Introduction to the Old Testament

PAR 235-001 and 002
Department of Philosophy and Religion and Anthropology
UNC Wilmington Fall 2006
Dr. Theodore W. Burgh
Phone: 910-962-7660
burght@uncw.edu

Class Meetings: T-Th Section One 8:00-9:15; Section Two T-Th 9:30-10:45
AM Bear Hall 103
Office: 275 Bear Hall Office Hours T 11:00-12:00 PM; W 1:00-2:00 PM; by appointment

Online Syllabus

**Please note that a copy of the syllabus is online at my webpage. If there are changes with the syllabus during the semester I will post them on the online syllabus and do my best to announce them in class. Understand that you are responsible for keeping up with the online syllabus.

Course Description

The Bible permeates nearly every aspect of Western culture. Legal systems, politics, moral issues, and philosophy are some of the areas in which this text has and continues to influence. No book in the history of human civilization has functioned in such a unique and powerful way in western culture. For this reason, the study of the Bible as a document is essential in the study of the American culture.

This is a basic studies course, which explores a range of issues and inquiries related to the Bible regarding its nature, origin, composition, history, culture, setting, people, and their stories, and its teachings. Students analyze and analyze approaches to interpreting the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, how it impacts people’s lives, how the study of the text developed, and the reasons for its enduring presence. Students will examine the range of literary genre, symbolic metaphors, figures of speech and religious and theological themes.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you will:

1) gain knowledge about the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and its formation and history, from an interdisciplinary perspective, which includes geography, history, archaeology, language, literature, and religious studies;

2) understand the literary genre and the phenomenal survival of the HB/OT as a religious text or scripture and an important collection of literary works worthy of study in the University curriculum irrespective of one’s religious faith or confession;

3) gain an overview of the history, cultures, and peoples mentioned in the HB/OT; what might be learned from the Hebrews’ ideas of...
the sacred and the secular, ancient peoples’ communities, law and morality, pain and suffering, war and peace, honesty and deception, gender and sexuality, and better understand how family dynamics are approached in the biblical text.

Required Texts

-Matthews, V., and Moyer, J.

-Introduction to Old Testament Course Packet (Availably electronically through the UNCW library homepage; see explanation below)

-English Bible. Any modern translation will be fine. However, I ask that you not use the paraphrase editions, i.e., *Good News for Modern Man* or the Living Bible. If you are not sure about a version of the Bible, please check with the instructor!

Recommended Texts

Shanks, H., ed.


The instructor will announce any additional readings in class.

Course Requirements

Readings: You are expected to complete all required readings before class. In addition to the readings from the textbook, there will be several readings that you will find in the electronic course packet.
The “R” in the syllabus indicates reserve readings; “CP” = Course Packet; “M” = Matthews; “S” = Shanks, and “B” = Bible.

To access the electronic course packet, follow these instructions:
-Go the UNCW homepage: http://www.uncwil.edu/
-Click on “Library”: http://library.uncwil.edu/
-On the library homepage, click on “Search Course Reserves (to find class readings)”
-If you are accessing the library website from off campus a page may come up asking for some ID information. Once this is complete, you should be taken to "Welcome to Docutek ERes http://0-erreserve.randall.uncw.edu.uncclclcoast.uncwil.edu/eres/
-Click on “Electronic Reserves and Reserve Pages.” This will take you to the “Ereserves Index.”
-Select Philosophy and Religion” and Burgh, Theodore, and click on “Go.”
-Click on “Introduction to the Old Testament” to get the reading list.
-Click on “Accept”
-If there are any problems, please contact the instructor or the library.

-Exams: Midterm, Final, and any Pop Quizzes

-Group Project and Class Presentation:
  -Following are some examples of group projects:
    -Archaeological Aspect of Ancient Israel/Palestine and its relationship to the biblical text (e.g., Temples, Gates, Food Production, etc.)
    -Prophecy or a particular prophet
    -Specific biblical figures
    -Trade and relationships between Ancient Israel/Palestine and surrounding Near Eastern cultures
  -The group must select its own topic, and the instructor must approve all topics no later than October 5, 2006! (Note that Class presentations should be no more than 25 minutes or the instructor will stop you!)

-Final Paper (Please note that EACH person in the group must turn in a paper!): The Final Paper is on the subject that the group selected. The paper will be a maximum of 7 pages in length; PLEASE remember this as the instructor stops reading after page 7! Points will be deducted for not following instructions!

