

RLST 204 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
MWF 12:00 – 12:50 PM
Spring Semester 2013

Instructor: Dr. Susan Cohen
Office: 2-161 Wilson Hall
Office hours: W 10:00 – 11:30 AM and by appointment
Email: scohen@montana.edu

- Goals of the course:**
- 1) to become acquainted with the major themes of the Hebrew Bible.
 - 2) to become acquainted with some of the critical scholarly tools used in the interpretation and study of the Hebrew Bible in an academic setting.
 - 3) to become acquainted with the historical and cultural background out of which the religion presented in the Hebrew Bible emerged.
 - 4) to learn to read, examine, and discuss the Hebrew Bible as an academic text and as a means of examining the development of western religious thought.

Required texts: *Bible*. New Revised Standard Version, HarperCollins edition.
Who Wrote the Bible? Friedman, R.
The Old Testament. An Introduction. Coogan, M.

All texts are available at the MSU bookstore.

Course requirements:	assignments	20%
	midterm exam	20%
	2 papers	20% each
	final exam	20%

There will be **five short writing assignments** throughout the semester, the due date for each one is listed below on the syllabus. Only four of them will count toward your final grade—you may choose to not write one of them; if you write all of them the lowest grade for the semester will be dropped.

There will be **one midterm exam**, on **Friday 8 March**. The exam will be on material up to and including the lecture of Wednesday 6 March.

There will be **two papers**, on topics to be handed out later in the semester. These papers will be due on **Friday 8 February** and **Friday 19 April**.

The **final exam** for this course will take place on **Thursday 2 May**. The final will be comprehensive for the semester.

Course Policies:

- 1) This is a course about religion as an academic subject and that examines the development of human thought about religion and the divine. This is **NOT** a class that teaches religious doctrine or that is taught from a religious and/or devotional perspective. As such, we will be examining the Hebrew Bible as **an academic and secular subject**. **The biblical text will be treated as material open to questioning, examination, criticism, and interpretation.** An open mind and a willingness to examine new ideas and new methods of examining the biblical text are essential. **This class is not a forum for expressions of personal theology.**
- 2) Plagiarism – the presentation of others’ work as your own – is an offense punishable by expulsion. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and all references to ideas from books, articles, or other sources must be cited correctly. If you do not know how to properly reference your work, or you are in doubt whether or not you should cite material, refer to the *Student Academic and Conduct Guidelines*, or make an appointment to see the instructor to discuss the problem. **Anyone found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification or any other form of academic dishonesty will fail this course and the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students.**

Course Schedule:

Week One:

- Jan. 9: Introduction to the study of the Hebrew Bible
- Jan. 11: The Hebrew Bible: writing, date, language and interpretations
Read: Coogan, Chapters 1 and 2.
Friedman, pp. 15-32.

Week Two:

- Jan. 14: In the Beginning ...
Read: Genesis 1-2.
Coogan, Chapter 3.
- Jan. 16: Man and Woman, Cain and Abel
Read: Genesis 3-4.
Coogan Chapter 4
- Jan. 18: Text, source, and story: Noah and the flood
Read: Genesis 6-11
Coogan, Chapter 5
Friedman, pp. 50-60.

Week Three:

- Jan. 21: **UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**
- Jan. 23: Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant
Read: Genesis 12-22.
Coogan, Chapter 6
- Jan. 25: **Assignment 1 due in class**

Isaac and Jacob
Read: Genesis 25-27.
Friedman, pp. 60-69.

Week Four:

- Jan. 28: Altars, etiologies, and theophanies: interpreting the patriarchs
Read: Genesis 28-35.
Coogan, Chapter 6.
- Jan. 30: Setting the stage: the story of Joseph
Read: Genesis 37-50.
- Feb. 1: Exodus and Exodus traditions
Read: Exodus 1-18, 32-34; Ps. 106:1-32.
Friedman, pp. 70-88.
Coogan, Chapter 7.

Week Five:

- Feb. 4: Covenant at Sinai
Read: Exodus 19-21; 24, 33-34.
Coogan, Chapter 8.
- Feb. 6: The Commandments and the Law
Read: Exodus 20-23; Lev. 19, 25-26; Deut. 5-6.
Coogan, Chapters 9 and 10.
- Feb. 8: **Assignment 2 due in class**
Numbers: the Wandering
Read: Num. 11-16, 20-25
Coogan, Chapter 11.

