

SCRIPTURE I
Fall and Spring Semester 2009-20010

Instructor: Johanna Bos

Class Assistant: Adam Clark

Office hours: Professor Bos by appointment – Gardencourt 303

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Scripture I, along with Scripture II, is intended to introduce the student to the Bible and the world of the Bible as a basis for further studies in the curriculum. Scripture I is a four-credit course spread over two semesters; 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 history and literature of the Bible, considered 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

- (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 is divided into two groups each of which will meet twice a week for one hour, devoted partly to presentations and partly to conversation and questions. The course is taught in two semesters and each semester there will be opportunities for in-class testing; see the schedule for dates. The end of semester exam will be comprehensive. Study questions pertaining to the material to be addressed will be handed out and reviewed ahead of test time. The final exam will be a take-home of which a part will be a short essay on a specific biblical text. Guidelines for the exam will be handed out and reviewed ahead of time.

The Hebrew Bible is a complex document of considerable size and students are expected to read through the different sections of the Bible on their own, with a selection of passages to be discussed in class. In order to facilitate an adequate knowledge of the content of the books, students will prepare outlines of a number of biblical books. These outlines will not receive a letter grade but they must be completed in order to receive a grade. There are a variety of ways to complete this task that are acceptable and guidelines for it will be provided in a handout. The outlines are expected to be your own work arising from your own reading of the Bible. For the purpose of this exercise use of Internet resources is not allowed.

MEANS OF EVALUATION: A grade will be assigned for each semester. Responsible presence will be noted and taken into account. The final will constitute 60 percent of the grade, with the written in-class test 40 %. Class presence and participation will be weighed in the consideration of the final grade.

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.

Internet and Cell Phones

The use of laptop computers during class is discouraged. Cell phones are to be turned off. Exceptions may be requested from the instructors.

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 Books

The Harper Collins Study Bible – New Revised Standard Version

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

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

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.

John J. Collins: *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007)

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

Handouts

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) ISBN 0393109551

Rainer Albertz. *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period.* (Louisville: Westminster, 2004). ISBN: 0664218466 and 0664218474

Johanna W.H.van Wijk-Bos. *Reformed and Feminist – A Challenge to the Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991) ISBN: 0664 251943

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

***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.**