

COURSE SYLLABUS
ANCIENT ISRAEL AND THE NEAR EAST
THEO 393

PLACE: St. Louis University, Madrid Campus

TIME: Fall 2010, MW 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 (please write: "Ancient Israel and the NE" as subject title)

OFFICE HOURS: M 16:00-19:00; T 12:30-13:30; R 12:30-13:30, 16:00-17:00 in Dr. Aznar's office at Manresa Hall, second floor

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the semester students will have gained knowledge on the major stages of the historical evolution of ancient Israel and the Israelite religion within the context of the history and culture of the Near East. It is hoped this knowledge will allow them to understand the writing of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament texts better.

SKILL ACQUISITIONS

By the end of the semester students will have evaluated how some of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament texts and the archaeological data relate to the Israelites and will have learnt how to avoid circular reasoning when dealing with these different types of sources in investigating the past. The students will have also 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

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.* 2nd 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 Parallactic 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

Amnon Ben-Tor (ed.) *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel.* (New Haven: Yale University Press: 1992).

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).

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).

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).

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.* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan: 1990).

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

CLASS ATTENDANCE, EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND PENALTIES

The final grade will be based on the following percentages:

Class participation:	10 %
Mid-term exam:	40 %
Final paper:	40 %
Presentation of paper:	10%

1. **Class participation** is a part of the final grade. It includes doing the assigned readings and discussing them, answering the questions posed by the professor in class, and asking and discussing content-related questions when appropriate. Students are expected to do the assigned readings for any given day *in preparation for* (that is, *before*) the class of the day so they can discuss them in class. For participation in the discussions each student needs to bring his/her own Bible to class from Sept. 6 to Sept. 13 and from Oct. 25 to Dec. 21 (all of these days included).

2. Students will take a **mid-term exam** on October 18. This exam will include content-based questions as well as practical exercises on the HB/OT and on the history of ancient Israel within its Near Eastern background.

3. Students will write a **ten- to twelve-page paper** on how some text of the HB/OT from a list of texts the instructor will select compares to other ancient Near Eastern texts. The paper will be done according to the guidelines the instructor will provide. For this paper each student must visit with the instructor in her office at some time during the office hours of Sept. 20-23. Then each student must submit an abstract, an outline and a short bibliography of the paper at the beginning of class on M Sept. 27 and a draft at the beginning of class on W Oct. 27. The instructor will provide feedback on both. None of these 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 at the beginning of class on W Dec. 1.

4. On Dec. 21 students will be divided in groups according to the texts they commented on. Each group will present and discuss the topic they researched by means of a **joint oral Powerpoint-based presentation**

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

Please, notice:

Since class participation is a part of the grade, 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). Being late and/or lacking knowledge of the assigned readings for each day and/or not bringing the Bible to class from Sept.6 to Sept. 13 and from Oct. 25 to Dec. 21 (all of these days included) will also decrease the final grade since it will prevent the student from participating in class—one third of the participation grade letter for each two days in which any of these two situations takes place (e.g. from B- to C+). 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. 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 for each day of delay in submitting any of these. After a week, no late submissions will be accepted and the assignment will be graded as 0 (=F).

Students who missed the first day of class (Sept. 1) must stay after class on W Sept. 15 for fifteen minutes for a special meeting. Not doing so will decrease the class participation grade—one third of the participation grade (e.g. from B- to C+).

All written assignments must be submitted double-spaced, page-numbered, typed and printed. They must be submitted in class. **E-mail submission of papers** is not acceptable and does not count towards the grade (i.e. an e-mailed paper counts as not submitted) unless the instructor gives the student an e-mail approval of her permission for the student to e-mail her the paper. In the papers, 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 make it to the mid-term exam or could not submit his/her outline, draft, or paper on time, he/she **should contact me BEFORE the due date** to discuss what the options are (the only exception to this are justified medical emergencies).

All students in this class have a *slu* e-mail account (i.e. an e-mail address ending in *slu.edu*). Therefore, all e-mail communications between the instructor and the students will be done by using the *slu* e-mail system. **It is the student's responsibility to get to know his/her slu e-mail address, to check it regularly, and to speak with the people at the Registrar's Office (in Manresa Hall) if there are any problems with his/her e-mail account.**

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 **ATLA**, **JSTOR** 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 Manresa 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*, *Biblical Archaeology Review* and *Archaeology Oddisey* (<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.

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.

ACADEMIC ACCOMODATIONS

Any student who qualifies for special accommodations due to a learning disability or physical handicap should contact Counseling/Disability Services. Please phone the office at 91 554 5858 (ext. 230), or send an e-mail to vandrew1@slu.edu. Students may also stop by the Counseling/Disability Services office in the Manresa building. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

If you need special accommodations for class and/or to take exams (such as left-hand writing chairs), please let the instructor know during the first week of class and (again) one week before the given exam so the instructor can plan accordingly.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY AT SLU

Please note that, as a student in this course, you are required to adhere to the university's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are strictly forbidden. Plagiarism is the intentional representation of someone else's thoughts or words as if they were one's own. Any violation of this policy will result in an F for the pertinent academic exercise. A detailed statement of the policy may be found at

http://spain.slu.edu/academics/policies_&_procedures/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf

Definitions

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the kinds of misconduct listed below. Such dishonesty may involve written or spoken communications or those conveyed in electronic form.

