COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course begins with the recognition that the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament is a complex collection of writings composed by past cultures informed by ideologies and modes of living radically different from our own. Despite this, the influence of this corpus of literature permeates many aspects of contemporary religious communities as well as western culture in general. These books, which are collectively called the Bible in Judaism (or by its acronym, the Tanakh) and the Old Testament in Christianity, have had a formative influence over confessional perspectives on divine role in humanity and the cosmos. At the same time, these writings provide important insight into the religion, culture and history of ancient Israel and early Judaism. Thus, the purpose of this course is to explore the origins and compositional history of biblical literature. Towards this purpose, the class will draw from literary, historical-critical, and contemporary hermeneutical approaches to explore the specific socio-historical circumstances that shaped what would become sacred literature in Judaism and Christianity. The lectures and assigned readings will alternate between formal and historical analyses in order to survey the different aspects of the Hebrew Bible. This survey will include the careful examination the diverse literary forms represented in the Tanakh/Old Testament, along with the development and history of important motifs and central ideas in ancient Israel and early Judaism.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
The purpose of this course is to read the Hebrew Bible and to approach these readings from an academic perspective with the following objectives in mind:
1. Analyze the structure and meaning of the various books in their present (canonical) form, in order to enable the student to recognize and understand the major genres of biblical literature.
2. Explore the important themes and ideas of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, such as cosmogony and theodicy, as well as concepts such as nationhood and the construction of social identity.
3. Describe various interpretative strategies developed for biblical criticism, the intellectual histories of these strategies, and their general impact.

Through these objectives the class will be able to trace the formation of this body of literature, within their various contexts, in relation to the socio-historical trajectory of ancient Israel and early Judaism.
REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
Lecture attendance is required and students will lose points for tardiness. If the essay is handed in late, the assignment grade will be penalized and students will lose participation points as well. There will be two examinations, a midterm and final, and the final examination will be cumulative.

The grade for the class will be based on the following percentages:

- Student Participation: 10%
- Midterm examination: 30%
- Written assignment: 20%
- Final examination: 40%

The instructor reserves the right to make any necessary changes to the syllabus.

OFFICE HOURS
Office hours will be kept on Mondays (10–11) and Wednesdays (1–2), in the Humanities and Social Sciences Building 3050. Students can also meet with the instructor after class or by appointment.

COURSE MATERIAL
The required readings consist of two textbooks, a sourcebook with a selection of relevant primary sources in translation, and readings placed on reserve include a selection of essays, articles and additional translated texts. Required readings are marked by an asterisk (*), and the readings on electronic reserve (http://eres.library.ucsb.edu/) are listed under ‘Additional Readings / ERes. The schedule of reading assignments is keyed to the bibliography found at the end of this syllabus.

REQUIRED TEXTS
- Levenson, J. D. Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible (San Francisco: Harper, 1986).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS
ADDITIONAL READINGS / ERes


ASSIGNMENT/ESSAY

Write a 6–8 page research paper. Include at least six sources, and list these sources in a separate bibliography attached at the end of the paper. The assignments are due at the beginning of class on Monday, November 30th; papers turned in at any point after the beginning of class are considered late.

1. A hard copy must be turned in at the beginning of class on the date due.
2. Any paper turned in after Week 10 will not be accepted and will receive a 0 grade.
3. Late papers will be marked down 5% per day (beginning in class).
4. Minimum page requirements are for complete pages of text, NOT including bibliography.
   a. A 6-page paper, for example, will include a minimum of six COMPLETE pages of text, in addition to the bibliography.
   b. A 10% deduction will be issued for each page less than the minimum.
5. Plagiarism. “Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use of another’s words or ideas as if they were one’s own; including, but not limited to representing, either with the intent to deceive or by the omission of the true source, part of or an entire work produced by someone other than the student, obtained by purchase or otherwise, as the student’s original work; or, representing the identifiable but altered ideas, data or writing of another person as if those ideas, data or writing were the student’s original work.”
   —from the UCLA Student Conduct Code (.pdf file), Fall 1998, section 102.01c.

