Old Testament Interpretation
Fall Course (first half)
John J. Collins

Course Goals:
1. To familiarize you with the content of the Old Testament and to provide basic exegetical skills.
2. To train you to think critically about the biblical material
3. To encourage you to reflect on the appropriate use of the Bible in the modern world.

Requirements
Grades will be based on
1. A mid-term examination, to be given on xxx. Exams will require factual knowledge of the content of the bible and will also include questions of interpretation.
2. An exegesis paper due on xxx. This paper should be 7 to 10 pages in length (typed, double-spaced) and should be given to the TA on the day that they are due. Papers that are turned in late without special permission will not be eligible for an Honors grade. The content of the paper will be the subject of a workshop on October 28.
3. A final examination, given during the normal exam period.

Note:
All written work must be your own. Sources must be properly documented.

Reading Assignments
Required books are available in the bookstore.

Required literature:
John J. Collins, Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Fortress, 2004)
John J. Collins, Does the Bible Legitimate Violence? (Fortress, 2004)
P. Trible, God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality (Fortress, 1978)
Packet of articles.

Class Schedule
Aug 3 1. Introduction. What is the OT.?
   Reading: Collins, Introduction.
   Miller and Hayes, chapter 1.
Sept. 2, 5 The ANE Context.
   Required Reading: Collins, Chapter 1.
Pritchard, ANET, Enuma Elish, Gilgamesh, Baal epic.

Sept. 7 Approaches to the study of the Pentateuch.

**Required Reading:** Collins, Chapter 2.
* R. Rendtorff, "The Yahwist as Theologian?" JSOT 3(1977)2-9

Sept. 9 Workshop on source criticism.
Barton, Reading the Old Testament, chapter 1.

Sept. 12-14 The Primeval History (Genesis 1-11).

**Required reading:** Genesis 1-11; Collins chapter 3.
P. Trible, God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality, 72-143

Sept. 16 Workshop on form criticism.

Reading:
* G. Tucker, Form-Criticism of the Old Testament, 1-41
Barton, Reading the OT, chapter 3.


**Required reading:** Genesis 12-50; Collins, chapter 4;
Miller and Hayes, Chapter 2.

Sept. 23 Workshop on literary approaches.

Reading:
* R. Alter, "Introduction," in The Literary Guide to the Bible
Barton, Reading the Old Testament, chapters 10 and 11.

Sept. 26-28

8 The origin of Yahwism (Exodus 1-6)
10 Egypt and Exodus (Exodus 7-18).

**Required reading:** Exodus 1-18. Collins chapter 5.
* W. Dever, "Israel, History of," ABD 3.546-7

Sept. 30 Preparation for Mid-term Exam.

Oct 3-5 Sinai

4 The revelation at Sinai
6 Book of the Covenant

**Required reading:** Exodus 19-24. Collins, Chapter 6

Oct 7 MID-TERM EXAM.

Oct 10-14: Reading Period.

Oct 17-19 The Priestly Source

Leviticus 1-16; Lev 27-Num 10
Leviticus 17-27

**Required reading:** Collins, chapter 7
* J. Milgrom, "Introduction," in Leviticus 1-16 (Anchor Bible)
  * M. Douglas, Purity and Danger, 41-57.

Oct 21 Section: Discussion of paper topics.

Oct 24 – 26 Deuteronomy
24 Deuteronomic Reform (2 Kings 22-23; 1 Chron 34-5).

26 Deuteronomy

**Required reading:** Collins, chapter 8

*M.* M. Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy, Book of," *ABD* 2.168-83
Miller and Hayes, 391-402.


Oct 28 Workshop on Redaction Criticism
Barton, Chapter 4. Oct 31 Joshua and the Conquest

**Required Reading:** the book of Joshua;
Collins, chapter 9.

*M.* W. G. Dever, "Israel, History of (Archaeology and the Conquest)," *ABD* 3.548-558.

Collins, *Does the Bible Justify Violence?*

Miller and Hayes, chapter 3

Nov 4 Workshop on Sociological Interpretation

*M.* R. Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*


Nov 7 Samuel and Saul

**Reading:** 1 Samuel. Collins chapter 11.

*M.* P. K. McCarter, "Introduction," in 1 *Samuel* (Anchor Bible)
Miller and Hayes, 120-48

Nov 9 David.
2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-2

**Reading:** Collins, chapter 12.

*M.* McCarter, "Introduction," to 2 *Samuel* (Anchor Bible)
Miller and Hayes, 149-88.

Nov 11 Workshop on feminist and liberationist readings.

Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality.*

Nov 14-16 Solomon, the temple, and the royal ideology

1 Kings 3-12.

16 Psalms 2,45, 46, 48, 63, 72, 89, 110, 132.

**Required reading:** Collins, chapter 13;
Miller and Hayes, 189-286

Nov 18 No sections.

Nov 21-25 Thanksgiving Break
Nov 28  The Divided Monarchy and early prophecy
   1 Kings 12-22
Nov 30    2 Kings
   Required Reading: Collins, chapter 14.
               Miller and Hayes, 314-415.
               *R. Wilson, "The Former Prophets. Reading the Books of
               Kings," in Mays et al., Old Testament Interpretation, 83-96.
Dec  2   Preparation for final
Dec  5   Concluding Lecture

Reading:
*J. A. Sanders, "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and
Barton, Reading the OT, chapters 6 and 7.

*Reader for REL 600 a. Old Testament Interpretation

15. N. Gottwald, “Sociological Method in the Study of Ancient Israel,” in Gottwald and
    Horsley, The Bible and Liberation, 142-53.
18. R. Wilson, “The Former Prophets,” in Mays et al., ed., Old Testament Interpretation,
    83-96.