

RS 2420B
Mon 7-9:30 pm, winter 2021

Dr. T. M. Lemos Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible Faculty of Theology, Huron @ Western	E-Mail: tlemos@uwo.ca Office: A219 Hours: Tues, 1-2:20; or by appointment
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Gods, Empires, Kings, and Rebels: The Hebrew Bible in Context

This course will introduce students to the texts of the Hebrew Bible, also called the Old Testament, and to the major events of Israelite history. Generally speaking, the class will examine biblical texts in the order in which they were written rather than in canonical order, situating them in their historical, social, and cultural contexts. We will use evidence of various kinds, including biblical, extra-biblical (that is, from ancient texts not included in the biblical “canon”), and archaeological, to better understand the societies and cultures that produced the biblical texts. The methods of this class will be primarily historical-critical, but theological and anthropological issues will also be addressed.

Prerequisites

It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that he/she has successfully met the course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are manifold, but we will focus primarily on the following:

1. Gaining factual knowledge regarding the content and sociohistorical background of biblical books.
2. Analyzing and critically evaluating the texts themselves through close reading, as well as the major arguments made regarding how to interpret these texts.
3. Framing arguments in both written and oral form regarding specific texts addressed in the course or some related aspect of Israelite history, society, or culture.
4. For M.Div./M.T.S. students, developing the ability to speak and write clearly and thoughtfully about one’s theology of scripture.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Attendance at all classes via Zoom is both expected and necessary to succeed in this course, as is reading all of the assigned materials. An excessive number of absences (i.e., more than one) will result in a deduction from your participation grade. Regular lateness to class may also result in deductions. I highly recommend that you participate in class discussions on a regular basis. See more on this component of your grade below.

Assignments for Bachelor's Students

You will be required to complete the following assignments:

Reflective paper: worth 15% of your grade; three to five pages double-spaced, twelve-pt. Times New Roman; reflecting on the significance of historical and/or archaeological evidence for biblical interpretation; assignment topic will differ for M.Div./M.T.S. and Bachelor's students.

Forum posts: 25% of grade; participation in asynchronous or synchronous online workshops; activities; and discussions of readings; student must post a comment (at least 100 words) about the week's readings and one response to another student's comments about the readings (at least 50 words) for nine weeks of the semester.

General class participation: 20% of grade; half of the grade will be computed based on attendance; one absence is allowed, each absence beyond one will result in a ten-point deduction in the attendance portion of the participation grade; half of the attendance grade will be based upon participation in class discussion and overall engagement in the course, including but not limited to the following considerations: how regularly student participates in discussions; whether or not student exhibits that he/she has done the readings; whether or not student is respectful toward professor and classmates; whether or not student speaks excessively, keeping other students from speaking or interrupting others; whether or not student's comments demonstrate they have analyzed the material; whether or not student has completed whatever short homework assignments professor might assign; whether or not student asks questions in class; whether or not student seeks help from professor when he/she needs help.

Final exam: 40% of grade; take-home; students will have twenty-hours to write exam; will consist of five identifications; at least five short answer questions; and two essay questions.

Assignments for M.Div./MTS Students

Reflective paper: worth 10% of your grade; three to five pages; reflecting on the significance of historical and/or archaeological evidence for biblical interpretation; assignment topic will differ for M.Div./M.T.S. and Bachelor's students.

Prospectus for research paper/ annotated bibliography: worth 5% of grade; prospectus should be no more than two pages; annotated bibliography must include at least five (non-biblical) sources.

Research paper: worth 30% of your grade; eight to ten pages 12-pt Times New Roman, double-spaced; on a topic of your choice as long as it is relevant to the class; paper must be previewed in prospectus. **NB: Papers that do not include a thesis statement that is clearly stated on the first page of the paper will receive an automatic 50.**

Final exam: 25% of grade; take-home; three hours in length plus thirty minutes in class; consisting of five identifications (in class); five short answer questions (two in class, three at home); and two essay questions (at home); cumulative.

Forum posts: 15% of grade; participation in asynchronous or synchronous online workshops; activities; and discussions of readings; student must post a comment (at least 100 words) about the week's readings and one response to another student's comments about the readings (at least 50 words) for nine weeks of the semester.

General class participation: 15% of grade; half of the grade will be computed based on attendance; two absences are allowed, each absence beyond two (i.e., two absences

are allowed) will result in a ten-point deduction in the attendance portion of the participation grade; half of the attendance grade will be based upon participation in class discussion and overall engagement in the course, including but not limited to the following considerations: how regularly student participates in discussions; whether or not student exhibits that he/she has done the readings; whether or not student is respectful toward professor and classmates; whether or not student speaks excessively, keeping other students from speaking or interrupting others; whether or not student's comments demonstrate they have analyzed the material; whether or not student has completed whatever short homework assignments professor might assign; whether or not student asks questions in class; whether or not student seeks help from professor when he/she needs help.

