

Ancient Israel (MAP World Cultures)

V55.0514

Fall, 2007

Lecture hours: Tuesday/Thursdays 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

Course Description and Goals:

This course presents primary artifacts (mostly texts both biblical and extra-biblical, but also iconography and archaeology) relevant to understanding the culture of ancient Israel roughly from the Late Bronze Age through the Hellenistic periods, and offers ways (intellectual categories, models, etc.) and means (scholarly resources) to reflect critically on these primary sources and what they can tell us about ancient Israel and what it meant to be called Israel. Some attention is given also to the larger modern and ancient contexts that influence the ways we look at and reflect on the primary evidence and its larger significance.

In this course, we are going to listen in and participate in ancient and modern discussions about Israel. This discussion involves an ongoing series of dialogues, disagreements and compromises over the identity and meaning of Israel in several ancient periods and among modern scholars who study them. The process of this course is dialectical between the ancient sources and modern study. On the one hand, the primary data are historical sources for our study and ancients' memories of their past. On the other hand, scholars today formulate their understandings of Israel informed by sources that show signs of participation in disagreements over its identity and meaning. As a result of the problematic nature of the ancient evidence, we will retain an awareness about the problem of modern scholarship simply giving voice to one or another ancient view of ancient Israel, or modern scholars skewing their view of ancient Israel toward their own interests. Sometimes, the study of antiquity feels like a walk through a hall of mirrors, but the construction of the hall is itself a cultural construction of antiquity worth considering as a signal from and about ancient Israel's culture. Our task then is to develop a critical density of knowledge about ancient Israel (not everything!) and a critical sense of the data and their cultural construction that avoids and goes beyond a scholarly posture of either hyper-credence in the material and its perspectives or hyper-skepticism about them.

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Office Hours with Prof. Smith by appointment:

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51 Washington Square South, Room 209 (enter at 53 Washington Square
South at King Juan Carlos Center;

Turn right and go through door to the department, and go up stairwell to second floor,
to the back of the hallway, to the last door on the right.

Preceptors: Sara Labaton, Stephen Russell, and Ariel Simon

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The preceptors' office is located at the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, 51 Washington Square South, Room 205

Books -- Required works

1. The Bible

For this course, we have ordered *The Harper Collins Study Bible including Apocryphal Deuterocanonical Books*. Student Edition. Fully Revised and Updated. General Editor, Revised Edition Harold W. Attridge HarperCollins, 2006.

This edition includes introductions and notes required for this course and not available in most other Bibles (these materials are in lieu of requiring a Bible textbook for the course).

Please bring your Bible to lectures every day beginning with lecture 4 = 18 September. For the Bible readings, you are required to read the assigned biblical passages, the notes to the passages (located at the bottom of the page) and the introduction to the biblical book for the assigned passage.

2. Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

3. *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*. Edited by Hershel Shanks. Rev. and expanded ed. Washington, D.C: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1999. pb.

4. A number of websites, especially for texts outside of the Bible. We will in particular use <http://www.kchanson.com/>, and click on "K. C. Hanson's Collections of Ancient Documents" (please bookmark this for the course).

For the readings, you are required to look up in a dictionary any English word (not including proper names or terms) that is unfamiliar to you.

For terms in the Bible unfamiliar to you, we recommend that you keep a list and ask Professor Smith or your preceptor if they go undefined in the course of lectures and section meetings.

For a handy resource for unfamiliar terms, see the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, located in Bobst at REF1 Desk BS44 (this is a good reference to get to know, as you will use it for one or another of your papers).

IT WILL BE ASSUMED THAT YOU KNOW THE MEANINGS OF THE WORDS AND TERMS USED BY THE BOOKS AND IN THE LECTURES unless you indicate otherwise.

Assignments and Grades

Midterm and final exams: 40% (20% each).

The midterm examination will be held on Thursday October 18.

The final examination will be held during the final examination period.

(The date of exam is to be determined by the Office of the Registrar.)

Three papers: 45% (15% each).

Class participation in preceptor sections and lecture attendance: 15% (you are permitted two unexcused absences from lectures and one from sections). Attendance will be taken by the preceptors at all sections and at the lectures.

Tests and papers will be graded by preceptors.

If a paper is going to be late, please talk to your preceptor (before due date)!

