

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**ART AND CULTURE OF THE NEAR EAST AND ISRAEL**  
**ARTH 3930**

**PLACE:** St. Louis University, Madrid Campus

**TIME:** Fall 2015, TR 14:30-15:45

**PREREQUISITE:** THEO-100 and one 200-level theology course

**CURRICULUM:** 3 credits. Fulfills theology requirement for A&S

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Carolina A. Aznar. E-mail: [caznarsa@slu.edu](mailto:caznarsa@slu.edu) (please write: "Ancient Israel and the NE" as subject title)

**OFFICE HOURS:** M 09:00-10:00, 12:30-13:30; R 09:00-10:00, 12:30-13:30 in Dr. Aznar's office

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An examination of the history and religion of ancient Israel within its Near Eastern context. This examination will allow students to identify similarities and differences between texts from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and other texts from the ancient Near East.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of the semester students will have gained knowledge on the major stages of the historical development of ancient Israel and the Israelite religion within the context of the history and culture of the Near East. This knowledge will allow students to understand the formation of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament texts better.

**SKILL ACQUISITIONS**

By the end of the semester students:

- will have evaluated how some Hebrew Bible/Old Testament texts and some archaeological data relate to the history of the Israelites and their religion;
- will have learnt how to handle the different types of sources in order to do sound research and to avoid circular reasoning;
- will have explored and gained an appreciation of the similarities and differences between ancient Israel and its neighbors, especially those regarding worship and theology.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

A reference Bible. For study purposes I recommend *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, but any translation is fine. Bibles in English can be purchased at the campus bookstore.

**MAIN TEXTS USED FOR REQUIRED READINGS**

Shmuel Ahituv. *Echoes from the Past. Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period.* (Jerusalem, Carta: 2008).

John Barton. *Reading the Old Testament. Method in Biblical Study.* (Louisville, Kentucky, Westminster John Knox Press: 1996).

Michael D. Coogan. *The Old Testament. A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures.* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 2006).

Michael D. Coogan (ed.) *The Oxford History of the Biblical World.* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1998) = *OHBW*.

- Stephanie Dalley. *Myths from Mesopotamia. Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1991).
- Avraham Faust. *Israel's Ethnogenesis. Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London, Equinox: 2006).
- David Noel Friedman (ed.) *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, Doubleday: 1992) = ABD.
- William W. Hallo (ed.) *The Context of Scripture. Vol I. Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World.* (New York, Brill: 1997) = COS I.
- Richard S. Hess. *Israelite Religions. An Archaeological and Biblical Survey.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Academic Press: 2007).
- Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel.* (Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press: 2001) = LBI.
- James B. Pritchard (ed.) *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press: 1955) = ANET.
- Jack M. Sasson (ed.). *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East.* 2 vols. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers: 2000) = CANE.
- Ziony Zevit. *The Religions of Ancient Israel. A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches.* (New York, Continuum: 2001).

\* The instructor will post the list of required readings for each class on Blackboard. The readings posted for each day must be read in preparation for (that is, before) the class due on that day.

#### **OTHER RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

- Spencer L. Allen. *The Splintered Divine: a Study of Ishtar, Baal, and Yahweh Divine Names and Divine Multiplicity in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin, de Gruyter: 2015).
- Hans M. Barstad. *History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck: 2008).
- Amnon Ben-Tor (ed.) *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel.* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1992).
- Mark W. Chavalas (ed.) *Women in the Ancient Near East: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge: 2014).
- Richard J. Clifford. *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible.* (Washington, D.C. The Catholic Biblical Association of America: 1994).
- Michael D. Coogan (ed.) *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (Louisville, The Westminster Press: 1978).
- Richard Elliott Friedman. *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco: 1997)
- William W. Hallo (ed.) *The Context of Scripture. Vol II. Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World.* (New York, Brill: 2000).
- William W. Hallo (ed.) *The Context of Scripture. Vol I. Archival Documents from the Biblical World.* (New York, Brill: 2002).
- G.S. Kirk. *Myth. Its meaning & functions in ancient and other cultures.* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1970).
- Alan Lenzi, Jonathan Stökl (eds.) *Divination, Politics, and Ancient Near Eastern Empires* (Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature: 2014).
- Mario Liverani. *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (London, Equinox: 2005).
- Amihai Mazar. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 B.C.E.* (New York, Doubleday: 1990).
- Jeffrey J. Niehaus. *Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Kregel: 2008).
- John N. Oswalt. *The Bible among the Myths* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan: 2009).
- James B. Pritchard. *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament.* Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press: 1954).
- James B. Pritchard (ed.) *The Ancient Near East. Supplementary Texts and Pictures Relating to the Old Testament.* Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press: 1969).
- Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley. *The Sacred Bridge.* (Jerusalem, Carta: 2006).
- Kenton L. Sparks. *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible. A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers: 2005).
- Piotr Steinkeller and Michael Hudson (ed.) *Labor in the Ancient World* (Dresden, ISLET-Verl.:2015).

