

Cultures & Contexts: Ancient Israel
MAP – The College Core Curriculum
UA.514
Fall 2013

Course Description and Goals:

This course belongs to the Cultures and Contexts curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences, and so we will be studying ancient Israel primarily as a culture. In this respect, this course stands closer to the field of anthropology than to the fields of history or literature. This does not mean that the study of biblical literature and history does not play an important role in understanding ancient Israel. In fact, the overall organization of the course follows in historical sequence (as seen in the main textbook used for this course), itself largely oriented to the order of the prose books of the Bible. However, this course is oriented to the examination of Israel as a culture. To be sure, we will use the Bible to study ancient Israel. To study ancient Israelite culture, this course presents primary artifacts: mostly texts both biblical and extra-biblical, iconography and archaeology. The course also offers ways (intellectual categories, models, etc.) to reflect critically on these primary sources and what they can tell us about ancient Israel and what it meant to be called Israel. Our task then is to develop a critical density of knowledge about ancient Israel (not everything!) and a critical sense of the data and their ancient cultural constructions that avoids and goes beyond a scholarly posture of either hyper-credence in the material and its perspectives or hyper-skepticism about them.

Learning Outcomes:

- To develop your capacity to absorb unfamiliar textual and archaeological information, to reflect on this new information, and to be able to reconfigure and apply it in a critical manner to different questions and problems.
- To develop your awareness of how the past informs the present and how distant and foreign the past is relative to the present (“the past is a foreign country”).
- To cultivate the intellectual habit of close reading of evidence as well as skill in historical reasoning.
- To improve your writing.

Lecturer:

Mark Smith, e-mail: mss11@nyu.edu

Office Hours with Prof. Smith by appointment:

Office located at the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies,

51 Washington Square South, Room 207 (enter at 53 Washington Square South at King Juan Carlos Center; turn right and go through door to the department, and go up stairwell to second floor, to the back of the hallway, to the last door on the right.

Preceptors:

Julie Deluty: julie.deluty@gmail.com

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The preceptors' office is located at the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, 51 Washington Square South, Room 209

Required Books

1. *The Harper Collins Study Bible: Student Edition*. This edition includes introductions and notes required for this course and not available in most other Bibles (these materials are in lieu of a Bible textbook for the course). Please bring your Bible to lectures every day beginning with lecture 5.

For the Bible readings, you are required to read the assigned biblical passages, the notes to the passages (located at the bottom of the page) and the introduction to the biblical book for the assigned passage.

2. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, edited by Michael D. Coogan (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). This book will serve as the main "textbook" for the course.

3. Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (second edition; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012).

4. William G. Dever, *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Intersect* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2012).

5. A number of websites, especially for texts outside of the Bible.

We will use and <http://www.kchanson.com/>

For the latter click on "K. C. Hanson's Collections of Ancient Documents."

Please bookmark this site for the course.

See also http://www.ualberta.ca/~ebenzvi/Assist/Hebrew_Bible/index.html

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~hummm/Resources/Texts/>

6. Handouts via blackboard

For the readings, you are required to look up in a dictionary any English *word* (not including proper names or terms) that is unfamiliar to you. For *terms* unfamiliar to you, we recommend that you ask your preceptor or Professor Smith if they go undefined in the course of lectures and section meetings. You should also keep a list of such terms as preparation for exams. For a handy resource for many unfamiliar terms, see the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, located in Bobst at REF1 Desk BS44 (this is a good reference work to get to know, as you will use it for one or another of your papers).

Assignments and Grades

- Midterm and final exams: 40% (20% each).

The final examination will be held during the final examination period.

(The date of exam is to be determined by the Office of the Registrar. No student may make arrangements to miss the final exam for personal reasons.) These tests are open book and open note exams (but not open-computer).

- Two papers: 40% (20% each).

- Class participation in preceptor sections and lecture attendance: 20% (you are permitted two unexcused absences from lectures and one from sections; if you miss more than these, then you automatically lose 5% of the class participation grade). **Attendance will be taken by the preceptors at all sections and at all lectures.**

Tests and papers will be graded by preceptors.

If a paper is going to be late, **you must talk to your preceptor (at least three days before due date)** and you must have a suitable reason!

Late papers (without negotiation and prior agreement by your preceptor) will be penalized according to the following system:

- within one week, graded down by one level (e. g., A to A-, A- to B+, etc.)
- after one week, graded down by two levels, after two weeks, graded down by three levels, etc.

NOTE: When final grades are turned in, the portion of the final grade represented by any unfinished work, whether papers or tests, will receive a grade of ZERO, if you have not made an arrangement with your preceptor.

IMPORTANT NYU DATES

- No class on October 15th (NYU fall break)
- No class on Thanksgiving 28 November (NYU Thanksgiving break)
- Note that Wednesday December 11 is a “Legislative Day.” On this Wednesday, classes will meet on a Monday schedule. Thus *there are no sections for Ancient Israel on this date.*
- Friday 13 December is the last day of classes

Papers and tests:

Paper #1: due on class 10 at the beginning of class

First exam: class 14

Paper #2: due on the last class at the beginning of class

Second exam: during final exam period (you may not miss this exam time as set by the registrar)

Semester Schedule of Lectures (Tuesdays and Thursdays) and Sections (Wednesdays). For each lecture, there are required readings (note that these are to be done in advance of lectures for which they are assigned).

I. TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT, APPROACH, LATE BRONZE AGE

BACKGROUND: Classes 1-7

Class 1, Tuesday September 3

Introduction to the course, terms of engagement: the problem of how to define phenomena

How the syllabus and readings work

“Ancient Israel” and the university’s sociology of knowledge and fields

Terms of engagement: how to define

Wednesday Sections: orientation to the Bible, its books and the orders of the books.

Bring your Bibles.

No class on Thursday September 5 for Rosh Hashanah

Class 2, Tuesday September 10

Terms of engagement: the problem of history and history writing (historiography)

Required reading: HarperCollins Study Bible, xxxiv-xxxv for timeline; Coogan, pp. ix-xi (Preface); Dever, vi-34; Braudel, *On History*, pdf. On blackboard.

Wednesday sections: work through and discuss readings by Braudel and Geertz.

Class 3, Thursday September 12

Terms of engagement: taking a cultural approach

Required reading: Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" (pdf on blackboard); Geertz, "A Life of Learning" (pdf on blackboard).

Recommended reading: Robert Miller, "A New 'Cultural History' of Early Israel" pdf.

Class 4, Tuesday September 17

Scrutinizing primary sources for studying ancient Israel: extra-biblical texts, iconography and archaeology

Archaeology and Iconography: A Lived World

Required: Dever, 47-105; look at the plates in the middle of Coogan. Now go to the Israel Museum! (go through "Israel and the Bible" -- Overview > Archaeology > "Israel and the Bible")

http://www.english.imjnet.org.il/htmls/page_901.aspx?co=14391&bsp=14381

Texts outside of the Bible: Inscriptions in Hebrew and Other Languages

Required reading: HarperCollins Study Bible, lvii-lxi.

Recommended: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/>; and click on "Educational Site" and then click on "Ancient Texts Relating to the Bible" and go through the listings.

Using your maps from the *Harper Collins Study Bible*, try to figure out where the artifacts come from.

Wednesday sections: Survey the contents of the Bible

No class on Thursday 19 September for Sukkot

Class 5, Tuesday September 24

Scrutinizing primary sources for studying ancient Israel: the Bible

The study of ancient Israel does not begin with biblical books as simply windows into the culture of ancient Israel. In fact, the very existence of "biblical books" as we know them in the Bible came after the periods as represented in the Bible. In other words, what we call "biblical books" developed over time and were finished only after the period thought of as biblical. So we begin with the basic observation that "biblical books" are not fixed points for studying ancient Israel; rather, they are themselves products of the culture and society of ancient Israel. The same point applies to what biblical books

contain. For example, the representations of history in biblical books are not straightforward or “objective” reporting of historical events. Instead, the representations of the past in biblical books represent as much as anything the interests and perspectives of their authors.

In this course, we are going to listen in on an ongoing discussion about Israel within ancient Israelite society. This discussion involved a series of dialogues, disagreements and compromises over the identity and meaning of Israel in several ancient periods --- and also among modern scholars who study them. On the one hand, the primary data are historical sources for our study and ancients’ memories of their past. On the other hand, scholars today formulate their understandings of Israel informed by these ancient sources that show signs of participation in disagreements over its identity and meaning. Sometimes, the study of antiquity feels like a walk through “a hall of mirrors,” with different authors offering differing views and interpretations of the same events and mentioning other events omitted by others. The construction of this “hall” is itself a cultural construction of antiquity worth considering as a signal from -- and also about -- ancient Israel’s culture.

Required Reading: Coogan, pp. 26-29, 69-79 (on where Bibles come from). In class we will discuss the following issues bearing on the need for interpretation; so bear these in mind as you do the following required readings:

- i. Multiple views on a subject suggestive of multiple traditions: when does Joshua die? Compare Josh 24:29 with Judges 1:1 vs. Judges 2:6-9; where is Rachel buried? Compare Genesis 35:19, 48:7 in territory of Judah vs. 1 Sam 10:2 in territory of Benjamin (cf. Jeremiah 31:15); where was Benjamin born? Compare Genesis 35:16-19 vs. Genesis 35:23-26; how many pairs of animals are commanded to go into Noah’s ark? Compare 6:20 vs. 7:2-3.
- ii. Later historical information embedded in contexts putatively older: Cyrus in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1. Read also the poetic pieces within Genesis 27.
- iii. Statements “to this day/today” in narratives – what day relative to the time of the narratives? See Genesis 22:14 (“the present saying”), and 32:33; note also 19:37, 38; 26:33; and 35:20.
- iv. Evident anachronisms: Philistines (Genesis 21:32-34, 26:1, 8, 14-15) and camels (Genesis 12:16) in the time of Abraham?
- v. Differences of language style and perspective: compare Gen 1:1-2:3 and Gen 2:4b-24.

Recommended: for the background of the composition of the Bible, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bible/program.html>; select “Who Wrote the Bible?”

Wednesday sections: Study reigning theories for the composition of Genesis through Kings.

Class 6, Thursday September 26

Longitudinal Perspective: Cultural backdrop to Israel at the end of the Late Bronze Age in the Ugaritic Texts (Canaan in poetry)

Required Reading: Introduction, plus Baal Cycle, in Coogan and Smith, pages 1-19 and 97-153.

Recommended: Back to the Israel Museum! (go through “The Land of Canaan”) http://www.english.imjnet.org.il/htmls/page_901.aspx?co=14391&bsp=14381 (Overview> Archaeology> “The Land of Canaan”)

Class 7, Tuesday October 1

Longitudinal Perspective: Cultural backdrop at the end of the Late Bronze Age in the Amarna letters (Canaan in prose) and the early history of Israel and God

Required reading on the Amarna letters: Coogan, pp. 10-56; the Amarna Letters in <http://www.reshafim.org.il/ad/egypt/amarnaletters.htm> (compare Labayu of Shechem in the Amarna Letters with Abimelech in Judges 9).

