

# WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

## Time & Location

Lectures: T/TH 10:00-10:50am

+ 50 min precept

## Requirements

Participation	20%
Short Written Responses	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- describe the contents of the Hebrew Bible on the level of both individual books and broader key concepts within the Bible
- have a clear understanding of the main historical processes that shaped Israelite communities and the composition and transmission of Israelite literatures in the first millennium BCE
- discuss the difference between "canonical" and "non-canonical" works and analyze the effect of these categories on the study of the Hebrew Bible
- hone their skills as close readers and critical thinkers

## Instructor:

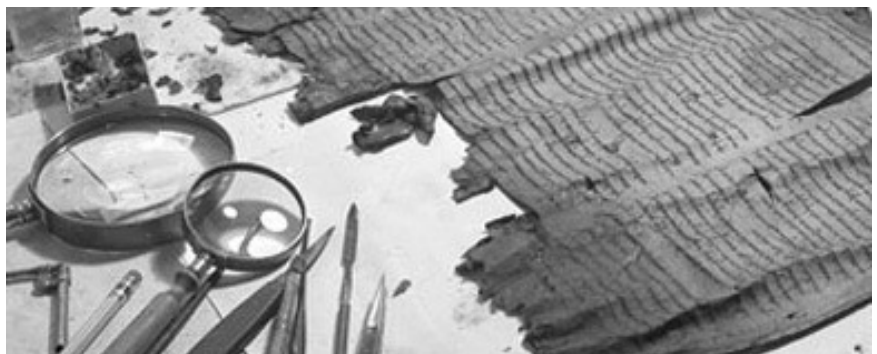
Liane M. Feldman ([lmfeldman@princeton.edu](mailto:lmfeldman@princeton.edu))  
 Assistant Professor of Religion & Judaic Studies  
 1879 Hall, Room 243  
 Office Hours:  
 T/Th: 2:00pm-3:00pm and by appointment



## Course Description

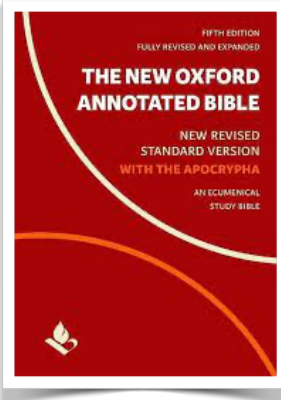
This course introduces the Hebrew Bible (Christian "Old Testament"), a complex anthology written by many people over nearly a thousand years. In this class, we will ask questions about the Hebrew Bible's historical context and ancient meaning, as well as its literary profile and early reception. Who wrote the Bible? When and how was it written? What sources did its authors draw on to write these stories? And to what circumstances were they responding? Students will develop the skills to critically analyze written sources, and to understand, contextualize, and critique the assumptions inherent in modern treatments of the Bible.

*Note: This is an introductory course; no prior knowledge of the subject is expected or assumed!*

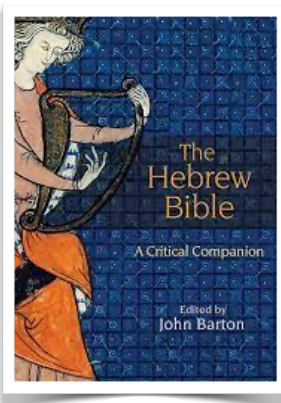


## Required Books

You are expected to have print or electronic access to the following books, both in-class and for the completion of assignments:



*The New Oxford Annotated Bible, 5th ed.*  
Oxford: OUP  
**ISBN:** 9780190276089



*The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Companion*  
John Barton  
Princeton: PUP  
**ISBN:** 9780691154718

These books are available for purchase at [Labyrinth Books](#)

All other readings will be available as PDFs on Canvas

## A Note on Bible Readings

Other Bibles that print the NRSV translation *with* Apocrypha are also acceptable. You can also access biblical texts online at [biblegateway.org](http://biblegateway.org). If you do access readings this way, be sure you are reading the NRSV translation. You will have to change the default translation on that site.