Ephraim Stern (ed.). *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society and Carta: 1993, 2008).

John H. Walton. *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan: 1990).

John H. Walton. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Academics: 2006).

## EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The final grade will be based on the following percentages:

Class participation:	10 %
Mid-term exam:	30 %
Final paper:	40 %
Final exam:	20%

1. **Class participation** is a part of the final grade. It includes being able to present and discuss the assigned readings when asked, answering the questions posed by the professor (either orally or in writing) in class, asking and discussing content-related questions when appropriate, and evaluating and commenting the students' oral presentations. Notice that students are expected to do the assigned readings for any given day *in preparation for* (that is, *before*) the class of that day so they can discuss them in class. Please note: from October 20 each student needs to bring his/her own Bible to class every class day.

2. Students will take a **mid-term exam on October 15**. This exam will include content-based questions as well as practical exercises on the understanding of the HB/OT and the history of ancient Israel and its religion within its Near Eastern background.

3. Students will write a **ten- to twelve-page research paper** comparing a topic in ancient Israel and in one or more of the other ancient Near Eastern cultures. The paper will be done according to the guidelines the instructor will provide. **For this paper each student will visit with the instructor in her office at some time during the office hours of September 22-24; submit an abstract, an outline and a short bibliography of the paper on September 29; and submit a draft on October 22.** The instructor will provide feedback on these. None of them will be graded, but not submitting them at all or submitting them late will be penalized. **The final version of the paper will be due on November 12.**

4. Students will take a **final exam on December 14**. This exam will include theoretical questions and practical exercises based on the material examined in class through the semester as well as on the students' papers.

5. Each student will **visit with the instructor in her office at some point during the office hours of Sept. 22-24.**

6. All students will **complete the on-line course evaluation at the end of the semester.**

All written assignments must be submitted double-spaced, page-numbered, typed and printed. They must be submitted in class. **E-mail submission of assignments is not acceptable** and does not count towards the grade (i.e. an e-mailed assignment counts as not submitted) unless the instructor sends the student an e-mail explicitly saying he/she can e-mail his/her assignment. In the assignments, bibliography and attachments will be placed at the end and will not count towards the page account. Cover pages are not needed.

All due assignments must be submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date. Submitting an assignment at the end of the class of the due date will count as submitting it late and therefore will be penalized as such. **If for any reason a student could not submit the due assignments on time or make it to the final exam, he/she should contact the instructor BEFORE the due date** to discuss what the options are (the only exception to this are justified medical emergencies).

**One of the classes will consist of an outing to the Egyptian Temple of Debod in Madrid (on Friday Oct. 2). It is a compulsory visit.** Students who cannot make the group visit on that day will need to visit the temple on a different date and submit a short assignment based on the instructor's guidelines (due on Oct. 6).

All students in this class have a *slu* e-mail account (i.e. an e-mail address ending in *slu.edu*)—both their Banner and SLU-Global accounts are linked to it. Therefore, all e-mail communications between the instructor and the students will take place by using the *slu* e-mail system. **It is each student's responsibility to get to know his/her *slu* e-mail address, to make sure it works on the first day of class (Sept. 1), to check it regularly (or to have the mail from this address forwarded to a preferred account which he/she checks regularly), and to speak with the people at the Registrar's Office (in Padre Arrupe Hall) if there is any problem with it.**

For bibliography for the paper, please make sure you check the SLU book catalogue (at <http://spain.slu.edu/academics/library/index.html>) as well as the **JSTOR, ATLA** and **WorldCat (FirstSearch)** databases (at <http://libraries.slu.edu/databases/databases.php#dbname>). To use the latter, you will need your SLU-Madrid login and password. If you do not know or have them yet, go to the Registrar's Office at Padre Arrupe Hall and ask about them. Keep in mind that many of the articles and books found in the ATLA and WorldCat (FirstSearch) Database may be retrieved in Madrid at the libraries of the Universidad Complutense, Universidad Autónoma, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Instituto Arqueológico Alemán, and/or the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. But for saving time, look for bibliographic resources on the internet first.

