

Religious Studies 101 (Honors)
Literature and World of the Old Testament
Fall Semester, 2012

Dr. Victor H. Matthews

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1.Texts Required:

a. V. Matthews & J. Moyer, *The Old Testament: Text and Context* (**3rd edition**; Baker, 2012)

b. V. Matthews & D. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels* (**3rd edition**; Paulist, 2006)

c. Any one of the modern translations of the Bible--preferably the New Revised Standard Version, New Jewish Publication Society Version, or New International Version. Do not use the King James Version. Although it is a beautiful literary translation, it is hard to understand for most modern students and is outdated. I will use the **NRSV** in class.

On-line concordances featuring several biblical translations can be found at:
<http://bible.gospelcom.net> and <http://bible.crosswalk.com/>

An on-line version of the NRSV translation is available at: <http://www.godweb.org/nrsv.html>
Basic index to Biblical Studies Terms: <http://www.wfu.edu/~horton/r102/ho1.html>

A directory to on-line resources for biblical studies can be found in my website at:
<http://courses.missouristate.edu/VictorMatthews/favorite.htm>

A glossary of religious studies terms: <http://www.deinde.org/resources/glossary/glossary.php>

The Old Testament: Text and Context will be used as a supplement to lectures. Students will benefit by using this volume to increase their understanding of both the biblical material and the lectures. *Old Testament Parallels* contains translations of ancient Near Eastern texts that will be used in class discussion comparing them with biblical stories and laws.

2. Course Description: This course is a part of the General Education curriculum in the area of Culture and Society/Humanities. The goals of the General Education program are found at: http://www.missouristate.edu/GeneralEducation/Goals_GenEd.htm. REL 101 is an introduction or survey of the literature and social world of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. As a way of further illuminating these materials, attention will also be given to the history and religion of Israel as well as the other peoples of the ancient Near East. Its application to the Public Affairs Mission of the University can be found in its efforts to educate students about the past so that they can build upon this heritage in making informed decisions about their own culture and the future direction of society. Student input is welcomed as a partial guide to material covered.

3. Classroom routine: Since this is a course introducing the biblical materials, the presentation in class will be for beginners. The biblical text will be carefully followed to determine and explain what the authors are saying. This will involve a lecture/discussion format and use of audio-visual materials. I will be constantly asking questions of students to emphasize points and determine mastery of the material. I welcome student questions and expect that the number of these questions will increase as the semester progresses.

4. Religious Studies Courses in a State University: The U.S. Supreme Court (*Abington v. Schempp*) in 1963 encouraged the objective study of religion and the Bible. This is why we teach an introductory course to the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at Missouri State. However, the approach here is different from that taken in a religious group. We will concentrate on reconstructing what the text originally meant to its ancient audience in the light of its ancient Near Eastern setting rather than on what the text means for us today. You do not have to have a faith commitment in this course, nor will you be asked to abandon your faith. My purpose is to increase your knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible, and to help you think carefully and in new ways about what it originally meant.

You will earn a good grade in this class the same way you do in other courses, not by being more religious.

5. Learning Objectives:

- a. Provide students with a basic understanding of the OT/HB and of the social world of ancient Israel that will serve as the foundation for future study and assist with developing cultural competence.
- b. Provide the student with a basic knowledge of the history of the biblical periods, noting the relationship between Israel and the other nations of the ancient Near East.
- c. Provide students with a basic knowledge of the physical environment and geographical features of the ancient Near East.
- d. Give students an understanding of the principal beliefs found in the OT/HB about God and humankind and provide comparisons with other world religions.
- e. Present to students for their use the tools and approaches that scholars use to study the OT/HB.
- f. Prepare students to deal openly and intelligently with the text of the OT/HB, neither minimizing nor over-emphasizing the very real historical and intellectual difficulties that they will encounter.
- g. Demonstrate to students that the study of religions in a state university setting is a natural part of a humanities curriculum and of the university's Public Affairs mission.
- h. Help students to take seriously, state accurately, and evaluate thoughtfully positions other than their own and cultures other than their own.