The assignment will address one of the two following topics:

# 1: Patriarchal Traditions of Beer-Sheba
# 2: Saul and the birth of the Israelite monarchy
**Topic # 1: Patriarchal Traditions of Beer-Sheba**

Beer-Sheba is a location that is mentioned in several passage of the Hebrew Bible, however it is most prominent in the stories of the Patriarchs found in the Book of Genesis. Analyze the literary composure of the various traditions of Beer-Sheba in Genesis. As part of this analysis, discuss the different sources that scholars identify in the narratives. Explain why scholars have delineated such sources within the narratives. In other words, what elements in the narrative have led interpreters to distinguish separate authorship? In the course of your discussion, answer the following questions (in relation to the source-critical breakdown of each text):

1. What is the etymology (or, what are the etymologies) of the place name? How is the place name explained through the various etiological stories?
2. What are the different names for the deity? How is God identified and through what means does the deity appear to the different Patriarchs? Ultimately, what does this tell us about the history of Israelite religion(s)?
3. What do the different Patriarchs do in response to their divine encounters?
4. What sort of social and political perspectives do these accounts reveal? Do these perspectives shed light on the references to Beer-Sheba elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible?
5. Where is Beer-Sheba and why is this important for understanding the narrative?

Synthesize your answers to the above questions into a coherent (and concise) conclusion that explains, ultimately, the purpose of these stories in ancient Israel.

*Required biblical readings: Genesis 21 (and 22:19); 26; 28:10; 46:1–7*

**Topic # 2: Saul and the birth of the Israelite monarchy**

The account of Saul’s election as the first king of Israel, found in 1 Samuel 8–12, has intrigued biblical scholars due to the different perspectives on the monarchy offered throughout the narrative. An earlier generation of commentators interpreted these perspectives as representative of separate sources, loosely labeled: “pro-monarchal” and “anti-monarchal.” Although this approach has not been abandoned, more recently it has become popular to explain the multiple perspectives as indicative of literary stylizing. In other words, the differences in the text are intentional and were produced by a single writer. Carefully analyze 1 Samuel 8–12, and discuss its component parts, and then review the different approaches to the text. In the course of your discussion, answer the following questions (in relation to the text):

1. What are the reasons that interpreters delineate divergent sources? What are the different historical backgrounds that biblical scholars often read into these texts?
2. Do you agree with the interpretation of two sources? If so, why? Can you detect the literary “seams” that connect the two sources? What explanation can you give for the combination of the two sources in the final (canonical) form of the Book of Samuel?
3. Do you disagree with the interpretation of two sources? If so, why? How are the apparent tensions of the text explained? What would be the purpose of such literary styling?

Synthesize your answers to the above questions into a coherent (and concise) conclusion that explains, ultimately, the role that this story /these stories might have played during the time of the Israelite monarchy as well as in the post-monarchical period.

*Required biblical readings: First Samuel 8–12*
## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1

**Sept 28**  
Introduction to Biblical Literature: Historical and Cultural Backgrounds  
Reading: *Collins, 1–46; Suriano (forthcoming); NOAB, Essays 507-519; you should know the dates, events and places listed at the end of the syllabus.

**Sept 30**  
The Composition and Background of the Torah  
Reading: Genesis 1–11; NOAB, 3-7; *Collins, 47–65; *Schniedewind, 1–23.

### WEEK 2

**Oct 5**  
The Primeval History and the Israelite Worldview  
Reading: Genesis 1; Psalm 74:12-19; *Collins, 67–82; selections from Enuma Elish.

**Oct 7**  
The Composition and Background of the Ancestral Narratives  
Reading: Genesis 12–36; *Collins, 83–105; Isserlin, 48–64.

### WEEK 3

**Oct 12**  
The Exodus Tradition in Biblical Literature  

**Oct 14**  
The Construction of the Tabernacle in Exodus  
Reading: Exodus 25-34, 40; 1 Kings 6–8; *Collins, 121–157; *Levenson, 137-145.

### WEEK 4

**Oct 19**  
Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History  
Reading: Deuteronomy 1-12; 2 Kings 22-23; *Collins, 159–179; *Moran, 77–87.

