

Indiana UMC Course of Study 221
Bible II: Torah and Israel's History
Fall, 2024

****Check back for updates on this syllabus, especially in the supplementary readings. However, the present edition gives a fair sense of what to expect from the class.****

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This course interprets the critical events, developing institutions, and traditions of Israel. Attention is given to the earliest Covenants, to the Exodus, to the rise of the monarchy, and to other events up to the eighth century prophets. At the end of the course you should be able to:

- Articulate a historical overview of the experience and faith of ancient Israel.
- Exegete selected passages that illustrate crucial turning points in the history of Israel.
- Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

We will give special attention to identifying different points of view within the text, noticing their interactions, and appreciating the nuances of the storytelling.

OVERVIEW: Too often we think of the Bible as a “thing” to be “used.” Instead this course invites you to hear it as a vibrant conversation taking place over many centuries and involving diverse points of view. What different points of view are expressed? How are traditions interpreted and reinterpreted within the text itself? What are the nuances of Hebrew storytelling style? The course also invites you to respond to those voices and continue their conversation into our own day. What questions most interested the Bible’s speakers? What various answers do they offer? How might each position be helpful then or now, and how might it be misapplied or abused? How might ancient traditions be helpfully related to new questions arising in our own world?

This course only *introduces* you to the books which Jewish tradition calls the Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy) and Former Prophets (Joshua through 2 Kings, omitting Ruth). While one course cannot teach you all that is helpful to know, it will offer you tools to continue extending the acquaintance.

TEXTS

The Bible is our most important text. PLEASE BRING AT LEAST ONE BIBLE TO CLASS. While I have designated a limited number of passages as assigned reading, I encourage you to read beyond those limited passages as we turn to particular biblical books.

- You should have an **NRSV or NRSVue translation** (*The New Interpreter’s Study Bible* uses the NRSV translation).

- **At least one other translation**, preferably not what you usually read. Look for an edition with apocrypha, if available; although those from Jewish sources (Tanakh and Alter’s translation) will contain only the books of the Hebrew Bible. Some good choices:
 - **CEB** (Common English Bible, 2011; I recommend the *CEB Study Bible* edited by Joel Green)
 - **NAB** (New American Bible, 1970, with a Revised Edition in 2011, I recommend the *Catholic Study Bible* edition from Oxford University Press)
 - **Tanakh** (1985, I recommend you get it in the *Jewish Study Bible* edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler)
 - ***The Hebrew Bible: A New Translation***, by Robert Alter (I don’t usually recommend single-author translations, but this one is superb and has excellent notes)

You may wish to consult the “Translations in Relation” handout by Britt Leslie and “A Quick Orientation to Bible Translations” by Marti Steussy, both posted on the class web site.

Course Topic Texts

Required:

- Steussy, Marti J, ed. *Chalice Introduction to the Old Testament*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2003. This volume is out of print. Chapters assigned for this course will be posted on the class website. Print volumes can also be found for purchase at varying prices.
- Article and chapters from other books are listed on the calendar and will also be posted on the class website, except for the ones from required reference books..

Very strongly recommended:

- Coogan, Michael D., and Cynthia R. Chapman. *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024, preorders are supposed to ship on Aug 21). This was the recommended text for this course. I decided not to require it because of expense, availability, and reading level concerns, but I very much like the book and encourage you to acquire a copy to use as a supplement to this course and as a reference in the future. A shorter, allegedly more accessible version of the previous (4th) edition has been published as *The Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in its Context* (New York: OUP, 2019), but is also out of print.

Also recommended:

- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, revised and updated (New York, Basic Books, 2011). The 1st edition (not too different), is available as an ebook. This best-selling book offers great insights on a number of Hebrew Bible stories and will help you understand what to look for when you are reading on your own. If you like Alter’s comments, you can find more in his translation of the Hebrew Bible (listed above under Bibles).
- Levenson, Jon D. *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994; original New York, Harper & Row, 1988). An excellent Jewish scholar traces different “takes” on creation through the Hebrew Bible, arguing (among other things) that the appeal to God’s victory over evil almost always surfaces in times when the defeat of evil doesn’t seem obvious in everyday life. You will have no trouble seeing how the same dynamic operates in Christianity (e.g. the dragon-fighting imagery of Revelation in the 2nd Testament).