Late papers (without negotiation with your preceptor) will be penalized according to the following system:

- within one week, graded down by one level (e. g., A to A-, A- to B+, etc.)
- after one week, graded down by two levels, after two weeks, graded down by three levels, etc.
- after final grades have been turned in, unfinished work with no negotiated arrangement will receive a grade of F. This stipulation applies also to the tests.

For advice and help on papers and tests, you should visit with your preceptor. I am glad to address general problems and questions.

Classes and Readings

For each lecture is listed:

- (i) Biblical passages (you are required to read the introductions to each biblical book and to read the notes below the passages assigned) = Harper Collins below.
- (ii) Readings from King and Stager (= K & S) and/or *Ancient Israel*.
- (iii) Web sites, especially <http://www.kchanson.com/>, and click on "K. C. Hanson's Collections of Ancient Documents" (please bookmark this for the course).
- (iv) Blackboard.

You will notice that readings sometimes repeat; this is intentional. It is designed for you to encounter material in different ways and also to allow you to review material.

As you will see, lectures vary in the amount of required reading. There is also some overlap in the readings, since it is not always easy to digest the material. (Relatively little reading is assigned for the class dates when papers are due.)

Note: Thursday 13 is the first day of Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and Thursday 27 is the first day of Sukkot (Booths). No lectures on these dates. In lieu of classes, you are to use the time for your first papers. The first paper is due on **9 October**.

READINGS: note that these are to be done in advance of class for which they are assigned.

I. TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT: Classes 1-4

Class 1 Introduction to the course

How the syllabus and readings work – Bible texts, inscriptions, iconography, archaeology

Terms of engagement: Bible, books, literature, myth, religion, society, state, Israel
“Ancient Israel” and the university’s sociology of knowledge and fields

Class 2 Ancient Israel: History and Culture?

What is history? What kinds of history are there? What may serve as sources?

What is culture, what are cultures?

K & S, 1-4 and begin to familiarize yourself with the major periods and their dates on p. xxiii in K & S and maps on pages 106, 195, 219, 318, and 408 and at the end of Harper Collins (list for yourself major regions in Israel and their major cities; and the major regions of the ancient Near East and their major cities).

Class 3 The Worlds of Primary Sources for History and Culture of Ancient Israel: Texts, Iconography and Archaeology

1. Archaeology: A Lived World

K & S, pp. 6-8 and the archaeological plans on pp. 11-14; pottery, on pp. 139-146
Harper Collins, pp. lvii-lxvi

Look at <http://www.museum.upenn.edu/Canaan/LandandTime.shtml>

See also the web-site: IRAQ MUSEUM:

<http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/IRAQ/dbfiles/Iraqdatabasehome.htm>

Archaeology (material culture):

http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/HIGH/OI_Museum_Palestine.html

2. Iconography: A Visual World

Lachish Ewer (combines text and iconography), K & S, pp. 108-9

Cult stand from Ta’anach, K & S, p. 341-43

Bethsaida stand, K&S, p. 321

3. Texts Outside of the Bible: Inscriptions

K & S, pp. 109, 129, 261-62, and 304. Go to <http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/> and click on “Educational Site” and then click on “Ancient Texts Relating to the Bible” and go through the five texts there. Try to figure out where on your maps the inscriptions and iconography come from. Also try to see in K & S what the context was for each of these items. Look also at Deuteronomy 27:2-3, Job 19:24, Isaiah 30:8, Jeremiah 17:1, 32:10-14, and Habakkuk 2:2. Make a list of the variety of ways of writing in these passages.

Class 4: The Bible as a Source for and Reflection of Ancient Israelite History and Culture

Bible: From translations to their various ancient versions, where do Bibles come from?

Bases for dating of biblical texts

Israel’s “Prehistory” in Genesis and Exodus

Harper Collins, pp. xxi-xxviii, xxxi-xxxiii, xxxix-xliii, 1291

Ancient Israel, 1-54

Recommended: for articles by scholars arguing over the historical interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, see <http://www.bibleinterp.com>

II. ISRAEL AS AN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY: Classes 5-9

Class 5: Israel as people and in the land

K & S, p. xxiii, 1-8, Harper Collins, pp. xxxiv-xxxv

Ancient Israel, pp. 55-89

Read the Merneptah stele, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 77-79

See <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/merenphatvictorystele.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merneptah_Stele

