

COURSE TITLE: Introduction to the Old Testament // Hebrew Bible

COURSE NUMBER: THST 1000.03 // 1000.04

SECTIONS TIMES/DAYS: MWF 1:50-2:50 PM or 3:00 - 4:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher

CORE: Theological Inquiry

FLAGS: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Never thought you would enjoy the Old Testament? Think again. This course is intended to be a challenging introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), but all questions are fair game. The emphases of this course are historical and literary familiarity with the Hebrew Bible, although questions about the Hebrew Bible as a religious text will not be out of place. This is a “historical critical” approach to Textual analysis. No particular religious orientation is assumed, and students are invited to probe, question, and explore new ideas about the Bible. Students need not have a strong religious background in order to do well in this class –but it is good to have an interest in history, reading, and an interest in challenging questions!

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students Will:

- (1) Have a basic orientation to all the types of books of the Old Testament. (2) Have a basic grasp of essential dates of Old Testament History, and the importance of those events for the study of the Bible.
- (3) Have a basic understanding of the different genres of Old Testament Literature, such as Poetry, Wisdom, Prophetic Texts, Law, Story.
- (4) Have a basic understanding of critical approaches to the study of the Bible.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:

There are no prerequisites to this course. It is a basic course intended for the first or second year of University.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- 1) Bible -New Revised Standard Version (New American Bible is OK.)
- 2) Collins –A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Fortress Press)

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

- 1) Class attendance is required
- 2) I grade on a point system. There will be 6 quiz-type short tests, spaced every two-three weeks, covering BOTH reading and lecture material. Each test is worth 10 points. There is no mid-Term or Final in addition to these tests. Only the tests.
- 3) All students will write the final paper (10-13 pages), an analysis of a selected Bible passage, which is worth up to 40 points. Full Research Paper expectations –citations, bibliography, etc. There will be detailed instructions.

COURSE TITLE: Intro to the Hebrew Bible

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: JWST 1000

TIMES/DAYS: M/W 2-2:30 PM or M/W 4-5:30 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Gil Klein

CORE AREA: FND: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

Courses in Theological Inquiry raise fundamental questions of existence as these questions are embedded in religious traditions. Such questions include: Is there a divine and what does that mean? What does it mean to be human? What is the purpose of life? In this course, students will grapple with questions of ultimate concern with reference to the ancient texts of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Students will also examine the ways in which religious communities have taken up these questions, and come to appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action. They will become familiar with the legacy of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, with a focus on the history and development of the ancient Israelite religious traditions as well as the interpretation and analysis of primary Biblical writings. Although attention will be given to a broad survey of the variety of Hebrew texts that make up the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, the course engages, in particular, with the legacy of the Mosaic Law, the Prophetic Movement and Wisdom and Apocalyptic, as they relate to issues of ethics and social justice. Other themes of theological significance, which the course explores through the various texts of the Hebrew Bible, include theodicy, divine revelation, and the role of ritual and sacred space in religious worship. Finally, this course will examine Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions associated with the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, as they evolved in thought and practice.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will: 1.) Identify and analyze foundational theological questions. 2.) Interpret religious sources critically and creatively. 3.) Connect ultimate questions to Christian and Jewish faith and practice. 4.) Assess diverse religious approaches and contexts. 5.) Appreciate the intrinsic value of theological inquiry and its relation to meaningful action. 6.) As part of this course, students will learn to evaluate non-textual materials such as works of art and architecture, which were produced in the ancient Near East. These materials and works profoundly illuminate the theology and history of ancient Israelite religion and their analysis will greatly contribute to the students' understanding of the relations between different modes of religious expression. 7.) Students will also examine the fundamental question of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament's status as Scripture and analyze the complex relationships between the critical historical analysis of the Bible and its traditional understanding as divine word in both Christianity and Judaism. 8.) Students will appreciate the place of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in relation to other works of Scripture, as well as later exegetical works and extra-canonical text.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:

None

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1.) Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 2.) Marc Zvi Brettler, *How to Read the Jewish Bible*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 3.) Additional readings on MYLMU Connect

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:

-Attendance and participation-Tests and quizzes -In-class group presentation-A final exam

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: N/A

COURSE TITLE: World Religions in Los Angeles

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1500.01

TIMES/DAYS: Section .01 T/R 7:50 – 9:20 AM or
Section .02 9:50 - 11:20 AM

INSTRUCTOR: L. Arik Greenberg, Ph.D.

CORE AREA: Studies in American Diversity

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion and of world religions, and to the religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as several other current religious trends. The course examines the historical evolution, the fundamental doctrines and beliefs, the practices, institutions and cultural expressions of these religious traditions. The course also deals with some of the essential differences and similarities which exist among each religious tradition, and points to the uniqueness of each of them. Special emphasis is placed upon how these religious traditions have emerged within the context of Los Angeles, how they have changed, grown and adapted to their new surroundings.