6. Attendance: Statistical analysis has shown that regular attendance is the key to good grades. It is expected that all students will be present except for emergencies.

7. Class Participation: A significant portion of your grade (100 points) is dependent upon class participation. I will assign this grade at the end of the course. It will be based on attendance, ability to answer questions during regular and scheduled class discussions, in-class assignments, willingness to ask questions and seek help (both in and out of class), responses to posted Study Question on the

Blackboard forum (= 40 points of 100 point total), and general improvement in class discussion over the course of the semester.

► Students should feel free to send me e-mails VictorMatthews@missouristate.edu or come to my office during the semester to raise questions, make comments, or express concerns about the course.

8. Inclusive Language: In line with current style guides, I will be using inclusive language. This means that I will use language that includes women whenever possible. Instead of "man" I will use "human beings." Instead of "he" I will use "he or she," etc. I urge you to follow my lead both orally and in written form.

9. Exams: There will be three exams and a final. They will consist of essays, short identifications, and map questions. These exams will be given approximately at the 4th, 8th, & 12th week of the course. The final will cover both newly discussed material and a comprehensive essay. Before each exam I will provide students with a study guide. Please bring a blue book and a pen on each exam day.

10. Make-Up Exams: Make-up exams (though usually more difficult than regular tests) will be permitted only for those students with LEGITIMATE explained absences. Students should strive to notify me in advance if they know they will have to be gone on a scheduled exam day.

11. Written Assignment: Each student is required to do the following:

You are to read two articles dealing with either archaeology or aspects of the history or culture of the world of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible from journals that may be obtained in the Meyer Library or on-line.

You are then to write a short (2 pages) summary of each article's contents and a one page personal analysis of:

- (1) the author's primary thesis and how well it was explained (provide specific examples from the text of the article)
- (2) the degree of difficulty you had in reading it (use of jargon, writing style, etc.?)
- (3) what you found particularly interesting and would like to know more about (be very specific)
- (4) whether you agreed with the author and any ways the article could be improved or made more understandable
- (5) value of visual and explanatory aids and suggestions for additional student aids
- (6) the ways in which the article has aided your fuller understanding of the OT/HB (be specific).

I recommend the following popularly written journals:

Biblical Archaeologist (renamed Near Eastern Archaeology) -- BS620. A1 B5

Biblical Archaeology Review -- BS620. A1 B52

Bible Review -- BS410. B58

The Bible Today -- BS600.2 B53

Choose specific items in each article upon which to base your analysis. Be sure to include:

- (1) the author
- (2) title of the article
- (3) title of journal
- (4) issue number and year of publication
- (6) page numbers.

The first of these analyses (worth 25 points each) is due September 28, 2012. The second is due on November 14, 2011. A two point per class day penalty will be imposed on each paper submitted after the date it is due.

Each of you will become the “expert” on the topics covered in your article reviews and you will be called on periodically in class to provide information that will further enhance the classes’ understanding of this material.

12. Cheating: Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions as described in the *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures* (<http://www.missouristate.edu/registrar/acintegrity.html>) also at the Reserve Desk in Meyer Library.

Cheating and plagiarism, as defined in the Missouri State Student Judicial Code will not be tolerated in this course. Those who plagiarize the work of others will either be subject to a penalty of one letter grade on their written assignment or the imposition of an additional written assignment. The Writing Center makes clear that only information that is "common knowledge" does not need citation: <http://writingcenter.missouristate.edu/assets/WritingCenter/plagiarism2009.pdf>

13. Assessment: Students' command of the materials presented in this course will be assessed through written exams, written assignments, journal article critiques, class discussion, in-class oral presentations, and the ability to answer the instructor's questions during class. These methods of assessment will help gauge the effectiveness of the presentation by the instructor as well as help demonstrate the usefulness of this course as a part of the General Education curriculum. Students will also be given the opportunity to assess the course as a whole using both a standardized, college-wide questionnaire and an Honors College assessment instrument.