## Why the NRSV Translation?

Not all translations are created for the same purpose. We will discuss this in more detail in class, but the NRSV translation is considered to be one of the more “academic” translations of the Bible. The NRSVue is actually the most up-to-date version of this translation (2021) and is significantly better than the NRSV, but unfortunately it is so new that no Study Bibles have been published with it — yet!

## About the Reading Assignments

Students will be expected to read both primary and secondary literature in conjunction with the lecture. Required readings will typically total 50–70 pages per week (25–35 pages per class), though some weeks may be less while others are slightly more.

There may be further “optional” reading listed in the syllabus; these readings are truly optional and are meant to offer more in-depth coverage of particular topics should a student be interested. Many of the optional readings are more specialized and are texts I might assign in a graduate seminar on these topics.

## Reading and Precepts

Precepts will typically be focused on close readings of selected primary texts. Often these will be drawn from the primary readings assigned for the week, but at times they may be different. In the case that they are different, you are not expected to prepare the text prior to precept.

## Course Grading

There are a total of 800 possible points to be earned in this course across four categories of assignments.

Participation:	160 points
Short Written Responses:	200 points
Midterm Exam:	200 points
Final Exam:	240 points

### **Graded A-F, P/D/F, Audit**

There will be no extra credit assignments!

### **Participation (160 points; 20%)**

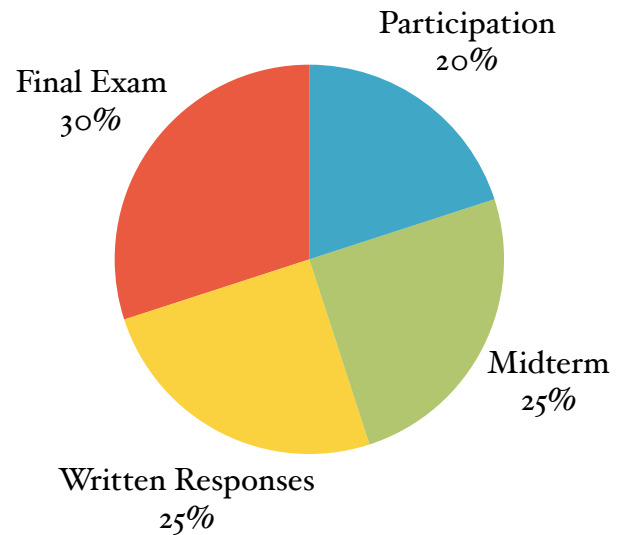
This portion of your grade is based on your participation in Precepts. Attendance in Precepts is mandatory. You are expected not only to be present, but to be prepared and to engage in any discussions or activities. If you are unable to attend a Precept, please contact your preceptor in advance of the session.

### **Midterm Exam (200 points; 25%)**

There will be a take home, essay-based midterm exam distributed on 10/5 and due on 10/12 at 5pm via Canvas.

This exam will focus primarily on broader themes and concepts addressed in the first half of the course.

Students are permitted use of any primary or secondary sources, but *must* cite the sources they use. Failure to cite sources will result in a grade of zero on the exam.



### **Short Written Responses (200 points; 25%)**

Each week, a question or prompt will be posted on canvas related to the lectures and assigned readings.

Students must write a 400–600 word response to **8 out of 10** of these questions/prompts. Each response is worth 25 points.

**Responses must be submitted to Canvas by Friday at 5pm each week.**

### **Final Exam (240 points; 30%)**

There will be a final scheduled exam.

This will be a closed-book exam. No notes or resources of any kind will be permitted.

Questions on the final exam could take multiple forms: identification, multiple choice, short answer, fill in the map, and 1-2 paragraph mini-essays

Week 1  
What is the Bible?

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Tu 9/5	<b>Introduction; Whose Bible, Which Bible?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hebrew Bible: A Critical Companion (HBCC) pp. 3-23</li> </ul>
Th 9/7	<b>Ancient Israel in the First Millennium BCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marc Z. Brettler. 2005. "A Brief History of Israel," in <i>How to Read the Jewish Bible</i>, pp. 19-28</li> <li>HBCC 24-53</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Miller and Hayes, <i>A History of Ancient Israel and Judah</i>, pp. 1-29</li> </ul>

