

SCRIPTURE I

Fall Semester 2013

Instructor: Johanna Bos

Office hours: Professor Bos by appointment – Gardencourt 303

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Scripture I, along with Scripture II, will introduce the student to the Bible and the world of the Bible. Scripture I is a four-credit course taught in one semester; it will concentrate on matters that are of interest to the study of the entire Bible and to the study of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in particular. Subjects for attention will be: The development of Christian study of the Old Testament from its earliest beginnings to the present day; steps in the formation of the biblical canon and the transmission of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament; the creation, composition and context of the texts of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament; the historical and geographical setting of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament; the nature of biblical authority, especially with a view to the relationship between the Testaments of the Christian Bible; some major theological concepts rooted in the Bible.

OBJECTIVES: In part the course aims to further the knowledge of the historical context and literature of the Bible, essential to introductory Bible study. In addition, students should arrive at an understanding of the nature of biblical revelation and authority that are existentially meaningful and relevant to a larger faith context.

Specific objectives and learning goals:

- (1) To be acquainted with a rough outline of the history and context of South-West Asia in biblical times.
- (2) To outline the history of ancient Israel from 1200 B.C.E. - 100 B.C.E. in relation to developments in other cultures of South-West Asia of that period and to geographical features of the area.
- (3) To be or become thoroughly familiar with the content of the different books of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and to be able to place texts within their appropriate biblical context and the history of Ancient Israel.
- (4) To be informed about the process and the formation of the Canon and to place this process in a historical and religious context.
- (5) To articulate understandings of the significance and authority of the Bible as a whole and of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in particular, especially in relation to the New Testament, providing historical settings for different perspectives.
- (6) To identify and discuss major biblical theological concepts, especially as they relate to present-day issues in the church and the world.

METHOD: The class will meet as one group twice a week for a two-hour period. Because of the size of the class, the course will consist for the greatest part in class presentations with some time set aside for questions and discussion.

MEANS OF EVALUATION: Students will receive a grade based on: (a) class presence and participation; (b) a take-home examination at mid-term and a short essay; (c) a final essay and a final take-home examination. The exams will stress the more factual information that is a part of the course, while the essays will focus on a specific unit of the biblical text. Detailed instructions for the essays will be handed out at an appropriate time.

Grading scale:

Class attendance and participation:	200
Mid-term exam:	100
Mid-term essay:	200
Final exam:	200
Final essay:	300
Total:	1000

1000-950=A 949-900=A- 899-850=B+ 849-800= B 799-750=B- 749-700=C+ 699-650=C 649-600=C- 599-550=D Less than 550 = F

Attendance at all class meetings is a basic requirement. Three absences reduce the class attendance grade by 100 points, with each additional absence reducing that grade by 50 points. Habitual tardiness in class attendance will be noted and will cause a deduction of 10 points for each occasion (beginning on the second meeting of the class). In case of unavoidable conflict, notify the instructor as soon as possible. Participation in class includes pertinent and productive questions, and insights and observations relevant to the subject and readings as well as completing in-class assignments.

Policy on Inclusive Language:

In speech and in written assignments, it is the policy of the school to avoid divisive terms that reinforce stereotypes or are pejorative. Do not use language that leaves out part of the population, perpetuates stereotyping, or diminishes importance. Do not use male pronouns (such as “men”) to refer to a group that includes females as well. Consult the Academic Support Center for additional guidance if necessary. See:

http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Electronic Devices

All electronic devices, laptop computers, i-pads, i-Phones, cell-phones, etc, are to be turned off during class time. Exceptions may be requested from the instructors. Taping of a class may take place only with permission by the instructor.

RESOURCES: The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament is a main resource for this course and we will spend a considerable amount of time working directly with the text.

Required reading material

The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003)

The Jewish Study Bible. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler eds. (Oxford University Press, 2004.)

Assignments posted on CAMS Check CAMS regularly for posted material.

Johanna W.H.van Wijk-Bos. *Making Wise the Simple – the Torah in Christian Faith and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, October 2005)

Jews, Christians and the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures. Alice Ogden Bellis and Joel S. Kaminsky eds. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005.

Sandra Gravett, Karla Bohmbach, F. Greifenhagen, Donald Polaski: *An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible – A Thematic Approach* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008)

Recommended

Everett Fox. *The Five Books of Moses – A New Translation with Introductions, Commentary and Notes.* (New York: Schocken, 1995)

Robert Alter. *The Five Books of Moses – A Translation with Commentary.* (New York: W.W.Norton & Co, 2004)

Peter C. Craigie. *The Old Testament – Its Background, Growth, and Content.* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986)

Rainer Albertz. *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period.* (Louisville: Westminster, 2004).

Johanna W.H.van Wijk-Bos. *Reformed and Feminist – A Challenge to the Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991)

Jonathan Sacks. *The Dignity of Difference* (New York: Continuum, 2002) ISBN: 0826468500

Daniel C. Snell. *Life in the Ancient Near East*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.)

The Contemporary Torah – A Gender-Sensitive Adaptation of the JPS Translation.

Editors: David E.S. Stein, Adele Berlin, Ellen Frankel and Carol L. Meyers. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006.