- Levenson, Jon D. *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: HarperOne, 1987). Available on Kindle. A good exploration of the two major covenant traditions and their interactions through the Hebrew Bible; again, you should easily be able to recognize how they are taken up in ancient and contemporary Christian traditions.
- Sanders, James A. *Canon and Community* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 200; orig. published Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984, either edition OK). A readable discussion of how to make sense of different voices in the Bible by seeing them as precedent for our ongoing interpretation.
- Tribble, Phyllis. *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, revised (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) and *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, 40th anniversary edition (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2022, original pub 1984). The first of these explores often-missed positive aspects of the treatment of women in scripture; the second tackles more painful stories. Both give you a sense for Tribble's "rhetorical criticism," an approach much like what Alter terms "literary criticism" and I sometimes call "close reading."
- Bloom, Harold, and David Rosenberg. *The Book of J* (New York: Grove Press, 2004, original 1990). A well-known literary critic comments on the "J" narratives of the Pentateuch, presented in a fresh translation. While Bloom's academic specialty is literature, rather than Bible, he offers perceptive insights. This book is most famous for proposing that "J" was a woman. That is purely speculative, but not (as I will explain in class) at all impossible.
- General advice: Spend some time with special-topic books in biblical studies (such as the books by Alter, Sanders, and Tribble that you are reading chapters from in this course). They survey the ways a specific theme shows up in different parts of the Bible, giving you a better sense of the relationship between different biblical texts and the nuances of particular subjects, and along the way will discuss matters (such as the nuances of particular words) that will help you interpret other biblical passages that aren't even discussed in the book you read. A good place to start is the old Fortress Overtures to Biblical Theology series: it is no longer being published as such, but you can still find listings of the titles. Some (e.g. Tribble) are still in print but without the series title, and all are available from used booksellers. I particularly recommend Fretheim's *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective*, Harrelson's *The Ten Commandments and Human Rights*, and Sakenfeld's *Faith in Action: Loyalty in Biblical Perspective*. These books are typically paperback and not terribly expensive, many are also be available from libraries, by interlibrary loan, and as e-books.

Reference Works

Required (you should already have these from COS 121):

- *The New Interpreters One-Volume Commentary (NIOVC)*. Edited by Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David L. Petersen. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010.
- *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary (HCBd)*, revised and updated. Edited by Mark Alan Powell. Nashville: Abingdon, 2011.
- *New Interpreter's Study Bible (NISB)*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003. ***Please read the biblical book introduction in this study Bible before you do assigned Bible readings from a particular book.***

Recommended:

- *Oxford Bible Atlas (OBA)*, 4th ed. Edited by Adrian Curtis. (New York, Oxford, 2009).

PAPERS

I do not require that you agree with positions explained in class and secondary reading, but I do expect you to show awareness and understanding of them. When I ask you to write about your own position, tell me not just WHAT you believe, but WHY. (If you haven't thought about why, now would be a good time to do so.) Please email papers to me: Msteussy@cts.edu.

General tips for papers:

