

**TS3200L Hebrew Scriptures**  
**Meadville-Lombard Theological Seminary**  
**Online course, Fall 2010**

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**Course description:** In this class, we will become acquainted with 1) the library of laws, narrative, and poetry that is known as the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament and 2) the variety of interpretive strategies that have been used to understand that library. We will discuss the pre-history of the documents, the influence of oral tradition, and the texts' tantalizing relationship to ritual, myth, and history. Students will become familiar with critical methods of reading and converse with the great diversity of perspectives on the text that we find in scholarship, in the church, and in popular culture.

**Course Objectives:**

- To become familiar with the variety within the Hebrew scripture
- to become acquainted with what is known and guessed of the historic and cultural forces that shaped the scripture
- To be able to grasp the significance of readings from a variety of perspectives.
- To be able to articulate one's own interpretation so that it makes sense to others with differing beliefs.
- To develop an appreciation for the variety of ways in which the Hebrew scriptures have been and continue to be used and understood around the world.

**Course Requirements**

Informed and regular participation in online discussion	20%
Quiz 1	10%
Quiz 2	10%
Quiz 3	10%
2-page first impressions paper	5%
5-page history of interpretation paper	20%
5-page exegesis paper	25%

**Required Textbooks:**

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. Basic Books, 1983.

Bowley, James E. *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.

Bridge, Steven L. *Getting the Old Testament: What It Meant to Them, What It Means for Us*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2009. ISBN 159856045X.

Day, Linda, ed. *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World: An Introduction to Feminist Biblical Studies in Honor of Katherine Doob Sakenfeld*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Duran, Nicole. *Having Men for Dinner: Biblical Women's Deadly Banquets*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2006.

Patte, Daniel et al, eds. *The Global Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004.

**Recommended textbooks:**

De Young, Curtis Paul et al, eds. *The People's Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008.

Levenson, Jon. *Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*. New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1994.

Ringe, Sharon and Carol A Newsome, eds. *The Women's Bible Commentary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Sugirtharajah, R.S. *The Postcolonial Bible*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Weems, Renita J. *Just a Sister Away: Understanding the Timeless Connection between Women of Today and Women of the Bible*. West Bloomfield, MI: Warner Books, 1988.

NOTE: Each week, you will need to 1) do the reading 2) go online and participate in two separate discussions of the reading—one on the week's text, on one theories surrounding the text, and 3) email me two questions that have occurred to you as a result of that week's reading. The first of these emails will be due by Sept 13th.

Additional weekly readings from the Bridges and the Bowler texts will be posted in a revised edition of this syllabus soon.

Sept. 7 Scope and history, Part I: Hebrew narrative

Reading: Genesis 1-11

*GBC*, "Genesis"; Day, 60-88

Sept. 13 Scope and history, Part II: More Hebrew narrative

Reading: Genesis 12-50

Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*

Sept. 20 The Law

QUIZ 1

Reading: Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

*GBC*, "Leviticus," "Numbers," and "Deuteronomy"

Sept 27 The Conquest

Reading: Exodus and Joshua

*GBC*, "Exodus" and "Joshua;" Day, 186-214

**First impressions paper due Sept 17.**

Oct. 4 Women in/and the Bible

QUIZ 2

Reading: Ruth, Ezra, and Nehemiah

*GBC*, “Ruth,” “Ezra-Nehemiah;” Day 47-59 and 89-113

Oct. 11 Stories of Surviving

Gen 37-50; Daniel 1-6; Esther

*GBC*, “Daniel,” and “Esther”

Oct 18 READING WEEK

Oct 25 Food, Drink, Sex, and Death

Reading: Judges, Esther, Judith

*GBC*, “Judges,” “Esther” and “Judith”

Duran, 7-84

Nov. 1 The Saul and David Saga

**History of interpretation paper due Oct 25**

Reading: 1-2 Samuel; 1-2 Kings

*GBC*, “1 Samuel,” “2 Samuel,” “1 Kings,” “2 Kings”

Duran, 105-134

Nov. 8 Wisdom and the question of suffering

Reading: Job, Psalms

*GBC* “Job,” “Psalms;” Day, 166-85

QUIZ 3

Nov. 15 Wisdom continued

Reading: Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon

*GBC* “Ecclesiastes,” “Song of Songs;” Day, 114-27

Nov. 22 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Nov 29 Prophets prophesy prophecy: Part I: the call

Ezekiel 1-4; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Isaiah 1-6; Jonah

*GBC* “Isaiah 1-39,” “Jonah,” “Ezekiel”

Dec 6 Justice now and in the future

Reading: Amos, Isaiah 7-39, Jeremiah

*GBC*, “Amos,” “Jeremiah”

**Exegesis paper due Dec 6**