

COS 221- Bible II: Torah and Israel's History

INSTRUCTOR Rev. Elizabeth Henry

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: COS 221- Bible II: Torah and Israel's History

This course interprets the critical events, developing institutions, and traditions of Israel. Attention is given to the earliest Covenants, to the Exodus, to the rise of the monarchy, and to other events up to the eighth century prophets.

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a historical overview of the experience and faith of ancient Israel. [L] [SEP]
2. Exegete selected passages that illustrate crucial turning points in the history of Israel. [L] [SEP]
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day. [L] [SEP]

CLASS TEXTS

- *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*, Rachel Held Evans
- *The Old Testament: A Historical & Literary Introduction*, Michael Coogan
- *The Pentateuch*, Terence Fretheim
- *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd Edition, Bruce Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence Fretheim, David Peterson
- *The Jewish Study Bible: TANAKH Translation*, Oxford Edition

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

All papers are to be written in Times New Roman, 12pt font, double spaced with 1-inch margins

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance and active participation are essential to successful completion of this course. In case of emergency, students may request an excused absence from up to 4 hours of instruction time from the instructor, Rev. Elizabeth Henry, and Course of Study Director, Rev. Paige Swaim-Presley. Students who miss more than 4 hours of class for any reason or students who do not secure an excuse for absences of 4 hours or less will be required to repeat the course. Additionally, students who are absent or tardy for any reason must still complete all work and turn in any assignments due for that session to receive course credit. In addition to being physically present at all classes, students are asked to be mentally present as well by turning off

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all electronic devices (except those use to take notes) and actively engaging in class discussions and group assignments.

PLAGIARISM AND INTELLECTUAL HONESTY

As ministers of the Gospel, we are called to live with integrity in all areas of life, including academic study. All students are to practice intellectual honesty and avoid plagiarism in any form by (1) clearly acknowledging when they draw from the ideas or phrasing of other authors, (2) learning and using appropriate citation for sources consulted, (3) asking their instructor for guidance when they are uncertain of how to acknowledge the contributions of others in their thinking and writing. The need for appropriate citation in all written assignments includes all references to Scripture and required course readings. Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is a serious offense that will result in a failing grade on the plagiarized assignment and possible failure of the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

GRADE FORMULA

ASSIGNMENT 1	10%
ASSIGNMENT 2	10%
ASSIGNMENT 3	20%
ASSIGNMENT 4	10%
ASSIGNMENT 5	20%
ASSIGNMENT 6	20%
CLASS PARTICIPATION	10%

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SESSION ONE | SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2020 | TORAH

I. READINGS

- a. Read *Inspired* (Evans) chapters "Introduction," "The Temple & Origin Stories," "The Well & Deliverance Stories," "The Walls & War Stories," "The Debate & Wisdom Stories," "The Beast & Resistance Stories," and "And Then..." before our first session and complete Assignment 1 below.
- b. Read *The Pentateuch* (Fretheim) in its entirety before our first session and complete Assignment 2 below.
- c. Read the entire Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) from the Jewish Study Bible before class on September 25.

II. ASSIGNMENT 1 (Due Friday, September 25)

- a. Complete a **2-page reflection paper** on the 7 chapters you've read from Rachel Held Evans' *Inspired* summarizing the key points of each chapter, using no less than 2 sentences and no more than one paragraph per chapter.

III. ASSIGNMENT 2 (Due Friday, September 25)

- a. Complete a **3-5-page reflection paper** discussing the various methods for studying Scripture and the benefits and limitations of each based on Part One of the Fretheim's book. Be sure to include the (1) historical-critical method (the world behind the text), (2) literary criticism (the world within the text), and (3) reader-centered approach (the world in front of the text). In the paper's conclusion, please note which methods you find most helpful in interpreting the text for ministry and why.

