

# Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

## **HEB 2367-25492: Scripture and Script: The Bible and Contemporary Art, Media and Literature**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**SEMESTER:** Fall 2017

**DAY/TIME:**

**CLASSROOM:**

**OFFICE:**

**OFFICE HOURS:**

**EMAIL:**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Bible is a foundational text for contemporary art, literature, and political discourse as well as a sacred text for several religious traditions. This course explores narratives from the Bible in translation and the ways contemporary authors have used them in literary, poetic, artistic and cinematic productions to reflect moral, familial and societal successes, struggles and confusions. The course focuses on American cultural productions, including work of American poets, writers, filmmakers, sculptors, and the role of some biblical texts in American political discourse and social and cultural criticism. It also includes work of European and Middle Eastern writers and artists. The class will examine the Creation story, binding of Isaac, the Exodus from Egypt, as well as selections from prophetic and wisdom texts. Students will read biblical texts closely (with attention to stylistic elements such as character development, narrative themes and structure) and then analyze interpretations of those texts in modern and contemporary literature, film, poetry and arts. By looking at old texts and new interpretations, the course aims to provide students opportunities to see their own cultural contexts

anew and to determine how the Bible might or might not be considered relevant to our time.

## **STUDYING THE BIBLE IN AN ACADEMIC CONTEXT**

No prior knowledge of the Bible is required or expected, but the class requires an open mind. This course examines texts that some hold to be sacred and may challenge beliefs that some hold to be formative of their worldview. In all of these investigations, we take the academic approach of critical inquiry, assessment of sources and consideration of multiple perspectives. This can be challenging to some people of faith, whatever that faith may be. I am here to help you navigate these challenges if they arise, as we embark together on this intellectual endeavor.

We begin the course with some reflections on studying the Bible from a historical perspective and from a literary perspective. The literary method is a primary skill taught in the class and is a different way to approach the Bible than one would find in a devotional context. When discussing the Bible in class, the class will take the attitude of outside observer, regardless of personal background. The students with previous knowledge should take care not to assume the role of informant or pastor, but rather to maintain the role of student. **The "we" in class should as far as possible be the "we" of the class community.**

The class seeks to create an atmosphere where it is comfortable for students to occupy a place of “not knowing,” and to explore ideas and texts from a position of curious “not knowing” rather than everyone sharing what they already know.

## **HEBREW 2367 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

*General Education: Writing and Communication 2*

Goals: Students are skilled in written communication and expression, reading, critical thinking, oral expression and visual expression.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Through critical analysis, discussion, and writing, students extend the ability to read carefully and express ideas effectively.
2. Students apply written, oral, and visual communication skills and conventions of academic discourse to the challenges of a specific discipline.
3. Students access and use information critically and analytically.

### *General Education: Visual and Performing Arts*

Goals: Students evaluate significant works of art in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant works of art.
2. Students engage in informed observation and/or active participation in a discipline within the visual, spatial, and performing arts.

### *Course-Specific Expected Learning Outcomes:*

1. Students demonstrate knowledge of arts produced within American and world cultures that relate to the Bible.
2. Students use critical- concept “intertextuality” to make connections between Bible and contemporary cultural productions in the US and worldwide.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

All available from the [Student Book Exchange](#) except for the COURSE READER, which must be ordered from University Readers. Details below.

1. HEBREW 2367 COURSE READER from University Readers\*
2. JEWISH STUDY BIBLE, ED. ADELE BERLIN

9780199978465

Pub: OXF, Edition: 2<sup>nd</sup> or an earlier version, 2004-2014, hard or soft cover

Status: REQUIRED

3. MEGILLAT ESTHER, BY J.T. WALDMAN

9780827607880

Pub: JPS

Year: 2005

Status: REQUIRED

4. THE SECRET CHORD, BY GERALDINE BROOKS

9780670025770

Pub: VIKING, Edition: 1

Year: 2015

Status: REQUIRED

5. Videos for required viewing will be accessible streaming through the [secured media library](#) or open access online for homework. There will be some in-class viewings.

**\*ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS FOR HEBREW 2367 COURSE READER**

Please keep in mind that our institution adheres to copyright law—copyrighted material should not be copied or duplicated in any manner.

To purchase the text, please follow the instructions below:

**Step 1:** Log on to <https://students.universityreaders.com/store/>.

**Step 2:** Choose the correct course pack, select a format, and proceed with the checkout process.

**Step 3:** After purchasing, you can access a digital copy of the first few chapters (if you selected a print format) or all chapters (if you selected a digital format\*) by logging into your account and clicking "**My Digital Materials**" to get started on your reading right away.

Print orders are typically processed within 24 hours; the shipping time and price will depend on the selected shipping method and day it is shipped (orders are not shipped on Sundays or holidays).