Required reading on Israel in the extra-biblical record:

Coogan, pp. 58-119; and the Merneptah stele in any one of the following:

<http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/merenphatvictorystele.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merneptah_Stele

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bible/program.html>; select “Merneptah Stele” and “the Exodus”

Required Reading on the earliest references to God in the Bible and for the earliest extra-biblical references to Yahweh:

Review Coogan, pp. 105-111 and read 151-55. Compare Judges 5 (esp. vv. 4-5) with Psalm 68 (vv. 8-9; also note v 18); see also Deuteronomy 33:2-3 and Habakkuk 3 (v. 3). Note an Egyptian Topographical List dating to 1386 BC. In the temple of Amun in Soleb (Nubia) there is a topographical list from the time of Amenhotep III (1408-1372 BC). In column IV.A2 is written *t3 ssw yhw3* which may mean “Yahweh of the land of the Shasu.” In the ancient Near East a divine name could be given to a geographical place where the god was worshipped. This might be the first extra-biblical evidence for the divine name of “Yahweh.”

Wednesday sections: Introduction to conventions of poetry using Psalms 150, then Judges 5 and Psalm 68; and finally the description of the goddess Anat on pages 117-18 in Coogan and Smith.

II. Practices and worldview of pre-monarchic Israel (ca. 1200-1000):

Classes 8-13

Class 8, Thursday October 3

Applying Braudel: Israel’s agricultural context -- geography and calendar

i. Geography

Required reading: Coogan, 3-29, plus maps on pp. 6, 9, 37, 95, 114, 138.

Maps in the very back of Harper Collins Study Bible, maps 1-5.

Dever, pp. 35-46

Learn from the maps the following places:

Areas: Phoenicia, Philistia, Israel, Judah, Ammon, Moab, Edom.

Major towns: Damascus, Sidon, Tyre, Acco, Dor, Gaza; Dan, Hazor, Megiddo, Beth-shan, Dothan, Samaria, Shechem, Shiloh, Bethel, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Beer-sheba, Rabbah, Heshbon, Dibon, Bozrah.

Major mountain ranges and mountains: Lebanon; Hermon, Carmel, Gilboa, Ebal and Gerizim, Nebo; plus Jezreel and Esdraelon valleys

West to east topographical zones: Coastal plain (including the Sharon), Shephelah (low-lying hills), hill-country, Jordan valley; Negeb, the Arabah.

Major rivers: Kishon, Jordan, Sorek, Yarmuk, Jabbok, Arnon (Wadi Mujib), Zered.

Major bodies of water: Lake Huleh, Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea, Gulf of Aqaba, Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea

Recommended: See <http://geology.com/world/israel-satellite-image.shtml>

Go to <http://www.holylandphotos.org/> and type in sites for a look

For sites in Jordan, see <http://www.jordanjubilee.com/visitjor/sites3.htm#Wadi%20>

<http://www.jordanjubilee.com/visitjor/sites1.htm#top>

<http://www.case.edu/affil/nimrin/menu/nimrin.htm>

You might also try: <http://free.satellite.images.googlepages.com/>

ii. Calendar

Required reading: Coogan, pp. 132-63; the Gezer Calendar; Exodus 23, Leviticus 23, Numbers 28-29, Deuteronomy 16. For the Gezer Calendar, go to

<http://www.kchanson.com/>, and click on “K. C. Hanson's Collections of Ancient Documents,” scroll down to Hebrew, and click on Gezer Calendar.

Recommended: See also <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/HOAI/portal.htm>, under the heading “Exhibit,” read the article, “Farming”.

In your own notes, write out in parallel columns the names of the harvests and festivals in the biblical passages and correlate these with the times of year in the Gezer Calendar.

Wednesday Sections: go over geography

Class 9, Tuesday October 8

Applying Geertz: The patriarchal household, social identity and personhood

Required reading: Coogan, pp. 144-45; Dever, 186-94; Joshua 7, Judges 17-18, and the book of Ruth; go to <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/HOAI/portal.htm>, and on this website, under the heading “Exhibit,” read the articles from “Introduction” through “Prosperity and Posterity”; and Deena Grant, “A Brief Discussion of the Difference between Human and Divine *hemmâ* [anger],” pdf.

Wednesday sections: work on paper #1 due at the *beginning* of next Tuesday (lecture #10) in class.

Class 10, Thursday October 10

Applying Geertz: Occupations of men and women, and lifecycle events

FIRST PAPER DUE

Birth

Psalm 22:9-10, 139:13-16

Childhood and household instruction

1 Samuel 1-3, Leviticus 19:2-4

Puberty

Judges 11:29-40

Desire, violence, love, weddings

Genesis 34, Judges 21, Ruth 3-4, Song of Songs

Marriage and concubines	Exodus 15, Judges 5, Psalm 45
Widowhood, Old Age and Death	Proverbs 31:10-29, Judges 19
	Ruth 1, 1 Samuel 10:2 (cf. Genesis 35:16-20, Jeremiah 31:15)

Required Reading: passages above, Dever, 159-69, 180-81, 187-89, plus the posted pdf on occupations.