Discussion will also address how critical scholarship can bolster, rather than ruin an individual's faith. Students will be encouraged always to bear in mind their role in the world and how the study of world religions and familiarizing oneself with their texts can assist in illuminating our relationships to each other and determining our current global responsibilities.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course students will 1) demonstrate that they will think both empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims; 2) demonstrate that they have gained knowledge of the history and culture of several major religious traditions; and 3) through class participation and written assignments have improved their verbal and written skills.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

None, other than an open mind and a willingness to see the commonalities and cherish the diversities between people's faith traditions.

REQUIRED TEXTS [textbooks will be available through the bookstore at a discounted bundle-pricing from the publisher]

- Willard G. Oxtoby and Alan F. Segal, editors. *A Concise Introduction to World Religions*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN13: 9780199008551
- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha, New Revised Standard Version, Fourth Edition*.
- Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN13: 9780195289558 ISBN10: 0195289552 ISBN 9780195289602

- *The Bhagavad Gita*. Translated by W. J. Johnson. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2009.
ISBN13: 9780199538126 ISBN10: 0199538123
- *The Qur'an*, Translated by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem. Toronto: Oxford University Press,
2008. ISBN13: 9780199535958 ISBN10: 0199535957

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:

40% Written Assignments (four reflection papers)

10% Class Participation

25% Mid-Term Exam (On Eastern Traditions, written in green books)

25% Final Exam (On Western Traditions, written in green books)

COURSE TITLE: Literature of the Holocaust

COURSE NUMBER: JWST 4340 / ENGL 5534

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: TTH 12:50-2:20 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Margarete Feinstein

FLAGGED: Engaged Learning Flag

ATTRIBUTE: English: Comparative, English: Critical/Theoretical

How can literature bear witness? How is it possible to describe the indescribable? Who has the right to tell the story? These are just some of the questions with which we will wrestle this semester, as we read and discuss Holocaust memoirs, fiction, and drama. Survivors (and scholars) often say that language is insufficient to convey the Holocaust experience and that those who were not there are unable to comprehend it. And yet, they continue to write. This paradox, the need to bear witness and the fear of being unable to tell or of not being understood, is at the center of our course.

One possibility for engaged learning has students curating an exhibition of paintings.

Assignments:

Class Participation (10% of course grade)

Leading a discussion (10%)

Literary Journal (20%)

Two Exams (20% each)

Engaged Learning Project – TBA (20%)

COURSE TITLE: Ideas of Zionism

COURSE NUMBER: JWST 3510-01

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:50-2:20 pm

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Mark Diamond

CORE AREA: Historical Analysis and Perspective

FLAGS: Oral Skills, Information Literacy

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

This course on Zionism covers a timeline from 70 C.E. to the present. The emphasis of the course is on the period from the mid-1850's to the present and covers:

- Zionist theories and frameworks;
- Struggles among the Zionist movements and their followers and obstacles to implementation;
- Interactions with other stakeholders;
- Contemporary challenges, including security concerns, Israeli-Palestinian relations, and changing demographics;
- The nature of Zionism today and what the future may hold for Israel.

This is a *core class* specializing in historical analysis and perspective. In addition to context-specific objectives, *Ideas of Zionism* carries flags for two areas: *Oral Skills* and *Information Literacy*.

Oral Skills: This course emphasizes and broadens students' "ability to orally communicate ideas to an audience. These skills include the ability to understand and engage in a discipline's discourses and rhetorical situations by delivering formal oral presentations or performances." Students will work in pairs to prepare and present a *Zionist Ideas Debate* that includes advanced preparation, analysis and evaluation of materials, and a rehearsed presentation in front of the class.

Information Literacy: *Ideas of Zionism* strengthens students' "ability to find, evaluate and reflect on information found in a variety of sources...Information literacy skills include the ability to select information that provides relevant evidence for a topic; to find and use scholarly and discipline-specific professional information; to evaluate resources for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority and bias; and to document research in an appropriate, consistent and ethical way. In order to build upon the foundational information literacy knowledge and skills developed in the First Year Seminar and Rhetorical Arts courses." Students will be expected to prepare and write a 15-20 page research paper that will include an annotated bibliography, literature review, and thorough research design.

This is an interactive course, and students are expected to pay close attention to current news on the topic. The course will include student presentations, films, and guest lecturers in an atmosphere of critical thinking and challenged assumptions in a respectful and scholarly setting.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the semester students will be able to articulate and discuss:

- The national development of Zionism;
- The drivers of Zionism in 19th and 20th century Europe;
- The major strains of Zionist thought;
- Important Zionist thinkers and practitioners;
- The impact of Zionism on the realpolitik of the current Middle East;
- The impact of non-Jewish Zionism on Israeli politics;
- The social, economic and military conceptual frameworks of Zionism.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:

None

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Gil Troy, *The Zionist Ideas*
- Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*

The instructor will also assign articles from various sources for students to read in advance of class sessions.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:

This is a 4-unit course with the following grading scheme:

	<u>Value</u>
Attendance, assigned readings and class discussions	15%
Mid-term examination	15%
Final examination	20%
Class presentation	25%
Research paper	25%

COURSE TITLE: Nazi Germany and Questions of Conscience

COURSE NUMBER: JWST 4370

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: TTH 9:30-11:00 a.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Margarete Feinstein

CORE AREA: Faith and Reason

FLAGGED: Writing

This course engages students in a critical consideration of the moral, religious and theological implications of the Nazi regime. Through study of historical and theological texts, it explores the behavior and teachings of the Christian churches, their leaders, and lay adherents, as well as Jewish responses to the challenges posed by the Nazi regime. This course may also be applied toward requirements for the Bioethics Minor.