LATE PAPERS ARE NOT ACCEPTED. IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR ASAP!!!!!

-Other assignments will be announced in class.

-Students can choose the MLA or Chicago Style for paper documentation, but please remain consistent with the selected style. Be sure to eliminate spelling and grammar errors, etc. Represent yourself as best you can on paper. Also, PLEASE see the instructor or visit the Campus Writing Center if you have any questions or problems with writing your papers!

***PLEASE KEEP UP WITH THE READINGS THE BEST THAT YOU CAN, AS THE INSTRUCTOR WILL GIVE POP QUIZZES!

Disability Services

The University of North Carolina at Wilmington is open and accessible to students with disabilities. We are committed to providing assistance to enable qualified students to accomplish their educational goals, as well as assuring equal opportunity to derive all of the benefits of campus life. Disability Services has devoted much energy to meeting the requirements of Section 504, as a full-time advocate for students with disabilities, as well as a resource for faculty, staff and administration. Students needing accommodations should contact the director of Disability Services and provide appropriate documentation of the disability.

Performance Evaluations

The student's grade will be determined on the following basis:
Map Quiz (20 points)
Class Participation (30 points; e.g., participation, attendance, etc.)
PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT THREE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES MAY RESULT IN A MINIMUM
5 POINT DEDUCTION OF THE FINAL GRADE
Midterm (40 points)
Final (60 points)
Paper/Presentation (80 points: 30 points = presentation; 50 points = paper). LATE PAPERS, IF ACCEPTED, WILL BE REDUCED ONE LETTER GRADE PER
DAY UNLESS APPROVED BY THE INSTRUCTOR
Total Points: 230
***Points earned from quizzes or additional assignments will be added
to the point total

Class Attendance

Class attendance is the student’s responsibility. Students are
responsible for all assignments being handed in on time, obtaining
class notes or other assignments. Although there may be extra credit
class assignments, the instructor does not give extra credit work to
individual students. Also, class participation is part of the final
evaluation. You cannot participate if you are not present. If
emergencies or problems develop, please contact the instructor as soon
as possible.

Final grades will be assigned according to the following percentages of
the total possible points:

90% and above = A
80% and above = B
70% and above = C
60% and above = D
Below 60% = E

Honor Code

"The University of North Carolina at Wilmington is committed to
proposition that the pursuit of truth requires the presence of honesty
among all involved. It is therefore this institution’s stated policy
that no form of dishonesty among its faculty or students will be
tolerated. Although all members of the university community are
encouraged to report occurrences or dishonesty, honesty is principally
the responsibility of each individual.

Academic dishonesty takes many forms, from blatant acts of
cheating, stealing, or similar misdeeds to the more subtle forms of
plagiarism, all of which are totally out of place in an institution of
higher learning. Reporting and adjudication procedures have been
developed to enforce the policy of academic integrity, to ensure
justice, and to protect individual rights. Complete details may be
found in the current Code of Student Life" (Undergraduate Catalogue

Plagiarism
If you have questions regarding plagiarism, please visit the following
websites or ask the instructor.
http://library.uncw.edu/web/research/topic/plagiarism.html
http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm#anchor333333

4
Class Meetings

-Class Meeting One: Thursday, August 24: First Class Meeting. Discussion of Syllabus, Assignments, Course Objectives, etc. Geographical locations for the Map Quiz (see Electronic Reserve [pp 2-3 of syllabus] and Atlases in UNCW library for geographical locations)

-Class Meeting Two: Tuesday, August 29: **MAP QUIZ** What is the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament?

-Is there a difference between the Hebrew Bible and Old Testament?
  -If so, how would you explain the difference(s)?

-Class Meeting Three: Thursday, August 31: Formation of the Hebrew Canon (Biblical Criticism)

-Why do you think oral tradition/communication was so important in antiquity?
-Given the continuing development of technology today, is oral tradition/communication still important? Why or why not?

-Class Meeting Four: Tuesday, September 5: Literary Tools for Old Testament Study: Translation Issues

-What are some concerns that one has to consider when studying ancient translations?
-What are some translation concerns that we have to consider today in spoken and written languages?

