

Ancient Israel (CORE-UA 514)

Syllabus

Spring 2022

Tuesday/Thursday 8:00–9:15 a.m.

Silver Center 206

Professor: Michael J. Stahl, Ph.D. (pronouns: he/him/his)

Email: mjs748@nyu.edu

Office: KJCC 107

Office hours: T/W 2:00–3:30 p.m. or by appointment (recommended)

Zoom link: <https://nyu.zoom.us/j/3121898422>

Recitation instructors:

Yitzchak Schwartz, Ph.D. candidate; email: yes214@nyu.edu

Section 2: Wednesday, 8:00–9:15 a.m., TISC LC3

Section 3: Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.–10:45 a.m., TISC LC7

Quinn Daniels, Ph.D. candidate; email: dqd204@nyu.edu

Section 4: Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m., SILV 406

Section 5: Wednesday, 12:30–1:45 p.m., TISC LC3

Office hours: By appointment, KJCC 209 (53 Washington Square South, King Juan Carlos Center)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ancient Israel names the land and people of the Hebrew Bible, and it occupies a place in antiquity that serves as the “classical” background for Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious heritage, much as Greece and Rome stand behind much of modern philosophy and science. Yet, ancient Israel in history remains difficult to approach, between a biblical text received only through centuries of later transmission, and archaeological data lacking names, voices, and stories. In this course, we piece together glimpses of ancient Israel through varieties of evidence, acknowledging degrees of uncertainty, with the goal of probing what life was like for everyday people.

ABOUT THIS CLASS

WHAT IS NYU’S CORE CURRICULUM?

The goal of the Core Curriculum is to provide all undergraduates at NYU with a foundational academic experience in the liberal arts. Liberal arts refers to a longstanding commitment in universities to offer courses that teach students the skills needed for excelling in any aspect of professional life. Courses in literature, science, mathematics, or history, for example, do not only provide students with information in these areas of study. The foundational goal of these courses is to provide students with advanced skills in critical analysis. This means the ability to examine evidence and draw sound conclusions. Such courses are designed to build students' critical, analytic, and communications skills, hone the imagination, and promote creative thinking. These skills are not just the foundation of a liberal arts course—they are the foundation for success in all aspects of academic and professional life.

WHO SHOULD TAKE THIS CLASS?

Many of your peers in this class will be majors in the College of Arts and Science (e.g., English, History, Economics, etc.). Other students will come from other schools and disciplines, such as Education, Business, or Real Estate Management. Very few of you will be majors in Religious Studies or Jewish Studies. The Core Curriculum is designed for all these diverse students. Everyone will benefit from the skills learned in a Core Curriculum course and hopefully apply these skills successfully to their unique course of study and professional goals. I am hopeful that this course will also spark an interest in Religious Studies or Jewish Studies, as there are many other fantastic courses offered at NYU in these fields.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO LEARN IN THIS COURSE?

In this course, you will enter a foreign world. This world is separated from our own by several thousand years and takes place in distant lands. We examine the people and culture of ancient Israel. The world of ancient Israel has left a deep imprint on so-called "Western Civilization," primarily through the most famous book produced by its people—the Hebrew Bible (roughly equivalent to the Christian Old Testament). This course is not devoted primarily to the study of the Hebrew Bible (there are other courses at NYU for this), nor are we interested exclusively in the history of the ancient Israelites. In this course, we will try to understand the cultural landscape of ancient Israel and its many inhabitants over time. Think about your own place of origin and its unique customs and traditions. Cultures have distinct perspectives on religion, marriage and family life, death, justice and law, clothing, food, war and violence—and these perspectives usually change over time. These subjects and many more represent the cultural landscape of a people and a society. In modern settings, anthropologists embed themselves in societies and observe these aspects of a culture. This approach is obviously impossible for ancient societies. We

must therefore try to reconstruct ancient societies through the slivers of evidence from the past left to us as modern observers. This evidence usually falls into two categories: literary (e.g., ancient writings) and physical (e.g., archaeological data and other material culture). We will develop the skills for critical analysis of these sets of data as well as how these contribute to our understanding of the people and culture of ancient Israel.

WHAT TOOLS ARE WE GOING TO USE?

