**United Methodist Course of Study**

**Buffalo, New York Extension**

**COS 221—Bible II (2016) – October 21-22, November 11-12**

**Bible II – Torah and Israel’s History (Hebrew Bible I) - 2nd Year (Foundational Course)**

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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.

Students will be able to:

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

This course will provide an in-depth reading of biblical texts. We will examine historical context as well as traditional and contemporary interpretation with the goal of enabling students to work with biblical texts in a congregational setting for both educational and homiletic purposes as well as spiritual guidance.

Required Texts

Michael Coogan – *The Old Testament: A Historical And Literary Introduction* (Oxford, 2013, ISBN 0199946612)

Terrence Fretheim – *The Pentateuch* (Abingdon Press, 1996, ISBN 0687008425)

Recommended Texts

*Oxford Bible Atlas*

**\*** I highly recommend that you watch a 2 hour PBS documentary called “The Bible’s Buried Secrets.” It’s currently available for free at the following website:

[**http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html**](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html)

If it becomes unavailable there I suggest looking for it on YouTube ([**www.youtube.com**](http://www.youtube.com)).

Bruce C. Birch, Walter Bruggemann, Terence E. Fretheim, and David L. Petersen, editors - A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament (Abingdon Press, 2005; ISBN 068706676X)

*Women's Bible Commentary, Third Edition: Revised and Updated,* edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Westminster John Knox Press, 2012) ISBN: 978-0664237073

\*\*\* Please bring your NRSV study bible to all classes

**Assignments**

*For Session 1 Oct. 21-22*: Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy 4-6, Joshua, and Judges

 In your study bible*:*

1. Read the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy 4-6, Joshua and Judges, including the notes and commentary on each page, and read (or review) the introductory essays to each book.
2. Identify any questions you have about the biblical texts and background readings and bring a list to class.
3. Read the relevant sections in the Coogan (Ch. 1-9) and Fretheim books for these texts.
4. In *The Oxford Annotated Bible*, please read: (page #s may be different depending on edition)
   1. in the section on “The Pentateuch”
      1. “Introduction” p. 3
      2. Introduction to the Book of Genesis p. 7
      3. Introduction to the Book of Exodus p 81
   2. in the section on “General Essays, Tables”
      1. “The Canons of the Bible” p. 2185
      2. “Textual Criticism” p. 2192
      3. “Translation of the Bible into English” p. 2197
      4. “The Ancient Near East” p. 2236
      5. “Parallel Texts” p. 2264
   3. Also look over the material (but don’t worry about the details) in
      1. “Timeline” p. 2254
      2. “Weights and Measures” p. 2262
      3. “Calendar” p. 2263
      4. “Parallel Texts” p. 2264

After reading the material, please answer the following questions. If possible, you may also consult other commentaries or reference works.

The questions will indicate the suggested page length. You should use Times New Roman font size 12, double spaced, with standard margins. If you paraphrase or quote from a source, please indicate the source in your paper. Include your name and essay number in the heading and staple them. Please bring your essays to the first session. *If you have questions about the reading and/or essays please feel free to email or call me before the first class.*

1. Scholars refer to the first part of the Christian Bible as “The Hebrew Bible.” What is the difference between using the term “Hebrew Bible” and the term “Old Testament”? Why do Jews, Protestants and Roman Catholics have different versions of the Bible? What are the major differences? How critical is the concept of canon? (one to one and a half pages)
2. ) What is the Documentary Hypothesis? What are the perspectives and themes of the major sources (J, E, D, and P)? What are their respective dates? How does this hypothesis help explain the presence of repeated stories and details in the Pentateuch? How does it help us interpret and understand the stories in the Pentateuch? Identify specific chapters in your answer. (one to one and a half pages)
3. How do biblical narratives draw on ancient Near Eastern mythology? Please give specific examples from Genesis and Exodus. (one to one and a half pages)

Please define the following terms in 1-2 complete sentences:

