

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:

The New Oxford Annotated Bible. Third Edition.

John J. Collins, Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Fortress, 2004)

John J. Collins, Does the Bible Legitimate Violence? (Fortress, 2004)

J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, A History of Ancient Israel and Judah (Westminster, 1986)

J. B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, vol. 1 (paperback).

J. Barton, Reading the Old Testament (rev. ed., Westminster, 1996)

P. Tribble, 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. E. Friedman, "Torah (Pentateuch)" ABD 6.605-21.
 * 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. Tribble, 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.
- Sept. 19-21 Gen 12-50.
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
 R. Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative.
 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. Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy, Book of," ABD 2.168-83
Miller and Hayes, 391-402.
- *J. Blenkinsopp, "An Assessment of the Alleged Pre-Exilic
Date of the Priestly Material in the Pentateuch," ZAW
108(1996) 495-518.
- Oct 28 Workshop on Redaction Criticism
Barton, Chapter 4. Oct 31 Joshua and the Conquest
- Required Reading:** the book of Joshua;
Collins, chapter 9.
- *S. McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History," ABD 2.160-8.
*W. G. Dever, "Israel, History of (Archaeology and the
Conquest)," ABD 3.548-558.
Collins, Does the Bible Justify Violence?
- Nov 2 Judges. Collins, chapter 10.
Miller and Hayes, chapter 3
- Nov 4 Workshop on Sociological Interpretation
- *R. Wilson, Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament
*N. Gottwald, "Sociological Method in the Study of Ancient
Israel" in Gottwald and Horsley, The Bible and Liberation,
26-37.
- Nov 7 Samuel and Saul
- Reading:** 1 Samuel. Collins chapter 11.
*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.
*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
- 14 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 Function of Canon," in F. M. Cross, ed., Magnalia Dei, 531-60.
Barton, Reading the OT, chapters 6 and 7.

***Reader for REL 600 a. Old Testament Interpretation**

4. R. Friedman, "Torah," Anchor Bible Dictionary 6.605-21.
5. R. Rendtorff, "The Yahwist as Theologian," JSOT 3(1977) 2-9.
6. G. Tucker, Form Criticism of the Old Testament, 1-41.
7. R. Alter, "Introduction," The Literary Guide to the Bible.
8. W. Dever, "Israel, History of," ABD 3. 546-58.
9. J. Milgrom, "Introduction," in Leviticus 1-16 (Anchor Bible) 1-51.
10. M. Douglas, Purity and Danger, 41-57.
11. M. Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy," ABD 2.168-83.
12. J. Blenkinsopp, "The Alleged Pre-Exilic Dating of P," ZAW 108(1996) 495-518.
13. S. McKenzie, "Deuteronomistic History," ABD 2.160-8.
14. R. Wilson, Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament, 1-52.
15. N. Gottwald, "Sociological Method in the Study of Ancient Israel," in Gottwald and Horsley, The Bible and Liberation, 142-53.
16. P. K. McCarter, "Introduction," in 1 Samuel (Anchor).
17. P. K. McCarter, "Introduction," in 2 Samuel (Anchor).
18. R. Wilson, "The Former Prophets," in Mays et al., ed., Old Testament Interpretation, 83-96.
19. J. A. Sanders, "Adaptable for Life," in Cross ed., Magnalia Dei, 531-60.