- ✦ I will count off if you go beyond the specified number of pages. Double space, with ragged-right margins and a 12-pt font.
- ✦ A “paper” or “essay,” in the academic world, is more than a “report.” It does not just present a collection of juicy facts from your reading, but asks a specific question (or, in the case of the “Question Papers, three questions), discusses the evidence for possible answers, and explains why the answer you support is the most likely one. The question should be approachable (even if not definitely answerable) with evidence and reasoning. Avoid questions (such as “why did God...”) that can be answered only with speculation or by quoting someone else’s speculations, and do not assume agreement between different biblical passages unless you have evidence (for instance, “these both use the language of the Deuteronomistic Historians”) that they probably share a worldview.
- ✦ PLAGIARISM is using even a few of someone else’s words without quote marks, or using another’s ideas and information without credit, *regardless of whether you intend to cheat*. Rearranging a sentence or changing a few words in it does not make it your own. A good way to avoid plagiarism is to write with books/reading notes CLOSED. If you need to look at a source while writing, you probably also need to credit it. Not more than 10% of your paper should be direct quotes. Please use Chicago/Turabian format for references: I recommend the in-text author/date format (https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html). Only the exegesis paper requires a formal bibliography. On short papers about the assigned readings, I will know from context what “Coogan & Chapman, 19” means. (The COS policy on Academic Integrity is included at the end of this syllabus.)
- ✦ Avoid passive voice. "I" statements are acceptable in scholarly writing in biblical studies; say “Alter asserts” or "I think" rather than “it is believed.”
- ✦ Except in quotes from other sources, use inclusive language. Don’t say “man” if you mean “humankind,” or “brother” when you mean “member of the church.” Try to choose God-language that respects the ways in which an infinite God is beyond our finite (and often gender-limited) metaphors.
- ✦ Use SPECIFIC examples to illustrate points. Beware "of course" and "obviously." Ask yourself if there is an “other hand” that needs to be mentioned. Any time you draw a “lesson” or “teaching” from biblical material, tell me also how that teaching could be misapplied or abused.
- ✦ PROOFREAD.
- ✦ Instructions for specific written assignments are included in the calendar listings for those assignments.

Assignments for this Class (please submit written assignments by email; due dates are given in the calendar, but if you finish earlier, I encourage you to go ahead and submit the assignment)

- **Scripture Paper** (Max 2 pp, due Aug 31, P/F). Tell me a Bible passage you like and why, and one that you have issues with and why. The purpose of this assignment is to help me get to know you: the “right answers” are the ones that are true for you, although I will also have an eye on your writing skills.
- **Six Question Papers.** (2 pp). The default is one of these for each Chalice chapter, but you may also ask about scripture or other assigned reading for the upcoming session. Propose three essay-type questions (underline) about secondary readings or the associated biblical passages. Provide a paragraph or so of response to each question. Your answers should show that you have read both the biblical and secondary readings. **Tips:** Questions about things that puzzle or unsettle you usually work better than ones that draw a “lesson;” but if you’re stuck, look for the kinds of topics that would make good essay questions (however, your answer should be shorter than a full essay). If you’re asking about something you truly don’t understand, use your paragraph to explain why the question arises, what you think the answers might be, and/or how you might find an answer. Focus on what’s *in* the lines rather than reading between them (for instance, don’t tell me why God does something unless the text actually contains that information), and don’t appeal to other passages unless you can show reason to believe they have the same theology. If you make comments about a “lesson” from the reading, also say how it could be misapplied or abused.
- **Interpretive Presentation** (10 minute limit, due the last week of class unless you opt to schedule sooner). Two options:
 - **Option 1: Bible by heart:** Choose an 8-20 verse passage from the biblical books covered in this course (tell me your selection on Sept 14, also clear your choice of translation with me), and learn it by heart, so that you can tell it to the class with expression and eye contact on Nov 9. The purposes of this assignment are to help you claim your own voice (literally) in working with biblical material, force you to pay close attention to exact wording, experience a very ancient spiritual practice, and discover what you learn from carrying a passage within you over time.

By-Heart Learning Tips:

- The sooner you learn the passage, the more time you’ll have to improve your telling.
- Read the passage loudly, many times, with LOTS of expression (try different kinds). Listen to it (use online recordings or make your own). Pray it: if you don’t know what *lectio divina* is, consult an online guide, such as <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-what-how-why-of-prayer/praying-with-scripture>.
- Learn it by heart. Telling is often easier if you are on your feet. Don’t think of the poetry as a string of words. Think of it as an internet page that loads first as blobs of color, which turn into recognizable pictures and finally emerge in clear detail. The “blobs” are the subunits--know what they are! Turn each into a “recognizable picture” by learning its elements, using your own words when you don’t remember the biblical ones. I find it helpful to learn the end blob first and work backward.
- For final detail, look for nuances of the Bible’s *exact* wording (our other assignments will help you with this). Try for 90% content accuracy and 75% verbatim accuracy, but variations will sneak in no matter how well you know the words—don’t worry, I *understand* that!