You can also find useful articles at *Bible Review* and *Biblical Archaeology Review* (<http://www.basarchive.org>). These are not scholarly journals but popular magazines. However, the authors who write in them are scholars and many of the articles are summarized versions of similar, more detailed articles in scholarly journals. So you can use their articles, especially if you do not have access to the scholarly journal where the original version is published.

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PENALTIES**

Repeated unjustified absences will decrease the final grade—one full letter of the participation grade will be decreased for each three unjustified absences (e.g. from B to C).

Missing the Temple of Debod class outing on Oct. 2 and not submitting a make up assignment on Oct. 6 will decrease the final grade—two thirds of the participation grade letter will be decreased (e.g. from B+ to B-).

Being late to class and/or lacking knowledge of the assigned readings for each day and/or not bringing the Bible to class will also decrease the final grade since it will prevent the student from participating in class fully—one third of the participation grade letter will be decreased for each two days in which any of these situations takes place (e.g. from B- to C+).

Submitting the abstract, outline and bibliography, or the draft, or the final paper late will decrease the paper grade—one third of the paper letter will be decreased for each delayed day (the delays of different parts of the assignment will be cumulative). After a week from the date when the given part of the assignment is due, no late submissions will be accepted and the paper will be graded as 0 (=F).

Not submitting the abstract, outline and bibliography and/or the draft of the paper at all will decrease the paper grade—one full letter of the paper grade will be decreased.

Submitting the final paper in the middle of or at the end of the class when it is due will count as submitting it late and therefore will be penalized as such—one third of the paper letter will be decreased.

Not attending the final classes when oral presentations are due will be particularly penalized—one full letter of the participation grade will be decreased for each class missed.

Unauthorized web surfing, e-mail checking, online chatting, text messaging, and listening to music during class time will be penalized as each of these activities prevents students from fully engaging in class—one third of the participation grade will be decreased every time a student does any of these.

Students who missed the introduction on the first day of class (Sept. 1) must stay after class on R Sept. 15 for fifteen minutes. Not doing so will decrease their class participation grade—one third of the participation grade will be decreased.

## GRADING SCALE

The grading scale is as follows:

93-100	= A	- Excellent understanding of subject matter and mastery of the skills of the course
90-92	= A-	
87-89	= B+	
83-86	= B	- Good understanding of the subject matter and deployment of the skills of the course
80-82	= B-	
76-79	= C+	
71-75	= C	- Minimally satisfactory understanding of the subject matter and deployment of the skills of the course
68-70	= C-	
60-67	= D	- Less than satisfactory understanding of the subject matter or less than satisfactory deployment of the skills of the course
0 -59	= F	- Basic failure in understanding of the subject matter or basic inability to deploy the skills of the course

The following are general principles concerning grading standards and criteria at SLU:

**A range** = *Superior, exceptional, outstanding* with evidence of critical, informed, and creative inquiry that deepens their understanding of essential concepts. This means the student demonstrates depth of insight beyond what is normally expected. Carefully nuanced reasoning and writing, free from material, structural and grammatical error are presupposed in this grade.

**B range** = Good, ready command of full range of concepts and shows some critical, informed, and creative inquiry that deepens their understanding of essential concepts. This means the student has produced an assignment that is free from material, structural and grammatical errors.

**C range** = *Acceptable*, satisfactory ability to describe overall picture and essential concepts. This means the student has completed the assignment in a manner involving no significant errors. Material may not be free from structural and grammatical errors. Nuanced reasoning is not demonstrated.

**D range** = *Below normal expectation*. Reasoning is neither carefully nuanced nor coherently presented; writing is insufficient in depth of insight and/or use of texts; presentation is not free from material error in structure, spelling and grammar. This means that the student failed to respond adequately to the assignment and its intentions.

**F** = *Unsatisfactory*. The student failed to respond to the assignment: 1) failed to turn in the assignment; 2) did not respond to the assignment as given; 3) submitted work so thoroughly flawed as to indicate that the student did not make a serious effort, 4) plagiarism or cheating involved.

