Instructor:
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SPRING SEMESTER: Class meets on Mondays, 11:30 am-1:00 pm.

Pre-requisite: Hebrew V

Description of Course:
This course entails an introduction to the full complement of Biblical poetry, in its literary and historical context, and to modes of poetic interpretation and analysis. The course will cover selections from the Torah, Psalms, Proverbs, and the Book of Job, as well as selections from the Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah. We will discuss poetry within narrative, genres of Prophetic writings, apocalyptic revelations, and wisdom literature.

Goals of the Course:

- Attain a basic familiarity with the content, dating, themes, and canonization of poetic selections in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh).
- Exposure to different genres in the Tanakh, including cosmological history, historical narrative, legal codes, novella, and court tales. (We will look at prophetic oracles, biblical poetry, wisdom literature, and apocalyptic writings in the second semester).
- Acquire a basic familiarity with the methods of critical biblical scholarship and be able to apply them to the reading of biblical texts.
- Enable students to become more adept at reading the Tanakh in the original Hebrew. This will be accomplished by introducing/reviewing some salient features of Biblical Hebrew phonology, morphology, and syntax, and through the usage of the concordance, B.D.B., and grammar resources.

Required Texts:

- Any Hebrew Bible. Recommended: The bilingual JPS Tanakh or the bilingual Koren edition (preferred!).
Other selected articles and readings will be together as a Course Reader (from hereon “Reader”).

Highly recommended reference works:

- Thomas O. Lambdin’s textbook, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew*, can serve as a rough and ready simplified reference grammar, and is therefore highly recommended for students without extensive experience reading Biblical Hebrew.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

1. Participation (10%). Attendance and active involvement in discussion is critical to progress in this course. Typical preparation consists of close reading of an individual poem or poetic unit, in Hebrew, during Beit Midrash periods; bulk reading of Biblical and extra-Biblical primary sources in English, supplemented by secondary readings.
2. Three Short Assignments (20% each): 1) on “Characteristics of Ancient Biblical Poetry”, due March 10th; 2) on “Wisdom Literature” due April 7th; 3) on “The Prophets” due May 5th.
3. Final exam (30%). The final exam will be cumulative and may address any of the readings and class discussions. It will be done in class, OPEN BOOK, on the last day of the semester, Monday, May 19th, 11 am-1 pm.

Unit 1: Biblical Poetry (4 classes)

1. Feb. 3rd Introduction to the Art of Biblical Poetry

   - Primary Reading: Exodus 15.
   - Secondary Reading: James L. Kugel, The Great Poems of the Bible, 19-23 uploaded to Schoology; Jeffrey H. Tigay, commentary to Exodus 15, in The Jewish Study Bible, 136-139.

   **Hand-out Assignment # 1** – Characteristics of Ancient Biblical Poetry, due March 10th

   No Class on Feb. 17th – President’s Day

3. **Feb. 24th**, The Psalms of David
   - Primary Reading: Psalm 1

   No Class on March 3rd, Community Day of Learning with ANTS

4. **March 10th**, Psalms in Liturgy & Assignment #1 Due!
   - Primary Reading: Psalm 145

**Unit 2: Wisdom Literature (3 classes)**

   - Primary Reading: Job chs. 1-3
   • Primary Reading: Job chs. 38-41 (this is very difficult poetry – so cover as much as you can; ch. 42 is the denouement – read that in English).

7. March 31st Proverbs and Sirach (of the Apocrypha) on “The Evil Woman/Good Wife”
   • Primary Reading: Proverbs 7:4-23 and 31 (in Hebrew); Sirach (or Ecclesiasticus) 25:13-23 and 26:1-18 (in English).

Unit 3: Biblical Prophecy (5 classes)

8. April 7th What is Biblical Prophecy? The Initiation into Service **Assignment #2 on Wisdom Literature due today!
   Primary Reading: Exod. ch. 3; Isaiah ch.1 & 6; Jeremiah ch. 1; Ezekiel chs.2-3.

   No Classes on April 14th and 21st, Passover

9. April 28th The Prophet as Intercessor
   Primary Reading: Jeremiah in the Potters House (Jer.18:1-23).

   Assignment 3 – Biblical Prophecy, due May 1st

10. May 5th The Prophet’s Lament, Third Assignment Due!
    • Primary Reading: Isaiah ch.1, Deut. 32
• Secondary Reading: Harold Fisch, “The Song of Moses: Pastoral in Reverse”, in Poetry with a Purpose, 55-79 (uploaded to Schoology)

11. May 12th  Zechariah: Addressing the Communities in Exile;
Primary Reading: Zechariah 1:1-5:1 (focus on ch. 3)
• Secondary Reading: Michael Fishbane, The JPS Bible Commentary: Haftarot, 162-168 and 262-263.

12. May 19th, Final Exam (in class), 11 am-1:00 pm

Bibliography (Preliminary)
