

## **HIST 151: The History of the Second Commonwealth**

Tuesday 2:15-4:15

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### **I. General Overview of the Course:**

The purpose of this course is to survey the diversity and development of Judaism in the ancient world. We pick up where a typical course in Hebrew Bible (AKA “Old Testament”) leaves off: with the building of the second temple toward the end of the sixth century BCE. But we will then move quickly to cover some of the events and phenomena that shaped ancient Jews and Judaism: the impact of Hellenism, the Maccabean revolt, and the Roman conquest. Much of our time will be devoted to the ever-important first century of the Common Era—the period that saw both the birth of Christianity and the destruction of the ancient Jewish state.

As we proceed through this material we will be keeping the following goals in mind: (1) paying careful attention to those theologically significant sources (biblical and “apocryphal”) that might otherwise fall through the cracks (e.g., Daniel, Koheleth, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Josephus, and others); (2) tracing the development of many significant aspects of Jewish theology that begin to emerge in this period (e.g., resurrection, the balancing of fate and free-will); (3) gaining greater awareness of the contemporary issues (denominational and otherwise) that have an impact on the study of ancient Jewish history; and (4) understanding the significance of the concept “canon” in its ancient and contemporary contexts. If you have additional goals in mind now or as our course progresses, please let me know.

### **II. Requirements for the Course:**

**A.** Attendance, preparation for class, and participation in class discussions are a requirement, and will be factored into your final grade.

**B.** The bulk of your grade will be based on two short papers (3-4 pages) and a take-home final examination. The first paper will be due roughly 1/3 the way into the semester; the second paper roughly 2/3 the way into the semester. The final examination will be due at the end of the semester, and will consist of a battery of short identifications and a brief essay. For each of these assignments, there will be both “academic” and “rabbinic” versions of essay questions.

**C.** Time permitting, students may be asked to prepare one brief oral report, simply to present the basic facts concerning a primary or secondary source reading. This will serve primarily as a vehicle to promote classroom discussion.

**Be sure to consult our Blackboard website:** <http://hebrewcollege.blackboard.com/>

**III. Required Textbooks for the Course:** These books introduce you to the history and literature of ancient Judaism, from a variety of perspectives. Available at the bookstore (and elsewhere):

(1) Murphy, Frederick J. *Early Judaism: The Exile to the Time of Jesus*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002. This is a relatively new textbook designed for courses just like ours. Very helpful in surveying the issues and providing supplementary bibliography.

(2) Harrington, Daniel J. *Invitation to the Apocrypha*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999. This introductory work presents surveys of the texts contained within the “Apocrypha.”

(3) Josephus. *The Jewish War*. Translated by G. A. Williamson. With a New Introduction, Notes, and Appendixes, by E. Mary Smallwood. London: Penguin, 1981. Josephus is our main source of information on ancient Judaism. *Jewish War* is his first work, presented here with helpful notes, a useful index, and an excellent introduction.

(4) Students will need a study Bible (with Apocrypha): The Third Augmented Edition of the New Oxford Annotated Bible With Apocrypha (Michael D. Coogan, ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) is particularly recommended. (The Apocrypha NOAB is also available separately.) The HarperCollins or Cambridge Study Bibles are also sufficient. For our purposes the all-new (and excellent) *Jewish Study Bible* will not do, as it does not contain the Apocrypha or New Testament.

**IV. Tentative Schedule of Lectures and Reading Assignments.** We will do the best we can to keep up with this schedule, so as to cover the full second temple period, and avoid cutting short the important material that comes toward the end of the semester. I may post lecture notes on line now and then to complete units that were not completed in class. Some readings are marked with an asterisk—these are recommended readings, meant for more advanced students or those who have chosen to write an essay on this particular topic. Most asterisked readings will be placed on our blackboard8 website.

### **Unit I: The Beginnings of Judaism**

Week 1: Historical Survey; Introduction to the Sources; The Concept of Canon; Ideology and Theology in the understanding of ancient Judaism  
Murphy, *Early Judaism*, pp. 1-8; see also box on p. 63 (on Israelites and Jews)  
Harrington, pp. 1-9 (esp. pp. 3-6)

Week 2: The Persian Period and the Second Temple;  
Hebrew Bible: Haggai 1-2; Ezra 1; Nehemiah 1-5; Isaiah 55-66; Ruth  
The Apocrypha: 1 Esdras (make note of parallels in Ezra and Nehemiah)  
Murphy, pp. 61-90  
Harrington, pp. 152-165 (on 1 Esdras)  
\*Mary Douglas, “Responding to Ezra.”