- Continue to think/pray about what the passage means to you, especially where it bothers you or you consistently get something wrong. *Don't* tell to hammer home a "lesson," and *don't* feel compelled to smooth over troubling parts. A Bible passage seldom/never has just one meaning, and often centers on questions or discomforts rather than answers and comfort. Don't force it to be "nice": if it wants to raise questions or shock the audience, let it.
- Suggestions for learning also appear in Joyce Johnson's book, *Sowing Stories Deep in the Soul: Biblical Storytelling with Adolescent Women*, and Tom Boomershine's *Story Journey*. You may also want to explore the Network of Biblical Storytellers' website, www.nbsint.org.
- **Option 2: An exploratory presentation**. This is a hermeneutic (see the definitions of exegesis and hermeneutics later in this syllabus) assignment to encourage you to get into conversation with a text. Possible formats include drama, musical composition, liturgical dance, and storytelling. You may ask the class to participate in the process if you wish; team projects are allowed. Criteria: (1) audience engagement (make us CARE); (2) informed relationship to the biblical text—you are free to challenge or expand upon the text, but know how and why you are doing so; (3) excellence in execution. The stages for this assignment:

Stages of the assignment:

- A proposal, due Sept 14. It should state
 1. The passage you want to work with and why it interests you
 2. The audience you carry in your head (a church group, this class, yourself...)
 3. The questions you want to pose (better not to "answer" them)
 4. The format you plan to use and a plan for developing it prior to presentation (for instance, you might consult a professional liturgical dancer, or do a practice reading of your theatrical script with friends)
- The final presentation (we'll choose dates on Sept 14), followed by discussion.

Exploratory presentation tips: The most important quality for a presentation idea is that it interests you. In developing it, you will do best if you work some of the time in a freewheeling "let's try it and see" mindset and at other times in a reflective "how did that work?" mode. *Avoid lecturing your audience* on what your text means, because your work may open up meanings that you hadn't thought about! Some possibilities for this project:

- You can retell your text with a more contemporary setting, images, and language. In today's world, Jacob's sons probably wouldn't be looking after sheep...
- You can explore things the text doesn't cover. In particular, it is often interesting to explore a different point of view, such as what Noah's wife thinks, or Mark Twain's imagined scene of an elderly Adam visiting Eve's grave: "Where she was, there was Eden." You can even create an imaginary conversation between a biblical character and God, or yourself and a biblical character (human or divine).
- For stories that can be read in different tones or with different "takes" on who is in the right, you could try playing out the scene twice (David as faithful and Joab as the violent general who doesn't "get it," versus David as the politician who palms off the dirty work on Joab, who does not like having to betray his soldiers to protect an adulterous king).

- You may use a wide variety of media: visual images (paintings, photographs, drawings, sculpture, fabric art, electronic media), music, drama, dance, liturgical forms, poetry, storytelling, or formats that invite the audience to engage in some kind of activity.

Remember that while I encourage you to explore issues not spelled out in your text or even try to imagine an alternate story line, I *do* expect you to know whether, how, and why you are departing from your base text.

- **The Place of Hebrew Scripture in Christian Faith** (3 pp, due Oct 26). Explain your understanding of the proper place of Hebrew scripture in Christian faith. Be honest, but also be reflective: what assumptions go into your thinking on this, and what are the pros and cons of your position? Has the Course of Study program prompted any changes in your thinking?
- **Book Review.** 3 pages, due Nov 9. Read one of the “Also Recommended” books, summarize, and evaluate it. Include information about the author’s purpose for the book, whether it achieves this purpose, and the audiences/purposes for which you would recommend it. Put bibliographic information about the book (author, title, publisher and date, number of pages, and availability as an ebook) at the top of your review.
- **Shema Paper** (4 pp, first version due Oct 30, final version due Nov 16). This paper should focus on what the *shema* (Dt 6:4-9) meant in ancient context, although you are permitted to contrast this with Jewish and Christian understandings now. Include options for translating the opening verse and tell me how you think it was most likely understood *then*.