## No Precepts this week!

Week 2  
Making a Biblical Story

Tu 9/12	<b>Competing Narratives, Composite Texts: Creation and the Flood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genesis 1-3; 6-9</li> <li>Baruch J. Schwartz. 2021. "The Documentary Hypothesis," in <i>Oxford Handbook of the Pentateuch</i>, pp. 165-187</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richard Elliott Friedman. 1989. <i>Who Wrote the Bible</i>, pp. 15-32.</li> <li>Joel S. Baden. 2012. <i>The Composition of the Pentateuch</i>, esp. pp. 13-33, 214-29, 246-49.</li> </ul>
Th 9/14	<b>Behind a Biblical Story: Ancient Near Eastern Parallels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Atrahasis: pp. 450-452 in <i>The Context of Scripture</i>, vol 1</li> <li>Christopher Hays. 2014. "Flood Stories," in <i>Hidden Riches</i>, pp. 75-95</li> <li>David Wright. 2021. "Ancient Near Eastern Literature and The Pentateuch," in <i>Oxford Handbook of the Pentateuch</i>, pp. 379-398 (focus on pp. 379-381 and 392-396)</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John J. Collins. 2018. "The Near Eastern Context," in <i>Introduction to the Hebrew Bible</i>, 3rd edition, pp. 25-52.</li> <li>John Day. 2013. "Comparative Ancient Near Eastern Study: The Genesis Flood Narrative in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Flood Accounts," in <i>Biblical Interpretation and Method: Essays in Honour of John Barton</i>, pp. 74-88.</li> </ul>

## Week 2 Precept:

Genesis 6-9: Comparing independent P and J versions

## Week 2 Response Prompt:

*Integrating the lectures and readings from Weeks 1 & 2, discuss the significance of understanding the Bible as 1) an anthology, 2) a composite text, and 3) part of a broader ancient Near Eastern literary tradition. Be sure to differentiate between the Bible and the Pentateuch where necessary.*

THE IRON AGE

Week 3

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Tu 9/19	<b>God or Gods? The Issue of Israelite Monotheism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deuteronomy 32:6-8</li> <li>Kuntillet Ajrud, selected texts (read intro, look at images and read translations of the texts; you can ignore the notes!)</li> <li>HBCC 239-270</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christopher A. Rollston. 2003. "The Rise of Monotheism in Ancient Israel: Biblical and Epigraphic Evidence," <i>Stone-Campbell Journal</i> 6: 95-111.</li> <li>Mark S. Smith. 2001. <i>The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts</i>, esp. pp. 135-148.</li> </ul>
Th 9/21	<b>Memory and History: The Exodus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exodus 1-15</li> <li>Bernd U. Schipper. 2019. <i>A Concise History of Ancient Israel: From the Beginnings Through the Hellenistic Era</i>, pp. 10-21</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nadav Na'aman. 2011. "The Exodus Story: Between Historical Memory and Historiographical Composition." <i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i> 11, no. 1: 39-69</li> <li>Elizabeth Bloch-Smith. 2003. "Israelite Ethnicity in Iron I: Archaeology Preserves What Is Remembered and What Is Forgotten in Israel's History," <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> 122: 401-425.</li> <li>Anson F. Rainey. 2001. "Israel in Merneptah's Inscription and Reliefs," <i>Israel Exploration Journal</i> 51: 57-75.</li> </ul>

**Week 3 Precept:**  
Psalm 82: Translation as Theological Interpretation (the case of polytheism)

**Week 3 Response Prompt:**  
*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week, discuss the ways in which different narratives about ancient Israel have been constructed for different audiences. What role have modern religious beliefs played in the interpretation of ancient evidence? How have things like archaeology or inscriptional evidence challenged those interpretations? What role do you think biblical texts should play in the construction of a history of ancient Israel?*

