

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 2DD3 THE FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES

McMaster University, Term 1, 2004

Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30-11:20, TSH/B106

Tutorial I: Fridays, 11:30-12:20, JHE/326H; *Tutorial II:* Fridays, 13:30-14:20, BSB/106

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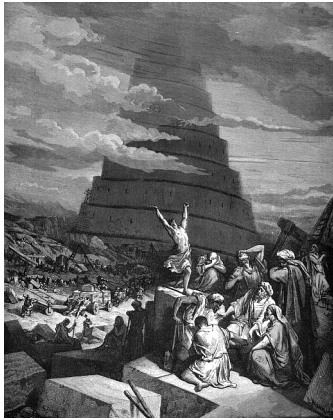
Teaching Assistant – Susan Wendel

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

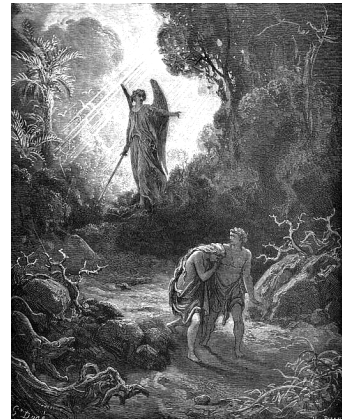
The first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—have had a formative influence on ideas about God, humankind, and the cosmos, as well as understandings of ethics, family, history, and nationhood, in Judaism, Christianity, and Western culture more broadly. Termed the Torah in Jewish tradition and the Pentateuch in Christian tradition, these books contain some of the most familiar and famous biblical tales, alongside laws and precepts that shaped Jewish and



Christian views of piety and proper ritual practice. At the same time,

these books provide precious

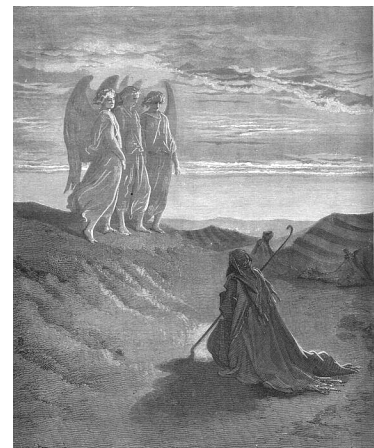
evidence of the history, religion, and culture of ancient Israel. As such, their study opens a window onto the specific socio-historical circumstances that shaped the words that Jews and Christians would come to cherish as divine Scripture. In this course, we will read through the entirety of these five books. Approaching them from an academic perspective, we shall trace the processes by which these texts came to be formed and consider the multiple socio-historical contexts that informed them, while also analyzing their narrative structures and meaning in their present form.

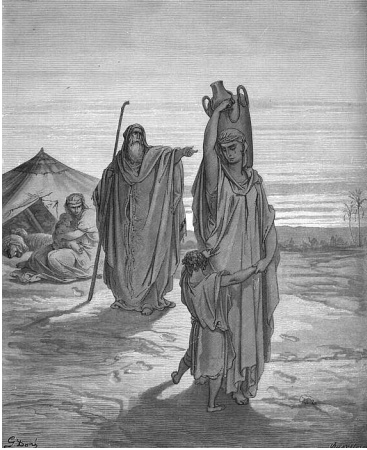


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & participation (10%) – It is *imperative* that students attend the Lectures and weekly Tutorials. Not only will attendance and participation count for 10% of the final grade, but Lectures will cover material not treated in the textbooks, for which students will be responsible in the Quizzes and on the Final Exam. Tutorial sessions will focus on close readings of key selections from the assigned biblical texts; detailed knowledge of these selections will be assumed in the Lectures and on the Exam.

Make sure to have read the assigned passages prior to attending Lectures and Tutorials and to bring your Bibles to both!





Quizzes (30%) – Three in-class quizzes (20-30 min. each) will consist of identification questions and test knowledge of the biblical sources as well as key concepts from the supplementary readings in Friedman and Blenkinsopp. They are scheduled for October 6th (Genesis), October 25th (Exodus), and November 22nd (Leviticus & Numbers).

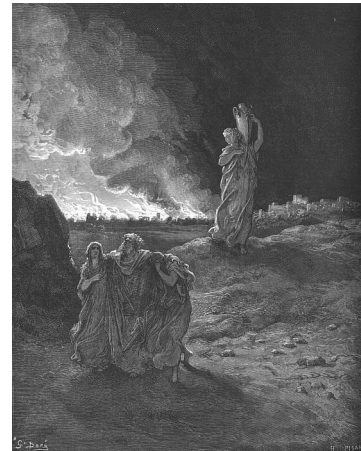
Short Paper (25%) – Due November 1st, the paper will be a short (3-5 pp.) source-critical analysis of a passage from the assigned readings, discussed with reference to Lectures and assigned readings as well as scholarly commentaries. These commentaries will be placed on reserve at Mills, and further instructions for the paper will be circulated shortly.