Judges 5: tribal Israel

Harper Collins has maps in the very back, Maps 1-8

K & S, pp. 21-28 (stone and soils), pp. 391-392 (maps)

See also <http://geology.com/world/israel-satellite-image.shtml>

You might try: <http://free.satellite.images.googlepages.com/>

Learn from the maps the main topographical zones and the location of the following places:

Neighbors: Phoenicia, Philistia Israel, Judah, Ammon, Moab, Edom

Major towns: Damascus, Sidon, Tyre, Acco, Dor, Gaza; Dan, Hazor, Megiddo, Bethshan, Dothan, Samaria, Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Beer-sheba, Rabbah, Heshbon, Dibon, Bozrah

Major mountain ranges and mountains: Lebanon; Hermon, Carmel, Gilboa, Ebal and Gerizim, Nebo; plus Jezreel and Esdraelon valleys

West to east topographical zones: Coastal plain (including the Sharon), Shephelah (low-lying hills), hill-country, Jordan valley; Negeb, the Arabah.

Major rivers: Kishon, Jordan, Sorek, Yarmuk, Jabbok, Arnon (Wadi Mujib), Zered

Major bodies of water: Lake Hula, Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea, Gulf of Aqaba, Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea

Go to <http://www.holylandphotos.org/> and type in sites for a look

For sites in Jordan, see <http://www.jordanjubilee.com/visitjor/sites3.htm#Wadi%20>

<http://www.jordanjubilee.com/visitjor/sites1.htm#top>

<http://www.case.edu/affil/nimrin/menu/nimrin.htm>

Class 6: Israel as an Ancient Agricultural-herding Culture

The Rhythms of an Agricultural Year

K & S 87-127, esp. Gezer Calendar in K & S pp. 87-88

Exodus 23, Leviticus 23, Numbers 28-29, Deuteronomy 14

Go to <http://www.kchanson.com/>, and click on "K. C. Hanson's Collections of Ancient Documents," scroll down to Hebrew, and click on Gezer Calendar. Read the translation of the Gezer Calendar and answer the questions after the translation.

Class 7: The Structure of the Household

Judges 17-18, Ruth 1-2

K & S, pp. 4-40

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/HOAI/portal.htm>

Class 8: Lifecycle events and the lives of women and men

K & S, pp. 40-81, 129-61

Birth

Psalm 22:10, 110:3, 139:13-16

Childhood and household instruction

1 Samuel 1-3, Leviticus 19:2-4

Puberty

Judges 11:29-40

Desire, love, weddings

Genesis 34, Judges 21, Ruth 3-4, Song of

Songs,

Exodus 15, Judges 5, Psalm 45

Marriage and concubines

Proverbs 31:10-29, Judges 19

Widowhood, Old Age and Death

Ruth 1, 1 Samuel 10:2 (cf. Genesis 35:16-20,
Jeremiah 31:15)

Class 9: Religion of the Household

Genesis 31 (verses 19, 30, 34-35); cf. Judges 17-18, esp. 17:5, 18:14

Exodus 21:6; cf. Deuteronomy 15:17

K & S, pp. 9-20, 81-84, 363-382

Harper Collins, pp. xlv-xlvii

III. Tribal Life and Organization in Israel before monarchy (ca. 1200-1000):

Classes 10-12

Class 10: Early Israel and its old Canaanite Cultural Context

Review *Ancient Israel*, pp. 55-89, and in particular the Merneptah stele, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 77-79; and Judges 5.

Structure, Crafts, Trade, Warfare (*herem*, “ban”-warfare)

Read Joshua 7 and Judges 3 (only vv 11-31), 5, 7-8: IGNORE ANY NEGATIVE JUDGMENTS in the biblical text

K & S, 162-200

Class 11: Social Organization and religious practice, personnel and places

Note the various religious practices and ideas (or expressions of religious worldview or beliefs) as well as locations of worship in Judges 6, 13 and 1 Samuel 1-3

K & S, pp. 319-22, 339-68

Early leadership: Religio-Political Holy Men and Women: Deborah and Samuel and the woman at Endor

Judges 4-5 and 1 Samuel 3, 7 and 28 (cf. Ezekiel 13:17-23)

Memories of Moses and Miriam (Exodus 15 and Numbers 12)

Class 12: Edomite Cultural Influence and The Origins of God(s)

List deities mentioned in Judges 6, 8-9

Compare Judges 5 (esp. vv. 4-5) with Psalm 68 (vv. 8-9; also note v 18); see also Deuteronomy 33:2-3 and Habakkuk 3 (v 3).