A. Cheating

Cheating involves the use of unauthorized or unethical assistance to gain an unfair advantage over other students. Instances include the following:

1. Use of unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes or examinations;
2. Use of resources beyond those authorized by the instructor in solving problems or in carrying out other assignments such as writing papers, preparing reports, or giving oral presentations;
3. Acquisition, dissemination, or use of tests or other academic materials belonging to an instructor or a member of the staff without prior approval;
4. Hiring or otherwise engaging someone to impersonate a student in taking a quiz or examination or in fulfilling other academic requirements.

B. Falsification

Falsification involves misrepresentations of fact for academic gain. Instances include the following:

1. Lying to or deceiving an instructor;
2. Fabrication or misrepresentation of the documentation or the data involved in carrying out assignments;
3. Fabrication, misrepresentation, or unauthorized alteration of information in academic records belonging to an instructor or to any academic division or administrative unit within the Madrid Campus.

C. Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves the intentional representation of someone else's thoughts or words as if they were one's own. Instances include the following:

1. Quoting directly from someone else's work without using quotation marks and without giving proper credit to the author;
2. Paraphrasing someone else's ideas, concepts, arguments, observations, or statements without giving proper credit;
3. Submitting as one's own work a paper or other assignment that has been prepared, either wholly or in large part, by another person, group, or commercial firm.

D. Sabotage

Sabotage involves interference with the academic work of another member of the university community or modification, theft, or destruction of intellectual property such as computer files, library materials, or personal books or papers.

E. Collusion

Collusion involves collaboration with another person or persons for the purpose of engaging in, aiding, or abetting acts of academic dishonesty as defined above.

(...)

COURSE TOPICS

I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

2. What the HB/OT is, text genres, canons
3. Biblical exegesis, historical criticism
4. Overview of the history of the HB/OT text/s

III. THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL WITHIN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST (ANE)

5. Sources to study the past
6. The Third Millennium BCE: the rise of the early civilizations in the ANE
7. From ca. 2100 to the 17th century BCE: the background of the Patriarchal narratives?
8. From the 16th to the 13th centuries BCE: Egypt, Canaan, and the time before the emergence of Israel
9. From the 12th to the 11th centuries BCE: the emergence of Israel
10. From the 10th to the 9th centuries BCE: the early times of the monarchy of Israel
11. The 8th century BCE: the monarchy of Israel and the Assyrian conquests
12. From the 7th to the beginning of the 6th centuries BCE: the late times of the monarchy of Israel and the Babylonian conquests
13. From the beginning of the 6th to the 1st centuries BCE: the exile of the Israelites in Babylon, the return from the Exile, and the Persian and the Hellenistic Periods
14. Worship in ancient Israel (1)
15. Worship in ancient Israel (2)

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 (1)
22. Historiography (2)
23. Prayers (1)
24. Prayers (2)
25. Wisdom texts
26. Prophetic texts
27. Apocalyptic texts

28. 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: - W Sept. 1
- Week 2: - M Sept. 6: First day of required-bringing-the-Bible-to-class period
- W Sept. 8
- Week 3: - M Sept. 13: Last day of required-bringing-the-Bible-to-class period
- T Sept. 14: Last day to Add/Drop (without “W”)
- W Sept. 15
- Week 4: - M-R Sept. 20-23: Each student must speak with me during office hours
- M Sept. 20
- W Sept. 22
- Week 5: - **M Sept. 27: Paper abstract, outline, and short bibliography due**
- W Sept. 29: Last day to choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No pass (P/NP) status
- Week 6: - M Oct. 4
- W Oct. 6
- Week 7: - M Oct. 11
- W Oct. 13
- Week 8: - **M Oct. 18: Mid-term exam**
- W Oct. 20
- Week 9: - M Oct. 25: First day of required-bringing-the-Bible-to-class period
- **W Oct. 27: Paper draft due**
- F Oct. 29: Last day to Drop with “W”
- Week 10: - M Nov. 1: No class (*Día de Todos los Santos* Holiday)
- W Nov. 3
- Week 11: - M Nov. 8: Registration for Spring Semester begins
- W Nov. 10
- Week 12: - M Nov. 15
- W Nov. 17: No class (substituted for class on F Nov. 26)
- Week 13: - M Nov. 22
- W Nov. 24
- F Nov. 26: Extra class (instead of class on W Nov. 17)
- Week 14: - M Nov. 29
- **W Dec. 1: Final paper due**
- Week 15: - M Dec. 6: No class (*Día de la Constitución* Holiday)
- W Dec. 8: No class (*La Inmaculada Concepción* Holiday)
- Week 16: - M Dec. 13
- W Dec. 15: Last class
- Week 17: - **M Dec. 20: Oral presentations (15:30-18:30)**, last day of required-bringing-the-Bible-to-class period

*** The dates in this general schedule will be matched to the topics in the course topic list according to the Professor’s indications**