-Class Meeting Five: Thursday, September 7: History and Geography of the Ancient Near East: The People and Land of the Hebrew Bible

-Why is geography important in studying the past?
-How would you describe the terrain where you live?
-How is it different from where you live or grew up and where you are presently?
-What are some the challenges or benefits of the different terrains?

-Class Meeting Six: Tuesday, September 12: Continued---History and Geography of the ANE: The People and Land of the Hebrew Bible

-What groups of people lived in the Ancient Near East?
-Where did they live?
-How would you describe them?

-Class Meeting Seven: Thursday, September 14: The Pentateuch---What is the Pentateuch?
Class Meeting Nine: Thursday, September 21: Creation Narratives Continued; Flood Narratives; Patriarchs

**Readings:** B (REQUIRED): Genesis 12-50; Also review pp 44-47 in M

Class Meeting Ten: Tuesday, September 26: The Exodus and Settlement Period

**Readings:** M (REQUIRED): "The Exodus-Settlement Period," pp 57-67;
B (REQUIRED): Exodus 1-40
S (RECOMMENDED): "Israel in Egypt," N. Sarna, pp 33-54
-Who was Moses?
-How would you describe him?
-Is there anyone today you would consider a type of "Moses"?

Class Meeting Eleven: Thursday, September 28: Exodus continued; Joshua, Family Stories in Early Israelite History

B (REQUIRED): Joshua 1-12
-How would you describe the family unit in the culture of Israel/Palestine?

Class Meeting Twelve: Tuesday, October 3: Joshua, Family Stories in Early Israelite History continued

**Readings:** B (REQUIRED): Joshua 13-24

Class Meeting Thirteen: Thursday, October 5: The Judges

B (REQUIRED): Judges 1-10
CP (STRONGLY RECOMMENDED): The Deities in Israel in the Period of the Judges," M. Smith, pp 151-60;
-What is a judge?
-What were the duties of the judge?
October 7-10 FALL BREAK

-Class Meeting Fourteen: Thursday, October 12: Midpoint Summary/Midterm Review


-Class Meeting Fifteen: Tuesday, October 17: MIDTERM

(Class Meeting Sixteen: Thursday, October 19: Transition from Judges to Monarchy in Ancient Israel

**Readings: M (REQUIRED): 93-110;

-Why did Israel want a king versus a judge?

-Class Meeting Seventeen: Tuesday, October 24: Monarchy of Israel

S (RECOMMENDED): "The United Monarchy," A. Lemaire, pp 91-128

-Using the information you've read in the biblical text, which system of government would you have chosen (if you had the opportunity): the system of judges or the monarchy? Why?

-Class Meeting Eighteen: Thursday, October 26: Divided Kingdom

**Readings: M (REQUIRED): pp 110-111
B (REQUIRED): I Kings 12-2 Kings 6:33

-Why did the monarchy split?

-Class Meeting Nineteen: Tuesday, October 31: Divided Kingdom

S (RECOMMENDED): "Divided Monarchy," S. Horn, pp 129-199

-Class Meeting Twenty: Thursday, November 2: Prophets

**Readings: M (REQUIRED): 113-176

-How would you define the term prophet?
-Are there any persons today that you would consider as prophets? Why?

-Class Meeting Twenty-One: Tuesday, November 7: Prophets Continued; Final Fall of Kingdom

**Readings: CP: "What Manner of Man is of the Prophet?" A. Herschel, pp 135-150.

-Class Meeting Twenty-Two: Thursday, November 9: Final Fall of Kingdom; Wisdom Literature

**Readings: M (REQUIRED): "Wisdom Literature, "pp 177-194

-Class Meeting Twenty-Three: Tuesday, November 14: Group Presentations/Workday

NO CLASS NOVEMBER 16 THROUGH NOVEMBER 26

-Class Meeting Twenty-Four: Tuesday, November 27: Group Presentations
Section 002 (9:30-10:45): Your Final Exam is Tuesday, December 12, 2006, 8:00AM-11:00AM in Bear 103

***Final Group Project Papers are due no later than Friday December 8, 9:30 AM. You can place them in the box at the instructor's office —Bear 275

E-MAILED PAPERS REQUIRE ALSO REQUIRE A HARDCOPY UNLESS ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE WITH THE INSTRUCTOR. PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT A PAPER "LOST" IN CYBERSPACE IS NOT AN EXCUSE. THE PAPER WILL STILL BE CONSIDERED LATE.

AS MENTIONED ABOVE, LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!