GRADES

A = truly superior work according to the declared purposes and criteria

A- = very good work, but not quite reaching excellence on all purposes and criteria

B+ = good work, beyond basic expectations

B = competent work, clearly and solidly fulfilling basic purposes and criteria (see below)

B- = satisfies the basic purposes and criteria in a minimal way

C+ = meets many of the basic expectations but does not satisfy some significant purposes and criteria

C = meets some of the purposes and criteria but leaves several unfulfilled

C - meets few purposes of the assignment and satisfies few of the criteria

D = student did something but does not meet the purposes and criteria of the assignment

F = work does not deserve credit or was not turned in

For a B, I expect you to identify basic content and be able to restate main ideas in a clear, well-organized fashion. Misunderstandings, incompleteness, fuzzy thinking, or poor writing will result in grades lower than B. Higher grades require accurate reporting, clear writing, and fresh, clearly reasoned and articulated connections between ideas and evidence (in other words, go beyond just repeating what your sources say). Assignments are weighted as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Participation | 15 |
| Scripture Paper | *P/F |
| Question papers | 35 |
| Interpretive Presentation | 20 |
| Heb. Script. & Christian Faith | 5 |
| Book Review | 10 |
| Shema paper: first version | 5 |
| <u>Shema paper: second version</u> | <u>10</u> |
| | 100 % |

*Although the scripture paper is ungraded, you will lose points if it isn't done on time.

CALENDAR

Do readings and assignments BEFORE class. If you don't understand something in the reading, ASK. Useful questions for both the Bible and secondary texts: "What is this writer trying to get at?" "Why is it important to him/her?" "Who/what is the conversation partner?" "What did people find helpful in this?" "How could it be misapplied or abused?"

Saturday, August 31: Scripture Paper due.

Wednesday, Sept 3: First Question Paper due on your choice of the assigned readings for the upcoming Zoom session (2 pp, email to Msteussv@cts.edu.)

Saturday, Sept 7, 2-4 PM, ZOOM: Introductions and Overview

This will be an online session; invitation will be sent later.

Before class, read:

- Syllabus
- HCBBD, 415-417: "Israel."
- *Chalice Introduction*: "Introduction" by Marti Steussy, "Geographical and Historical Background" by Lowell Handy
- NIOVC, 943: "How the Bible was Created."

Wednesday, Sept 4: Question Paper on Genesis (2 pp)

Saturday, Sept 14 (in-person, 8:30-4)

Topics: Creation Stories, the Binding of Isaac, Covenants, Pentateuchal Sources, #MeToo in the Bible.

Before class, read:

- *Chalice Introduction*: "Genesis," by Richard Lowery.
- NIOVC, 951-952: "Hebrew Narrative."
- NIOVSB, Introduction to and excurses on Genesis (the easy way to do this is to use the Study Bible for your reading and catch the excurses as you go).

- The book of Genesis. You may skim the genealogies; the point is to experience Genesis as a whole book, reading for continuity and enjoyment.
- HCBDB, 766-769: “Pentateuch, Sources of”
- Auerbach, Erich. 1953. “Odysseus’ Scar.” In *Mimesis*, 3-23. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Crenshaw, James L. 1984. “A Monstrous Test.” In *A Whirlpool of Torment: Israelite Traditions of God as an Oppressive Presence*, 9-29. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- Alter, Robert. 2011. “A Literary Approach to the Bible.” In *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, revised and updated, 1-24. New York: Basic Books.

Assignments due at class time (please email me the written versions, but we will also talk about them in class):

- **Presentation proposal (one page, you may also post for peer feedback)**
- **Book for review: Let me know your book choice from “Also Recommended”**

Wednesday, Oct 2: Two more question papers due on readings for Oct 12.

Saturday, Oct 12 (in-person, 8:30-4:00)

Topics: Exodus and the Sinai covenant, the Bible on sexuality, stories of Samuel, Saul, David, and their children.