See also Egyptian Topographical List - 1386 BC. In the temple of Amun in Soleb (Nubia) there is a topographical list from the time of Amenhotep III (1408-1372 BC). In column IV.A2 is written t3 ssw yhw3 which may mean "Yahweh of the land of the Shasu." In the ancient Near East a divine name could be given to a geographical place where the god was worshipped. This might be the first purported extra-biblical evidence of the name "Yahweh."

Class 13: Philistine-Israelite Engagement and Israelite Cultural Reaction: Circumcision and Pork

Explicit reaction - Circumcision: K & S, pp. 43-45. Read Jeremiah 10:24; Exodus 4:24-26; Genesis 34.

See *ANEP* 332 Megiddo ivory (feature of the old Canaanite heritage of Israel?).

See *ANET* 326 and *ANEP* 629 for circumcision in Egypt.

Philistines explicitly as uncircumcised: Judges 14:3, 15:18; 1 Samuel 14:6, 17:26, 36; 31:4; 2 Samuel 1:20.

Israelite generalization: read Genesis 17, and compare Jeremiah 4 and Joshua 5

Circumcision as religious metaphor: Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6; Leviticus 19.

(Second wave of cultural reaction in the Greco-Roman period (see the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, pp. 1025-31.)

Implicit reaction - Pork: K & S, p. 119.

25 OCTOBER

First test (review in sections on 24 October)

IV. Royal Organization and Worldview (1000-586): Classes 14-21

Class 14: Transition into Monarchy: Amarna Letters, Abimelek, Saul to David

Ancient Israel, pp. 91-108

1 Samuel 9 through 2 Samuel 10.

The Origins of the Monarchy

Samuel and Saul (ca. 1020-1000)

Saul's kingdom: 2 Samuel 2:1-11 (cf. map in Harper Collins, p. 408)

David (ca. 1000-972)

Class 15: David and Solomon and Matters of Phoenician Cultural Influence

2 Samuel 11- 1 Kings 7

Ancient Israel, pp. 108-20

Solomon (ca. 972-922)

The Temple and its Psalms: portrait of monarchic polytheism

Read 1 Kings 1-7 and K & S, pp. 30, 329-38 + pp. 30, 110

Psalm 24 (compare Psalm 15) = Jerusalem as cosmic mountain and home of the warrior-king

Psalm 18//2 Samuel 22:1-20 and Psalm 29 = temple as the home of the divine warrior-king
Psalm 36 = the temple as home of the divine light (theophany)/Eden
K & S, pp. 201-3

Class 16: The Early Divided Monarchy

Southern (continuous) dynasty (922-587)

Northern dynasty (922-722)

Ancient Israel, pp. 129-39

K & S, pp. 201-245

See HarperCollins, p. 500 for timeline of monarchs

Developing northern identity

1 Kings 12

K & S, 322-23

For the Middle Bronze calf at Ashkelon, see also

http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/ashkelon/ashkelon_ramp.html

Class 17: Royal Life Cycle and Worldview

Birth: Royal Ascent (Coronation)

Read Psalms 2 and 110 (the “messiah” passages of Isaiah 7, 9 and 11)

Life: Protection and Warfare - King as “divine” patriarch of human society

Psalm 45, 72 and 89

Read the Ekron inscription:

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/ekron.html>

Reread the Meshe stela, see K & S, pp. 127-29; and

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/mesha.html>

See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesha_Stele; and

www.jordanjubilee.com/history/mesha.htm

<http://christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a019.html>

Death: Royal Descent (Death) and the Cult of the Dead in Jerusalem

K & S, pp. 368-74

Read biblical texts regarding death and burial: Isaiah 22, Psalms 16 and 49, as well as the priestly blessing in the Ketef Hinnom Jerusalem cave (see Numbers 6:22-24)

Read about royal burial: 2 Kings 21:18, 26, and Ezekiel 43:7-9; cf. the royal garden (as mentioned in the book of Jeremiah 39:4; cf. burial in City of David, in 1-2 Kings such as 1 Kings 22:51, 2 Kings 8:24, 9:28, 12:22, [13:13], 14:20, 15:7, 38, 16:20, 25:4; cf. 10:35, 14:16)

Class 18: Prophecy, Wisdom and Scribal Practice

K & S, pp. 300-17

Prophecy and Holy Men in the North and Matters of Phoenician Religious Influence: Elijah and Elisha, in 1 Kings 17-18 and 2 Kings 2

Ancient Israel, pp. 139-43.