Hebrew Bible: The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) is the most prominent piece of data for understanding the culture of ancient Israel. Many people in diverse settings wrote this anthology of books, which were then edited by later scribes. The actual creation of the Bible as the canonical holy book of Judaism and Christianity happened even later. These writers and scribes were not historians or anthropologists. They were learned elites attempting to promote a distinct set of ideas and values. The Hebrew Bible thus does not represent the full spectrum of ancient Israelite society. In this course, we will learn how to read the Hebrew Bible critically. This does not require you to dismiss the religious significance that the Bible may have in your own life. I only ask that you “bracket” these assumptions as we develop the skills to peer behind the biblical texts to see the (often hidden) social and cultural world of ancient Israel.

Other Texts from Ancient Israel: We know that ancient Israelites wrote other books, but these have mostly disappeared. However, we do have a small but significant corpus of other ancient Israelite texts that we will attempt to read alongside the Hebrew Bible. We will also draw on some later Jewish literature.

Archaeology and Material Culture: If the Hebrew Bible represents the heritage of the elite, archaeology often allows modern observers to observe a wider segment of society. Archaeological excavation of ancient Israel has a long history and continues today in an extremely robust way. While archaeology is sometimes thought to produce “hard evidence,” modern scholars debate the archaeological data as vigorously as other scholars debate the literary evidence. We will examine the archaeological data alongside the literary evidence to generate the broadest portrait possible.

Related Cultures: The ancient Israelites lived in a vibrant, creative, and often volatile world. Some of these neighboring societies are well known to us—for example, Egypt and Mesopotamia—and others are less well known. How many of us have heard of Mari, Ugarit, or Phoenicia? Like ancient Israel, these societies have left modern observers with a wealth of literary and material data to understand them. Historians studying these societies have painted wonderful portraits of these ancient worlds and their

inhabitants. Much of this comparative evidence is helpful in filling in the gaps in our study of ancient Israel.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In addition to acquiring a critical density of knowledge regarding course content, this course aims to develop intellectual and professional skills of broader application, such as:

- The intellectual skill of reading texts closely and thoughtfully
- Historical reasoning skills
- Analytical skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Reading and writing at an advanced level
- The ability to participate in respectful and thoughtful civic dialogue
- The ability to reflect self-critically about one's own culture and historical situatedness
- The ability to empathize with others and to be sensitive to differing perspectives
- The capacity to work collaboratively
- Public speaking
- The theoretical knowledge and vocabulary needed to critically question and examine other bodies of knowledge

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

Required:

- (1) Berlin, Adele, and Marc Z. Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- (2) Greer, Jonathan S., John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton, eds. *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.

I will also provide electronic copies or scans of any required articles or book chapters not found in the course textbooks on the course's Brightspace webpage (full bibliographical information is provided in the Course Schedule section of the syllabus below). These articles and book chapters will be made available before the classes for which they are assigned, and students are expected to prepare each reading in advance of class.

Note: You must bring your *Jewish Study Bible* to every class session.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Course assignments have been constructed to achieve the goals listed in the Course Objectives section above. Graded work includes:

(1.) Preparation/Attendance/Participation (20%): Students are to prepare by thoughtfully reading and analyzing the assigned primary and secondary readings in advance of the classes for which they are assigned. Class preparation, attendance, and participation—as well as turning in assignments on time—accounts for 20% of the student’s final grade in the course. Absences and tardiness will negatively affect the Preparation/Attendance/Participation component of one’s final grade.

(2.) Exams (35%): This course will have two exams, one **Midterm** and one **Final**, each worth 17.5% of the final grade. Both the Midterm Exam and the Final Exam include two sections: (1) short answer, matching, true and false, and/or fill-in-the-blank questions; and (2) two essay questions (from a choice of three or four possible essay questions). The exams will cover material from the primary readings, scholarly readings, lectures, PowerPoints, and class discussions up to and including the last class before the exam. The Final Exam will cover only the second half of the semester.

Students may not consult their *Jewish Study Bibles*, notes, PowerPoints, readings, or any other materials while taking the Midterm and Final Exams, which must be completed in one sitting. One week before each exam, I will provide online an extensive study guide with important terms and sample essay questions similar to the types of questions one should expect to find on the Midterm and Final Exams.

The Midterm Exam will take place in class on Thursday, March 10, while the Final Exam will take place on the date for which it is scheduled during the Final Exams Period (TBD).

