

RELS 21 Course Outline as of Fall 2013**CATALOG INFORMATION**

Dept and Nbr: RELS 21 Title: THE HEBREW BIBLE

Full Title: The Hebrew Bible

Last Reviewed: 3/10/2025

Units		Course Hours per Week		Nbr of Weeks	Course Hours Total	
Maximum	3.00	Lecture Scheduled	3.00	17.5	Lecture Scheduled	52.50
Minimum	3.00	Lab Scheduled	0	6	Lab Scheduled	0
		Contact DHR	0		Contact DHR	0
		Contact Total	3.00		Contact Total	52.50
		Non-contact DHR	0		Non-contact DHR	0

Total Out of Class Hours: 105.00

Total Student Learning Hours: 157.50

Title 5 Category: AA Degree Applicable

Grading: Grade or P/NP

Repeatability: 00 - Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

Also Listed As:

Formerly: HUMAN 10.1

Catalog Description:

A critical survey of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) which traces its historical development in the context of Ancient Near Eastern cultures. The course explores its great stories, personalities, themes, and their global impact on civilizations.

Prerequisites/Corequisites:**Recommended Preparation:**

Eligibility for ENGL 100 or ESL 100

Limits on Enrollment:**Schedule of Classes Information:**

Description: A critical survey of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) which traces its historical development in the context of Ancient Near Eastern cultures. The course explores its great stories, personalities, themes, and their global impact on civilizations. (Grade or P/NP)

Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL 100 or ESL 100

Limits on Enrollment:

Transfer Credit: CSU;UC.

Repeatability: Two Repeats if Grade was D, F, NC, or NP

ARTICULATION, MAJOR, and CERTIFICATION INFORMATION:

AS Degree:	Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	E	Humanities	Fall 1981	
CSU GE:	Transfer Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	C2	Humanities	Fall 1981	
IGETC:	Transfer Area		Effective:	Inactive:
	3B	Humanities	Fall 1981	
CSU Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1981	Inactive:
UC Transfer:	Transferable	Effective:	Fall 1981	Inactive:

CID:

Certificate/Major Applicable:

Major Applicable Course

COURSE CONTENT

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Use a critical-historical vocabulary to describe the composition, history and socio-historical context of a book in the Hebrew Bible.
2. Compare and contrast the different religious ideas among texts of the Hebrew Bible.
3. Evaluate competing claims made by the various schools of thought represented in the Hebrew Bible.

Objectives:

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Acquire the skills to read and discuss the biblical text with reasonable ease and comprehension.
2. Name the genre and describe the generic features of a passage from the Hebrew Bible.
3. Distinguish among the assumptions of traditional biblical interpretation and the methodology and conclusions of modern biblical criticism.
4. Distinguish between the assumptions and techniques of traditional biblical exegesis and the theory and methodology of modern biblical criticism.
5. Describe historical origins and redaction of biblical literature.
6. Distinguish the salient features of various biblical genres such as: myth, saga, genealogy, legal code, poetry, prophecy.
7. Discern the major literary and religious themes and recount their dynamic development.
8. Identify the major personalities, events and political geography of Ancient Israel and become familiar with the unfolding story line of the biblical narrative.
9. Discuss the biblical text as the classical literature of an ancient people with sources in and shared cultural features with Mesopotamia, Egypt, Hatti and Canaan-Phoenicia, which has helped to shape the development of the western world.