Prophecy in the South: Isaiah 6-8, 36-39

Wisdom: Proverbs 22:17-31:9

Teachings of Amenemope (source for part of the biblical text of Proverbs 22:17-24:22!)
look at the notes to this passage in the Bible

Class 19: National Identity Stories in Israel's Cultural Memory

Read Genesis 32-33 and Hosea 12: northern origins traditions Jacob and origins in Syria? Exodus 32, Hosea 12, 1 Kings 12:28: northern origin tradition in Egypt

Read Genesis 2:4b through chapter 3: southern origin tradition

Read Deuteronomy 32: old creation tradition + deuteronomistic origin in wilderness

Read Genesis 1 + priestly legislation on Mount Sinai (for the verb to separate, see Leviticus 10:10, 11:47, 23:15, 25)

Reconsider Genesis-Exodus in light of this discussion. Review *Ancient Israel*, pp. 1-54.

Class 20: The Two Kingdoms down into the Eighth Century and the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Ancient Israel, pp. 143-84

North monarchy: Jeroboam II (ca. 786-746), Zechariah, Shallum, Menhem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea (746-724) to fall in 732/722.

Southern monarchy: Uzziah (ca. 783-742), Jotham (742-735), Ahaz (ca. 735-715), Hezekiah (ca. 715-686)

K & S, pp. 246-51, 259-300

2 Kings 11-21, Amos 1-9

K & S, pp. 246-48 for the siege of Lachish under Sennacherib (Hezekiah)

Read the Siloam inscription of Jerusalem: go to <http://www.kchanson.com/>, and click on "K. C. Hanson's Collections of Ancient Documents," scroll down to Hebrew, and click on Siloam Inscription. Read the translation and answer the questions after the translation.

Recommended resources:

Various web-sources for Assyria in the first millennium:

<http://www.kchanson.com/PHOTOS/photogal.html>

Neo-Assyrian representation of Khorsabad at Louvre website

www.louvre.fr/louvre.htm and click on Virtual Tours, Near Eastern Antiquities, Richelieu

http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/viewHigh.asp?dep=3&viewmode=0&set=09

Check out: http://oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/HIGH/OI_Museum_Assyria.html

<http://maroon.uchicago.edu/photos/pages/10-10-03OI-Iranexhibit.php>

Class 21: Judah after the Demise of Israel in the Seventh and Early Sixth Centuries

Ancient Israel, pp. 184-99

2 Kings 18-25, Isaiah 22, Jeremiah 11-20

Arad ostraca and Lachish letters in K & S, pp. 242, 312-14

go to <http://www.kchanson.com/>, and click on "K. C. Hanson's Collections of Ancient Documents," scroll down to Hebrew, and click on Lachish Ostrakon #3. Read the translation and answer the questions after the translation.

V. "ISRAEL" IN THE PERSIAN PERIOD (539-332) and HELLENISTIC PERIOD (332-63): Classes 22-27

Class 22: "Exile" (586-538) and Initial Restoration of Yehud under the Persians

K & S, pp. 248-58, 383-87

Ancient Israel, pp. 201-29

Psalms 74 and 137, and 126

2 Kings 24-25

Isaiah 40-55 (especially Isaiah 44:28-45:1)

Decree of Cyrus (the Persian emperor) in the Cyrus Cylinder; go to:

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/meso/cyrus.html>

Psalm 126, Ezra 1-4

Go to Louvre website www.louvre.fr/louvre.htm and click on Virtual Tours: Near Eastern Antiquities, Ground Floor Sully Wing

See the Persian pieces (the first two items at)

http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/viewHigh.asp?dep=3&viewmode=0&set=13

Class 23: Re(-)forming the community at home: Temple and Torah

K & S, pp. 258, 385-90

Ancient Israel, pp. 218-29

For a nice map of Jerusalem in this period, see http://jeru.huji.ac.il/emap_ba2.htm