Week 4

Date	Topic	Required Readings
<b>Tu 9/26</b>	<b>Kings and Monarchy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Samuel 8–10, 16; 2 Sam 2, 5; 1 Kgs 16–22</li> <li>Steven McKenzie. 1992. “Deuteronomistic History,” in <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>, pp.160–168</li> <li>Finkelstein and Silberman. 2001. “One State, One Nation, One People?” in <i>The Bible Unearthed</i>, pp. 149–156</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bernd U. Schipper, <i>A Concise History of Ancient Israel</i>, pp. 34–70</li> <li>Miller and Hayes, <i>A History of Ancient Israel and Judah</i>, 2nd ed., pp. 148–185; 284–326</li> </ul>
<b>Th 9/28</b>	<b>Laws and Legal Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exodus 20–23; Deuteronomy 12–26</li> <li>HBCC 160–182</li> <li>Chaya Halberstam. 2007. “The Art of Biblical Law.” <i>Prooftexts</i> 27, no. 2: 345–364.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bruce Wells. 2008. “What Is Biblical Law? A Look at Pentateuchal Rules and Near Eastern Practice.” <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> 70, no. 2: 223–243.</li> <li>David P. Wright. 2003. “The Laws of Hammurabi as a Source for the Covenant Collection (Exodus 20: 23–23:19).” <i>Maarav</i> 10: 11–87.</li> </ul>

**Week 4 Precept:**  
Exodus 20–23 and the Laws of Hammurabi

**Week 4 Response Prompt:**

*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week, discuss the relationship between monarchy and law codes in the ancient Near East. In what ways do the biblical law codes differ from the Mesopotamian examples? Consider not just individual laws, but the larger structures and rhetorical claims of biblical law codes.*

Week 5

<b>Tu 10/3</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Kgs 16–23; Isaiah 1–8; Amos 1–9; Jeremiah 21–25</li> <li>HBCC 133–159</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hugh G.M. Williamson. 2004. “In Search of Pre-Exilic Isaiah,” in <i>In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar</i>, pp. 181–206.</li> <li>Marc Z. Brettler. 2005. <i>How to Read the Jewish Bible</i>, chs. 15–18 (pp. 137–184).</li> </ul>
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## ACROSS TIME: TEMPLES, PRIESTS, AND SACRIFICE

Week 5

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Th 10/5	<b>Temples and Sacrifice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Kgs 6-8; Lev 1-4, 16</li> <li>HBCC 356-376</li> <li>Liane M. Feldman. 2020. "The Idea and Study of Sacrifice in Ancient Israel." <i>Religion Compass</i> 14, no. 12: 1-14.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Michael B. Hundley. 2015. "Divine Presence in Ancient Near Eastern Temples." <i>Religion Compass</i> 9: 203-215.</li> <li>Avraham Faust. 2019. "Israelite Temples: Where Was Israelite Cult Not Practiced and Why." <i>Religions</i> 10, no. 2: 1-26.</li> <li>Menachem Haran. 1978. <i>Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School.</i></li> </ul>

**Week 5 Precept:**  
**1 Kgs 18: Elijah and the Prophets of Ba'al**

**Week 5 Response Prompt:**

*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week, discuss the relationship between either (a) prophets or (b) temples/sacrifice to the institution of the monarchy and Yahweh. What political role does it play? What about its role in the religious life of ancient Israel? Additionally, what (if any) relationship do you see between the roles of prophets and temples/sacrifice in ancient Israelite society and in their portrayal in biblical literature?*