(3.) Primary Sources Paper (10%): The Primary Sources Paper (4-5 pages) is intended to help you learn how to carefully read and analyze ancient sources on your own in reference to larger questions of history, religion, and culture. In this paper, you will critically analyze a specific biblical passage that relates to the larger topic and concerns of this course. For this assignment, you may not use any outside sources or materials, whether scholarly or popular (e.g., Wikipedia), apart from the footnotes in the *Jewish Study Bible* (although the commentator’s notes sometimes may mislead you!). Rather, you are to make independent interpretive observations and construct your own argument based on the primary source material alone. Any use of outside sources will negatively impact your grade. Additional instructions for writing the Primary Sources Paper will be provided during recitation.

The Primary Sources Paper is due in class on Thursday, February 17. If you have any problems meeting this deadline, please talk with your recitation instructor as soon as possible.

(4.) Analysis Paper (15%): The Analysis Paper **(6-7 pages)** will introduce you to scholarly literature and how to analyze it. In this paper, you will analyze in conjunction two or three scholarly articles about a specific dispute related to the content of the course. Among other goals, this assignment is intended to (1) introduce you to scholarly writing, which is often technical and written in a sober style; (2) help you learn to weigh contradictory analyses in a judicious manner; (3) rationally analyze and critique scholarly arguments; and (4) ready you for the future task of preparing research papers using scholarly sources. Additional instructions for writing the Analysis Paper will be provided during recitation.

The Analysis Paper is due in class on Thursday, March 24. If you have any problems meeting this deadline, please talk with your recitation instructor as soon as possible.

(5.) Argument Paper (20%): The Argument Paper **(8-9 pages)** is a thesis-driven essay on a specific issue related to the topic of this course. This essay builds on the analysis paper, in that you are to take a stand on the issue under debate in the scholarly literature. However, the Argument Paper is not a summary of the scholarly literature or the primary sources. Rather, it must offer a coherent, sustained argument regarding the issue under contention, analyzing the relevant primary evidence, discussing the interpretive issues at stake, addressing the main controversies in the secondary literature, etc. Among other goals, this assignment is intended to help you learn how to: (1) develop a thesis statement; (2) create, introduce, organize, structure, and sustain an extended written argument; (3) interpret and apply evidence to particular problems, questions, and issues; (4) appropriately quote and cite primary and secondary sources; and (5) ready you for the future task of preparing research papers from scholarly literature in other courses.

The Argument Paper is due on the last day of class, Thursday, May 5. If you have any problems meeting this deadline, please talk with your recitation instructor as soon as possible.

Writing Guidelines for Papers: All papers must be typed, double spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font, with one-inch margins. Sources are always to be cited using a standard citation style (e.g., Chicago, Turabian, APA, MLA, etc.). Use quotation marks when quoting a source verbatim, whether ancient or modern. Avoid long citations of ancient texts or modern scholars. Do not make assertions that you cannot support without direct evidence. Aim for a polished writing style (idiomatic, yet semi-formal): avoid

contractions, slang or informal expressions, run-on sentences, switching between past and present tenses in the same sentence, passive voice, common verbs (try to use more descriptive, precise verbs), and the pronouns “you,” “we,” and “us.” Write clearly and concisely. Avoid unnecessarily long, complex sentences with numerous subordinate clauses. Clear written expression is one goal of this course. Remember to proofread and use your word processor’s grammar and spellcheck!

Helpful Reference Works:

Turabian, Kate, et. al. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 9th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

How to Cite the Bible:

- Gen 1:1 = Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1.
- Gen 1-3 = Genesis, chapters 1 through 3.
- Gen 1:1-11:32 = Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, through chapter 11, verse thirty-two.
- Gen 1:1-2:4; 6:1-4 = Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, through chapter 2, verse 4; AND chapter 6, verse 1 through verse 4.

You can find a list of abbreviations for biblical books in the front matter of the *Jewish Study Bible* (p. xix).

(5.) Extra Point: After assessing a student’s overall grade based on their attendance/participation, exams, and papers, I will add one point to each student’s final overall grade. There will be no curve in the class, and I will not add more than one point to each student’s final grade. Because of the addition of one point to each student’s final overall grade, grades will not be rounded up or down (e.g., if you get an $88.9 + 1 = 89.9$, you will receive a B+ in the course; your grade will not be rounded up to a 90, i.e., an A-).

