

Western Jurisdiction Course of Study 2016

Claremont School of Theology

Year Two

COS 221 – Bible II: Torah, and Israel's History

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Course Description:

This course interprets the critical events, developing institutions, and traditions of Israel. Attention is given to the earliest Covenants, to the Exodus, to the rise of the monarchy, and to other events up to the eighth century prophets.

Course Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a historical overview of the experience and faith of ancient Israel.
2. Exegete selected passages that illustrate crucial turning points in the history of Israel.
3. Apply exegesis to preaching, other pastoral responsibilities, and issues of the present day.

Textbooks:

1. Required

NRSV Study Bible, either *Harper Collins Study Bible*, or *New Oxford Annotated Bible*.

John J. Collins. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

Terence E. Fretheim. *The Pentateuch*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.

2. Optional

James L. Mays., editor. *Harper's Bible Commentary*. Revised edition. San Francisco: Harper, 2000.

Course Requirements:

1. Pre-Class Assignment. Three short papers to be due at Session 1.
 - (i) Read Fretheim pages 19-38. Describe in your own words how Fretheim talks about author-centered, text-centered, and reader-centered approaches to the Bible. What does each focus on? What does Fretheim find uniquely promising about each of these three approaches? What does he see as their respective limitations? (4-5 pages, double-spaced).
 - (ii) Read Collins pages 183-279. What is the Deuteronomistic History? What is the historical context of its composition? What are its characteristic features, in terms of its literary genre and in terms of its theological claims about God and God's ways with people Israel? (4-5 pages, double-spaced).
 - (iii) Read carefully Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a and Genesis 2:4b-25. What are the major differences between these two creation stories? Contrast the major characteristics and themes. How are they developed? (8-10 pages, double-spaced).
2. Attendance and participation at every Session.
3. Assigned readings to be done beforehand.
4. 8-10 page, double-spaced, exegetical paper to be due at Session 7. This should be a historical or literary analysis and interpretation of an Old Testament text chosen in consultation with the Instructor.
5. Take-home Final Exam will be due at the final Session.

Grading:

1. Pre-class Assignment (three short papers) 30%
2. Class Attendance and Participation 20%
3. 8-10 page Exegetical Paper 25%
4. Take-home Final Exam 25%

Course Schedule:

Session 1:

General Introduction; Definition of Approaches and Methods; Canon and Text Issues; Overview of Ancient Near Eastern History; Overview of the Pentateuch/Torah; Source Criticism (Documentary Hypothesis); **Genesis**

Readings: Collins 1-105; Fretheim 19-38, 67-100.

Genesis; **Pre-Class Assignment due.**

Session 2:

Pentateuch/Torah: **Exodus/Leviticus.**

Readings: Collins 107-152; Fretheim 101-136.

Exodus; Leviticus.

Session 3:

Pentateuch/Torah: **Numbers/Deuteronomy**

Readings: Collins 153-179; Fretheim 137-170.

Numbers; Deuteronomy.

Session 4:

The Deuteronomistic History: **Joshua/ Judges**

Readings: Collins 183-215.

Joshua; Judges.

Session 5:

The Deuteronomistic History: **1-2 Samuel/1-2 Kings**

Readings: Collins 217-279.

1-2 Samuel; 1-2 Kings.

Hand out of the Take-home Final Exam.

Session 6:

Prophecy: Overview of Prophecy in the Ancient Near East and in Israel; **Amos/
Hosea**

Readings: Collins 283-306.

Amos; Hosea.

Session 7:

Prophecy: **Isaiah/Micah/Nahum/Zephaniah**

Readings: Collins 307- 329.

Isaiah; Micah; Nahum; Zephaniah

Exegetical Paper due; Take-home Final Exam due.