Assignments:

Class Participation (10% of course grade)

Preliminary Report (10% of grade)

Midterm Exam (25% of grade)

Research Paper (10% of grade)

Rewrite of Research Paper (20% of grade)

Final Exam (25% of grade)

COURSE TITLE: New Testament Contexts

COURSE NUMBER/SECTION: THST 1010-06 and 1010-07

JWST 1998-03 and 1998-04

TIMES/DAYS: M/F 8:00-9:00am and W 11:00 AM-12:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Sarah Emanuel

CORE AREA: Theological Inquiry

FLAGGED: n/a

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This course introduces students to New Testament texts and contexts. While a primary focus is situating New Testament writings in their own historical settings—a traditional starting point within the field of New Testament Studies—the course also examines how New Testament sources have been analyzed in contexts beyond their own times. Throughout the class, students will learn about the early Jesus movement; the construction of the New Testament canon; the development of New Testament Studies as an academic field; and the relationship among text, context, and interpretation. No prior knowledge is needed.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1.To gain familiarity with the textual complexities of New Testament and ancient Jewish/early Christ-centered texts;
- 2.To become familiar with the social and historical contexts of New Testament and ancient Jewish/Christian texts in order to explore what they might have meant to those who lived at the time in which they were written;
- 3.To recognize the relationship among text, context, interpretation, and interpretive histories;
- 4.To think ethically about the ways in which the New Testament might have been significant to its communities of origin;
- 5.To think ethically about the ways in which the New Testament continues to influence contemporary culture;
- 6.To become familiar with the methods and vocabulary scholars use to discuss the Bible and New Testament writings;
- 7.To learn to read texts closely, attending to multi-vocality and multiplicity of meaning;
- 8.To develop a vocabulary to talk about the relationship between ancient Judaism and Christian origins.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND None REQUIRED TEXTS

The Jewish Annotated New Testament (JANT), ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (2nd edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (7th edition; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

Class Attendance and Participation 10%

Four Reading Responses 20%

One Creative Essay 30%

Two Exams 40%

COURSE TITLE: Interreligious Experience and Engagement

COURSE NUMBER: JWST 4400-01/CATH 3998-04

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: Tuesdays 4:10-7:10 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Mark Diamond

CORE AREA: Integrations/Faith and Reason

FLAG: Engaged Learning

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

This seminar explores fundamental questions of faith and identity through a close examination of the interaction of diverse religious traditions in Los Angeles and throughout the nation and world. The curriculum includes guest presenters who will share text materials and experiences from their respective faith traditions, and site visits to local religious centers and interreligious events. These experiences will enable students to interact with faith leaders and practitioners engaged in interreligious dialogue, explore how faith communities come to terms with religious pluralism, and analyze the positive and negative roles of religion in conflicts.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will understand the seminal texts of interfaith relations and the historical contexts in which they developed.
- Students will compare and contrast the core theologies, narratives, and rituals of diverse faith communities and how they shape values of religious particularism and pluralism.
- Students will evaluate the efficacy of interfaith dialogues, social justice programs, conflict resolution projects, and other models of interreligious experience.
- By the end of the course, students will have applied the theory and practice of interfaith dialogue to design a working project of interreligious engagement.

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

Integrations courses are intended to serve as culminating experiences in the Core Curriculum, encouraging students to develop a more mindful engagement with the world. These courses are normally taken in years three and four, although students of any year may enroll in the course as room allows. Students of all faiths, traditions and practices--or none at all-- are welcome in the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Pim Valkenberg (editor), *World Religions in Dialogue, A Comparative Theological Approach, Enhanced Edition*, published by Anselm Academic, 2016, ISBN 978-1-59982-799-5.

The instructor will also assign articles from various sources for students to read in advance of class sessions.

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

- Students will write and post a series of three short (1-page) reflections on interfaith relations in the media and other issues in interreligious experience and engagement.
- In order to understand the existential importance of questions of faith and reason, students will research and write an *Interfaith Case Study* of a selected interreligious milestone or controversy.
- Students will participate in an *Interfaith Field Experience*--study, worship or other activity within a faith tradition not their own, and submit a reflection paper on their experience.
- To be able to bring to practice a model of interfaith dialogue, students will work in small groups to design a usable *Interfaith Engagement Project* for their community, described and analyzed in a class presentation.
- There will be a mid-term examination halfway through the semester and a final examination at the end of the semester.