Assignment Weight:

	Assignment	Weight
1.	Preparation/Attendance/ Participation	20%
2.	Midterm Exam	17.5%
3.	Primary Sources Paper	10%
	Analysis Paper	15%
4.	Final Exam	17.5%
5.	Argument Paper	20%

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89.9	C+	77-79.9	D+	67-69.9	F	0-59
A-	90-92.9	B	83-86.9	C	73-76.9	D	63-66.9		
		B-	80-82.9	C-	70-72.9	D-	60-62.9		

COURSE POLICIES AND SERVICES

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity, including: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:

Students should always use non-sexist, gender-inclusive language that respects and affirms the gender identities of all other participants in the course, including honoring others' names and pronouns. Additionally, one's written and oral communications should be as inclusive and expansive as possible with respect to sex, gender, race, ethnicity, age, and disability (e.g., "humanity" not "man"/"mankind," etc.).

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you are a student with a documented disability at NYU, your recitation instructor and I will be happy to work with you to appropriately adapt the course material and assignments to your needs. Please provide us with documentation of your learning needs as soon as possible because accommodations cannot be provided retroactively. If you have any questions about documentation, please contact the Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility by phone at (212) 998-4980 or online at <https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/student-accessibility.html>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:

For the College Core Curriculum's "Statement on Academic Integrity," please go [here](#).

THE WRITING CENTER:

The Writing Center, located at 411 Lafayette 4th Floor, is a resource for you to meet one-on-one with trained writing consultants who can help you learn to communicate your ideas more clearly. Students work with consultants at every stage of the writing process and on any piece of writing except for exams. You can contact the Writing Center by phone at (212) 998-8866 or schedule an appointment online at <https://nyu.mywconline.com/>. For further information about the Writing Center, visit www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html.

IMPORTANT DATES

Graded Work:

1. Primary Sources Paper: Thursday, February 17.
2. Midterm Exam: Thursday, March 10.
3. Analysis Paper: Thursday, March 24.
4. Argument Paper: Thursday, May 5.
5. Final Exam: TBD (Finals Week: Thursday, December 16–Wednesday, December 22).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit 1—Terms of Engagement

Week 1

Tuesday, January 25: Ancient Israel—Who, What, Where, Why, How?

- Lauren Monroe and Daniel Fleming, “Earliest Israel in Highland Company,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 82 (2019): 16-23.
- Judges 5.

Wednesday, January 26: Recitation #1

Thursday, January 27: Sources for Ancient Israel—The Hebrew Bible

- Michael Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Very Short Introduction*, OVS 181 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-11.
- Eliezer Segal, “The Hebrew Scriptures and Their Structure,” and “Biblical Narrative: Covenantal History,” in *Introducing Judaism*, World Religions (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 2-10.
- Brennan Breed, “How Was the Bible Written and Transmitted?,” <http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/bible-basics/how-was-the-bible-written-and-transmitted>.

- Look at images of Hebrew Bible manuscripts: [Aleppo Codex](#) (tenth century CE), [Leningrad Codex](#) (ca. eleventh century CE), [Great Isaiah Scroll](#) (ca. 125 BCE), [Nash Papyrus](#) (ca. second century BCE), [Ketef Hinnom Amulets](#) (ca. 600 BCE).

Week 2

Tuesday, February 1: Sources for Ancient Israel—Archaeology, Epigraphy, Iconography

- **(1)** Seymour Gitin, “Introduction to Biblical Archaeology,” **(2)** Judith M. Hadley, “Hebrew Inscriptions,” and **(3)** Brent A. Strawn, “Canaanite/Israelite Iconography,” in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 39-46, 135-141, and 172-184.
- Peruse two online collections of ancient written and other artifacts: **(1)** [West Semitic Research Project](#) (“Non-Biblical Ancient Texts Relating to the Biblical World”); **(2)** [Israel Museum](#) (“Israel and the Bible Collection”).
- Look through the images of major biblical sites at <https://www.bibleplaces.com/>.

Wednesday, February 2: Recitation #2

Thursday, February 3: Sources for Ancient Israel—Israel’s Neighbors

- **(1)** Carl G. Rasmussen, “Regions and Routes in the Levant,” **(2)** Adam E. Miglio, “Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” and **(3)** Margaret E. Cohen, “Northwest Semitic Inscriptions,” in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 12-20, 91-96, and 126-134.
- Visit the British Museum’s interactive site on writing in the ancient Near East (http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/writing/home_set.html) and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology’s online exhibit “Canaan and Ancient Israel” (<http://www.penn.museum/sites/Canaan/index.html>).