**Midterm Exam will be distributed and posted on Canvas on 10/5.  
 DUE: Thursday 10/12 at 5:00pm**

Week 6

Date	Topic	Required Readings
<b>Tu 10/10</b>	<b>Literary Sacrifice: The Priestly Source</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excerpt from the P source (See Canvas for PDF)</li> <li>Liane M. Feldman. 2023. <i>The Consuming Fire: The Complete Priestly Source from Creation to the Promised Land</i>, pp. 15-52.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jason M. H. Gaines. 2015. "The Priestly Source in Scholarship," <i>The Poetic Priestly Source</i>, pp. 257-287.</li> <li>William K. Gilders. 2009. "Sacrifice Before Sinai in the Priestly Narratives," in <i>The Strata of the Priestly Writings</i>, pp. 57-72.</li> <li>Jacob Milgrom, 1973. "Israel's Sanctuary: The Priestly 'Picture of Dorian Gray'", <i>Revue Biblique</i> 83: 390-99.</li> <li>Liane M. Feldman. 2020. <i>The Story of Sacrifice: Ritual and Narrative in the Priestly Source</i>, esp. pp. 1-28.</li> </ul>
<b>Th 10/12</b>	<b>A Priest and Prophet in Exile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ezekiel 1-3, 8, 40-48</li> <li>Marc Z. Brettler. 2005. <i>How to Read the Jewish Bible</i>, ch. 19, pp. 185-198.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ganzel, Tova and Shalom E. Holtz. 2014. "Ezekiel's Temple in Babylonian Context." <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> 64, no. 2: 211-226.</li> <li>Julia Rhyder. 2022. "Gates and Entrances in Ezekiel 40-48: The Social Utopia of the Temple Vision." <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>: 1-14.</li> <li>Johnathan Z. Smith, 1987. "To Put in Place," in <i>To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual</i>, pp. 47-73.</li> <li>Jacob Milgrom and Daniel I. Block. 2012. "The Visionary Sanctuary," in <i>Ezekiel's Hope</i>, pp. 41-60.</li> <li>Baruch J. Schwartz. 2000. "Ezekiel's Dim View of Israel's Restoration" in <i>The Book of Ezekiel</i>, pp. 43-67.</li> </ul>

## Week 6 Precept: The Priestly Sinai Story

### Week 6 Response Prompt:

*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week along with the class on Oct. 5, discuss the relationship between literary representations of sacrifice and/or sanctuary space in P and Ezekiel and the historical practice of sacrifice in ancient Israel. What role do you think P and Ezekiel should play in reconstructing historical ritual practice? Why?*

**Fall Recess 10/14-10/22**



## THE PERSIAN PERIOD

Week 7

Date	Topic	Required Readings
<b>Tu 10/24</b>	<b>A Return from Exile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isaiah 65–66; Ezra 1–6; 2 Chronicles 36</li> <li>Excerpts from Cyrus Cylinder</li> <li>Introduction to “Ezra” in <i>Oxford Annotated Bible</i>, pp. 675–676</li> <li>John J. Collins, 2018. “The Additions to the Book of Isaiah,” in <i>Introduction to the Hebrew Bible</i>, pp. 405–410</li> <li>David M. Carr, 2010. “Torah, Psalms, and the Rebuilding of Judah,” in <i>An Introduction to the Old Testament</i>: 208–227</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Miller and Hayes, <i>A History of Ancient Israel and Judah</i>, pp. 498–540.</li> <li>Matthew W. Waters. 2020. “The Achaemenid Persian Empire: From the Medes to Alexander,” in <i>The Oxford World History of Empire</i>: 111–36.</li> <li>Peter van der Veen. 2014. “Sixth-Century Issues: The Fall of Jerusalem, the Exile, and the Return” in <i>Ancient Israel’s History</i>, pp. 383–405.</li> </ul>
<b>Th 10/26</b>	<b>Second Temple(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Haggai 1–2; Zechariah 1, 4</li> <li>Elephantine Letters A 4.1; 4.8; 4.9</li> <li>Rüdiger Schmitt. 2020. “Diversity and Centralization of the Temple Cult in the Archaeological Record from the Iron IIC to the Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Judah,” in <i>Text and Ritual in the Pentateuch</i>: 151–171.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benedikt Hensel. 2018. “Cult Centralization in the Persian Period: Biblical and Historical Perspectives.” <i>Semitica</i> 60: 221–272.</li> <li>Sylvie Honigman. 2009. “Jewish Communities in Hellenistic Egypt: Different Responses to Different Environments,” in <i>Jewish Identities in Antiquity</i>, 117–135.</li> <li>Jodi Magness. 2016. “Were Sacrifices Offered at Qumran? The Animal Bone Deposits Reconsidered.” <i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i> 7: 5–34.</li> <li>Reinhard Pummer. 2016. “Archaeological Excavations: Mt. Gerizim” in <i>The Samaritans: A Profile</i>, pp. 1–12</li> </ul>

**Week 7 Precept:**  
**Ezra 3–4: Competing Communities in Persian Yehud**

**Week 7 Response Question:**

*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week, discuss the different communities at the start of the Persian period. Where are these communities of located? Do they seem to be related to each other? If so, how? If not, why not? How do different biblical and non-biblical texts represent these relationships?*