IV. ASSIGNMENT 3 (Due Saturday, September 26)

- a. Students will be sorted into 5 groups during our first Friday evening class and each group will be assigned one book of the Torah.
- b. Members of each group will be given time in class Friday evening/Saturday morning to review their assigned book of Scripture in the Jewish Study Bible, including margin notes. They will also review Fretheim's chapter on their assignment book of Torah from his text, *The Pentateuch*, and any relevant chapters of Evans' *Inspired*.
- c. Students will work together in class to use the Jewish Study Bible, Fretheim's designated chapter on their assigned book of Torah, and (where applicable) Evans' chapter on the stories of their assigned book to prepare and present a **10 minute group presentation** on the literary structure and significant themes of their book to the class on Saturday, September 26.

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V. **ASSIGNMENT 4 (Due Friday, October 9)**

- a. Each student should complete a **2-page reflection paper** summarizing Fretheim's chapter on their groups' assigned book of Torah to be turned in Friday, October 9.

VI. **ASSIGNMENT 5 (Due Friday, October 9)**

Complete a **5-page paper** on a reference to Torah found elsewhere in the canon (including the Prophets and Writings of the Old Testament or any book of the New Testament). Address the following questions in your paper:

- a. What causes you to believe this is a reference to a particular passage of Torah? Cite book, chapter, and verse.
- b. What is the original context of the passage in Torah?
- c. What is the context of the passage where Torah is referenced elsewhere in the canon?
- d. How does the original context of the passage provide fresh meaning to the reference elsewhere in the canon?
- e. What truths about humanity, God, and their relationship to one another are revealed through this use of Torah?
- f. POSSIBLE TOPICS: *If you wish to choose another passage, you must approve this with the instructor via email by Saturday, October 7*
 - i. Matthew 4:1-4 (Deuteronomy 8:3)
 - ii. Matthew 4:5-6 (Psalm 91:11-12)
 - iii. Matthew 4:7 (Deuteronomy 6:16)
 - iv. Matthew 4:8-11 (Deuteronomy 6:13)
 - v. Matthew 23:35 (Genesis 4:1-8)
 - vi. Matthew 24:37 (Genesis 6:5-8)
 - vii. Matthew 27:46 (Psalm 22:1)
 - viii. Romans 5:14-15 (Genesis 3:1-19)
 - ix. Romans 9:17-18 (Exodus 9:16)
 - x. Jude 1:4, 11-13 (Genesis 4:1-8, Numbers 22, Numbers 16:1-32)

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SESSION TWO | OCTOBER 9-10, 2020 | ISRAEL'S HISTORY FROM EGYPT TO EXILE

VII. READINGS

- a. Skim Chapters 1-6, 11-18, 22-24, 27-28 from *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction*; skim the other chapters and take note of any questions
- b. Read Chapters 1-12 from *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*

VIII. ASSIGNMENT 6 (Due Friday, October 23)

You will be given time in class to begin preparing a **3-week Bible study** on the role of wilderness in the Israelites' spiritual and cultural identity. The study should build from week to week with a cohesive theme, and each week should include:

- a. One key passage (anywhere from one verse to one chapter) describing a significant experience of the entire people (or significant person or group from within the people) of Israel in the wilderness
- b. Explanation of why you chose this passage; What does it tell us about who God has created and called the Israelites to be?
- c. At least 4 discussion questions based upon the significant themes you have identified through exegesis of the passage; Questions should be open-ended to encourage discussion (i.e. the answer should not be "Yes," "No," or "Jesus")
- d. An invitation for participants to reflect on the lessons the Christian church can learn from this story about God and God's people Israel that explains our role as Gentiles grafted into the family tree of Israel
- e. Provide legible notes on all exegesis of each passage, including:
 - i. Copies of the 5 or more English translations of the passage with your notes (may be typed or handwritten)
 - ii. Annotated bibliography (1-2 sentences per source) of any secondary sources used to provide commentary on the passage. Commentaries not listed in the resources section of the syllabus must be approved by instructor in advance.