Unit 2—Origin Stories

Week 3

Tuesday, February 8: Origins of Israel—The Ancestors

- Marc Z. Brettler, *How to Read the Jewish Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 49-59.
- Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, “Kirta,” in *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 65-95.

- Genesis 12; 15; 18:1-15; 22; 27; 32; 37; 49:29-50:26.

Wednesday, February 9: Recitation #3

Thursday, February 10: Origins of Israel—The Exodus

- Ronald Hendel, "The Exodus as Cultural Memory: Egyptian Bondage and the Song of the Sea," in *Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective: Text, Archaeology, Culture, and Geoscience*, ed. Thomas E. Levy, Thomas Schneider, and William H.C. Propp (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2015), 65-77.
- James K. Hoffmeier, "The (Israel) Stela of Merneptah," *COS* 2:40-41.
- Exodus 14-15.
- [Parting of the Sea scene in "The Prince of Egypt" \(1998\).](#)

Week 4

Tuesday, February 15: Origins of Israel—The Conquest

- Lawrence E. Stager, "Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel," in *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, ed. Michael D. Coogan (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 90-116, 124-129.
- Joshua 6-11; Judges 1.
- [Indiana Jones and the Ark of the Covenant in "Raiders of the Lost Ark" \(1981\).](#)

Wednesday, February 16: Recitation #4

Unit 3—"Israel" in History and Tradition

Thursday, February 17: Israel and/vs. Judah

- Daniel E. Fleming, *Israel's Legacy in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 17-33.
- **(1)** Aren M. Maeir, "Archaeology of the Iron Age I," and **(2)** Amihai Mazar, "Archaeology of the Iron Age II," in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 54-61 and 62-69.
- K. A. D. Smelik (trans.), "The Inscription of King Mesha," *COS* 2:137-138.
- Allan Millard (trans.), "The Tel Dan Stele," *COS* 2:161-162.
- 1 Kings 12:1-24; 16; 2 Kings 3; 8; 11.

Primary Sources Paper due.

Week 5

Tuesday, February 22: Age of Empires

- Thomas Römer, “The Fall of Samaria and the Rise of Judah,” in *The Invention of God*, trans. Raymond Geuss (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 173-190.
- Mordechai Cogan (trans.), “Sennacherib’s 3rd campaign,” *COS* 2:302-303.
- 2 Kings 16; 18:13-19:37; Isaiah 7-8.

Wednesday, February 23: Recitation #5

Thursday, February 24: Exile and Return

- **(1)** Constance E. Gane, “Archaeology of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods,” and **(2)** Dierdre N. Fulton, “Exile and the Exilic Communities,” in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 70-77 and 230-235.
- Laurie Pearce, “Judean Life in Babylonia,” <https://thetorah.com/judean-life-in-babylonia/>.
- Mordechai Cogan (trans.), “Cyrus Cylinder,” *COS* 2:314-316.
- Isaiah 40; 44:24-45:8; Jeremiah 29; Ezekiel 1-3; 8-10; Psalm 74; 126; 137; Ezra 1; 6-7; Nehemiah 1-2; 8-9.

Week 6

Tuesday, March 1: Diaspora

- Kenneth A. Ristau, “The Achaemenid Empire in the West and Persian-Period Yehud,” in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 236-243.
- Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Elephantine Passover Papyrus: The Observance of Passover” and “Elephantine Temple Papyrus: The Destruction of the Temple at Elephantine,” in *Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1998), 73-79.
- Jonah; Esther.

Wednesday, March 2: Recitation #6

Unit 4—Religion and Politics

Thursday, March 3: God(s) and Temples

- Michael J. Stahl, “The Historical Origins of the Biblical God Yahweh,” *Religion Compass* 14/11 (2020): 1-14.
- Coogan and Smith, “Baal,” in *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 96-153.
- Look at the Louvre’s Baal Stele (<https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/stela-depicting-storm-god-baal>), the temple of Arad (<http://www.bibleplaces.com/arad/>), and the pictures of the ‘Ain Dara temple in John Monson, “The New ‘Ain Dara Temple:

Closest Solomonic Parallel," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 26/3 (2000): 20-35 + 67.

- Exodus 25; 39-40; 1 Kings 5-6, 8.