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Tu 10/31	<b>The Making of the Torah</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genesis 37; Nehemiah 8–12; Ezra 7</li> <li>• Baruch J. Schwartz. 2012. “How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37,” in <i>The Book of Genesis: Pages 263-278</i>.</li> <li>• Marc G. Brett. 2021. “The Imperial Context of the Pentateuch,” in <i>Oxford Handbook of the Pentateuch</i>, pp. 443–462.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John J. Collins. 2021. “The Pentateuch in the Second Temple Period,” in <i>Oxford Handbook of the Pentateuch</i>, pp. 61–75</li> <li>• Molly M. Zahn. 2021. “The Relevance of Moses Traditions in the Second Temple Period,” in <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Pentateuch</i>: pp. 78–94</li> <li>• Peter Frei. 2001. “Persian Imperial Authorization: A Summary,” in <i>Persia and Torah</i>: pp. 5–40.</li> </ul>
Th 11/2	<b>Biblical Novellas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruth, Esther, Jonah</li> <li>• Lawrence M. Wills. 2016 “The biblical short story,” in <i>The Cambridge Companion to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament</i>: pp. 314–330</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawrence M. Wills. 2011. “Jewish Novellas in a Greek and Roman Age: Fiction and Identity.” <i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i> 42, no. 2: 141–165.</li> <li>• Ilana Pardes. <i>Ruth: A Migrant’s Tale</i>. 2022.</li> <li>• Sebastian Grätz. 2007. “The Second Temple and the Legal Status of the Torah: The Hermeneutics of the Torah in the Books of Ruth and Ezra,” in <i>The Pentateuch as Torah</i>: pp. 273–288</li> <li>• Jean-Daniel Macchi. 2009. “The Book of Esther: A Persian Story in Greek Style,” in <i>Palimpsest: Rhetoric, Ideology, Stylistics, and Language Relating to Persian Israel</i>: pp. 109–128.</li> </ul>

### Week 8 Precept:

Ruth: Foreign migration to Israel and the issue of endogamous marriage

### Week 8 Response Question:

*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week, discuss some of the newly emerging types of literary activity in the Persian period. How does this literature look different from earlier periods? What techniques and genres are being used? How might this relate to the changing social and political landscape?*

## ACROSS TIME: THE PSALMS

## Week 9

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Tu 11/7	<b>Psalms: Poetic Structures and Devices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psalms 13, 19, 29, 93; Ben Sira 44:1-45:26</li> <li>• Adele Berlin. 2004. "Reading Biblical Poetry," in <i>The Jewish Study Bible</i>, pp. 2097-2104.</li> <li>• Robert Alter, 1985. "The Dynamics of Parallelism," in <i>The Art of Biblical Poetry</i>, pp. 3-26</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Kugel, 1981. <i>The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History</i>.</li> <li>• Adele Berlin. 2008. <i>The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism: Revised and Expanded</i>.</li> <li>• F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp. 2015 <i>On Biblical Poetry</i>.</li> </ul>
Th 11/9	<b>Psalms and Liturgy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psalms 24, 29, 93-100</li> <li>• HBCC 206-236</li> <li>• Richard J. Clifford. 2014. "Psalms of the Temple," in <i>The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms</i>, pp. 326-337.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaine T. James, "'Silence is Praise': Art and Knowledge in Psalm 65," in <i>Biblical Poetry and the Art of Close Reading</i>, pp. 32-48.</li> <li>• Jeffrey L. Cooley. 2014. "Psalm 19: A Sabbath Song." <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> 64: 177-195.</li> <li>• Nigel B. Courtman. 1995. "Sacrifice in the Psalms," in <i>Sacrifice in the Bible</i>: pp. 41-58</li> <li>• John J. Collins. 2018. "The Psalms and Song of Songs," in <i>Introduction to the Hebrew Bible</i>, pp. 73-91.</li> </ul>

**Week 9 Precept:**

Psalm 19: parallelistic analysis and close reading

**Week 9 Response Question:**

*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week, discuss the key characteristics of biblical poetry, both in terms of form and function. What is parallelism? How does it work? How were the psalms related to the worship of Yahweh, both in the temple and outside of it?*

# THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Week 10

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Tu 11/14	<b>Historiography</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QUICKLY SKIM 1 Chronicles 1-9</li> <li>• 1 Chronicles 20:1-23:6; 2 Chron 29-32; 1 Maccabees 1-4, 6, 8; 2 Maccabees 3-6</li> <li>• Alexander Rofé. 2009. "Late Historiography," in <i>Introduction to the Literature of the Hebrew Bible</i>, pp. 70-p. 97 par. 2</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martha Himmelfarb. 1998. "Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees." <i>Poetics Today</i> 19, no. 1: 19-40.</li> <li>• Gary N. Knoppers. 2003. "Greek Historiography and the Chronicler's History: A Reexamination." <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> 122 no. 4: pp.627-650.</li> <li>• Kenneth G. Hoglund. 1997. "The Chronicler as Historian: A Comparativist Perspective," in <i>The Chronicler as Historian</i>. pp. 19-29</li> <li>• Sara Japhet. 2006. "Postexilic Historiography: How and Why?," in <i>From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah</i>: pp. 307-330.</li> </ul>
Th 11/16	<b>Wisdom Literature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qohelet 1-12</li> <li>• Sirach: chs 9, 11, 44-51</li> <li>• HBCC 183-205</li> <li>• Annette Y. Reed and Liane M. Feldman, Selections from WJX Study Bible notes on Ben Sira (prepublication version)</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jennie Barbour. 2012. "'I saw all the deeds that were done under heaven': History in the Opening Poems," pp. 37-76.</li> <li>• Alain Buhlman. 2000. "The Difficulty of Thinking in Greek and Speaking in Hebrew: Qoheleth 3:18; 4:13-16; 5:8." <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> 90: 101-108.</li> <li>• Alma Brodersen. 2022. "Historical Contexts of Ben Sira," in <i>The Beginning of the Biblical Canon and Ben Sira</i>, pp. 35-58.</li> </ul>

**Week 10 Precept:**  
Firestone Field Trip!

## Week 10 Response Question:

*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week, discuss some of the key characteristics of Hellenistic-era biblical historiography and wisdom literature. What features do these two genres have in common? How are they different?*

**No Class Thanksgiving Week (11/21 and 11/24). Enjoy the Break!**

# Course Schedule

Week 11

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Tu 11/28	<b>Translation and Transmission: The Torah</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sirach, Prologue</li> <li>• Letter of Aristeas §§ 9-11, 301-316</li> <li>• Benjamin G. Wright III. 2011. "The Letter of Aristeas and the Question of Septuagint Origins Redux." <i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i> 2: pp. 303-325.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lindsey Arielle Askin. "What did Ben Sira's Bible and Desk Look Like?" 2018. in <i>Ancient Readers and their Scriptures</i>: pp. 3-26.</li> <li>• Sylvie Honigman. 2003. <i>The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the narrative of the Letter of Aristeas</i>.</li> <li>• Cécile Dogniez. 2022. "The Greek Translation of the Pentateuch," in <i>Oxford Handbook of the Pentateuch</i>, pp. 111-132</li> <li>• Francis Borchardt. 2017. "What Do You Do When a Text is Failing? The Letter of Aristeas and the Need for a New Pentateuch." <i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i> 48, no. 1: pp. 1-21.</li> <li>• Jonathan Vroom. 2021. "The Normativity of Torah in Ezra-Nehemiah and Ben Sira," in <i>Torah: Functions, Meanings, and Diverse Manifestations in Early Judaism and Christianity</i>, pp. 167-186.</li> </ul>
Th 11/30	<b>Apocalyptic Literature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniel 7-12</li> <li>• Animal Apocalypse</li> <li>• Anatheia Portier-Young. 2014. "Jewish Apocalyptic Literature as Resistance Literature," in <i>Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature</i>, pp. 145-160</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martha Himmelfarb. 2010. <i>The Apocalypse: A Brief History</i>.</li> <li>• Annette Yoshiko Reed. 2022. "Gendering Revealed Knowledge? Prophecy, Positionality, and Perspective across Sibylline and Enochic Discourses." <i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i> 13, no. 2: pp. 113-150.</li> <li>• John J. Collins 1998. <i>The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature</i>.</li> </ul>