Topics and Scope:

1. Introduction to traditional understandings of the Hebrew scripture.
2. Modern methods of biblical research.
 - a. Documentary Theory
 - b. Comparative Near Eastern literature
 - c. The theory of the original matriarchy, the nature of patriarchy and its literary heritage
 - d. Midrash and biblical literary style compared with other narrative styles
 - e. Contemporary historiographic and hermeneutic criticism
3. The Covenant -- tracing its literary presence in the creation story.
 - a. The flood and Abraham
 - b. Abraham as ancestor of the Israelite and Ishmaelite traditions
4. The Akedah
 - a. Its literary history, traditional interpretations
 - b. Its connections to the sacrificial cult
 - c. Its centrality in the history of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
5. Machpelah -- the burial of Sarah and narratives concerning claim to the land of Canaan.
6. The story of Sodom and the code of hospitality.
7. The Jacob Tradition: Tribal history and legend.
8. The Rape of Dinah and the Levitical origins.
9. Judah and Tamar and the beginnings of the Judean Davidic traditions.
10. Joseph and the Northern Israelite traditions.
11. The Exodus Story
 - a. Testing the historical reality of the story
 - b. Testing the durability and thematic credibility of the story
 - c. Miracles, historiography and literary style
 - d. The nature of prophecy and Yahwist understanding
 - e. The evolutionary reality of the "Mosaic" traditions
12. The Book of Joshua: the Tribes of Yahweh and the period of the conquest/rebellion.
13. The Book of Judges
 - a. The period of the Settlement
 - b. Israel facing the external threat of Canaanite and Philistine domination -- Deborah as prophetess and military leader
 - c. Israel facing the internal threat of assimilation and acculturation -- the story of Samson and Delilah
14. The Monarchy:
 - a. The tradition from Samuel to Saul with emphasis on the literary characteristics of these figures as they interact
 - b. The beginnings of prophetic criticism of the monarchy
 - c. The advent of David, his rise and reign
 - d. The accession of Solomon
 - e. The transformation of Israel from an agrarian, egalitarian, tribal confederation to an urban, military aristocracy
15. The monarchies of David and Solomon.
16. The divided kingdoms and the rise of the literary prophets: (Elijah), Hosea, Amos and Isaiah through the Assyrian invasion and the destruction of Israel.
17. The nature and content of prophecy: Yahwist social criticism, the Yahwist hermeneutic.
18. The Deuteronomists and the reform of Josiah.
19. The Babylonian Exile.
20. Yahwism vs. Zoroastrian dualism.
21. Isaiah and the coming of Cyrus and the Persian conquest.
22. Job.
23. Ezra and Nehemiah--the restoration of Judah and the canonization of the Torah.

24. Yahwist Wisdom literature: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and the Song of Solomon.

Assignment:

1. Weekly reading assignments of between 20-50 pages
2. Reading reports 2-4 pages
3. 1- 3 exegetical essays explicating select biblical texts using critical methods acquired in lecture and reading
4. 1-3 thematic essays which build a conceptual synthesis out of related narratives and aphorisms
5. 2-4 exams of objective or essay or combined format
6. Final exam of objective or essay or combined format
7. 2-7 quizzes
8. Optional field trips and oral presentations
9. In-class analytical interpretations: Class performances or performance exams

Methods of Evaluation/Basis of Grade:

Writing: Assessment tools that demonstrate writing skills and/or require students to select, organize and explain ideas in writing.

Reading and writing exegetical, thematic reports research papers and essays

Writing
25 - 60%

Problem Solving: Assessment tools, other than exams, that demonstrate competence in computational or non-computational problem solving skills.

Analytical interpretations: Class performances or performance exams

Problem solving
10 - 25%

Skill Demonstrations: All skill-based and physical demonstrations used for assessment purposes including skill performance exams.

None

Skill Demonstrations
0 - 0%

Exams: All forms of formal testing, other than skill performance exams.

Multiple choice, true/false, matching items, completion, essay exams, text analysis

Exams
20 - 40%

Other: Includes any assessment tools that do not logically fit into the above categories.

Classroom participation, optional oral presentations, reports on interviews, museum visits, or field trips.

Other Category
0 - 10%

Representative Textbooks and Materials:

The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts. Finkelstein, Israel and Silberman, Neil Asher. Touchstone: 2002. (classic)

The Hebrew Bible: New Insights and Scholarship. Greenspahn, Frederick. New York University Press: 2008.

A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. Collins, John J. Fortress Press: 2007.