

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 7602
STUDIES IN HEBREW PROSE: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN BIBLICAL
& POST-BIBLICAL HEBREW LITERATURE
Autumn 2017
Meeting Time/Location

Instructor:
Office Hours:

Phone:
Email:

Class will not meet on September 21 and October 5
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DESCRIPTION:

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 Hebrew**, but use of English Bibles outside of class is permitted.

OBJECTIVES:

1. to introduce students to the problem of evil in the Hebrew Bible and certain postbiblical texts.
2. to acquaint students with the ancient contexts in which Jewish theodicies developed.
3. to familiarize students with key scholarly discussions of the subject.
4. to develop students' facility with reading and analyzing biblical Hebrew prose.

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.

QUIZZES (15%)

There will be **four** quizzes, each consisting of a short passage for translation and grammatical comment. The lowest grade will be dropped. quizzes will be given on **September 7, October 10, November 9, and November 30.**

BOOK REVIEW (25%)

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 **Tuesday, October 3.** Late essays will not be accepted.

TERM PAPER AND PRESENTATION (25%):

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 (25%):

The Final Examination will be distributed on **Monday, December 4.** It must be returned by **Friday, December 8.** Further information on the examination's structure will be forthcoming.

GRADING:

The final grade will be calculated on the following basis:

Journal:	10%
Quizzes:	15%
Book Review:	25%
Term Paper and Presentation:	25%
Final Examination:	25%

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 22

1. Introduction

Readings (to be done after the first class):

Evil_ER2

Evil_OCB

Mackie-Evil&Omnipotence

Thursday, August 24

2. Genesis I: Chaos and Order

Readings:

•Genesis 1 (Hebrew)

Creation_OCB

Genesis,The_Book_of_OCB

Names_of_God_in_the_Hebrew_Bible_OCB

Tuesday, August 29

3. Genesis 1: Mesopotamian Parallels

Readings:

Atrahasis_trans_Frymer-Kensky

Atrahasis_ER2

Enuma Elish (King1902)

Thursday, August 31

4. Genesis 1-2: The Natural Order

Readings:

•Genesis 2 (Hebrew)

Knight-Cosmogony_&_Order

Kugel-Creation_of_World

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Tuesday, September 5

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

Readings:

•Genesis 3 (Hebrew)

Leith-Back_to_the_Garden

Thursday, September 7

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

Readings:

Milgrom-Sex_&_Wisdom

Quiz No. 1 (Genesis 2-3)

Tuesday, September 12

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

Readings:

Kugel-Adam_&_Eve

Thursday, September 14

8. Genesis 4: Cain and Abel

Readings:

Myth_OCB

Tuesday, September 19

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

Readings:

Flood,The_ER2

Thursday, September 21

No Class (Rosh Hashanah)

Tuesday, September 26

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

Readings:

Gilgamesh_Epic_OCB

Gilgamesh_ER2

Gilgamesh-Flood

Frymer-Kensky-Babylonian_Flood_Stories_&_Genesis

Thursday, September 28

11. Genesis 18-19: The Destruction of Sodom

Readings:

Sarna-Understanding_ch8

Tuesday, October 3

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

Readings:

Sarna-Understanding_ch9

Book Reviews Due

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Thursday, October 5

No Class (Sukkot)

Tuesday, October 10

Quiz No. 2 (Genesis 22)

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

Readings:

Manns-Sacrifice_of_Isaac_Appendices [These are primary sources]

Levenson-Ch14_Rewritten_Aqedah

Thursday, October 12

No Class (Autumn Break)

Tuesday, October 17

Term Paper Topics Due

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

Readings:

Thursday, October 19

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?

Tuesday, October 24

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

Readings:

Maimonides, *Eight Chapters* (selection)

Maimonides, *Laws of Repentance* (selection)

Thursday, October 26

17. Numbers 31: A "Holy War"?

Readings:

Saperstein-Least_Favorite_2010

Houtman-Theodicy_in_the_Pentateuch

Tuesday, October 31

18. 2 Samuel 11-12: Atonement through punishment

Readings:

Thursday, November 2

Oral Presentations

19. Theodicy and Prayer: Psalm 73

Tuesday, November 7

Oral Presentations

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20. Job I (chs. 1-3) [Hebrew]

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

Thursday, November 9

Quiz No. 3 (Job 1-3)

21. Job II (4-7) [selection in Hebrew]

Readings:

Tuesday, November 14

Term Papers Due

22. Job III (chs. 28-32-37) [selection in Hebrew]

Readings:

Thursday, November 16

23. Job IV (chs. 38-42) [selection in Hebrew]

Readings:

Tsevat-Job

Tuesday, November 21

24. Job V (reception: Maimonides)

Readings:

- Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* (selection in Hebrew)

Thursday, November 23

NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Tuesday, November 28

25. Jonah (I)

Readings:

- Jonah chs. 1-2 (Hebrew)

Thursday, November 30

Quiz No. 4 (Jonah 1-2)

26. Jonah (I)

Readings:

- Jonah chs. 3-4 (Hebrew)

Monday, December 4

Take-Home Final Examination Distributed (electronically)

Friday, December 8

Take-Home Final Examination Due (electronic submission)