Read:

- *Chalice Introduction*: Gorman on Exodus-Numbers, Davison and Steussy on Samuel/Kings.
- HCBDB, 1060-1061: “Torah”; ####“Deuteronomists,” “Deuteronomistic History”; 916-918: “Samuel, First and Second books of”;
- NISB: Introductions to Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus, and the Samuel books; excurses on 106-7, 113-114, 122, 134-135, 407-408, 434-435, 437-438 (again, you may want to pick these up as you are reading the stories)
- Ex 1-24, 32-34; Lev 19-20; Num 11-14, 18-24; Dt 26:1-11; 1 Sam 1-31; 2 Sam; Pss 2, 18, 45 and 72
(priority: Ex 1-5, 12-15, 19-20, 32-34, Lev 19, 1 Sam 16-20, 27-31, 2 Sam 1, 6-7, 11-15, 18; Pss 2, 18)
- NIOVC, 955: “Legal Literature.”
- Tribble, Phyllis. 1984. “Tamar: The Royal Rape of Wisdom.” In *Texts of Terror*, 36-63. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Saturday, Oct 26: “The Place of Hebrew Scripture in Christian Faith” due.

**Wednesday, Oct 30: Two question papers due on readings for Nov 9,
first version of Shema paper due to professor AND classmates.**

Saturday, Nov 9 (in-person, 8:30-4:00)

Topics: Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History, Prophets, Two Kingdoms Rise and Fall, Second Temple spiritualities, Interpretive Presentations.

Before class read:

- *Chalice Introduction*: Patrick on Deuteronomy, Higginbotham on Joshua and Judges, review Steussy/Davison on Samuel & Kings.
- NISB: Introductions to Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and the books of Kings; Excurses on 307-8, 314 338-9, and 522-3.
- Josh 6-7, 24; Judges 3-5, 9, 11, 19-21; 1 K 1-2 K 25; Amos; Hosea (priority Josh 6-7, 24; Judges 3-5, 9, 11, 19-21; 1 K 12:1-20, 18-22; 2 K 18-25; Amos 5-7; 1-2, 11-12)
- HCBD, 268-9, “Exile”; 194-5, “Deuteronomist,” “Deuteronomistic”;
- Moran, “Covenant background of ‘love.’” ## 3 more short pieces on Shema.
- NIOVC, 108, “Overview [Deuteronomy]”; 953-955, “Legal Literature.”
- *Shema* papers from classmates; identify two things each paper did well and two things it could do better, also mark points where you didn’t follow what the writer was doing.

Assignments: Interpretive presentation (you will present in class, and we will discuss)

Nov 16: Final version of Shema paper due.

THE BIBLE AND HISTORY--AN OVERVIEW

(most dates are approximate)

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| For scale: | Oldest evidence of universe | 15,000,000,000 years ago |
| | First life on earth | 3,000,000,000 years ago |
| | Dinosaurs extinct | 65,000,000 years ago |
| | Stone tools and fire | 400,000 years ago |
| | First <i>homo sapiens</i> | 50,000 years ago |
| | First agriculture | 10,000 years ago |
| | First writing | 5,500 years ago |

First Testament Dates (know these):

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1800 BCE | Great migrations into Palestine <i>Ancestral (or "Patriarchal") Period</i> |
| 1250 BCE | Moses and Exodus <i>Tribal Period</i> (Wilderness Wandering and Judges) |
| 1000 BCE | David <i>United Monarchy</i> (after Solomon becomes <i>Divided Monarchy</i>) |
| 721 BCE | Fall of Samaria |
| 621 BCE | Josiah's Reform |
| 586 BCE | Fall of Jerusalem <i>"Exile"</i> |
| 538 BCE | Edict of Cyrus <i>Persian Period</i> |
| 323 BCE | Alexander the Great dies <i>Begin Hellenistic Period</i> |
| 164 BCE | Rededication of the Temple (Hanukkah) <i>Hasmonean Period (Hellenistic continues)</i> |
| 63 BCE | Romans conquer Jerusalem <i>Roman Period</i> (can be considered continuation of Hellenistic) |

Some major dates beyond the First Testament period (for reference):

| | |
|---------|-----------------------|
| 30 CE | Jesus dies |
| 70 CE | Second Temple burnt |
| 95 CE | Book of Revelation |
| 312 CE | Constantine converted |
| 410 CE | Fall of Rome |
| 1100 CE | Crusades |
| 1450 CE | Printing Press |
| 1517 CE | Luther's 95 Theses |
| 1791 CE | Bill of Rights |
| 1900 CE | Fundamentalism |