Note relative rarity of biblical references to scribes in this period; see Judges 8:14

No class on Tuesday October 15 (NYU fall break)

Wednesday sections: Review for first test (on Class 14, Thursday 24 October)

Class 11, Thursday 17 October

Applying Braudel and Geertz: Religion of the household

Required reading: Genesis 31 (note verses 19, 30, 34-35); and Judges 17-18, (esp. 17:5, 18:14); 1 Samuel 19:11-17; Exodus 21:6; cf. Deuteronomy 15:17; and reread Joshua 7, Judges 5-8, 13 and 1 Samuel 1-3. List the religious practices mentioned in these texts.

Read the two Ugaritic texts, one called Aqhat, the other called the Rephaim, in Coogan and Smith, pp. 27-55, and 57-63. What are the religious practices described in these two texts. Now recall the Baal Cycle. Watch for the deities El, Baal, Asherah and Anat in these texts: who are they? What are their roles? What do their titles say about them? Read then Genesis 12-47, specifically for “El religion” in Ugaritic texts and in Genesis 14:18-20 and 49:25-26; Exodus 6:2-3; and think about the name of Israel.

Class 12, Tuesday 22 October

Applying Braudel and Geertz: Religion of clans and tribes

Required Reading: Judges 4-21 and 1 Samuel 3, 7 and 28 (cf. Ezekiel 13:17-23); in these passages, note shrines and practices as well as sorts of leaders and the deities, mentioned also in the Ugaritic texts of Kirta (Coogan and Smith, pp. 65-95) and Aqhat (which you’ve already, for class 11); Dever, 249-93.

Wednesday Sections: Review for exam

Class 13, Thursday 24 October: First test

III. Practices and worldviews in the era of the monarchies (1000-586 BCE):

Classes 14-24

Class 14, Tuesday 29 October: Transition into monarchy and its cultural fall-out

The origins of the monarchy and the demise of “warrior culture” in the era of the Philistine wars: Samuel and Saul (ca. 1020-1000); David (ca. 1000-972).

Required reading: Coogan, 165-95; 1 Samuel 9 through 2 Samuel 10 (note esp. 2 Samuel 2:1-11); review Aqhat and the Baal Cycle in Coogan and Smith (note Baal, Anat and Mot/Death as warriors, and also Aqhat and Danil as “heroes”); for poetic commemoration of warfare in early Israel, Judges 5 and 2 Samuel 1:19-27; and for

warfare in the era of the Philistines wars, read 1 Samuel 31-2 Samuel 1, 2 Samuel 21:15-22 (compare verse 19 with 1 Samuel 17, esp. v. 7) and 2 Samuel 23:8-38.

Recommended reading: For male-male bonds, read 1 Samuel 18-20; 2 Samuel 1.

For the comparison of David and Jonathan with Gilgamesh and Enkidu, see <http://www.gatewaystobabylon.com/myths/texts/classic/temple1.htm> (under the site <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~hummm/Resources/Texts/>)

For a discussion of the issue of the putative homoeroticism between David and Jonathan compared with Gilgamesh and Enkidu, read <http://epistle.us/hbarticles/gilepic2.html>;

Contrast the explicit Leviticus 18:22.

Ronald Cohen, "Warfare and State Formation: Wars Make States and States Make War," in *Warfare, Culture, and Environment* (ed. Brian Ferguson; 1984) 329-58.

Wednesday sections: library trip for some sections.

Class 15, Thursday 31 October

Philistine-Israelite engagements and Israelite cultural reaction: Circumcision and pork

Required readings:

For background of Philistines: Genesis 20-21 (21:26) and 26; Judges 16-18, 1 Samuel 4-7; Coogan, pp. 90-91, 113-28, 153; Dever, pp. 294-303.

for explicit reaction to Philistines– Circumcision – read Jeremiah 9:25-26; Exodus 4:24-26; Genesis 34;

for Philistines explicitly as uncircumcised: Judges 14:3, 15:18; 1 Samuel 14:6, 17:26, 36; 31:4; 2 Samuel 1:20;

for Israelite generalization about circumcision: read Genesis 17, and compare Jeremiah 4 and Joshua 5; and

for circumcision as religious metaphor: Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6; Leviticus 19.

Recommended reading: See *ANEP* 332 Megiddo ivory (feature of the old Canaanite heritage of Israel?). For circumcision in Egypt, see also *ANET* 326 and *ANEP* 629 = <http://www.egyptancient.net/circumcision.htm>

Implicit reaction to Philistines - Pork: for pork taboo in Egypt (not accepted uniformly), see *ANET* 10 or *The Context of Scripture* 1.30, "Cultic Abomination of the Pig". (Second wave of cultural reaction in the Greco-Roman period (see the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 1, pp. 1025-31.)

Class 16, Tuesday 5 November

The early Judean monarchy and Phoenician cultural influences

Phoenician Influence: Trade and Temple, Alphabet and Writing

Required reading: Coogan, pp. 196-203; Dever, 303-6; 2 Samuel 11- 1 Kings 7
Note dates for Solomon's rule (ca. 972-922)

Required reading for the palace and temple:

Dever, 55-58, 213-17, 256-62, 349-51; Read 1 Kings 1-11

Psalm 24 (compare Psalm 15) = Jerusalem as cosmic mountain and home of the warrior-king

Psalm 18//2 Samuel 22:1-20 and Psalm 29 = temple as the home of the divine warrior-king

Psalm 36 = the temple as home of the divine light (theophany)/Eden

Recommended reading: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/HOAI/portal.htm>

On this website, under the heading “Exhibit,” read the articles on “Temple,” House of Yahweh” and “Music”

The Temple and its Psalms: portrait of “monarchic polytheism.” For the idea, see Psalm 29 (and the divine beings of verse 1; cf. Exodus 15:11: “Who is like You among the gods, O Lord?”)