Week 7

Tuesday, March 8: Priests and Sacrifice, Kings and Palaces

- Liane Feldman, "The Idea and Study of Sacrifice in Ancient Israel," *Religion Compass* 14/12 (2020): 1-14.
- Nili S. Fox, "Kingship and the State in Ancient Israel, *Behind the Scenes*, in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 475-81.
- Leviticus 1-7; Numbers 5:10-31; Deuteronomy 21:1-9; 1 Kings 7; 16:8-28; 2 Kings 11.

Wednesday, March 9: Recitation #7

Thursday, March 10: Midterm Exam

Midterm Exam in class.

Week 8

Tuesday, March 15: Spring Break, no class

Wednesday, March 16: Spring Break, no recitation

Thursday, March 17: Spring Break, no class

Week 9

Tuesday, March 22: Prophets and Diviners

- John W. Hilber, "Prophecy, Divination, and Magic in the Ancient Near East," in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 368-374.
- Corrine Carvalho, "How to Recognize a Biblical Prophet," (<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/people/related-articles/how-to-recognize-a-biblical-prophebasic-article>).
- Shmuel Ahituv, "The Book of Balaam Son of Beor," in *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 433-39, 454-57 (only the translation).
- Martti Nissinen, "Text A. 1968: Nur-Sîn to Zimri-Lim," in *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (SBLWAW 12; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 17-21.
- Numbers 23-24; 1 Kings 17-19; 2 Kings 2, 4; Isaiah 6; Jeremiah 27.

Wednesday, March 23: Recitation #8

Thursday, March 24: Law in Ancient Israel

- David W. Baker, “Law and Legal Systems in Ancient Israel,” in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 492-498.
- Hays, *Hidden Riches*, 121ff. (“The Laws of Hammurabi”— Prologue, Epilogue, and Laws §117, 148-49, 154-56, 175, 178, 192-201, 206-14, 229-30, 250-71, 282).
- Exodus 20//Deuteronomy 5; Exodus 21-23.
- The Code of Hammurabi in the Louvre:
<https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/law-code-hammurabi-king-babylon>

Analysis Paper due.

Week 10

Tuesday, March 29: The Problem of “Monotheism”

- Römer, “From *One* God to the *Only* God: The Origins of Biblical Monotheism at the Beginning of the Persian Period,” in *Invention of God*, 210-241.
- Benjamin R. Foster, “Syncretic Hymn to Marduk” and “Syncretistic Hymn to Ninurta,” in *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1996), 598-99 and 619-20.
- Genesis 6:1-4; Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:8-9, 43; 1 Kings 14:13; 15:13; 18:19; 2 Kings 21:7; 23:4, 6; Isaiah 6:1-8; 44:6-8; 45:5, 14; 46:9; Habakkuk 3:3-15; Psalms 29; 48:3 [ET 2]; 74:12-15; 82:1-8; 86:10; 89:6-9 [ET 5-8].

Wednesday, March 30: Recitation #9

Unit 5—Daily Life

Thursday, March 31: The Israelite Household

- **(1)** Victor H. Matthews, “Family, Children, and Inheritance in the Biblical World,” and **(2)** Richard E. Averbeck, “Slavery in the World of the Bible,” in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 403-408 and 423-430.
- Exodus 20:8-11, 14; 21:2-6, 7-11, 20-21, 26-27, 28-32; 21:37-22:3; 23:12, 23-33; Deuteronomy 5:12-15, 21; 15:1-3, 12-18; 21:10-14; 23:16-17; 24:7, 17-18, 22.
- Look at pictures from the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East’s exhibit “Houses of Ancient Israel” (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/exploringourmatrix/2013/07/ancient-israelite-house.html>) and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology’s online exhibit

“Canaan and Ancient Israel: Daily Life, Home, and Family”
(<http://www.penn.museum/sites/Canaan/Home%26Family.html>).

Week 11

Tuesday, April 5: Economy and Agriculture

- **(1)** Daniel Fuks and Nimrod Marom, “Plants and Animals of the Land of Israel,” **(2)** Oded Borowski, “Seasons, Crops, and Water in the Land of the Bible,” and **(3)** Richard E. Averbeck, “The Local Economies of Ancient Israel,” in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 28-36, 411-415, and 431-437.
- Shmuel Ahituv, “The Gezer Tablet,” in *Echoes from the Past: Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2008), 252-254.
- Exodus 1:21; 1 Samuel 8:13; 28:7; 1 Kings 3:16; Jeremiah 9:19; Proverbs 31:10-31.