TYPES OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

1. **Text criticism:** Are there problems in or inconsistencies between ancient copies and translations of the text? What do we think the original letters on the scroll were?
2. **Translation questions:** What do the words mean and how do they relate to each other? Word study can help you get at vocabulary issues, but grammatical questions require Hebrew.
3. **Performance criticism:** How does this material work differently if encountered in oral performance (as almost all ancient writing was) rather than in writing?
4. **Source and redaction criticism:** Who put this in writing, when, and why? Who revised it, when, and why? Not everything in a given book necessarily comes from the same source or date. *Why* do scholars date it as they do and how does it relate to the concerns of that time?
5. **Form and genre criticism:** What literary genre(s) (e.g. creeds, hymns, curses, secular and religious laws, proverbs, school-lessons, epics, apocalyptic visions, prophetic lawsuits) does the text employ? Do the genres suggest anything about life-setting (for example, worship, war, schools, courts of law, or resistance to persecution)? How do they affect interpretation?
5. **Tradition history:** What are the sources of the ideas and motifs, and how does this text use them in comparison to other texts in which they appear (what is the conversation)?
6. **Archaeology:** What can physical remains tell us about the great events and daily life of biblical times?
7. **History-of-religions:** How was Israel's religion like and unlike that of its neighbors? What did it inherit or later borrow from them? How did Israel's religion develop over time?
8. **Myth-and-ritual study:** How have Israel's stories, poems, and hymns grown out of worship and ceremony?
9. **Structuralism:** What polarities (life/death, barrenness/fertility, insider/outsider, etc.) are important to biblical thought, what meanings are assigned to them, and how are they resolved?
10. **Anthropology and cultural world studies:** What can we learn by direct study and by analogy about the economic, social, and cultural world of ancient Israel? How does this illuminate events and images in the text?
11. **Sociology and ideological criticism:** What different social groups were contending with one another, which one speaks in this particular text, and who gains what from its theology?
12. **Literary criticism** (rhetorical criticism, close reading, poetics): How do the biblical writers artfully structure their writing to make their points?
13. **Intertextuality and canon(ical) criticism:** Childs: How does the overall biblical tradition affect the meaning of individual parts? Sanders: Does the text consciously interact with other biblical texts? How is each affected by the interaction? What might we learn from the process?
14. **Contemporary and liberation theologies:** How do we make sense of ancient writings when our worldviews have shifted? What questions does later experience raise? Who gets what out of a particular understanding of the Bible?

Exegesis and Hermeneutics

Exegesis: Inquiring into the probable meanings of a particular biblical passage in its ancient historical, literary, and theological contexts. This involves inquiry into the date and circumstances (social and religious setting, current controversies, cultural assumptions) of the writer (and/or editors) and audience, genre, the meanings of words in the original language, the relationship of the passage to surrounding text, and its literary/rhetorical features. Proposed answers to these questions are better supported by appeal to the words of the text and other written and nonwritten evidence from the ancient world than by citing the conclusions of modern scholars.

Hermeneutics: Discerning the message of a particular biblical passage for today. A good hermeneutic argument should engage honestly with the exegetical meaning of the text (see above) and similarities and differences between the ancient and modern contexts, rather than jumping directly from a naïve reading of the text to application.

The Trouble With Hebrew

ONC UPN A TIM THR WS A SLSMAN WH WNT ON A LNG TRP FOR HS CMPNY TO
 BY SHOS TO SLL N THR STRS WHN HE GT T HIS DSTNTN HE ASKD TH WNER OF
 THE SHOS WHTS TH PRC OF YR SHOS TH MN REPLD TWNTY DLLRS
 A PR TH SLSMN WS NT SUR IF HS BS WOLD WNT HM TBY THS SHOS ST THT
 PRC SO HE SNT A TLGRM TO HS BS SHLD I BY TH SHOS AT TWNTY DLRS A PAR TH
 TLGRM SD TH NXT DY HE RCVED HS BS RPLY T SD NO PRC TO HGH SO
 TH SLSMN BGHT N THSND PRS F SHOS

Is the salesman in trouble with his boss?