**Oct 21**  
The Origins of Israel in the Deuteronomistic History: Joshua and Judges  
Reading: Joshua 1-12, 24; Judges 1-2, 19-21; *Collins, 183–215.

### WEEK 5

**Oct 26**  
Midterm Examination

**Oct 28**  
The Davidic Dynasty and Jerusalem in Samuel-Kings  
Reading: 1 Samuel 1, 11; 2 Samuel 5-7; 1 Kings 1-9; *Collins, 217–244; *Levenson, 89–136; Isserlin, 65–92.

### WEEK 6

**Nov 2**  
Israel and Judah among the Nations  
Reading: 1 Kings 12–2 Kings 25; the Tel Dan Stele; *Collins, 245–260; Schniedewind, “The Tel Dan Stela,” 75–90; Suriano, “Apology of Hazael,” 163–176.

**Nov 4**  
Prophetic Movements of the Eighth Century BCE  
WEEK 7

Nov 9  Jerusalem and Judah in the Age of Empires
Readings: 2 Kings 16-25; Deuteronomy 12; *Collins, 245–259; *Schniedewind, 24–73.

Nov 11  Class not in session – Veterans Day

WEEK 8

Nov 16  Exile and Return in Biblical Discourse
Reading: Jeremiah 1–7, 29–34; Isaiah 40–55; *Collins, 331–377; *Schniedewind, 139–164.

Nov 18  An Introduction to the Writings

WEEK 9

Nov 23  Class Cancelled

Nov 25  Wisdom Literature in the Post-Exilic Period
Reading: Job; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth); *Collins 461–527.

WEEK 10

Nov 30  Hellenistic Judaism and the Hebrew Bible
Reading: Daniel; 1 Maccabees; Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira); *Collins 553–598.

Dec 2  What is the Hebrew Bible?
Reading: *Collins 599–605.

Dec 2  “Women’s Rites in the Family Context: What Do We Really Know?”
Evening Guest Lecture, 7:00–9:00 by Saul Olyan (Brown University) in the McCune Room, Sixth Floor HSSB:
### Chronological Overview (Know for the Midterm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Beginning of the Iron Age (Israel emerges in southern Levant)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>David’s conquest of Jerusalem; rise of United Monarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>960</td>
<td>Solomon construct first temple in Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>928</td>
<td>Division of the United Monarchy; beginning of Divided Monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>745</td>
<td>Beginning of Assyrian involvement in Israel (Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III)</td>
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<tr>
<td>722</td>
<td>Fall of Samaria and northern kingdom to Assyria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>701</td>
<td>Sennacherib’s conquest of Judah; Hezekiah, Isaiah, deliverance of Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>597</td>
<td>First Babylonian deportations; royal family exiled to Babylon; Jeremiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>587</td>
<td>Babylonians destroy Jerusalem, temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>539</td>
<td>Edict of Persian king Cyrus allows exiled Judeans to return to Palestine (Yehud)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>520</td>
<td>Beginning of the rebuilding of the temple; Haggai, Zechariah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>515</td>
<td>Dedication of the second temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>458</td>
<td>Ezra’s mission to Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>445</td>
<td>Nehemiah’s journey to Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>332</td>
<td>Persian empire falls to Alexander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>Seleucid rule in Palestine; Antiochus III &amp; IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Hasmonean Dynasty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Archaeological Periods for History of Syria-Palestine

- **Bronze Age (3200-1200 BCE)**
  - Early Bronze (3200-2000 BCE)
  - Middle Bronze (2000-1550 BCE)
  - Late Bronze (1550-1200 BCE)
- **Iron Age (1200-539 BCE)**
  - Iron I (1200-1000 BCE)
  - Iron II (1000-539 BCE)
- **Persian Period (539-332 BCE)**
- **Hellenistic Period (332-63 BCE)**
- **Hasmonean Period (167-63 BCE)**

### Geography (Be Able to Identify on the Maps in NOAB)

Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylonia, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Anatolia, Mediterranean Sea, Nile River, Tigris River, Euphrates River, Red Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf, (Syro)-Arabian Desert, Sahara Desert, Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea, Jerusalem, Lachish, Megiddo, Dan, Hazor, Carmel, Samaria, Bethel, Beersheba, Jericho.