**Week 11 Precept:**  
Animal Apocalypse: Deciphering the history behind the story

## Week 11 Response Question:

*Integrating the lectures and readings from this week, select either the transmission and translation of the Torah or the emergence of apocalyptic literature and discuss how it relates to the construction and/or negotiation of Judean/Jewish identity in this period.*

# Course Schedule

	Date	Topic	Required Readings
Week 12	Tu 12/5	<b>The Myth of Canon and the Idea of the “Bible”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malachi 3; 2 Chronicles 36</li> <li>• Annette Y. Reed. 2020. “Canon,” in <i>Jewish Annotated Apocrypha</i>, pp. 570–575.</li> <li>• John Reeves. 2010. "Problematizing the Bible: Then and Now." <i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i> 100: 139–152.</li> </ul> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eva Mroczek. 2018. “The Mirage of the Bible,” in <i>The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity</i>, pp. 25–50</li> <li>• Robert A. Kraft. 2007. ”Para-mania: Beside, Before and Beyond Bible Studies." <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> 126, no. 1: 5-27.</li> </ul>
	Th 12/7	Wrap Up & Review for Final Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No readings due!</li> </ul>

**Week 12 Precept:**  
Wrap up; exam review; open for questions

Final Exam	<p><b>Final Exam Date TBD by Registrar’s Office</b></p>
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## Attendance

Students are permitted two (2) unexcused absences from lectures. Any additional absences may result in a lowering of a student's final participation grade.

Attendance in precepts is mandatory and unexcused absences from precepts will result in a lowering of a student's participation grade.

## The "It Happens" Clause

Once each semester, students may invoke this clause to receive a no questions asked 72-hour extension on any weekly written response paper. (Your response would then be due on Monday at 5pm.)

To invoke this clause, simply email me ([lmfeldman@princeton.edu](mailto:lmfeldman@princeton.edu)) and your preceptor *before* the assignment's original due date.

## Academic Integrity and Honor Code:

Students are expected to comply with the Honor Code for both the midterm and final examinations, as well as all of the rules of academic integrity.

All work submitted for this class (exams and weekly written responses) should contain your own ideas and insights. You must properly cite all sources you have consulted, including those that you are quoting or paraphrasing. If you have questions about whether you should be citing something, [this is a helpful resource](#).

It is your responsibility to understand the Honor Code and how it applies to this course. If you have any questions about the Honor Code or on academic integrity, please contact me.

## The Use of Generative AI in this Classroom

- You are welcome to use generative AI to brainstorm ideas, clarify concepts, identify examples, or contextualize your learning in this course.
- The output of a generative AI tool may not be included in any of your submitted work.
- Exception:
  - You are permitted to use generative AI tools (such as Grammarly) to improve the language or readability of your submission.
  - If you do this, you must include a statement with your submission disclosing the tool you used and a short description of how you used it.
- You are ultimately responsible for the content of your submissions. Inclusion of uncited work that is not your own—even inadvertently—constitutes plagiarism. (And generative AI is known for not citing its sources!)
- If you have any questions about a specific use of generative AI, come talk to me. You will never be penalized for asking questions before you turn something in.

## **Crisis Policy**

It is your responsibility to balance your personal commitments so that you can also meet your curricular obligations in this class. That being said, things can and do happen in your life outside of class. If a personal situation arises during the semester that threatens to affect your performance in the course, you are strongly encouraged to speak with the professor and your residential college dean or assistant dean for student life about your circumstances immediately. Do not wait until the situation has begun to damage your grade/s in the course. It remains your responsibility to communicate with relevant Princeton personnel sooner rather than later so that an appropriate accommodation, strategy or resolution can be devised.

*(Policy adapted from Catherine Clune-Taylor)*

## **Academic Accommodations**

Students must register with the Office of Disability Services ([ods@princeton.edu](mailto:ods@princeton.edu)); 258-8840) for disability verification and determination of eligibility for reasonable academic accommodations. Requests for academic accommodations for this course should be made at the beginning of the semester or as soon as possible for newly approved students. I encourage students with approved accommodations to contact me at the beginning of the semester and again before major course assessments. Please note that no accommodations for a disability will be made without authorization from ODS or without advance notice.