\*Digital access: To access digital materials, you will need an Adobe ID and the free Adobe Digital Editions (ADE) software installed on your computer. Visit [https://students.universityreaders.com/store/digital\\_adobe](https://students.universityreaders.com/store/digital_adobe) for easy instructions and a video walkthrough of the process. Once you download the digital pack you can access it online or offline at any time on your computer, tablet, or smart phone. You can also annotate, highlight, and search the content. Please note that the digital rental expires after six months.

If you experience any difficulties, please email [orders@universityreaders.com](mailto:orders@universityreaders.com) or call 800.200.3908 ext. 503.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT**

Further details and instructions for each assignment are on Carmen.

### **1) Oral Presentation 10%**

Due dates vary by student, see schedule on Carmen. Students may switch dates if another student agrees. Content typically based on journal entry for that class, see Carmen for details and rubric for assessment.

### **2) Midterm Examination 30% (In-class: 10/18/2017)**

This will be an in-class writing assignment in which you write an original example of "fan fiction" based on a text from the Hebrew

Bible. You should choose your passage from the Bible ahead of time. It may not be a passage we have studied together in class, and it should be from the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible. You may bring to the exam one 5x8 card with notes (on both sides) or an outline of what you want to write during the midterm. You may also bring a bible to refer to during the exam. You will have the entire length of class to write this piece of fiction.

This piece of fiction should reimagine a character or narrative from the biblical text in a new way. Some popular ways of doing this are to narrate the story from the perspective of a marginal character, to take the perspective of the anti-hero, or to imagine the events on a different planet, or time or context, and explore how those social structures might change and affect where the story might go. The fiction you write will be graded on originality, on bringing to light something unexpected from the biblical text, or its themes or social implications, as well as on your use of language in creative writing, such as creative use of dialogue, rich or unexpected descriptions, and staying away from worn-out language like cliché. You must bring blue books and a pen to write. Skip lines.

**3) Abstract of Final Paper (Complete/Incomplete) 5% (Due 10/23/17)**

See Carmen for details.

**4) Outline of Final Paper (Complete/Incomplete) 5% (Due 11/13/16)**

See Carmen for details.

**5) Online Journal and Homework 10% (Due via Carmen 11.10am each class, all entries must be submitted by 11.10am 12/6/2017)**

Completion of required journal writing each week, see Carmen for detailed instructions. This is a single assignment with multiple submissions. For each class when a journal entry is due (all classes except: first class of semester, Field trips, midterm, midterm writing workshop, classes on *The Secret Chord*, and days when class does not meet), upload your journal entry. After the first lecture, this will involve

using the "resubmit" button. Keep adding entries to the **same text document**, dating and titling each entry with the name of the reading/viewing. By the end of the semester your journal will have **24** entries. The four lectures in which we study *The Secret Chord* have a different homework, these worksheets are found on the Assignments page. Completion of them will be counted as completion of a journal entry for that session. **To repeat: no journal entries are due for sessions on the Secret Chord, but oral presentations will take place.**

**6) Choice of Three Journal Entries for Assessment 10% (Due via Carmen 11/20/17, 11.10am)**

See Carmen for details.

**7) Final Paper 30% (Due via Carmen 12/11/17, 11.59pm)**

5 double-spaced pages analyzing a contemporary text and its relationship to a specific biblical passage. A full description of the paper and the list of possible paper topics will be posted on Carmen. You have the opportunity to propose your own paper topic or to choose one from Carmen. During a research skills workshop in the library, Dr. Joseph Galron (our course's research librarian) and I will work with you to help you choose possible research topics for the formal paper. You will turn in an **abstract** of the paper, a detailed **outline** of this paper, to which I will respond, and the final paper is due **via Carmen**. Details on the abstract, outline and paper are on Carmen under "Assignments."

The paper must be double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font with 1" margins on each side. **SAVE THE FILE NAME IN THIS FORMAT: yourname\_assignmenttitle. Upload the essays in .docx, .doc or .pdf. Do not use Pages.**

If you choose your own paper topic, which I recommend, you may not address a piece of art or media that interacts with a biblical passage we have already studied in class. **To be clear – this means no Creation stories, Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, Flood stories, Exodus from Egypt or other texts we study. Popular Hebrew biblical texts we do**

**not read together in this class include:** Jonah and other minor prophets, Daniel, Joshua, Judges, Kings, other parts of the books of Samuel besides David stories, Major prophets with the exception of a small piece of Jeremiah, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, and much more. We only address one Psalm and no Proverbs, so selections from these books are available as well. Popular figures we do not address include: King Saul, Deborah the Prophet, Yael, Miriam, King Solomon, Ruth and Naomi, Samson, Jephthah and many others. Our research session in Thompson library will give you ideas on how to find good texts or arts to work with.