Ezra 5-10, Nehemiah 8

Priesthood, temple and the question of the Davidic line: Haggai 1-2, Zechariah 3

1 Chronicles 16 compared to 2 Samuel 6

Psalms 1, 119

Ecclesiastes

Class 24: Persian period diaspora

Ancient Israel, pp. 209-16

Psalm 120, Esther, Daniel 1-6 (compare the story of Susanna, preserved at the end of Daniel in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible made in Alexandria beginning in the 3rd century BCE)

Read about the Elephantine papyri at:

http://www.ancientneareast.net/elephantine_papyri.html AND

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/passover.html>

Ahiqar (Jew working in the neo-Assyrian court!) (FYI: compare the stories of Tobit and Judith in the Septuagint)
<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rs/courses/rs135/samples.html>

Class 25: Judean History and Religion in the Greco-Roman Context
Ancient Israel, pp. 231-64

Jews and diaspora: read Tobit 1, Judith 4, Susanna
<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rs/courses/rs135/samples.html>

Jews in the land: Read Sirach 50; 1 Maccabees 1-2; Daniel 7-12
(for Daniel 10-12, read the notes at the bottom of the pages in Harper Collins for each event)

Go to (for Judean coins): [members.verizon.net/.../ buttons/button1.gif](http://members.verizon.net/.../buttons/button1.gif)
Note the Samaritans at:
<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=110&letter=S#426>;
<http://www.livius.org/saa-san/samaria/samaritans.htm>

The rebuilding of the Temple under Herod and its destruction by the Romans in 70 CE/AD See <http://www.kchanson.com/PHOTOS/temple.html>

Reading, writing and interpretation and the production of Scripture:
Sirach 44-49 and Daniel 9 as emblematic
THIRD PAPER DUE

PAPERS: the first two papers are to be handed in at the BEGINNING of the lecture on the due date

Paper #1 (7 pages): Studying differences within similarities found among primary texts, due on **class 9 = 9 October**

The goal: The main task with this initial paper is first contact with primary texts of the Bible. (Primary texts refer to original documents such as the Bible or the Iliad and the Odyssey, while secondary literature refers to books or articles written about these sorts of primary texts.) You are to read the biblical passages assigned below without reference to later religious traditions or philosophical ideas. The goal is to read the texts and their details closely. You're trying to read without an interpretive lens informed by post-biblical concerns. Instead, focus on the details in the texts to let them express themselves to you. Looking at the task from another perspective, you are trying to ask what the texts seem to express about the concerns of the texts' authors at their own time, not what do these texts mean now or what these texts mean in the light of later religious traditions.

The assignment: our case study focuses on multiple accounts of creation: study in detail Psalm 74 (especially verses 12-17), Psalm 104 and the two creation stories in Genesis 1:1-2:4a.

For your work toward this paper, the following steps are highly recommended:

- i. Make a list of all the specific verbal and thematic differences and all the specific similarities between the texts.
- ii. In your list, focus on matters of content. Set aside matters of style for a separate list.
- iii. Now with the same eye for detail, study the specific differences within these content similarities. Suggestion: if and when you generalize about differences within the similarities, let your points flow from the specific details, not from some general idea that you get about each text. For many readers of the Bible, there is an urge to look for the general meaning or lesson to be learned from any given passage; so people often generalize about a passage. Avoid this tendency and instead focus on the details within the whole for your thinking about the whole. (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, architect, 1886-1969: "the genius is in the details." The general understanding -- or overall "architecture" -- of a text is realized better by studying the details.)
- iv. Regarding Genesis 1:1-2:4a, your discussion is to be informed by your reading of K & S, pp. 41, 49, 55, 57, 104, 170-71, which provide some interesting details about the stories. **YOU MAY NOT USE ANY OTHER SECONDARY SOURCE.**
- v. Now rethink your work in steps i through iii (especially the differences within the similarities) in light of step iv and produce an integrated well-structured essay based on your study in steps i through v.
- vi. Now go back over your essay. You know what you mean, but will someone who is not talking to you about your paper know what you mean from reading your paper? Ask yourself as you reread your paper whether your points really come across clearly. (See the list of other pointers for papers after the description of the third paper below.)

