

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.

HEBREW / JEWISH STUDIES 5802
THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN BIBLICAL AND POST-BIBLICAL LITERATURE
Autumn 2015
Meeting Time/location:

Instructor:
Office Hours:

Phone:
Email:

Class will not meet on September 15, 29; October 6, 15; November 26
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OBJECTIVES:

If there is a God, and He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and wholly benevolent, how can evil exist? The Bible raises this question — the problem of evil — many times in different contexts and ways. Through extensive reading in primary and secondary sources relating to theodicies, students will gain an appreciation of religious thought among the ancient Israelites and their Near Eastern neighbors as well as later Jewish approaches to theodicy. All readings will be done in English translation.

CLASSWORK:

1. Students are expected to attend all classes. In the event of absence, please contact other students for material covered in class. Please notify the instructor in advance of any unavoidable absences.
2. Students are expected to participate in class.
3. Students are expected to arrive punctually for class.

HOMEWORK (10%):

Students are expected to keep an electronic journal in which they record their reactions to the assigned primary sources. Journal entries should be emailed to the instructor weekly at the conclusion of the last class that week. The instructor will read all entries and offer comments, but the entries will not be graded.

BOOK REVIEW (30%)

There will be one book review of **five** pages (1,250 words). Guidelines and a list of books will be provided in a separate document. The reviews are to be submitted electronically via the Carmen Dropbox. They will be due on **Thursday, October 8**. Late essays will not be accepted.

TERM PAPER AND PRESENTATION (30%):

In consultation with the instructor, each student will write a term-paper (1,500-2,000 words) on a topic to be determined. Students will be asked to make short (ten-minute) presentations to the class on their research prior to submission. Timeline:

Tuesday, October 20: Topics must be fixed

November 5 or 10: Student presentations

Tuesday, November 17: Papers due (electronic submission via Carmen Dropbox)

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAMINATION (30%):

The Final Examination will be distributed on **Monday, December 7**. It must be returned by **Friday, December 11**. Further information on the examination's structure will be forthcoming.

GRADING:

The final grade will be calculated on the following basis:

Journal:	10%
Book Review:	30%
Term Paper and Presentation:	30%
Final Examination:	30%

REQUIRED READINGS:

In addition to the assigned readings from the Bible, some required secondary literature will be posted on CARMEN. You may use virtually any English translation of the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament, e.g., the King James Version (KJV), the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the New International Version (NIV), or the new Jewish Publication Society translation (NJPS, a.k.a. the *TANAKH*). (Some translations, e.g., the "Good News Bible," are, however, too paraphrastic to be suitable for this course.)

→ **RECOMMENDED TEXT** (available from SBX):

Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler (eds.), *The Jewish Study Bible: Featuring the Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation*. pbk. Oxford University Press, 2004; 2d ed., 2014. [=JSB]
ISBN: 0195297547

•NOTE:

Readings will also be drawn from *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan (1993). [electronic resource available online via the OSU libraries catalogue] [=OCB]

Other required readings will be posted on CARMEN.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

You can consult the Bible online; this site offers a number of different translations:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/>

OTHER INTERNET RESOURCES:

Bible Research: Internet Resources for Students of Scripture

<http://www.bible-researcher.com>

Old Testament Gateway

<http://www.otgateway.com>

The Old Testament and the Ancient Near East (Ralph W. Klein)

<http://prophetess.lstc.edu/~rklein>

Okeanos: Ancient Near Eastern Studies

<http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/okeanos.html>

Bible Studies on the Web

<http://www.bsw.org>

STUDENT CONDUCT:

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://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Grading Scale:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	85-89
B	80-84
B-	75-79
C+	70-74
C	65-69
C-	60-64
D+	55-59
D	50-54
D-	45-49
E	<45

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SCHEDULE

Tuesday, August 25

1. Introduction

Readings (to be done after the first class):

Evil_ER2

Evil_OCB

Mackie-Evil&Omnipotence

Thursday, August 27

2. Genesis I: Chaos and Order

Readings:

Creation_OCB

Genesis,The_Book_of_OCB

Names_of_God_in_the_Hebrew_Bible_OCB

Tuesday, September 1

3. Genesis 1: Mesopotamian Parallels

Readings:

Atrahasis_trans_Frymer-Kensky

Atrahasis_ER2

Enuma Elish (King1902)

Thursday, September 3

4. Genesis 1-2: The Natural Order

Readings:

Knight-Cosmogony_&_Order

Kugel-Creation_of_World

Tuesday, September 8

5. Genesis 3: In the Garden of Eden (Pt. I)

Readings:

Leith-Back_to_the_Garden

Thursday, September 10

6. Genesis 3: In the Garden of Eden (II)

Readings:

Milgrom-Sex_&_Wisdom

Tuesday, September 15

No Class (Rosh Hashanah)

Thursday, September 17

7. Genesis 3: In the Garden of Eden (III)

Readings:

Kugel-Adam_&_Eve

Tuesday, September 22

8. Genesis 4: Cain and Abel

Readings:

Myth_OCB

Thursday, September 24

9. Genesis 6-9: The Flood (I)

Readings:

Flood,The_ER2

Tuesday, September 29

No Class (Sukkot)

Thursday, October 1

10. Genesis 6-9: The Flood (II)

Readings:

Gilgamesh_Epic_OCB

Gilgamesh_ER2

Gilgamesh-Flood

Frymer-Kensky-Babylonian_Flood_Stories_&_Genesis

Tuesday, October 6

No Class (Simhat Torah)

Thursday, October 8

Book Reviews Due

11. Genesis 18-19: The Destruction of Sodom

Readings:

Sarna-Understanding_ch8

Tuesday, October 13

12. Genesis 22: The Binding of Isaac (I)

Readings:

Sarna-Understanding_ch9

Thursday, October 15

No Class (Autumn Break)

Tuesday, October 20

Term Paper Topics Due

13. Genesis 22: The Binding of Isaac (II)

Readings:

Manns-Sacrifice_of_Isaac_Appendices [These are primary sources]

Levenson-Ch14_Rewritten_Aqedah

Thursday, October 22

14. Genesis 22: The Binding of Isaac (III)

Readings:

Tuesday, October 27

15. Hardening Pharaoh's Heart (I): The Problem

Readings:

1. Exodus chs. 4-11, and 14. Note especially the following verses: Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17
2. Currid-Why_Did_God_Harden_Pharaoh's_Heart [Carmen]
3. Exodus7,3_Medieval_Commentaries [Carmen]

Question to consider (for electronic journal):

If God is beneficent, how can He compel Pharaoh to behave wickedly and then punish him? Is this not a violation of human freedom of will? Doesn't God's interference absolve Pharaoh of responsibility for his refusal to let the Israelites go?

Thursday, October 29

16. Hardening Pharaoh's Heart (II): Free Will and Divine Punishment

Readings:

Maimonides, *Eight Chapters* (selection)
Maimonides, *Laws of Repentance* (selection)

Tuesday, November 3

17. Numbers 31: A "Holy War"?

Readings:

Saperstein-Least_Favorite_2010
Houtman-Theodicy_in_the_Pentateuch

Thursday, November 5

Oral Presentations

18. 2 Samuel 11-12: Atonement through punishment

Readings:

Tuesday, November 10

Oral Presentations

19. Theodicy and Prayer: Psalm 73

Readings:

Thursday, November 12

20. Job I (chs. 1-3)

Readings:

Clines+Milgrom-Deconstructing_the_Book_of_Job
Freedman-Is_It_Possible_to_Understand_Job
Greenstein-When_Job_Sued_God
Job_ER2
Satan_OCB
Suffering_ER2
Suffering_OCB

Tuesday, November 17

Term Papers Due

21. Job II (4-7)

Readings:

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Thursday, November 19
22. Job III (chs. 28-32-37)
Readings:

Tuesday, November 24
23. Job IV (chs. 38-42)
Readings:
Tsevat-Job

Thursday, November 26 **NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)**

Tuesday, December 1
24. Job V (reception: Maimonides)
Readings:

Thursday, December 3
25. Jonah
Readings:

Monday, December 7 Take-Home Final Examination Distributed (electronically)
26. Conclusion
Readings:

Friday, December 11 Take-Home Final Examination Due (electronic submission)