Joe Uziel and Itzhaq Shai, “Jerusalem: Temple-Palace, Capital City” pdf.

Wednesday sections: library sessions/10th-8th century history of Israel and Judah.

Class 17, Thursday 7 November

The monarchies of Judah (southern kingdom) and Israel (northern kingdom, sometimes called Ephraim): the production of national religious identities

Southern (continuous) dynasty (922-587) and Northern dynasty (922-722)

Required reading: 1 Kings 12:1-16:22; Coogan, pp. 206-40.

For national identity stories for origins of the people in Israel’s cultural memory, read Genesis 32-33 and Hosea 12 for northern origins traditions of Jacob and origins in Syria; Dever, 307-19.

National iconography traditions in Jerusalem versus Dan and Bethel:

Read 1 Kings 12 (esp. v. 28) and Exodus 32 (esp. vv. 4-5, 8), Hosea 12, for northern origin tradition in Egypt; Dever, 58-60 and 252-56.

Wednesday sections: library sessions/tba. *Wednesday sections:* Library sessions/work through prophetic call stories: Isaiah 6, Jeremiah 1 and Ezekiel 1-3. In addition to fairly standard format, note call orality (touching the mouth in Isaiah 6:6-7, Jeremiah 1:9) versus written (scroll in Ezekiel 2:8-3:4). Note: this is the deadline for picking topic for second paper.

Class 18, Tuesday 12 November

Worldview and royal “life-cycle” in the South (Judah)

Required reading: read on national gods and “world theology” in Psalms 2 and 82, as well as Deuteronomy 32:8-9.

Royal “life-Cycle”

Birth: Royal Ascent (Coronation)

Required reading: Psalms 2 and 110 and the “messiah” passages of Isaiah 7, 9 and 11.

Life: Protection and Warfare - King as “divine” patriarch of human society

Required reading: Psalm 45, 72 and 89 (recall Kirta in the Ugaritic texts)

the Ekron inscription: <http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/ekron.html>;
and read the Meshe stela, see
<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/mesha.html>
See also <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~semitic/HOAI/portal.htm>, under the heading
“Exhibit,” read the article, “Mesha”.

Death: Royal Descent (Death) and the Cult of the Dead in Jerusalem

Required reading: Isaiah 22, Psalms 16 and 49, as well as the priestly blessing in the Ketef Hinnom Jerusalem cave (see Numbers 6:22-24; and

<http://christiancadre.blogspot.com/2005/10/ketef-hinnom-most-important-ot.html>;
for a photograph of the silver amulet with the priestly blessing, see
http://cojs.org/cojswiki/Silver_Scroll_Amulets_from_Ketef_Hinnom,_c._600_BCE).

Recommended reading about royal burial: 2 Kings 21:18, 26, and Ezekiel 43:7-9; cf. the royal garden (as mentioned in the book of Jeremiah 39:4; cf. burial in City of David, in 1-2 Kings such as 1 Kings 22:51, 2 Kings 8:24, 9:28, 12:22, [13:13], 14:20, 15:7, 38, 16:20, 25:4; cf. 10:35, 14:16)

Non-royal views of the king: “torah” perspective of Deut 1 7:18-19 (cf. Ps 1:3; Josh 1:7-8).

Wednesday sections: Library sessions/work through prophetic call stories: Isaiah 6, Jeremiah 1 and Ezekiel 1-3. In addition to fairly standard format, note call orality (touching the mouth in Isaiah 6:6-7, Jeremiah 1:9) versus written (scroll in Ezekiel 2:8-3:4). Note: this is the deadline for picking topic for second paper.

Class 19, Thursday 14 November

Different forms of prophecy and prophets in the ninth-eighth centuries

Required reading: on the “holy men,” Elijah and Elisha, in the north in the 9th century, read 1 Kings 16:23 - 2 Kings 10; on prophecy in the North in the 8th century, read Amos 1-9 (southerner who works in the north); and for prophecy in the South in the 8th century, read Isaiah 6-8, 36-39.

Class 20, Tuesday 19 November

Priestly/levitical culture in Judah

Required reading:

Priestly communication system with the deity: Leviticus 1-7.

Priestly practices: priestly divination by the ephod (1 Samuel 23:6-13, 30:7-8); and priestly blessing (Numbers 6:22-24).

Priestly worldview: review the priestly story of Genesis 1 (for the verb to separate, see Leviticus 10:10, 11:47, 23:15, 25) versus Genesis 2:4b through chapter 3 (southern origin tradition, cf. royal gardens), and Deuteronomy 32 (especially verses 7-10, with its old creation tradition + origin in wilderness).

Reading for priestly lines:

for Levites, see Deuteronomy 33:8-11, then Deuteronomy 17-18, Malachi 2:1-9, versus Ezekiel 44 and Nehemiah 8 (post-exilic) (note Jeremiah as belonging to a Levitical family;

for “sons of Aarons” (Aaronids), note 2 Samuel 8:17 (and see “sons of Aaron” in most of the priestly literature of the Torah/Pentateuch);
for Zadok and the Zadokites, see 2 Samuel 8:17, 15:23-29 (David), 1 Kings 2:35 (Solomon), and Ezekiel 44 (note prophet Ezekiel as a Zadokite).