Paper #2 (7 pages): Differences of scholarly research, due on **class 19 = 15 November**

The goal: this project is intended to introduce you to the task of preparing research papers from scholarly literature, which was not written for college undergraduates, particularly those in a MAP course. This assignment is designed to help you get past that awful feeling that much of the literature that you will have to read for your final papers is over your head. Indeed, when you do research on specific topic on ancient Israel, you will find that most books and articles in journals (secondary literature) were not written for people like you in mind.

Despite this problem with secondary literature, it is not insurmountable. It is true that most of you do not know the ancient languages involved in the study of ancient Israel, and probably few can identify archaeological finds such as types of pottery, and the technical vocabulary used by scholars (derived from various fields such as anthropology or literature) will be unfamiliar. However, even the most technical writing does not presuppose that all scholars have the same level of skill or knowledge; they, too, have to "figure things out." Like them, you'll be able to adjust to technical scholarly writing. Foreign words are often translated, and the important features of archaeological detail are often described or presented in drawings or photographs. The style of writing is often sober, even dry, but once you get used to the exacting style of most academic writing and you figure out the main issue(s) at stake, you should be able to find what you need from most articles or books. Beyond the difficulty of scholarly writing style, there is the problem of debates about evidence. Scholars often disagree about how to interpret evidence. Although this may seem obvious, it is not so easy to

master two divergent points of view and present a fair case for both. With this paper you will try to weigh contradictory analyses.

The assignment: Write a detailed account of the dispute encountered in the readings (listed below). It is up to you to decide how best to organize your essay. Do not write as if we already know the contents of the articles and the subject of the debate. So distill and analyze the main points related to the debate at hand (do not summarize or recount the readings at length). Explain the problem in question and present the essential evidence at stake. Make sure that you understand what are the positions held, and at what specific point(s) the writers agree and disagree. Observe the particular patterns in the discussion, such as:

- who wrote first/second, and the effect of the statement/response (are they talking exactly about the same thing)?
- what is their approach and the logic of their argument?
- what evidence do they use and what evidence do they omit?
- do they categorize the evidence in the same manner?
- what is considered decisive by each writer?

Do not choose sides. For this paper, we are more concerned that you show a detailed and fair understanding of each position. It is sometimes said that one cannot begin a fair rebuttal of any position until you can present that position in terms that its own advocate would accept as accurate. Apply your critical thinking to the way(s) in which the writers develop their cases.

Warning: you are certain to encounter in these articles names of places and people as well as technical terms and foreign words that are unfamiliar to you. The fact that you do not know these will represent initial barriers to understanding the articles, but this is very much part of the point to this paper. (Remember: look up unknown items in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*.) Your job is to read for the structure of thinking, to follow the flow of an argument, and then to figure out each category of information and how it fits into the larger purpose of the article. The significance of most of the evidence can be figured out this way. References to biblical passages you can look up, and you should look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary, but even most other technical information (such as archaeological sites, references to other scholars' articles or books, foreign words) can be figured out from context. Despite such features regularly found in scholarly articles, it should still be possible to follow the reasoning of the article. For this paper, go through the steps described for the first paper as best as possible.

The Readings (YOU MAY NOT USE ANY OTHER SECONDARY SOURCE):
Topic question: what and/or who was the asherah/Asherah in ancient Israel?
Analyze the following three readings:

1. Pp. 99-105 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, Pieter W. van der Horst; 2nd extensively rev. ed. Leiden; Boston : Brill ; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999.

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2-3. Any **two** of the following:

Freedman, David Noel. "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah," *Biblical Archaeologist* 50 (1987) 241-49.

Hadley, Judith. "Some Drawings and Inscriptions on Two Pithoi from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *Vetus Testamentum* 37 (1987) 180-211.

Emerton, J. A., "Yahweh and his Asherah: The Goddess or her Symbol?" *Vetus Testamentum* 49(1999) 315-37.

Hess, R., "Yahweh and his Asherah? Epigraphic Evidence for Religious Pluralism in Old Testament Times," in Clarke and Winter, eds., *One God, One Lord in a World of Religious Pluralism*, 5-33.

For background information, you may consult

<http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/nes275/studentproj/fall05/kmr38/index.html>.