## **COLLECTION OF STUDENT WORK FOR UNIVERSITY-WIDE ASSESSMENT**

Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose we keep on file anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. Thus, copies of your work for this course, including exams, oral presentations, and submitted papers may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMODATIONS**

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to [http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning\\_resources.html](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html).

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204, send an e-mail to [counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu), or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter. **If you need special accommodations, please get in contact with Disability Services and let the instructor know during the first week of class and (again) one week before the exam so the instructor can plan accordingly.**

## **POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM AT SLU**

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students but also undermines the validity of the University's evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator.

Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student's work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty. Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accord with standards and procedures of the school or college through which the course or research is offered. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. The complete SLU Academic Honesty Policy can be found at the following link:

[http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic\\_advising/docs/Academic\\_integrity.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf)

## **COURSE TOPICS**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. General introduction. Geography of the Ancient Near East (ANE)

### **II. THE HEBREW BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT (HB/OT)**

2. The HB/OT, canons, text genres

3. Historical criticism of the HB/OT

### **III. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL AND ITS RELIGION WITHIN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST (ANE)**

4. Sources to study the past

5. The Third Millennium BCE: the rise of the early civilizations in the ANE

6. From ca. 2100 to the 17<sup>th</sup> century BCE: the background of the Patriarchal narratives?

7. From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE: Egypt, Canaan, and the time before the emergence of Israel

8. From the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE: the emergence of Israel

9. From the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE: the early times of the monarchy of Israel (I)

10. From the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE: the early times of the monarchy of Israel (II)

11. Outing to the Egyptian Temple of Debod

12. The 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE: the monarchy of Israel and the Assyrian conquests

13. From the 7<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE: the late times of the monarchy of Israel and the Babylonian conquests

14. From the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE: the exile of the Israelites in Babylon, the return from the Exile, and the Persian and Hellenistic Periods

15. Midterm exam

### **IV. TEXTS IN THE HB/OT AND THE ANE: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

16. Creation texts (1)

17. Creation texts (2)

18. Flood texts

19. Personal archives, legal texts

20. Covenants and treaties

21. Historiography

22. Prayers

23. Wisdom texts

24. Prophetic texts

25. Apocalyptic texts

26-29. Oral presentations

\* The instructor will post the list of required readings for each class on Blackboard. Please, remember that the readings posted for each day must be read in preparation for (that is, *before*) the class due on that day.

## **COURSE GENERAL SCHEDULE\***

- Week 1:       - T Sept. 1  
                  - R Sept. 3
- Week 2:       - T Sept. 8  
                  - R Sept. 10
- Week 3:       - M Sept. 14: Last day to Add/Drop (without “W”); last day to choose Audit (AU)  
                  or Pass/No pass (P/NP) status  
                  - T Sept. 15  
                  - R Sept. 17
- Week 4:       - **T-R Sept. 22-24: All students must speak with the instructor (in office hours)**  
                  - T Sept. 22  
                  - R Sept. 24
- Week 5:       - **T Sept. 29: Paper abstract, outline, and short bibliography due**  
                  - R Oct. 1  
                  - F Oct. 2: Extra class (instead of class on Nov. 19) – Outing to the Temple of  
                  Debod
- Week 6:       - T Oct. 6  
                  - R Oct. 8
- Week 7:       - T Oct. 13  
                  - **R Oct. 15: Mid-term exam.** Last day to submit transfer application for Spring  
                  Semester
- Week 8:       - T Oct. 20  
                  - **R Oct. 22: Paper draft due**
- Week 9:       - T Oct. 27  
                  - R Oct. 29: Last day to Drop with “W”
- Week 10:      - T Nov. 3  
                  - W Nov. 4: Registration for Spring Semester begins  
                  - R Nov. 5
- Week 11:      - T Nov. 10  
                  - **R Nov. 12: Final paper due**
- Week 12:      - T Nov. 17  
                  - R Nov. 19: No class (substituted for class on Oct. 2)
- Week 13:      - T Nov. 24  
                  - R Nov. 26
- Week 14:      - T Dec. 1  
                  - R Dec. 3
- Week 15:      - T Dec. 8: No class (Inmaculada Concepción Holiday)  
                  - R Dec. 10
- Week 16:      - **M Dec. 14: Final Exam (12:00-15:00)**