Wednesday sections: work on second papers, due on LAST CLASS

Class 21, Thursday 21 November
Judah’s scribal cultures

Required reading: Jeremiah 8:8-9; Jeremiah 36; 2 Kings 22:11-20; Proverbs 10-31 Proverbs 22:17-31:9 for wisdom in Israel and also teachings of Amenemope (source for part of the biblical text of Proverbs 22:17-24:22!) look at the notes to this passage in the *Harper Collins Study Bible* and note <http://egypt.thetao.info/amenemope.htm>.

Recommended reading on scribal practice: writing out abecedaries, then proverbs/letter formulary and memorization: Proverbs 3:3 and 7:3 (“writing on the heart”, copying proverbs and memorizing)

Scribes as notaries: Jer 32:9-15

Royal scribes: 2 Samuel 8:17, 1 Kings 4:3, 2 Kings 18:18 and 2 Kings 22; Psalm 45:2.

Royal scribes also learn foreign languages: Aramaic in 2 Kings 18:26; Akkadian (note many Akkadian loanwords in Hebrew); possibly Egyptian (note Proverbs 22:17-24:22)

Priestly scribal productions: Numbers 5:23 (priestly writing down of curses), priestly teaching in Hosea 8:12 and Jeremiah 8:8; certify written records (Isa 8:2); read torah (Jer 2:8 and 2 Kings 22). Note priestly narratives (e.g., Genesis 1) and instruction (torah) (e.g., Numbers 24-31 and 35-40, all of Leviticus and much of Numbers 1-10).

Prophetic scribe: Jeremiah 36

Post-exilic scribe: Ezra in Ezra 7

Divine scribe: Hosea 8:12; divine finger in Exodus 32:18 and 34:1.

Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*.

Class 22, Tuesday 26 November
The Assyrian Impact

Required reading: 2 Kings 16-23; Dever, pp. 320-67.

Wednesday sections: work on final papers in sections (it is required that you bring first draft to sections)

Thursday 28 November Thanksgiving

Class 23, Tuesday 3 December: “Exile” (586-538)
Monotheism in Ancient Israel in the Assyrian/Babylonian Context

Required reading: HarperCollins Study Bible, xlv-xlviii; pdf handout for class; Exodus 15:11 (note “gods”), 20:3 (note “gods”); Deuteronomy 32; Psalm 82 (note picture of the divine council); Deuteronomy 4 (note the different reasons for the uniqueness of Israel’s God and statement of God alone as divine); Isaiah 40-48 (note discussion of God alone).

Wednesday sections: introduction to final exam

IV. “ISRAEL” IN THE PERSIAN PERIOD (539-332) and HELLENISTIC PERIOD (332-63): Classes 24-26

Class 24, Thursday 5 December

How is “Israel” “Israel” outside of Israel? The experience and experience of “exile”

Required reading: Coogan, pp. 269-92; and Faust, “Deportation and Demography in Interpreting Exile” pdf.

Historical sources: 2 Kings 24-25 and Jeremiah 52; and the Decree of Cyrus (the Persian emperor) in the Cyrus Cylinder; go to:

<http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/meso/cyrus.html>

Liturgical sources: Psalms 74 and 137, and 126

Prophetic sources: Ezekiel 1-3 and 10; Jeremiah 29; and Isaiah 46-48 (especially Isaiah 44:28-45:1)

Recommended: For the palace of the Persian king, Darius I, go to

<http://www.louvre.fr/llv/commun/home.jsp?bmLocale=en> and click on Virtual Tours (under Museum at top left-hand quadrant of the page): Near Eastern Antiquities, and then click Ground Floor Sully Wing

See the Persian pieces (especially the first two items) at:

http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/viewHigh.asp?dep=3&viewmode=0&set=13

Last Wednesday sections: reviewing for final exam

No class on Thursday 28 November for Thanksgiving

Class 25, Tuesday 10 December

Re(-)forming “Israel” in Yehud: Temple and Torah at home in the Persian period

Required reading: Coogan, pp. 292-315; Ezra 1-10, Haggai 1-2 and Zechariah 3; and Nehemiah 8; Psalms 1, 119; and Qohelet (also called Ecclesiastes).

Recommended: for a nice map of Jerusalem in this period, see

http://jeru.huji.ac.il/emap_ba2.htm

No Wednesday sections: NYU classes on this Wednesday meet on Monday schedule

Class 26, Thursday 12 December FINAL PAPER DUE

What does it mean to be “Israel” in the Persian period diaspora and in the context of the Hellenistic world?

Required reading: Esther and Daniel 1-6; the Passover Papyrus in the Elephantine papyri, <http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/westsem/passover.html>.

Ben Sira Prologue, in Harper Collins Study Bible, p. 1380 and chapters 44-50 in Harper Collins Study Bible, p. 1438f. Apocalypse and empire: Daniel 7-12; cf. 1 Maccabees 1-4.

Recommended reading: Pierre Briant, "The Seleucid Kingdom, the Achaemenid Empire and the History of the Near East in the First Millennium BC," in *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom* (ed. Per Bilde, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Lise Hannestad, and Jan Zahle; Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1990), pages 40-65.

PAPERS

The papers are to be handed in at the BEGINNING of the lecture on the due date (you are required to back up all work on papers on your computer; computer crashes -- or problems with printers -- are not an acceptable excuse for not handing in work on time)

Paper #1 (8-10 pages): Differences of scholarly research

Due on class 10

The goal: this project is intended to introduce you to the task of preparing research papers from scholarly literature, which was not written for college undergraduates, particularly those in a MAP course. This assignment is designed to help you get past that awful feeling that much of the literature that you will have to read for your final papers is over your head. Indeed, when you do research on specific topic on ancient Israel, you will find that most books and articles in journals (secondary literature) were not written for undergraduates in mind.

