

**The Hebrew Bible as Literature**  
REL 3213 / JST 3930, Spring 2016  
Tu 4 (10:40-11:30) / Th 4-5 (10:40-11:30; 11:45-12:35), MAT 105

**Professor:** Robert Kawashima  
**office hours:** Tu 9:30-10:30; Th 1-2; or by appointment  
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**office:** 120 Anderson

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the literary study of the Hebrew Bible within its ancient Near Eastern context. Our primary focus will be on a wide and varied reading of biblical narrative — along with a bit of poetry — but students will also be introduced to the scholarly study of the Bible from a literary perspective. More generally, this course will introduce students to the scholarly, interdisciplinary study of literature. That is, if the solutions and interpretations proposed will be specific to the Bible, the problems and ideas raised will have relevance for the study of literature in general.

Required Texts:

HarperCollins Study Bible — or other approved translation  
Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, second edition  
Secondary readings, course materials, and other information will be made available through **Canvas** at e-Learning Support Services: <http://elearning.ufl.edu>.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Course Requirements:

**Attendance is mandatory**

Participation — 10%

2 Essays — 45%

2 Exams — 45%

Grade scale:

87–89 = B+	77–79 = C+	67–69 = D+	below 60 = E
93–100 = A	83–86 = B	73–76 = C	63–66 = D
90–92 = A-	80–82 = B-	70–72 = C-	60–62 = D

Schedule:

Week 1

- 1/5 **Introduction:** syllabus; aims of course; general background  
1/7 **Adam and Eve:** Genesis 1-3; Kawashima, "Literary Analysis," 83-89;  
Kawashima "Sources and Redaction," 47-61

Week 2

- 1/12 **The Literary Approach:** Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, ch. 1  
1/14 **Cain and Abel; the Giants and the Tower:** Genesis 4-11; Kawashima,  
"Violence and the City"; Kawashima, "Homo Faber in J's Primeval History"

Week 3

- 1/19 **Sodom and Gomorrah:** Genesis 12-24; Alter, "Sodom as Nexus"; Kawashima,  
"Literary Analysis," 89-104  
1/21 **How to Read Biblical Narrative I:** Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, chs. 3-4

Week 4

- 1/26 **The Binding of Isaac:** Genesis 22; Homer, *Odyssey*, excerpt; Auerbach,  
"Odysseus' Scar"; Kawashima, "Biblical Narrative and the Birth of Prose  
Literature"  
1/28 **How to Read Biblical Narrative II:** Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, chs. 5-6

Week 5

- 2/2 **Jacob and Esau:** Genesis 25-27; Alter, "Literature"  
2/4 **Jacob and Laban:** Genesis 28-36; Hendel, "Cultural Memory"

Week 6

- 2/9 **Joseph and his Brothers:** Genesis 37-50; Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, ch. 8  
2/11 **Joseph and his Brothers:** Genesis 37-50

Week 7

- 2/16 **Moses and Pharaoh:** Exodus 1-13; **PAPER 1 due in class**  
2/18 **From Egypt to Sinai:** Exodus 14-24; Pardes, "Imagining the Birth of a Nation"

Week 8

- 2/23 **Aaron and the Gold Calf:** Exodus 32-34; 1 Kings 11-12; Friedman, *Who Wrote  
the Bible?*, ch. 3  
2/25 **EXAM 1** (1/7-2/23)

Week 9

- 3/1 **SPRING BREAK**  
3/3 **SPRING BREAK**

Week 10

- 3/8 **In the Wilderness:** Numbers 11-17; Pardes, “The Spies in the Land of the Giants”  
3/10 **Song and Story:** Judges 4-5; Exodus 14-15; Kawashima, “From Song to Story”

Week 11

- 3/15 **Jephthah and his Daughter:** Judges 1-12; Alter, “Allusion and Literary Expression”  
3/17 **The Levite and his Concubine:** Judges 13-21

Week 12

- 3/22 **The Ark and the Philistines:** 1 Samuel 1-7  
3/24 **David and Saul:** 1 Samuel 8-23; Alter, “Imagining History in the Bible”

Week 13

- 3/29 **David and Abigail:** 1 Samuel 24-31; 2 Samuel 1-10; Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons*, excerpts  
3/31 **David and Bathsheba:** 2 Samuel 11-24; 1 Kings 1-2

Week 14

- 4/5 **Biblical “Period Pieces”:** Jonah; Esther; Funkenstein, “Biblical and Postbiblical Perceptions of History”  
4/7 **Biblical “Period Pieces”:** Esther; Ruth; Pardes, “The Book of Ruth: Idyllic Revisionism”

Week 15

- 4/12 **Job:** Job 1-27; Alter, “Truth and Poetry in the Book of Job”; **PAPER 2 due in class**  
4/14 **Job:** Job 28-42

Week 16

- 4/19 **EXAM 2** (3/8-4/14)