

Pentateuch I: Genesis-Exodus
REL 4221 / JST 4936, Fall 2022
MWF 8 (3:00-3:50), Mat 102

Professor: Dr. Robert Kawashima
office hours: M 1:00-2:00; W 9:00-10:00; or by appointment
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Course Description:

The modern study of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) effectively began in the nineteenth century, when scholars, through painstaking critical analysis of the biblical text, discovered that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) was written not by one author – Moses, according to venerable tradition – but by several, over the course of several centuries. It was “the Documentary Hypothesis,” as this discovery came to be called, that laid the foundation for the modern discipline of biblical studies. In this course, we will take the analysis of the Pentateuch into its original sources as our starting point, and begin carefully reading our way through it, from the creation of the world to the exodus from Egypt. We will discover that modern interpretation, rather than stripping the Bible of its literary brilliance, has actually helped restore the original luster of its narrative art. Various secondary readings will raise other issues – historical and literary – necessary to a critical understanding of this foundational book, or rather, collection of composite books.

Required Textbooks:

Richard Elliott Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed*
Stephanie Dalley, trans., *Myths from Mesopotamia*
Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (recommended)
additional secondary readings, course materials, and information will be made available through **Canvas** at e-Learning

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 (6 pages) – 45%

2 Exams – 45%

Make-up exams and late papers must be approved by instructor beforehand, or justified afterward by providing appropriate documentation (medical, etc.).

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

PRIMEVAL HISTORY

Week 1

- 8/24 **Introduction:** syllabus; aims of course; general background
8/26 **Creation:** Genesis 1-5; Knohl, *Divine Symphony*, ch. 2 (pp. 9-14), ch. 3

Week 2

- 8/29 **Cosmogony:** Dalley, “Epic of Creation,” pp. 233-64; Knohl, *Divine Symphony*, ch. 1 & appendix A
8/31 **Philology:** Kawashima, “Sources and Redaction”; Genesis 1-3
9/2 **Creation:** Genesis 1-5; Knohl, *Divine Symphony*, ch. 2 (pp. 9-14), ch. 3

Week 3

- 9/5 **Labor Day (no class)**
9/7 **Composition of the Pentateuch:** Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, ch. 1
9/9 **Flood and Cosmic Balance:** Dalley, “Atrahasis”; Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths”

Week 4

- 9/12 **Cosmic Balance; Flood and the Problem of Evil:** Genesis 6:1-9:17; Knohl, *Divine Symphony*, ch. 2 (pp. 14-19); (Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, ch. 2)
9/14 **Problem of Evil; Gilgamesh and the Epic Quest:** Dalley, “Epic of Gilgamesh”; (Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, ch. 3)
9/16 **Gilgamesh**

Week 5

- 9/19 **J’s Primeval History and the Human Condition:** Genesis 9:18-12:4; Kawashima, “Homo Faber”
9/21 **Human Condition; The Redaction of the Primeval History:** Genesis 1-11; Knohl, “Cain”
9/23 **Redaction**

PATRIARCHS

Week 6

- 9/26 **Rosh Hashanah (class cancelled)**
9/28 **From Hero to Patriarch:** Coogan, Aqhat; Genesis 12:1-4, 14:1-22; (Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, ch. 4)
9/30 **Hero to Patriarch; Abraham:** Genesis 12:1-25:18; Hendel, *Remembering Abraham*, ch. 2

Week 7

- 10/3 **Abraham**
10/5 **Yom Kippur (class cancelled)**
10/7 **Homecoming Day**

Week 8

- 10/10 **Narrative Art I:** Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, chs. 3-4; **PAPER 1 due in class**
 10/12 **Bargaining with God:** Genesis 18-19; Hendel, "Poetics of Myth"
 10/14 **Narrative Art II:** Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, chs. 5-6

Week 9

- 10/17 **Narrative Art II**
 10/19 **EXAM 1** (8/26 – 10/17)
 10/21 **The Binding of Isaac:** Genesis 20-22; Homer, *Odyssey* 19; Auerbach, "Odysseus' Scar"

Week 10

- 10/24 **Binding of Isaac; the Patriarchal Age:** Genesis 25:19-36:43; Hendel, *Remembering Abraham*, ch. 3
 10/26 **Patriarchal Age**
 10/28 **Esau and Jacob:** Genesis 25:21-28:9; (Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, ch. 5)

EGYPT AND THE EXODUS

Week 11

- 10/31 **Esau and Jacob; Jacob and Laban:** Genesis 28:10-33:20, 35-36; Barthes, "Wrestling with the Angel"
 11/2 **Jacob and Laban**
 11/4 **Dinah and Shechem:** Genesis 34; Deuteronomy 22:13-30; Frymer-Kensky???

Week 12

- 11/7 **Dinah and Shechem; Joseph in Egypt:** Genesis 37-41; Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Bird, "Harlot as Heroine"
 11/9 **Joseph in Egypt**
 11/11 **Veteran's Day (no class)**

Week 13

- 11/14 **Joseph and his Brothers:** Genesis 42-50; Halpern, "Exodus," part 1
 11/16 **Joseph and his Brothers; Egypt:** Exodus 1-15; Numbers 33:1-49; Halpern, "Exodus," part 2
 11/18 **Egypt**

Week 14

- 11/21 **Class cancelled**
 11/23 **Thanksgiving (no class)**
 11/25 **Thanksgiving (no class)**

Week 15

- 11/28 **Slavery:** Exodus 1-6; Hendel, *Remembering Abraham*, ch. 4; **PAPER 2 due in class**
 11/30 **The Plagues:** Exodus 7:1-15:21; Psalms 78, 105; Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*, ch. 2
 12/2 **Birth of the Nation:** Exodus 15-20, 24; Pardes, *Biography of Ancient Israel*, ch. 4

Week 16

- 12/5 **EXAM 2** (10/21-12/2)