## **LETTER GRADES AND PERCENTAGE CONVERSIONS**

This course uses the OSU standard conversion of letter grades to percentages, which consist of a **range of values**. For consistency, your letter grade on an assignment will translate to ***the low boundary of that grade's range***. So, for example, an A will convert to 93%, a B to 83%, and so on, unless otherwise noted. Please bear this in mind as you follow your progress in Gradebook.

93 -100 A (4.0)

90 - 92 A- (3.7)

87 - 89 B+ (3.3)

83 - 86 B (3.0)

80 - 82 B- (2.7)

77 - 79 C+ (2.3)

73 - 76 C (2.0)

70 - 72 C- (1.7)

67 - 69 D+ (1.3)

60 - 66 D (1.0)

59 and below E (0.0)

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance at lectures and discussion sections is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will result in a percentage point deducted from the

final grade for each absence. A sign-in sheet will be available at the start of each class.

### **ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Any student who feels s/he/they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. We are all differently able. I want this class to allow all students to succeed.

This is particularly important for examinations and assignments. Please inform me at the beginning of the semester if you will need extra time or other accommodations, to ensure we have time to work out the details. If there are ways that the classroom experience can be made optimum for your registered disability, also contact me as soon as possible, and I will consult with the ODS. I am eager to learn about making all of my classes as suitable as possible for all students.

### **PARENTS & CAREGIVERS IN A FEMINIST CLASSROOM**

Many students are also parents or caregivers for children and/or other loved ones. Students in this position may sometimes need their academic and caregiving lives to overlap. If you need to bring your child or loved one to class, please don't hesitate to let me know, and we will welcome their participation in class. (I do appreciate an advance heads-up when possible). OSU's [ACCESS](#) program also offers free support for single parents, including childcare. Using our schedule of topics below, you can determine which days you would feel comfortable having your child or loved one in class.

### **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes

all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>).”

**SAFETY**

FOR YOUR SAFETY, the OSU Student Safety/Escort Service is available after 7 p.m. by dialing 292-3322.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>
Wed 8/23	Introduction <b>No Readings.</b> Fill out self-assessment of skills and approaches at beginning of semester.
Mon 8/28	What is Reading and Who Makes Meaning in a Text? <b>Readings:</b> Bennett and Royal, “Readers and Reading,” (Reader); Roland Barthes, “Toys” (Reader), Intertextuality by Daniel Boyarin (Reader)
Wed 8/30	How Do You Read the Bible as Literature? <b>Reading:</b> Robert Alter, “A Literary Approach to the Bible” (Reader)
Mon 9/4	<b>Labor Day No Classes</b>

Wed 9/6	<p>The Creation Stories</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> Genesis 1-2 (JPS TaNaKh) James Weldon Johnson, "The Creation" (Reader)</p>
Mon 9/11	<p>Eve and Adam</p> <p><b>Reading/Viewing:</b> Review Genesis 1-2, "She Unnames Them" by Ursula K. LeGuin (Reader); <i>The Twilight Zone</i>, "Probe 7, Over and Out" (11/29/1963) (Secured media library)</p>
Wed 9/13	<p>Film Introduction and Partial Screening: <i>Pleasantville</i></p> <p>Genesis 1-2. Class will include discussion of how to watch a film critically.</p>
Mon 9/18	<p><i>Pleasantville</i> and the Garden of Eden</p> <p><b>No Additional Reading, Viewing:</b> Finish <i>Pleasantville</i> and bring notes to class (Stream via secure media library)</p>
Wed 9/20	<p>Abel and Cain</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Genesis 3-4; Dan Pagis, "Scrawled in Pencil in a Sealed Train Car," (Reader), Amir Gilboa, "And My Brother Said Nothing," (Reader) Yehuda Amichai, "The Bible, The Bible, With You, With You" (Reader)</p>

<p>Mon 9/25</p>	<p>Ancient and Modern Resonances of Great Floods – Part 1</p> <p><b>In-class viewing and discussion:</b>          “Noah” directed by Darren Aronovsky, 2014.</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Genesis 6-9; Excerpt from 1 Enoch and Encyclopedia article on 1 Enoch (both on Carmen)</p>
<p>Wed 9/27</p>	<p>Ancient and Modern Resonances of Great Floods – Part 2</p> <p><b>Reading/Viewing:</b> Excerpts from “The Story of Atrahasis” (Reader); write brief notes in response to questions, bring to class. Complete “Noah” (2014) at home, via secured media library. Note main themes of film, citing plot and film techniques. Bring notes to class.</p>
<p>Mon 10/2</p>	<p>The Binding of Isaac in Literature and Satire</p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <p>Genesis 15-24; Wilfred Owen, “The Parable of the Old Man and the Young” (Reader); Haim Gouri, “Heritage” (Reader); Erich Auerbach, “Odysseus’ Scar” (Reader); Sketch from <i>That Mitchell and Webb Look</i> (link on course page, in “Pages”)</p>