14. Grading: I will be using plus/minus grades. The final grade will be computed as follows:

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|-----------------------|--|
| Exams I, II, & III- | 225 points (75 points each) |
| Final Exam-- | 100 points |
| Article Analyses-- | 50 points (25 points each) |
| Class Participation-- | 100 points (40 points from Study Question posts) |
| Total possible | = 475 |

Plus/minus grades: In order to give students appropriate credit for their work, grades will be reported with plusses and minuses at the end of the semester. Your overall numerical score in the class will be converted to a letter grade on the basis of the following chart:

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|------------|------------|
| 90-92 = A- | 93-100 = A |
| 80-82 = B- | 83-86 = B |
| 70-72 = C- | 73-76 = C |
| 60-66 = D | 67-69 = D+ |

Note that the university does not allow the reporting of D- or of A+ grades.

Borderline grades will be determined by such factors as attendance, the final exam, completion of work on time, evidence of hard work and a willingness to seek help, and general contribution to class discussions.

If you stop attending this class but do not follow proper procedure for dropping the class, you will receive a failing grade and will also be financially obligated. To drop a class anytime after the first week, see <http://www.missouristate.edu/registrar/chnsched.html>). You do not need to obtain a signature on the drop slip.

15. Disability Accommodation: To request accommodations for disability, students must contact the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.missouristate.edu/disability>), Plaster Student Union Suite 405, (417) 836-4192; TTY (417) 836-6792. Students must provide documentation of disability to Disability Services prior to receiving accommodations. DS refers some types of accommodation requests to the Learning Diagnostic Clinic (LDC). The LDC also provides diagnostic testing, for which a fee is charged.

16. Discrimination Policy: Missouri State is an equal opportunity employer/affirmative action institution, and maintains a grievance procedure incorporating due process available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. At all times, it is your right to address inquiries and concerns about possible discrimination to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (417-836-4252). Concerns about discrimination can also be brought directly to your instructor's attention, and to the attention of your instructor's department head. The Missouri State statement of non-discrimination can be found at <http://www.missouristate.edu/eoaa.htm>.

17. Office Hours: Students should feel free to consult with me about the course and their work. My office is STRO 215 (inside the Dean's Suite in STRO 207) and I will be there Monday through Friday 9:00-9:50. If you cannot meet with me during these times, see me after class and I will arrange a mutually convenient time for us to get together. The Dean's office phone is 836-5529 and the secretary can make an appointment for me. I can also be contacted by e-mail at:
VictorMatthews@missouristate.edu

18. Cell Phone Use: The Provost's Office prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent mode and cannot be taken out during class. At the discretion of the instructor, exception to this policy is possible in special circumstances (<http://www.missouristate.edu/recreg/classdis.html>). In testing situations, use of cell phones or similar communication devices may lead to a charge of academic dishonesty and additional sanctions under the *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures* (<http://www.missouristate.edu/registrar/acintegrity.html>). There are two appeal processes available to students. A sanction for class disruption may be appealed using the appeal process stated in the Class Disruption policy; however, a violation that involves a charge of academic dishonesty must be appealed using the process described in the *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures*. Students have the right to continue attending class while an appeal is in progress.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE -- RELIGION 101

Textbooks will be referred to below in abbreviated form (OTC and OTP). Reading should be completed as assigned before class. You are responsible for all reading assignments and you will be questioned about the material they contain in class discussion or asked to do free writing assignments about them. I will provide you with study questions after each class period that will form part of our discussion during the next class. Plan to spend at least four to six hours per week in preparation for this class.

All reading assignments, Power Point presentations, and Study Questions will be posted for each segment of the course on the Blackboard site. You click on CONTENT for the assignments and other study aids. You click on FORUM to post your responses to Study Questions.

Section One:

Introduction to the class. Syllabus, assignments, & grading. Discussion of tools for biblical study. OTC, 1-10.

