

COURSE SYLLABUS
ANCIENT ISRAEL AND THE NEAR EAST
THEO 393

PLACE: St. Louis University, Madrid Campus

TIME: Fall 2014, 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 (please write: "Ancient Israel and the NE" as subject title)

OFFICE HOURS: T 12:30-13:30, 16:00-17:00; R 16:00-18:00 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*. 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

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).

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).

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).

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).

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 doing the assigned readings, being able to present and discuss 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 that day so they can discuss them in class. Please note: from October 23 each student needs to bring his/her own Bible to class every class day.

2. Students will take a **mid-term exam on October 16**. 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 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 23-25; submit an abstract, an outline and a short bibliography of the paper on September 30; and submit a draft on October 28.** 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 on November 20.**

4. Students will take a **final exam on December 19**. This exam will include theoretical questions and practical exercises based on the material examined in class through the semester as well as on each student's paper.

5. Each student will **visit with the instructor in her office at some point during the office hours of Sept. 23-25.**

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. 3). 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. 7).

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 check it works on the first day of class (Sept. 2), to check it regularly (or to have the mail from this address forwarded to a preferred account which is checked 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. 3 and not submitting a make up assignment on Oct. 7 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).

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.

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.

The class requires each student's full attention. Because of it, music listening, mobile phone text messaging, unauthorized web surfing, e-mail checking, and online chatting during class time will be penalized—one third of the participation grade will be decreased every time a student is seen doing any of these.

Students who missed the introduction on the first day of class (Sept. 2) must stay after class on R Sept. 16 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.

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.

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, 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 AT SLU

Because the university is a community of learning, an environment of mutual trust and integrity is vital. Students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility for maintaining this environment. The university's Academic Honesty Policy strictly forbids cheating, falsification, and plagiarism. (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/academic_advising/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. 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 17th century BCE: the background of the Patriarchal narratives?
7. From the 16th to the 13th centuries BCE: Egypt, Canaan, and the time before the emergence of Israel
8. From the 12th to the 11th centuries BCE: the emergence of Israel
9. From the 10th to the 9th centuries BCE: the early times of the monarchy of Israel (I)
10. From the 10th to the 9th centuries BCE: the early times of the monarchy of Israel (II)
11. Outing to the Egyptian Temple of Debed
12. The 8th century BCE: the monarchy of Israel and the Assyrian conquests
13. From the 7th to the beginning of the 6th centuries BCE: the late times of the monarchy of Israel and the Babylonian conquests
14. 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 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 (1)
22. Historiography (2)
23. Prayers
24. Wisdom texts
25. Prophetic texts
26. Apocalyptic texts
- 27-30. 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. 2
 - R Sept. 4
- Week 2: - T Sept. 9
 - R Sept. 11
- Week 3: - M Sept. 15: Last day to Add/Drop (without “W”); last day to choose Audit (AU) or
 Pass/No pass (P/NP) status
 - T Sept. 16
 - R Sept. 18
- Week 4: - **T-R Sept. 23-25: All students must speak with the instructor during office
 hours**
 - T Sept. 23
 - R Sept. 25
- Week 5: - **T Sept. 30: Paper abstract, outline, and short bibliography due**
 - R Oct. 2
 - F Oct. 3: Extra class (instead of class on Oct. 21) – Outing to the Temple of Debod
- Week 6: - T Oct. 7
 - R Oct. 9
- Week 7: - T Oct. 14
 - W Oct. 15: Last day to submit transfer application for Spring Semester
 - **R Oct. 16: Mid-term exam**
- Week 8: - T Oct. 21: No class (substituted for class on Sept. 20)
 - R Oct. 23
- Week 9: - **T Oct. 28: Paper draft due**
 - R Oct. 30: Last day to Drop with “W”
- Week 10: - T Nov. 4
 - R Nov. 6: Registration for Spring Semester begins
- Week 11: - T Nov. 11
 - R Nov. 13
- Week 12: - T Nov. 18
 - **R Nov. 20: Final paper due**
- Week 13: - T Nov. 25
 - R Nov. 27
- Week 14: - T Dec. 2
 - R Dec. 4
- Week 15: - T Dec. 9
 - R Dec. 11
- Week 16: - **F Dec. 19: Final Exam (12:00- 15:00)**

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