Wednesday, April 6: Recitation #10

Thursday, April 7: Life Cycle

- Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 54-59.
- Leviticus 19:2-4; Judges 11:29-40; 19; 1 Samuel 1-3; Psalms 22:9-10; 139:13-16; Proverbs 31:10-29.

Week 12

Tuesday, April 12: Death and Afterlife

- Stager and King, *Life in Biblical Israel*, 363-381.
- Christopher B. Hays, “Death and Burial in the Iron Age Levant,” in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 381-388.
- Ahituv, “Inscriptions from Makkedah,” in *Echoes from the Past*, 220-226 (only the translations and images).
- Coogan and Smith, “Aqhat,” in *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 34-36.
- Genesis 2:7; 3:19; 23; Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 26:13-14; Judges 8:32; 16:31; 1 Samuel 28; 2 Kings 22:20; Isaiah 14:9-11; 22; 56:9-57:13; Psalms 6:5; 16; 49; 88:3-12; 139:8; 146:4; Job 14:10-12.

Wednesday, April 13: Recitation #11

Thursday, April 14: Food, Feasting, and Music

- **(1)** Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, “Food Preparation in Iron Age Israel,” **(2)** Janling Fu, “Feasting in the Biblical World,” and **(3)** Annie F. Caubet, “Music and Dance in the World of the Bible,” in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 456-463, 464-467, and 468-472.

- Genesis 1:29-30; 9:1-4; Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14:1-20.

Week 13

Tuesday, April 19: Education and Writing

- Christopher Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2010), 91-95, 111-113, 115-118, 122-126, 127-135.
- Ahituv, "The Tel Zayit Abecedary," "The 'Izbet Şarḥah Abecedary," and "Lachish No. 3," in *Echoes from the Past*, 17-18, 249-251, 63-66.
- Exodus 1:15; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; 21:18-21; Judges 8:20-21; 1 Samuel 1:22-28; 16:11; 2 Samuel 2:14-16; 2 Kings 4:18; 22:8; Isaiah 28:9-10; Jeremiah 8:8-9; Jeremiah 36; Proverbs 1:8; 3:3; 5:13; 31:1.

Wednesday, April 20: Recitation #12

Thursday, April 21: Women in Ancient Israel

- Carol Meyers, "Women in Ancient Israel," in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 396-402.
- Ruth 1-4.

Week 14

Tuesday, April 26: Gender and Sexuality

- **(1)** Mary Ann Tolbert, "Gender," and **(2)** Ken Stone, "Sexuality," in *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation*, ed. A. K. M. Adam (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), 99-105, and 233-238.
- Coogan, *God and Sex*, 115-140.
- Genesis 19; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19.
- [Judith Butler, "Your Behavior Creates Your Gender" \(YouTube; 3:01\).](#)

Wednesday, April 27: Recitation #13

Thursday, April 28: Race and Ethnicity

- Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006), 3-29.
- Kevin Burrell, "Theorizing Difference: From Race to Ethnicity," in *Cushites in the Hebrew Bible: Negotiating Ethnic Identity in the Past and Present*, BibInt 181 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 25-59 (skip footnotes).
- Genesis 10; Deuteronomy 23:4-9; Ezra 9-10; Nehemiah 13.

Week 15

Tuesday, May 3: Disability

- Saul M. Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-14.
- Alexandra Morris, "A Brief Guide to Disability Terminology and Theory in Ancient World Studies" (<https://classicalstudies.org/scs-blog/alexandra-morris/blog-brief-guide-disability-terminology-and-theory-ancient-world-studies>).
- Exodus 4:10-12; 23:8; Leviticus 19:14; 21:17-23; Deuteronomy 16:19; 23:2-9; 27:18; 28:28; Judges 16:25-30; Isaiah 35:4-10; 56:3-10; Jeremiah 10:5; Psalm 115:3-8; 146:5-9; Job 29:12-16.

Wednesday, May 4: Recitation #14

Thursday, May 5: War and Violence

- Mark Schwartz, "Warfare in the World of the Bible," in Greer, Hilber, and Walton, *Behind the Scenes*, 506-514.
- Matthew J. Lynch, "Introduction," in *Portraying Violence in the Hebrew Bible: A Literary and Cultural Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1-14.
- Genesis 4; 14; Judges 20-21; 1 Samuel 11; 2 Kings 17.

Argument Paper due.

Week 16

Tuesday, May 10: Reading Day, no class

Week 16-17

Final Exam: TBD, Final Exam Period (Wednesday, May 11-Tuesday, May 17)