Physical Environment of the Ancient Near East. Discussion of the **major geographical features** of the ancient Near East & their influence on cultural development. Read OTC, 5-15. **Bible Maps can be found at:**

<http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/keyway07.htm>; <http://www.bibleatlas.org> and also at <http://www.bible-history.com/geography/ancient-israel/israel-old-testament.html>

Archaeology. Discussion of the **methods**, values and limitations of archaeology for biblical research and field school opportunities. Read **OTC**, 15-22. For a discussion of archaeological methods, see <http://www.archaeological.org/pdfs/education/Arch101.2.pdf> and view the video at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bible/program.html>

Oral Tradition and Canon. **Writing Systems, textual** analysis, **Dead Sea Scrolls**, development of the canon, and methods for studying the Bible. **Class Discussion:** the authorship of the Pentateuch. Read **OTC**, 22-34 and write answers to questions on "Authorship of the Pentateuch" (**Handout**).

Creation Stories and the differences between Polytheism and Monotheism. Read **OTC**, 35-39; **OTP**, "The Enuma Elish Stories," 11-20 & "The Hymn to Ptah," 3-6, "Stories of Adapa," 43-46; Gen 1-4.

The Flood Story. Read Gen 6-9; **OTC**, 39-41; **OTP**, "Stories of Gilgamesh," 21-32 and "Stories of Atrahasis," 33-42.

The Ancestors: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Read Gen 12, 16-19, 21-34 and **OTC**, 53-59; **OTP**, "Nuzi Archives," 41-48.

Joseph, Goshen, and Slavery. Read Gen 37-45; **OTC**, 48-50; **OTP**, "Stories of Anubis & Bata," 65-69.

Moses and the Exodus Event. Read Exodus 1-5, 10-14, 19-20, 24, 32-34; **OTC**, 50-54; **OTP**, "Annals of Dedumoses," 54-56; "Annals of Kamose," 57-58; "Sargon of Agade," 89-90.

EXAM #1: Genesis and Exodus (75 points)

Section Two:

Sinai, Wilderness, Law. Read Ex 21-22; Num 13, 16, 20, 22-24; Deut 21-22, 34; **OTC**, 54-58; **OTP**, "Code of Hammurabi," 105-114, and "Stories of Balaam," 131-133.

Joshua and the Conquest. Read Joshua 1-11, 24; **OTC**, 58-71; **OTP**, "The El Amarna Letters," 146-150 and "Annals of Merneptah," 97-98. **View:** <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bible/program.html>

Discussion session: Canaanite Culture and the Role of the Judges. Read Judges 1-6, 9, 11-21; **OTP**, "Stories of Aqhat," 70-79; "Gezer Almanac," 155-156; **OTC**, 71-81. Prepare your answers for class discussion based on the set of questions in **OTC**, 81-82.

Early Monarchic Period: Samuel & Saul. Read **OTC**, 83-88; **OTP**, "Annals of Tiglath-Pileser I," 165-166, "Stories of Wen-Amon," 347-354, & 1 Sam 1-15.

Early Career of David. Read 1 Sam 16-19, 21-22, 24-28, & 31 and **OTC**, 88-91.

The United Monarchy of David. Read 2 Sam 1-7, 11-17, 20, 24; **OTC**, 92-98; **OTP**, "Karatepe Annals of Azitiwada," 172-175. (see <http://www.crystalinks.com/jerusalem.html>)

Solomon's Rule. Read 1 Kgs 1-5, 8, 11. Read **OTC**, 99-102. **View:** <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bible/program.html>

EXAM #2: Conquest to Solomon's Kingdom. (75 points)

Section Three: (see <http://www.kchanson.com/CHRON/isrkings.html> for a basic chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah)

Division of the Kingdom. Read OTC, 102-105; 1 Kgs 12-14, 16.

Characteristics of prophets. Read OTC, 105-114; OTP, "Mari Letters," 341-346. In class discussion of the role of prophets (see summary, OTC, pp. 132-133).

