Studies in Hebrew Scripture Course Syllabus

Dr. Daniel J. Borsay

RELG 304 Studies in Hebrew Scripture

Instructor: Dr. Daniel J. Borsay

Office Hours: 10 to 11:15 a.m. TTH or by appointment

Office: 259 Stansbury Hall

E-mail address: [daniel.borsay@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:daniel.borsay@mail.wvu.edu)

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Coogan, Michael D., A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament. Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-19-533272-8
2. A link to an online version of the Old Testament will be provided by the instructor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course introduces students to the academic study of Hebrew scriptures. After having taken this course, students should be familiar with the main issues surrounding the origin, development, and content of the Old Testament books/Hebrew Bible. Students should understand the basics of textual criticism, the most widespread theories of the composition of the various texts in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, and the controversies with respect to the dating and contents of the biblical books.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

* Understand how a standard Hebrew text is established from which English translations can be made.
* Understand the rationale behind and the salient features of source criticism.
* Understand aspects of the ancient Near East relevant to the study of Hebrew scriptures.
* Identify the contours of Israelite religion, such as the system of sacrifice, the emphasis on purity, the role of prophets, and kingship.

GEC GOALS:

As a part of the WVU General Education Curriculum the course addresses the following important objective: objective 3, the past and its traditions. Students will also be expected to demonstrate critical thinking.

COURSE POLICIES/REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance**. Students are expected to attend all sessions of this course. Failure to do so will result in point deductions from one’s grade. One point will be deducted for each missed class, up to 5 points, Excused absences will be determined on an individual basis. All other absences will be considered “unexcused.” ANY STUDENT MISSING 6 OR MORE SESSIONS WILL AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE A GRADE OF “F” FOR THE COURSE.
2. **Tests**. Exams will consist of multiple choice, true and false, and essay questions. There are no make-up exams under ordinary circumstances. If extraordinary circumstances allow for a make-up exam, its format may differ from the original.
3. **Drop Policy**. Students missing more than one class session during the first week of the course will be dropped from the student roster.
4. **Conduct Policy**. All students are expected to act respectfully in class. The use of cell phones, talking in class, or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
5. **Honesty**. Rigorous standards of academic integrity will be enforced. Students are expected to adhere to the Student Conduct Code at West Virginia University. This can be found online.

GRADES/GRADING

1. There will be five unit exams worth 100 points each. The final unit exam will NOT be cumulative and will be completed during the week of finals at the appropriate time.
2. Grades will be calculated based on one’s percentage of total points (total points=500).

A= 90—100 %

B=80—89.9%

C=70—79.9%

D=60—69.9%

F=below 60% (under 420 points) OR more than 6 class absences

There is no grade curve nor are there any extra credit points.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS:

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION

August 18 and 20

TOPIC: *What is the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament?*; *Geography of the Promised* *Land*

August 25 and 27

READINGS: Coogan, chapters one and two, pp. 3—26

September 1 and 3

TOPIC *Cosmic Origins*

READINGS Genesis 1—3 Coogan, chapter 3, pp. 27—40

**FIRST TEST September 8 (On the material covered to date, both in readings and lectures)**

UNIT 2 - September 10 and 15

TOPIC: Formation of the Pentateuch

READINGS: Genesis 4—11 and Coogan, pp. 41—60

September 17 and 22

TOPIC: The Ancestors of Israel

READINGS: Genesis 12—50 and Coogan, pp. 61—77

**SECOND TEST SEPTEMBER 24 (On the material covered, both in readings and lectures, since our last exam)**

UNIT 3 NATIONAL ORIGINS

September 29 and October 1

TOPIC: Escape from Egypt

From Egypt to Sinai

READINGS: Exodus 1—24 and Coogan, 78—106

October 6 and 8

TOPIC: *Law, Ritual, and Holiness*

*In the Wilderness*

READINGS: Exodus 20—Numbers and Coogan, pp. 107—146

OCTOBER 13 NO CLASS, FALL BREAK

October 15 and 20

TOPIC: *End of the Journey*; *Joshua and the Conquest*

READINGS: Deuteronomy and Joshua and Coogan, pp. 147—174

**THIRD TEST OCTOBER 22 (On the material covered, both in readings and lectures, since our last exam)**

October 27 and 29

TOPIC: *The Emergence of Israel in the Land of Canaan*

READING: Judges and Ruth and Coogan, pp. 175—192

November 3 and 5

TOPIC: *The Establishment of the Monarchy*; *The Reign of David*

READINGS: 1 Samuel; 2 Samuel and 1 Kings 1—2; and Coogan, pp. 193—219

November 10 and 12

TOPIC: *Reign of Solomon*; *Divided Kingdoms*

READINGS: 1 Kings 1—2 Kings 14, Psalm 89, and Coogan, pp. 220—251

November 17 and 19

TOPICS: *Northern Kingdom*; *Kingdom of Judah*

READINGS: 2 Kings 14—20, Amos, Hosea, 2 Chronicles 29—32, Isaiah 1—39, Micah and Coogan, pp. 252—286

THANKSGIVING RECESS NOVEMBER 24—26

**FOURTH TEST DECEMBER 1 (On the material covered, both in readings and lectures, since the last exam)**

December 3 and 8 – LAST CLASS

TOPIC: *Fall of Judah*

Readings: 2 Kings 21—25, 2 Chronicles 33—36, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Jeremiah and Coogan, pp. 287—310

**FIFTH AND FINAL EXAMINATION (On the material covered, both in readings and lectures, since the last exam) The date and time of the final will be Wednesday December 16 from 11 AM – 1 PM.**

Statement of Non-Discrimination

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our university does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran’s status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestion as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make

appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293—6700).