Asherah

Baal

Canaan

canon

Code of Hammurapi

cosmology

El

Elohim

Exodus

Hebrew

Israel

Israelite

mythology

parallelism

Tanakh

Tetragrammaton

theophany

Torah

Yahweh

1. Compare the Covenants found in the readings for this session – with Noah (Genesis 9), with Abraham (Genesis 12), and with Moses (Exodus 19). Are these covenants fulfilled? What situations put the fulfillment at risk? How do these covenants like the narratives in Genesis and Exodus. (one to one and a half pages)
2. Compare Joshua and Judges. Do they agree in the details of how Israel developed? How do their themes and messages compare? Based on your readings, which seems more historically reasonable? (one to one and a half pages)
3. Select a passage from Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, or Judges (not Deuteronomy) (no more than 1 chapter in length) and discuss briefly how you might use this in your ministry, including the following (1-2 pages total)
   1. Audience and setting – to whom are you speaking and when / where (Sermon, Sunday School, Youth Group, Bible Study, Women’s Fellowship, etc., time of year, formal / informal discussion, etc.)
   2. What message would you highlight in the text and why?
   3. How would you adjust the message to the audience?

*for session 2 Nov. 11-12:* Historical Books – 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, along with Leviticus 11-26

1. In *The Oxford Annotated Bible* read Leviticus 11-26, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles including the notes and commentary on each page, and read (or review) the introductory essays to each book.
2. Identify any questions you have about the biblical texts and background readings and bring a list to class.
3. Read the relevant sections in the Coogan (Ch. 10-18) and Fretheim books for these texts.
4. In *The Oxford Annotated Bible*, please read: (page #s may be different depending on edition)
   1. in the section on “The Pentateuch”
      1. Introduction to the Book of Leviticus p. 141
      2. Introduction to the Book of Numbers p. 185
      3. Introduction to the Book of Deuteronomy p. 247
   2. in the section on “The Historical Books”
      1. “Introduction” p. 313
      2. Introduction to the Book of Joshua p. 318
      3. Introduction to the Book of Judges p. 355
      4. Introduction to the Book of I Samuel p. 399
      5. Introduction to the Book of II Samuel. p. 445
      6. Introduction to the Book of I Kings p. 485
   3. Also look over the material (but don’t worry about the details) in
      1. “Chronological Table of Rulers” p. 2258

After reading the material, please answer the following questions. If possible, you may also consult other commentaries or reference works.

The questions will indicate the suggested page length. You should use Times New Roman font size 12, double spaced, with standard margins. If you paraphrase or quote from a source, please indicate the source in your paper. Include your name and essay number in the heading and staple them. Please bring your essays to the first session. *If you have questions about the reading and/or essays please feel free to email or call me before the first class.*

1. How does the theme of covenant continue from the Pentateuch into the Historical books? Specifically, how is the covenant with David (2 Samuel 7) different from the previous ones? How do these covenants compare with other Ancient Near Eastern versions? What did ancient Israelites mean when they described their relationship with God as a covenant? (one to one and a half pages)
2. What do the historical books (Joshua, Judges, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings) tell us about the formation of Israel? How does this compare with historical data and other theories about the formation of Israel? (one to one and a half pages)
3. What is Deuteronomistic theology and how does it relate to the Deuteronomistic History? How does this version of Israel’s history compare to the version in Chronicles? (one to one and a half pages)
4. How do the Deuteronomistic Histories and Chronicles explain the downfall of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah? Please list examples. (one to one and a half pages)
5. Please define the following terms in 1-2 complete sentences:

Apocrypha

Aramaic

Code of Hammurapi

Cohen

Covenant Code

Dead Sea Scrolls

Holiness Code

Judah

judge

Levite

sacrifice

scapegoat

Shema

suzerainty treaty

Tabernacle

Temple

Zion

1. Select a passage from 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Leviticus 11-26 (no more than 1 chapter in length) and discuss briefly how you might use this in your ministry, including the following (1-2 pages total)
   1. Audience and setting – to whom are you speaking and when / where (Sermon, Sunday School, Youth Group, Bible Study, Women’s Fellowship, etc., time of year, formal / informal discussion, etc.)
   2. What message would you highlight in the text and why?
   3. How would you adjust the message to the audience?