/qualifies/ counters Sweeney's argument?

The first paper is due at 9:00 am on October 14. Late papers will be docked ten points per day until it is turned in.

The **Second Paper** is an exegesis of a biblical text from a list that I will supply. (Students may propose to study a text not on the list. Such a proposal should be typed, double-spaced, about a page long, and it should persuade me that your proposed passage is the only biblical text that will enable you to write a successful paper. Proposals must be submitted to me no later than October 21. Unpersuasive proposals will not be approved.)

The term "exegesis" refers to "the process of careful, analytical study of biblical passages undertaken in order to produce useful interpretations of those passages" (D. Stuart, "Exegesis," in *ABD* II, p. 682). This process will take place over the second half of the course. Each week will focus on a different part of the exegesis and will include brief written assignments. ("Brief" is no more than one page double-spaced.) You will discuss your brief papers in small groups and turn them in to me at the end of class. (See above for due dates.) What follows are instructions for each assignment, which are also the criteria by which I will grade them:

Part 1 – Choose a passage from the list and write a paragraph explaining why you chose the passage. What about it caught your attention? Why do you want to study it further? What about your own background drew you to this passage? Lastly, write in one sentence what you take to

be the primary message of the passage. I even encourage you to start the sentence in this way: “The primary message of this passage is....”

Part 2 – Compare three different translations of your passage by arranging them on a sheet in three columns. (One of the translations should be from the Jewish Study Bible.) Beneath these columns write a paragraph describing any significant differences you notice among the three. Finally, tell me which translation you will use in your paper and why.

Part 3 – Write an annotated bibliography of at least three scholarly and recent (post-1965) commentaries that you will use in writing your exegesis paper. (Note: the scholar who comments on your passage may not be the same as the scholar who has edited the commentary.) For each citation write the important points made by the commentator. Lastly, write a paragraph describing how the commentaries have affected your understanding of the passage. How has your understanding been modified/challenged/confirmed by consulting the commentaries?

Part 4 – Write about the genre of your passage. What is its genre (e.g., hymn, blessing, curse, oath, law, prayer, etiology, etc.)? What are some other biblical examples of the same genre? How is your passage similar to those other examples? How is it different? Finally, what biblical motifs and traditions are being reused and/or reinterpreted here?

Part 5 – Write about the historical context of your passage. To what time period do scholars date your passage? Do scholars agree on the date? Where do scholars think it was written? What was the situation in that time and place? How do you think someone living in that time and place would have received your passage?

Part 6 – Write about how later generations interpreted your passage. Is your passage quoted in the New Testament or in the Dead Sea Scrolls? Has it been used in Jewish or Christian liturgy? On what occasions? How did the meaning of your passage change for these later communities of faith? How would a contemporary audience receive this passage? How would a community you serve (be specific) be challenged by your reading of this passage?

The Second Paper (“Part 7”) – Craft Parts 1-6 into an organized, well-structured and elegant exegesis paper. You already have the raw materials; all that remains is to integrate them into a final product that is built around a central thesis statement. (It will not be enough simply to stitch together the six brief papers.) Your thesis statement should be a single sentence in your first paragraph that explains, after all your research and reflection, what you think is the primary message of your passage. All the other parts of your paper should in some way support your thesis statement, so that by the last paragraph I am convinced by your paper that your interpretation really is a valid and meaningful way to understand the passage. This paper will be graded according to a rubric that you will receive later in the course.

Additionally, it may be helpful to consult M. Gorman’s *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers* (rev. and exp.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2009).

Parts 1-6 are due at 9:00 am on the assigned day. Late papers will be docked ten points per day until it is turned in.

The Second Paper itself is due to me by email by 9:50 am on Monday, December 9, which is the end of our assigned exam period. Late papers will be docked ten points per day until it is turned in.

VI. ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will be calculated thus:

Letter grades will be determined thus:

First Paper	20%	A	93 – 100
Second Paper		A-	90 – 92.99
• Part 1	5%	B+	87 – 89.99
• Part 2	5%	B	83 – 86.99
• Part 3	5%	B-	80 – 82.99
• Part 4	5%	C+	77 – 79.99
• Part 5	5%	C	73 – 76.99
• Part 6	5%	C-	70 – 72.99
• Final Paper	20%	D+	67 – 69.99
In-Class Participation	15%	D	63 – 66.99
<u>On-Line Participation</u>	<u>15%</u>	D-	60 – 62.99
Final Grade	100%	F	< 60

VII. ADDITIONAL POLICIES

- Academic Honesty (including plagiarism): The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the academic policy regarding Academic Integrity as indicated on the Seattle University Registrar website, as noted in the box below.
- Disability: If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an ‘invisible disability’ such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, please see related note in the box below.

University Resources and Policies

Academic Resources

- Library and Learning Commons (<http://www.seattleu.edu/learningcommons/>)
 - (This includes: Learning Assistance Programs, Research [Library] Services, Writing Center, Math Lab)
- Academic Integrity Tutorial (found on Angel and SU Online)

Academic Policies on Registrar website (<https://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/academics/performance/>)

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Grading Grievance Policy
- Professional Conduct Policy (only for those professional programs to which it applies)

Notice for students concerning Disabilities

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an ‘invisible disability’ such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff located in Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.

VIII. CITATION FORMAT

Students in the Pastoral Counseling degree submit papers with citations in APA (American Psychological Association) format delineated by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. All other students submit papers with citations in CMS (Chicago Manual of Style) format delineated by *The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*. The basic rules for these style formats may be found at the following websites:

- **APA:** <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/> (Diana Hacker website/social sciences)
- **CMS** <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/> (Diana Hacker website/history)
or http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html (CMS website)

At times students need assistance with the writing process itself. In addition to face-to-face assistance offered by Seattle University's Writing Center (McGoldrick Learning Commons 2nd Floor), two websites offer online assistance with writing.

- **Seattle University Writing Center:** <http://www.seattleu.edu/writingcenter/> (Resources)
- **Purdue Writing Center:** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>