Final Exam (35%) – The final exam will consist of identification questions spanning all the material covered in the course, together with 2-3 essay questions.

REQUIRED BOOKS

The following books are required for this course. They are available for purchase at Titles and have been placed on Reserve at Mills:

- *HarperCollins Study Bible (NRSV Translation)*, Society of Biblical Literature, 1993. Acceptable alternatives include the *Oxford Study Bible: Revised English Bible with Apocrypha* (Oxford UP, 1992), *Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Jewish Publication Society, 1985), and *The Jewish Study Bible: Tanakh Translation, Torah, Neviim, Kethuvim* (Oxford UP, 2003). Students who wish to use another biblical translation should consult with the instructor in the first weeks of class.
- Richard Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997.
- Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible*, New York: Doubleday, 1992.



STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3.



The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: (1) Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. (2) Improper collaboration in group work. (3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Please be aware that Plagiarism includes quoting and paraphrasing other people's writings or ideas – whether from a book, commentary, website, etc. – without proper citation of the author, book, URL, or so on. I cannot stress this enough: whenever in doubt, always add a reference (whether in a footnote or in parentheses in the body of your paper) making clear the source of your information!

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Monday, September 13 – *Introductory Comments*

Wednesday, September 15 – *Approaches to Studying the Pentateuch*
Friedman, pp. 15-49; Blenkinsopp, pp. 31-53

Monday, September 20 – *Creation of the Cosmos and Humankind*
Genesis 1-3
Friedman, pp. 50-53; Blenkinsopp, pp. 12-28, 54-71

Wednesday, September 22 – *Earliest Human History*
Genesis 4-11
Friedman, pp. 53-61; Blenkinsopp, pp. 71-97

Monday, September 27 – *Abraham Cycle*
Genesis 11:26-25:11
Blenkinsopp, pp. 98-133

Wednesday, September 29 – *Jacob Cycle*
Genesis 25:11-36:42
Friedman, pp. 62-69

Monday, October 4 – *Joseph Story*
Genesis 37-50
Blenkinsopp, pp. 134-160

Wednesday, October 6 – *Israel in Egypt*
Exodus 1-6
****QUIZ 1 (GENESIS)****

Monday, October 11 – **Thanksgiving; no class**

Wednesday, October 13 – *Plagues, Passover, and the Exodus*

Exodus 7:1-15:21

Friedman, pp. 150-73

Monday, October 18 – *Law and Covenant*

Exodus 15:22-24:18

Blenkinsopp, pp. 183-209

Wednesday, October 20 – *Tabernacle, Golden Calf, and Renewal of Covenant*

Exodus 25-40

Friedman, pp. 173-206

Monday, October 25 – *Sacrifice*

Leviticus 1-7

**** QUIZ #2 (EXODUS)****

Wednesday, October 27 – *Priestly Ordination*

Leviticus 8-10

Blenkinsopp, pp. 220-23

Monday, November 1 – *Purity and Impurity*

Leviticus 11-16

****PAPER DUE****

Wednesday, November 3 – *The Holiness Code*

Leviticus 17-27

Blenkinsopp, pp. 223-25

Monday, November 8 – *Preparations for Departure to Sinai*

Numbers 1:1-10:10

Blenkinsopp, pp. 160-182

Wednesday, November 10 – *From Sinai to Kadesh*

Numbers 10:10-20:21

Friedman, pp. 207-33

Monday, November 15 – *From Kadesh to Moab*

Numbers 20:22-36:13

Blenkinsopp, pp. 229-242

Wednesday, November 17 – *Remembering the Past*

Deuteronomy 1:1-4:40

Friedman, pp. 89-100

Monday, November 22 –

****QUIZ #3, LEVITICUS & NUMBERS****

Wednesday, November 24 – *Looking forward to the Future*

Deuteronomy 4:41-11:32

Friedman, pp. 101-149

Monday, November 29 – *Laws*

Deuteronomy 12-26

Blenkinsopp, pp. 209-20

Wednesday, December 1 – *Blessings, Curses, and the Death of Moses*

Deuteronomy 27:1-34:12

Friedman, pp. 234-45

FINAL EXAM – Time/Date TBA