Elijah, Elisha, and Conflict between Kings and Prophets. Read OTC, 114-123; 1 Kings 17-19, 21-22; 2 Kgs 1-5, 8-9; OTP, "Annals of Mesha," 167-169; "Annals of Shalmaneser III," 176-181; "Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III," 182-184; "Tell Dan Annals of Hazael," 170-171.

Overview of the History of the Late Monarchy. Read OTC, 125-131.

Amos and Israelite Society. Read OTC, 131-135; OTP, "Yavne-Yam Letter," 355-356; and Amos 1-5, 7. Rewrite Amos 5:21-24 in modern language, with modern issues.

Hosea and the Fall of Israel. Read OTC, 135-141; Hosea 1-4, 6, 11; 2 Kgs 17; OTP, "Annals of Sargon II," 185-189. View: http://wn.com/Sargon_and_Samaria

Isaiah of Jerusalem. Read 2 Kgs 15-18; Isa 5-11, 20, 36-37; Micah 1, 3, 6; OTC, 141-155; OTP, "Siloam Annals," 193-194, "Annals of Sennacherib," 190-192.

Deuteronomic Reform. Read 2 Kgs 22-23; Deut 12-14; OTC, 128-130.

Jeremiah and the Last Days of Judah. Read OTC, 165-179; OTP, "Lachish Letters," 201-203; "Annals of Nebuchadnezzar," 195-197; 2 Kgs 24; Jeremiah 1, 5, 7, 13, 16, 18-19, 21, 26, 28-29, 32, 36.

EXAM #3: Late Monarchy Period (75 points)

Section Four:

Ezekiel and Babylonian Exile. Read OTC, 181-191; OTP, "Laments for Ur," 247-255; Psalm 137; Ezekiel 1-5, 8-9, 14, 16, 18, 34, 36-37; 2 Kings 25.

Second Isaiah and the Promise of Return. Read OTC, 194-200; OTP, "Decree of Cyrus," 207-209; Isaiah 40-45, 49-53.

Jewish Identity Movement and the Return from Exile. Read Haggai 1-2; Zech 1-4; Isaiah 58-60; OTC, 200-211.

Post-Exilic Yehud. Read OTC, 223-228.

In preparation for our discussion of the Restoration and Reconstruction Period, read and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the following sequence:

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| 1. Ezra 1, 2:1-70 | 6. Neh 1:1-7:5 |
| 2. Neh 7:6-73a | 7. Neh 11-13 |
| 3. Ezra 3:1-4:6 | 8. Neh 9:38-10:39 |

4. Ezra 4:24-6:22
5. Ezra 4:7-23

9. Ezra 7-10
10. Neh 8:1-9:37

The Psalter. Read Psalm 1, 8, 18, 22, 23, 51, 91, 95, 104, 115, 122, 145, 148; **OTC**, 250-254; **OTP**, "Hymn to the Aton," 275-279.

Wisdom Literature. Read Eccl 1-5; Prov 22-24, 31; **OTC**, 237-243; **OTP**, "Teachings of Ptah-Hotep," 283-288 and "Teachings of Ahiqar," 303-309.

Class Discussion: Job. Read Job 1-12, 31, 38-42; **OTC**, 243-250; **OTP**, "A Sufferer and a Friend in Babylon," 239-244. Prepare answers to the questions in **OTC**, pp. 249-250 for use in our class discussion.

Judaism and the World. Read the entire books of Ruth, Jonah, and Esther; **OTC**, 215-219, 228-236; **OTP**, "Elephantine Letters," 210-215.

Daniel and the Hellenistic Period: Read **OTC**, 257-270; Dan 1-7, 12; **OTP**, "Visions of Neferti," 335-340.

FINAL EXAM: Covering the last section of the course and a Comprehensive essay question. **No Exemptions.** (100 points)

Final Exam: December 12; 11:00 am-1:00 pm in STRO 350

This schedule is not carved in granite. There will undoubtedly be some departures from it -- especially if the class chooses to spend more time on a particular subject. **Please come see me if you are having trouble with any of this material.**



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