ISRAEL'S TWO GREAT COVENANT TRADITIONS

| SINAI | ZION |
|---|--|
| suzerainty treaty (stresses vassal's obligations, premised on suzerain's past favors to vassal) = "law" | treaty of grant (stresses suzerain's promise, premised on vassal's past service to suzerain) = "promise" |
| blessing CONDITIONAL upon obedience to covenant stipulations (but "breaking" the covenant does not necessarily mean nullifying it) | God retains room to discipline, but bottom line is protection for Zion and the Davidic king |
| revelation at Sinai/Horeb, wilderness (WORD) | revelation through Zion, Temple (VISION) |
| foundation events are exodus, Sinai wandering | foundation events are creation, promises to ancestors and David |
| covenant with WHOLE PEOPLE (although Moses mediates) | covenant with Abraham, David (although whole people benefits) |
| suspicious of kingship, stresses role of prophets | celebrates Davidic monarchy, role of priests and royalty |
| often uses language of blessing/curse, commandments | often uses language of <i>zedeq, shalom</i> . human "rods" used if discipline needed |
| in Torah, especially emphasized by E and D (northern influence?) | in Torah, especially emphasized by J and P (Judean influence?) |
| YHWH is the God of Israel, other nations have their own gods | YHWH rules all the earth, Israel a "priest" to other nations |
| Deuteronomy (esp. 26, 30:11-21); Josh 24, Amos, Micah, Jeremiah | Gen 15, 17; 2 S 7; Ps 89, Isaiah of Jerusalem |

NOTE: Most of us think of Sinai covenant theology as much older than Zion theology. However, the Sinai and Moses traditions appear to have come into greatest prominence in the late monarchy and Second Temple Periods. We should also remember that different geographic regions and social groups stressed different theological traditions.

Second Temple Spiritualities

| | Priestly | Wisdom | Apocalyptic |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | HOLINESS: respecting the order God has ordained | WISDOM: empirical discernment of what works and what doesn't | HOPE: holding out until God intervenes to set things right. |
| Social matrix | Establishment: empowered to rebuild Jerusalem | Middle class: Concerned with individual. | Disenfranchised: Good and bad communities. |
| What is relation to creation | World created good. Blessing stronger than malfunctions. | Order pervades world and is actively present to us. | Looks forward to New Creation |
| what is history? | continuance of good creation | arena of choices, and consequences | downward cycle towards drastic culmination |
| Power over destiny: | Just don't screw up fundamental goodness. | Rules are known, each makes own choice. | Current history handed over to evil. |
| Time focus | past | Present | future |
| point of contact | sacramental | ethical | hang on into future |
| trust creation? | yes | yes | no |
| where grace and blessing? | created order as maintained by cult | in concrete joys of everyday life | in the world to come (and in anticipation) |
| what is sin? | an accidental counterforce | stupidity | evil power |
| how should I live? | don't rock the boat | moderation and common sense | don't be fooled by appearances |
| Reentering the Garden | In worship (Ps 36:8-9) | In wisdom/Torah (Sirach 24:23-29) | In the eschaton (Ezek 47:1-12) |
| NT loci: | Hebrews | James | Revelation |
| Song | Gloria patri | This is my Father's World | Wayfaring Stranger, This Train |

Academic Integrity

The Indiana Extension Course of Study requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling academic requirements must be the original work of the student. Violations of academic integrity include any action by a student indicating lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism (see above).

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the published or unpublished words or ideas of another, including online resources, as if it were one's own work. A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly (whether intentionally or unintentionally) uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism. A student found guilty of a violation of the academic integrity policy, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions:

- warning
- probation
- a reduced or failing grade for the assignment or the course
- suspension for the remainder of the course
- expulsion from the Course of Study
- notification of one or more persons, organizations, or committees:
 - o Student's Conference/District Superintendent
 - o Student's District Committee on Ordained Ministry
 - o The Regional COS director
 - o The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry

Decisions relating to the above consequences shall be decided by the instructor and the director of the Extension COS, and be based on the following factors, including but not limited to:

- Severity of the offence: What percentage of the assignment was plagiarized?
- Previous instances of plagiarism
- Intent: In as much as can be determined how well did the student understand she or he was plagiarizing?