Despite this problem with secondary literature, it is not insurmountable. It is true that most of you do not know the ancient languages involved in the study of ancient Israel, and probably few can identify archaeological finds such as types of pottery. The technical vocabulary used by scholars (derived from various fields such as anthropology or literature) will also be unfamiliar. However, even the most technical writing does not presuppose that all scholars have the same level of skill or knowledge; they, too, have to "figure things out." Like them, you'll be able to adjust to technical scholarly writing. Foreign words are often translated, and the important features of archaeological detail are often described or presented in drawings or photographs. The style of writing is often sober, even dry, but once you get used to the exacting style of most academic writing and you figure out the main issue(s) at stake, you should be able to find what you need from most articles or books. Beyond the difficulty of scholarly writing style, there is the problem of debates about evidence. Scholars often disagree about how to interpret evidence. Although this may seem obvious, it is not so easy to master two divergent points of view and present a fair case for both. With this paper you will try to weigh contradictory analyses by scholars.

The assignment: Write a detailed account of the dispute encountered in the readings (listed below). It is up to you to decide how best to organize your essay. Do not write as if we already know the contents of the articles and the subject of the debate. So distill and analyze the main points related to the debate at hand (do not summarize or recount the readings at length). Explain the problem in question and present the essential evidence at stake. Make sure that you understand what positions are held, and at what specific point(s) the writers agree and disagree. Observe the particular patterns in the discussion, such as:

- who wrote first/second, and the effect of the statement/response (are they talking

exactly about the same thing)?

- what is their approach and the logic of their argument?
- what evidence do they use and what evidence do they omit?
- do they categorize the evidence in the same manner?
- what is considered decisive by each writer?

Do not choose sides. For this paper, we are more concerned that you show a detailed and fair understanding of each position. It is sometimes said that one cannot begin a fair rebuttal of any position until you can present that position in terms that its own advocate would accept as accurate. Apply your critical thinking to the way(s) in which the writers develop their cases.

Warning: you are certain to encounter in these articles names of places and people as well as technical terms and foreign words that are unfamiliar to you. The fact that you do not know these will represent initial barriers to understanding the articles, but this is very much part of the point to this paper. (Remember: look up unknown items in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*.) Your job is to read for the structure of thinking, to follow the flow of an argument, and then to figure out each category of information and how it fits into the larger purpose of the article. The significance of most of the evidence can be figured out this way. You can look up references to biblical passages, and you should look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary. Most other technical information (such as archaeological sites, references to other scholars' articles or books, foreign words) can be figured out from context. Despite such features regularly found in scholarly articles, it should still be possible to follow the reasoning of the article.

The Readings (YOU MAY NOT USE ANY OTHER SECONDARY SOURCE):
 Topic question: what and/or who was the asherah/Asherah in ancient Israel?
 Analyze the following three readings, to be posted on blackboard:

1. Pp. 99-105 in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, Pieter W. van der Horst; 2nd extensively rev. ed. Leiden; Boston : Brill ; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999.

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2-3. Any **two** of the following:

Hadley, Judith. "Some Drawings and Inscriptions on Two Pithoi from Kuntillet 'Ajrud," *Vetus Testamentum* 37 (1987) 180-211.

Emerton, John A., "Yahweh and his Asherah: The Goddess or her Symbol?" *Vetus Testamentum* 49(1999) 315-37.

Hess, Richard, "Yahweh and his Asherah? Epigraphic Evidence for Religious Pluralism in Old Testament Times," in Clarke and Winter, eds., *One God, One Lord in a World of Religious Pluralism*, pp. 5-33.

For background information, you may consult:

<http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/nes275/studentproj/fall05/kmr38/index.html>.

Paper #2 (10-12 pages): Combining the analysis of primary texts and secondary literature: **first draft to be handed in at Wednesday section on 26 November and final version due on last lecture on 12 December**

The goal: this paper is the culmination of your writing for the course. It is designed to make you use the skills that you have developed over the term. The goal is to gather information about a specific topic of interest that falls within the definition of the course (time range: Late Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period; geographical range: Israel and its ancient Near Eastern neighbors - any topic of your choice that deals with a neighboring area such as Egypt should include a connection to Israel; categories: history, archaeological sites, religion, literature, including the Bible) and to present a coherent analysis of the evidence, interpretive issues, and main controversies involved. You may choose a topic from the readings in the course, as long as your research **significantly goes beyond** what is found in these readings. If your paper does not do this, then a failing grade will be given. If you have any doubts about this, then choose a topic not addressed in the readings on the course syllabus.

The assignment: After deciding what sort of area you would like to investigate, you need to get to know the area in question. An area is not a topic. You can't do a paper on a general category (such as Israelite culture, monotheism or the book of Isaiah). Instead, you need to spend some time reading both the primary sources and secondary literature about an area in order to narrow and define your topic. After reading up on an area, focus on a particular aspect of that area (such as jewelry production, the emergence or development of monotheism in a particular book, or some part of the book of Isaiah).

For the discussion in your paper, make sure that you scrutinize the evidence used by the secondary sources that you cite. As with the first paper, you need at least three scholarly sources; and as with the first paper, you should ask how good the evidence is and how well is it used (reasoning) by the various secondary sources. Do not simply string together what the secondary sources say about your subject. (The point of the secondary sources is to advance your analyzing and understanding of the primary sources.)

