

## **Introduction to Judaism**

**Barat College**

Monday, Wednesday; 1:00-2:20

### **Instructor:**

Jim L. Papandrea, Ph.D.  
office hours by appointment

### **Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to gain an understanding of the history of the people called Hebrews, along with an understanding of their faith, as seen through their Scriptures, and in light of contemporary scholarship. We will survey the documents in the Hebrew Bible; that part of the Bible known to Christians as the Old Testament, in order to gain an understanding of the people called Hebrews from their own writings and in their own words. Using a historical and literary method, we will place the Jewish people and their faith into the context of the bigger historical picture, especially in relation to the Roman Empire and early Christianity.

### **Course Requirements**

Each class meeting will consist mainly of lecture and discussion, and questions and discussion are encouraged at all times. It is expected that all positions and opinions will be respected, and no sincere question will be excluded from our exploration. Reading assignments are to be done before each class meeting. Late assignments will be reduced in grade by one part of one letter for each class meeting that the assignment is late, unless previous arrangements are made with the instructor. In the case of emergencies, exceptions may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Late final exams will not be accepted, except in extreme cases, and then only at the instructor's discretion. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course.

Class participation: Attendance, reading preparation, and class discussion will effect the course grade, especially in the case of a borderline final grade. Students must bring their Bibles to each class (any modern version of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible is acceptable - see below), and be prepared to read aloud when called upon.

Exams: There will be two 5-7 page take-home exams: a mid-term exam and a final exam. (All papers for this course must be double-spaced.) The exams will focus on synthesizing material from the reading and lectures, specifically the main themes, events and characters of the history of Judaism, rather than the minor details of the biblical record. Each exam will count for 40% of the course grade.

## **CHOOSE FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

**Interpretation Paper:** Write a 5-7 page interpretation of a passage from the Bible, explaining what he or she thinks it meant in its original context as well as its significance for contemporary faith. The primary resources for this assignment will be the Bible itself and various Bible study aids. After the rough draft of the paper is written, students will meet in groups and compare their conclusions. Each student will then add a section to his or her paper outlining the findings of the group. Explain how other members of the group agreed or disagreed with your interpretation. Explain how your opinion of the passage changed (if at all) based on the group discussion. The interpretation paper will count for 20% of the course grade.

## **OR**

**Research Paper:** Write a 5-7 page research paper on any aspect of Judaism of your choice, from the time of the Monarchy through the 2nd century CE. Your paper must emphasize some aspect of Jewish faith or history not covered in the class lectures - in other words, your research will go beyond what was learned in class. This is not a book report on the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Outside research must be done, and it is not enough to simply retell the story. The research paper will count for 20% of the course grade.

## **Required Reading**

Ancient Israel by Hershel Shanks  
Excerpts from Josephus (on handouts)  
The Hebrew Bible / The Old Testament

Note: Any modern translation is acceptable. The best Bible translations are the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the New Revised Standard Bible (NRSB). Avoid the King James Version (KJV). Do not use a paraphrase such as the New International Version (NIV) or the Living Bible.

## **Supplemental Reading/Bible Study Aids**

The Oxford Bible Atlas  
The Bible as History by Werner Keller  
*Concordance*, such as Strong's or Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible  
*Bible Commentaries*, several good series are available, individual volumes are listed by the title of the biblical book dealt with  
*Encyclopedia of Biblical Studies*, such as the Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible

## Course Schedule

### **Week 1**

Introduction to the course and the Old Testament  
In the beginning: Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Tower of Babel

Read: Bible; Genesis 1:1-11:26

### **Week 2**

The Covenant - Adam, Abram (Abraham) & Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Moses

Read: Bible; Genesis 11:27-50:26

### **Week 3**

The Law, Holiness, and the Land

Read: Bible; Exodus 1:1-20:17  
Leviticus 11:1-47, 16:1-34  
Deuteronomy 6:1-14, 29:24-30:20

### **Week 4**

Hebrew Ritual

### **Week 5**

Introduction to the Historical Writings (or the “Former Prophets”)

### **Week 6** *Hand out Midterm Exam Question*

The Kings of Israel and Judah

Read: Bible; Joshua 1:1-6:27, 23:1-24:33  
Judges 2:6-23, 13:1-16:31  
I Samuel 16:1-19:10  
II Samuel 5:1-7:29, 11:1-12:31  
I Kings 1:1-6:1, 9:1-9, 11:1-13, 16:29-18:40  
II Kings 17:1-41, 22:1-25:30

**Week 7 *Midterm Exam Due***

The Kings of Israel and Judah , Continued

**Week 8**

The Divided Kingdom and the Exile

**Week 9 *Interpretation Paper Due***

The Prophetic Writings

Read: Bible; Jonah, entire book

Hosea 1:1-3:5

Micah 5:2-6:8

Isaiah 1:1-12:6, 40:1-56:8, 60:1-63:16

Jeremiah 1:1-5:31, 19:1-20:18, 23:1-22, 29:1-31:40

Ezekiel 1:1-2:6, 33:1-34:17

Daniel 1:1-8:27

Zechariah 1:1-6, 9:9-10

**Week 10**

The Prophetic Writings, Continued

**Week 11**

The Prophetic Writings, Continued

**Week 12**

Hebrew Poetry and Wisdom Literature

Read: Bible; Job 1:1-2:10, 38:1-42:17

Psalms 22, 23, 34, 37, 51, 139

Proverbs 16:1-17:3

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3:13

**Week 13** *Interpretation/Research Paper Due*

Hebrew Poetry and Wisdom Literature, Continued

**Week 14**

The Intertestamental Period & beyond  
Josephus

**Week 15** *Hand out Final Exam Question*

The Concept of Messiah & the Christian Church  
Concluding Thoughts

**Week 16 - No Class Exam Week**

*Final Exam Due*