Wed 10/4	<b>Research Workshop</b> for Final Paper with Prof. Joseph Galron at <b>Thompson Library</b>
Mon 10/9	The Binding of Isaac in Social Thought <b>Reading:</b> Excerpt by Mary McNoughton, quoted in Daphne Hampson, <i>After Christianity</i> (Reader); Tova Hartman, "But I Grieve for My Mother: The Betrayal of Iphigenia and Isaac" (Reader)
Wed 10/11	Exodus and Liberation in American Culture <b>Readings/ Viewings:</b> Exodus 1-3; Ex. 7-11, Ex. 12:29-42, Ex. 13:17-14:31; Robin D. Kelley, "Dreams of the New Land" in <i>Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination</i> (Reader); Videos of Rennie Harris' "Exodus" performed by the Alvin Ailey Dance Company (course page)
Mon 10/16	Film Introduction and Viewing: Dekalog 1 <b>Reading:</b> Exodus 19-20
Wed 10/18	Kieslowski's Dekalog: Law and Religion <b>Viewing:</b> Dekalog episode 2 (Stream via secure media library). Bring notes from both episodes <b>Paper Abstract Due</b>
Mon 10/23	<b>Midterm Exam</b>

Wed 10/25	<b>Midterm Writing Workshop</b>
Mon 10/30	<p>Introducing the Prophets and Biblical Prophecy</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> II Samuel 11-12; Jeremiah 22, 26, 7, 36 (in that order); Yehuda Amichai, “My Mother was a Prophet” (Reader)</p>
Wed 11/1	<p>Prophecy and Pulp Fiction</p> <p><b>Reading/Viewing:</b> Ezekiel 25:15-17; <i>Pulp Fiction</i>, Q. Tarantino, et.al, Mirimax, 1994 (stream via secured media library)</p>
Mon 11/6	<p>Prophets: King David: Inventing a Backstory</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> 1 Samuel 16</p> <p>Geraldine Brooks, <i>The Secret Chord</i> ch. 1-4 (pp. 1-63). <b>Secret Chord Worksheet 1, no journal entry</b></p>
Wed 11/8	<p>Perceptions of Prophecy by Prophet and Others</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> 1 Samuel chapters 25-27; 2 Samuel 1:18-27; 2 Samuel 11; Geraldine Brooks, <i>The Secret Chord</i> ch. 5-7 (pp. 64-96). <b>Secret Chord Worksheet 2, no journal entry</b></p>

<p>Mon 11/13</p>	<p>King David: Music and Mayhem</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> 1 Samuel ch. 18-20, 1 Samuel ch.31- 2 Samuel 1; 2 Samuel 2-3; Geraldine Brooks, <i>The Secret Chord</i> ch. 8-10 (pp. 97-160). <b>Secret Chord Worksheet 3, no journal entry</b></p> <p><b>Paper Outline Due via Carmen</b></p>
<p>Wed 11/15</p>	<p>Women’s Perspectives in the Story of King David</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> 2 Samuel 3:12-16; 2 Samuel 6; Review 2 Samuel 11; Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 12:15-25</p> <p>Geraldine Brooks, <i>The Secret Chord</i> ch. 11-15 (pp.161-212). <b>Secret Chord Worksheet 4, no journal entry</b></p>
<p>Mon 11/20</p>	<p><b>No Class</b> - Prof at American Academy of Religion Conference</p> <p><b>Choice of Three Journal Entries for Assessment Due Via Carmen</b></p>
<p>Wed 11/22</p>	<p><b>Thanksgiving Break No Class</b></p>
<p>Mon 11/27</p>	<p>Is Job “A Serious Man?”</p> <p><b>Reading/Viewing:</b> Job 1-3, 29-31, 38-42; <i>A Serious Man</i>, (2009) Focus Features, Dir. Joel and Ethan Coen (stream via secure media library)</p> <p><b>Recommended reading:</b> Robert Alter, “Job: Introduction” (Reader)</p>

Wed 11/29	<p>The Book of Esther and Forms of Power</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> The Book of Esther (JPS TaNaKh)</p>
Mon 12/4	<p>Esther and Graphic Narrative</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> J.T. Waldman, <i>Megillat Esther</i>; Hillary Chute, "Comics as Literature? Reading Graphic Narrative" (Reader)</p>
Wed 12/6	<p>Psalms and the Meaning of Life</p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Psalm 90; Ecclesiastes 1, 3; Yehuda Amichai, "A Man in His Life," (Reader), Pete Seeger, "Turn! Turn! Turn!" and the Byrds version (both on youtube)</p> <p><b>SEIs and Departmental Reviews. Fill out self-assessment, as first class.</b></p>
Mon 12/11 11.59 pm	<b>Final Project Due Via Carmen</b>