For all papers:

1. Type double space. No handwritten assignments – they must be typed.
2. You *must use page numbers*, preferably in the upper right-hand corner of each page.
3. Please staple or paperclip your papers. No folders or envelopes, please.
4. No front-page; just put your name at the top of the first page.
5. Cite all of your sources for your statements explicitly in footnotes (or in parenthetical notes according to the social science format). Cite verses in the Bible according to book and verse, such as Genesis 39:4 or Gen 39:4 (not Genesis chapter 39 verse 4).
6. Underline foreign words.
7. Underline or italicize the names of books by modern authors, but not the names of biblical books.
8. If you quote a word or more, put it in quotation marks.
9. Do not repeat the assignment back to us. Do not repeat the contents of a text or its storyline. You are providing an analysis of the contents of the texts.
10. Stick to the assignment; do not wander to other passages or into generalizations about the Bible or about the modern world.

11. In general, do not quote biblical verses or retell the biblical story. (You are to try to **analyze** it or its features.) Instead, **cite** the verse numbers. If you are dealing with biblical passages, study the passages; read through a couple of biblical commentaries and try to understand the specific words and phrases. For suggestions for commentaries, ask your TA.
12. Brief introductory paragraph(s) or concluding general paragraph -- just **analyze** the passages.
13. If the assignment calls for analyzing themes or religious ideas, then your answer should reflect how and how much the passage devotes attention to them. Please note: most passages involve more than one theme or idea, and your answer should reflect that fact. Furthermore, do not simply **name** a major theme; **analyze** how it works over the course of the passage, and how it relates to character development, plotline, etc.
14. Avoid vast generalizations or statements with "gives the impression" or "it is as if...". Describe what a passage is actually relating. In other words, when you use passages from the Bible, do not say anything that is not derived from the texts. Do not make statements that you cannot support by a specific use of language that actually occurred in the texts. For explicating texts, do not refer to broader claims of human history or experience ("external frames of reference").¹
15. Aim for a clear and polished writing style; it should be idiomatic yet semi-formal. Some constructions to be avoided: slang or informal expressions, such as "a lot of" and the word, "thing"; run-on sentences; switching between past and present tense verbs in discussing what is going in a text or scholarly discussion; passive voice, unless it works particularly well; common verbs, such as "is"/"are," "has"/"have" or "do" (aim for stronger and more precise verbs that say more about the subject of your sentences); contractions; and "you," "we"/"us," or "I." In addition, don't confuse "it's" with "its" ("it's" = "it is"); and use apostrophes correctly.
16. After you have written a draft that you really think is terrific, go back over your essay: "read literally what you have written – not what you intended to communicate. Pretend you don't know the argument you are making and read your actual words. What's confusing and what's missing? If you think you know an idea but can't express it clearly, then this process has identified a gap or vagueness in your understanding. After you admit and address those weaknesses, your exposition will be clearer and more directed to the actual audience."² In other words, you may know what you mean, but is it clear that someone who is not talking to you about your paper will know what you mean from reading your paper by themselves? Ask yourself as you reread your paper whether your points really come across clearly.

It is assumed that as university students, you will apply these guidelines and/or that you will learn any that you do not know by consulting the Writing Center. If your papers do not guard against these, then they will be graded down. Clear writing is one goal of this course. **Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the NYU Writing Center:** 411 Lafayette, 3rd Floor. Telephone: 212-998-8866

¹ The background of this guideline can be found in a book by Marjorie Garber, *The Use and Abuse of Literature* (Anchor Book Edition; New York: Random House, 2012), 155.

² Edward B. Burger and Michael Starbird, *The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012), 35-36.

Email: <mailto:writingcenter@nyu.edu>

Hours: Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 8 pm; Friday, 11 am to 4 pm

http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

Schedule an Appointment Online: <http://www.rich15.com/nyu/www.rich15.com/nyu/>

Plagiarism and Ethical Practices

All students are expected to adhere to the highest ethical and moral standards. **Any form of plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated.** Violators will be penalized in accordance with the policies established in the Bulletin of the College of Arts and Science (Pg. 370-371; www.nyu.edu/cas/Academic/bulletino6o8.pdf).

In addition, to avoid confusion, the following is some advice on avoiding plagiarism:

“Plagiarism includes presenting or paraphrasing a phrase, sentence, or passage of a published work (including material from the World-Wide Web) in a paper or exam answer without quotation marks and attribution of the source, submitting your own original work toward requirements in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors, submitting a paper written by someone else, submitting as your own work any portion of a paper or research that you purchased from another person or commercial firm, and presenting in any other way the work, ideas, data, or words of someone else without attribution.”

(www.nyu.edu/tisch/preservation/program/ongoing/plagiarism.htm)

Students are encouraged to consult the book by Charles Lipson, *Doing honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success* (second edition; Chicago Guides to Academic Life; Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press 2008).

Notice to Students with Disabilities

NYU recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional climate that enables students with disabilities to thrive. If you have any type of disability for which you require special accommodation to promote your learning in this class, please let me know as soon as possible to discuss your need. The Center for Students with Disabilities is the department on campus that can help with special accommodations (e.g., extended exam time). You may wish to contact them in order to verify your eligibility and the options for accommodations related to your disability. The Center for Students with Disabilities is located at 240 Greene Street, 2nd Floor; telephone: 212-998-4980; and <http://www.nyu.edu/csd/>