## **Unit 2: The Encounter with Hellenism: History, Apocalyptic, and The Greek Bible**

### Week 3: Hellenism and Wisdom Literature

Hebrew Bible: Ecclesiastes

Apocrypha: Ben Sira: chs 1-7, 15, 24, 33, 44-50;

Wisdom of Solomon chs. 1, 3, 10-19

Murphy, pp. 91-103, 120-123

Harrington, 55-77 (on Wisdom); 78-91 (on Ben Sira)

\*Klawans, "Sadducees and Zadokites"

### Week 4: The Maccabean Revolt, its Causes and Aftermath; Martyrdom and Immortality

The Apocrypha: 1 Maccabees 1-9; 2 Maccabees 1-10

Murphy, pp. 103-119

Harrington, pp. 122-151

B. Shabbat 21b; Siddur: "Al ha-Nissim" for Chanukah

\*Bickerman, "The Maccabean Uprising: an Interpretation"

### Week 5: Apocalyptic Literature: The End of Days

Hebrew Bible: Daniel chs. 7-12;

Apocrypha: 2 Esdras

Pseudepigrapha: 1 Enoch 1-36 (excerpts in Murphy)

Murphy, pp. 127-166

\*Himmelfarb, "From Prophecy to Apocalypse" in Green, ed., *Jewish Spirituality I*, pp. 145-164

### Week 6: The Bible: as Revised, Expanded, and Translated; Canon and Interpretation

"Apocryphal" Additions to Esther, Daniel;

Pseudepigrapha: Jubilees, chs. 1-12 (on line);

The Legend of the Septuagint: *Aristeas* §§ 1-50, 121-127, 301-321 (on line)

Harrington, pp. 44-54 (additions to Esther); pp. 109-121 (additions to Daniel)

\*Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, ch. 6

## **Unit 3: The Varieties of Judaism in the Roman World**

### Week 7: Jewish Sects in the Ancient World: The Cast of Characters, and the Major Issues

Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Qumran, Samaritans, Hasideans, Zealots, Priests  
Nickelsburg and Stone, *Faith and Piety*, ch. 1 (on line; please bring copy to class)

Cf. also Josephus, *Jewish War*, pp. 133-138

Murphy, pp. 119-120 (on Hasidim); pp. 213-244 (on Sects); pp. 282-289 (others)

\*Klawans, "Josephus on Fate and Free Will"

Week 8: Philo of Alexandria: Judaism in the “Hellenistic” Diaspora  
Philo, *Special Laws*, Book 1, and other selections (online)  
Josephus, *Jewish War*, pp. 143, 152, 172-173, 283, 290 (on T. J. Alexander)  
Wolfson, *Philo*, selection on line  
Runia, “Philo: Alexandrian and Jew” online...

Week 9: Roman Rule and Herod the Great  
Murphy, pp. 245-280  
Josephus, *Jewish War*, chs. 2-5 (Penguin Edition); and cf. pp. 303-306, 487-92  
(charts and maps, note p. 493: Herod’s Family Tree)  
The Talmud: B. Baba Batra 3b-4a (on website)  
\*Cohen, Shaye J. D., “Was Herod Jewish?” in *The Beginnings of Jewishness*.

Week 10: Jesus of Nazareth and Paul of Tarsus  
New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew; Letter to Galatians  
Murphy, pp. 328-375

#### **Unit 4: The Destruction of the Temple and its Aftermath**

Week 11: Josephus: traitor or prophet? The Jewish War, and the Destruction  
Josephus, *Jewish War*, pp. 179-222; 270-286; 307-322; 337-354;  
(pay close attention especially to Josephus’ Speeches)  
Murphy, *Early Judaism*, pp. 289-325, 376-404  
E. M. Smallwood, “Introduction” to Josephus, *Jewish War* (Penguin edition)  
\*Klawans, “Josephus, the Rabbis, and Responses to Catastrophe Ancient and Modern”

Week 12: Jewish and Responses to the Destruction  
Apocrypha: 2 Esdras  
Rabbinic Literature: Selections from Avot de Rabbi Nathan  
Historiography: Accounts of the Bar Kochvah Rebellion (on line)  
Murphy, *Early Judaism*, 328-375, 388-436  
Harrington, pp. 185-206 (2 Esdras)  
\*Cohen, “The Significance of Yavneh”

Week 13: The Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism (from Pharisees to Rabbis)  
Yohanan Ben Zakkai in history and legend, sources on website  
M. Rosh ha-Shannah 4:1-4  
Pirkei Avot, chs. 1-2  
Neusner, “The Quest for the Historical Ben Zakkai”  
\*Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*

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- Also keep in mind the following reference works: **Encyclopedia Judaica; Jewish Encyclopedia; and, especially, The Anchor Bible Dictionary** (Freedman, David Noel, ed. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992).