Week Six:

- Feb. 11: Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic Historian
Read: Deut. 1-4, 7-12, 17, 20-21, 27-30.
Coogan, Chapter 12.
- Feb. 13: The Book of Joshua and the Israelite Emergence in Canaan
Read: Joshua 1-12, 23-24; Judges 1-3.
Coogan, Chapters 13
- Feb. 15: **FIRST PAPER DUE VIA D2L**

Week Seven:

- Feb. 18: **UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**
- Feb. 20: The Book of Judges and the Israelite Emergence in Canaan
Read: Judges 2-11; 13-16.
Coogan, Chapter 14.
- Feb. 22: Samuel and Saul: the transition from judges to kings
Read: I Sam. 1-7, 9-11, 15.

Coogan, Chapter 15.

Week Eight:

Feb. 25: The Rise of David

Read: I Sam 16-25; II Sam 1-5

Feb. 27: From David to Solomon: the Succession Narrative

Read: II Sam. 11-19; I Kgs. 1-5, 9-10.

Coogan, Chapter 16.

March 1: **Assignment 3 due in class**

Kingship in ancient Israel

Read: Judges 8: 22-23; 9:8-20; 21:25;

I Sam 8, 12, 15; II Sam. 7; Ps. 2, 89,110, 132.

Coogan, Chapter 17.

Week Nine:

March 4: Tabernacle, Ark, and the Temple in Jerusalem

Read: Exodus 25-27 and 36-38; Deut. 12; I Sam. 4-6

II Sam 6-7; I Kings 5-8; Psalm 48, 87, 99, 122

March 6: Prophets

Read: Amos (all), Hosea 10-14; Isaiah 6-7; Jeremiah 1.

Coogan, Chapter 19

March 8: **MIDTERM EXAM DUE VIA D2L BY 1:03 PM**

March 11-16 Spring Break

Week Ten:

March 18: The Divided Monarchy: The Northern Kingdom

Read: I Kgs. 11-16, 18-19, 21.

Coogan, Chapter 18.

March 20: The Northern Kingdom and the fall of Israel

Read: II Kgs 10-17, Micah, all.

March 22: **Assignment 4 due in class**

Isaiah, Hezekiah, and Sennacherib

Read: II Kings 18-20; Isaiah 1-2, 5, 10-11.

Coogan, Chapter 20

Week Eleven:

March 25: The 'Sin of Manasseh' and 'Good King' Josiah

Read: II Kings 21-23; Deut. 12-13:1; II Chr. 33-35.

Coogan, Chapter 21.

Friedman pp. 96-124 and 130-135

March 27: The Fall of Jerusalem

Read: II Kings 23:24-26 and 24-25; II Chr. 36, Jer. 39

March 29: **UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

Week Twelve:

April 1: Jeremiah: prophet of destruction and exile
Read: Jer. 5-7, 11, 18, 21, 25-27, 31, 50-51. Psalm 137, Lamentations, all.
Coogan, Chapter 22 and pp. 379-384.

April 3: Israel in Exile: Deutero-Isaiah
Read: Is. 40, 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 52.
Friedman, pp. 150-160.
Coogan, pp. 404-411.

April 5: **Assignment 5 due in class**
Israel in Exile: Ezekiel
Read: Ez. 1-3, 17-18, 37-38, 40-43.
Coogan, pp. 384-397.

Week Thirteen:

April 8: Wisdom Literature: Proverbs
Read: Proverbs 1-4, 11-12, 22, 27, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 1, 4, 24
Coogan, pp. 459-466

April 10: Wisdom Literature: Job
Read: Job 1-4, 7-10, 15-16, 28, 38-42.
Coogan, pp. 471-481.

April 12: Wisdom Literature: Qohelet
Read: Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) all.
Coogan, pp. 481-586

Week Fourteen:

April 15: Women in the Hebrew Bible
Read: Gen. 3; Num. 5; Judges 4-5; Jer. 3; Ez. 16; Hosea 1-2; Proverbs 8-9, 31, Ruth, all.
Coogan, pp. 154-156, 228-229.

April 17: Apocalyptic Literature
Read: Coogan, pp. 527-533
Daniel, all; Zechariah, all.

April 19: **SECOND PAPER DUE VIA D2L**

Week Fifteen:

April 22: Kings and Chronicles; Exilic Writings
Read: II Sam. 7, 24; I Chr. 17, 22, 28-29; I Kings 11-12; II Chr. 10.
Coogan, pp. 440-448.

April 24: “A Nation of Priests”: Ezra, Nehemiah, and the return from Exile
Read: Lev. 1-4, 18; Ezra 1, 6-7; Neh. 1-2, 8-10; Ps. 147.
Friedman, pp. 217-233.
Coogan, Chapter 26.

April 26: Conclusion: the Hebrew Bible and its many uses...
Read: Friedman, pp. 234-245.

Week Sixteen:

May 2: **FINAL EXAM 8:00 – 9:50 AM**