Paper #3 (8-10 pages): Combining the analysis of primary texts and secondary literature, due the **first day of exams = 14 December handed in at the department**

The goal: The last paper is the culmination of your writing for the course. It is designed to make you use the skills that you have developed over the course of the term. The goal is to gather information about a specific topic of interest that falls within the definition of the course (time range: Late Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period; geographical range: Israel and its ancient Near Eastern neighbors - any topic of your choice that deals with a neighboring area such as Egypt should include a connection to Israel; categories: history, archaeological sites, religion, literature, including the Bible) and to present a coherent analysis of the evidence, interpretive issues, and main controversies involved. You may choose a topic from the readings in the course (see, for example, the topics listed on p 2 of K & S), as long as your research significantly goes beyond what is found in these readings.

The assignment: After deciding what sort of area you would like to investigate, you need to get to know the area in question. An area is not a topic. You can't do a paper on a general category such as monotheism or the whole book of Isaiah. Instead, you need to do some reading in both the primary sources and secondary literature in order to narrow and define your topic. After reading up on areas such as these, you might focus on one aspect of the emergence or development of monotheism or on the book of Isaiah or some other area.

For the discussion in your paper, make sure that you scrutinize the evidence used by the secondary sources that you cite. As with the second paper, you should ask how good the evidence is and how well is it used (reasoning) by the various secondary sources. Do not simply string together what the secondary sources say about your subject. (The point of the secondary sources is to advance your analyzing and understanding the primary sources.)

For all papers:

1. Type double space. No handwritten assignments -- all, without exception, must be typed.
2. You must use page numbers, preferably in the upper right-hand corner of each page.
3. Please staple or paper clip your papers. No folders or envelopes, please.
4. No front-page; just put your name at the top of the first page.
5. Cite all of your sources for your statements explicitly in footnotes (or in parenthetical notes according to the social science format). Cite verses in the Bible according to book and verse, such as Genesis 39:4 or Gen 39:4 (not Genesis chapter 39 verse 4).
6. Underline foreign words.
7. Underline or italicize the names of books by modern authors, but not the names of biblical books.
8. If you quote a word or more, put it in quotation marks.
9. Do not repeat the assignment back to us.
10. Stick to the assignment; do not wander to other passages or into generalizations about the Bible or about the modern world.
11. In general, do not quote biblical verses or retell the biblical story. (You are to try to **analyze** it or its features.) Instead, **cite** the verse numbers.
12. Brief introductory paragraph(s) or concluding general paragraph -- just **analyze** the passages.
13. If the assignment calls for analyzing themes or religious ideas, then your answer should reflect how and how much the passage devotes attention to them. Please note: most passages involve more than one theme or idea, and your answer should reflect that fact. Furthermore, do not simply **name** a major theme; **analyze** how it works over the course of the passage, and how it relates to character development, plotline, etc.
14. Avoid statements with "gives the impression" or "it is as if...". Describe what a passage is relating.

General Information

Notice to Students with Disabilities

NYU recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional climate that enables students with disabilities to thrive. If you have any type of disability for which you require special accommodation to promote your learning in this class, please let me know as soon as possible to discuss your need. The Center for Students with Disabilities is the department on campus that can help with special accommodations (e.g., extended exam time). You may wish to contact them in order to verify your eligibility and the options for accommodations related to your disability.

Center for Students with Disabilities

240 Greene Street, 2nd Floor
212-998-4980

<http://www.nyu.edu/csd/>

Students are encouraged to make use of the NYU Writing Center:

411 Lafayette, 3rd Floor

Telephone: 212-998-8866 ~ Email: writingcenter@nyu.edu

Hours: Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 8 pm; Friday, 11 am to 4 pm

http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

Schedule an Appointment Online: <http://www.rich15.com/nyu/www.rich15.com/nyu/>

Ethical Practices

All students are expected to adhere to the highest ethical and moral standards. **Any form of plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated.** Violators will be penalized in accordance with the policies established in the Bulletin of the College of Arts and Science (Pg. 370-371; www.nyu.edu/cas/Academic/bulletino6o8.pdf).

In addition, to avoid confusion, the following is some advice on avoiding plagiarism:

Plagiarism includes presenting or paraphrasing a phrase, sentence, or passage of a published work (including material from the World-Wide Web) in a paper or exam answer without quotation marks and attribution of the source, submitting your own original work toward requirements in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors, submitting a paper written by someone else, submitting as your own work any portion of a paper or research that you purchased from another person or commercial firm, and presenting in any other way the work, ideas, data, or words of someone else without attribution.

(www.nyu.edu/tisch/preservation/program/ongoing/plagiarism.htm)