Grading Scale:

Grade Range	%	Definition
A+ A	90-100 80-89	The student exhibits an exceptional and sophisticated level of achievement; displays a superb command of the material and can creatively apply it at all levels; presents an insightful and, in the case of an A+, novel view of subject matter. Arguments are both inventive and fully supported. Writing is clear, elegant, mature, and completely grammatical, with few if any typographical errors.
B	70-79	The higher end of this range indicates above average achievement; examines issues thoroughly and critically; demonstrates a good grasp of the material and can creatively apply it at most levels; arguments are usually well supported and display some novel thinking. Writing is clear and displays no major grammatical errors and few minor ones.
C	60-69	The higher end of this range represents an average or somewhat below-average level of achievement and only a narrow grasp of the material; student is uncritical about tacit assumptions; arguments reflect the subject matter but evidence is sometimes insufficient or inadequate. Writing is at times awkward, unclear, or colloquial in style. A few major grammatical mistakes are present.
D	50-59	Minimally acceptable, indicating little understanding of the subject matter and lack of awareness of critical and differing views; arguments are superficial and merely descriptive. Writing is below the level expected for a university course, betraying a lack of understanding of the grammatical rules of the English language; it is informal in style and unvaried in diction.
F	0-49	Work is unacceptable, representing no comprehension of the material and a lack of ability to communicate even the basic grasp of the raw data presented. It is possible the student did not follow the directions of the assignment in a major way. Writing is far below the level expected for a university course.

Things to keep in mind

- Please read this syllabus carefully. I will expect you to be familiar with its contents, that is, with course requirements, assigned readings, due dates, etc.
- Work must be submitted via email as a .doc or .docx file. Unless you request and receive permission for an extension, late papers will be penalized one-half letter grade (5 points) per day.

- You are allowed one absence from class sessions (excluding exam days). After that absence, your participation grade will be lowered unless you can present evidence of illness or other emergency (e.g., death of a family member or your house burnt down).
- I will send out emails regularly in this course. I expect that you will check your email at least once a day. Failure to check your email regularly will not be considered an excuse for failing to complete an assignment or for failing to do so according to specified directions.
- If you email me, please follow proper letter-writing etiquette. Please address me as “Professor Lemos” or “Dr. Lemos.”
- Students are expected to treat others with respect in this course; disruptions and other rude behavior will not be tolerated.
- Be more concerned with the quality of your work than with your grade. A grade is an indication of quality, not the other way around.
- I do not grade inflate. You will not receive an A in this course unless you have truly earned it, i.e., unless your work is of extraordinary quality, far above the level of most university students.
- Do not text-message or send emails in my class. If I see you text or email in class, you will be marked as absent for the day. If I see you doing work for another course or amusing yourself online, you will be marked as absent for the day.

Books for Purchase

Attridge, Harold, et al. eds. *The Harper Collins Study Bible*. NRSV translation. Revised ed. San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 2006. (The older edition is also fine.)

Coogan, Michael D. *Stories from Ancient Canaan*. Either first or second edition is fine. (SAC).

Finkelstein, Israel, and Neil Asher Silberman. *The Bible Unearthed*. New York: Touchstone, 2001.

Roth, Martha T. *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*. Available as ebook from Western library website. (LC)

Readings marked with an * will be made available to students on Owl.

Course Schedule

N.B. While exam dates are fixed, the dates on which particular topics are covered in class may shift somewhat from what is listed below.

1/11—Introduction to the course; What is the Hebrew Bible?; The Hebrew Bible in its Ancient Near Eastern Context

1/18—Biblical Creation and Flood Accounts; The Patriarchs
 Read: “Epic of Creation”*; Atrahasis*; Baal Cycle* (SAC); Genesis 1-50; Finkelstein, 27-47, 319-325;
 Suggested: Kirta epic (SAC); Aqhat epic (SAC)

1/25— The Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings Entering the Land; The Early Iron Age and the Period of the Judges

Read: Sargon legend*; Exodus 1-19, 32; Numbers 11-14, 17, 20-25, 31-34; Finkelstein, 48-71, 326-328; Joshua 1-12; Judges 1-21; Finkelstein, 72-122, 329-339

2/1— The Emergence of the Monarchy

Read: 1-2 Samuel; Finkelstein, 123-148

2/8— The Monarchy, cont'd; Israelite Prophecy

Read: 1 Kings; Finkelstein, 149-195; 2 Kings 1-8; Amos; Hosea

Discussion: The Bible, History, and Modern Interpretive Communities

Due: 3-5-page reflective paper

2/15— Reading week; no class

2/22— Southern Prophecy in the 8th Century; The Northern Kingdom and its Demise

Read: Micah; Isaiah 1-14, 19, 29; 2 Kings 9-17; Kurkh inscription*; Black Obelisk inscription*; Finkelstein, 196-228

Ancient Near Eastern Law Codes; Biblical Law Codes

Read: Laws of Hammurabi; Middle Assyrian Laws; Exodus 20-23; Deuteronomy 1-34

3/1— Israelite Religion: “Popular” vs. Elite?; The Deuteronomistic Movement; The Final Years of the Judean Kingdom and the Destruction of Jerusalem

Read: 1 Kings 16:29-33; 18; 2 Kings 9-10; 13:1-9; 18-23; Isaiah 36-39; Kuntillet

Ajrud drawings*; 2 Kings 24-25; Jeremiah 37-44; Finkelstein, 229-295 (skim 229-274)

3/8— Exilic responses to crisis: Jeremiah; Ezekiel; Lamentations

Read: Jeremiah 1-10, 12, 15, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33-34, 36, 39, 51-52; Ezekiel 1-11, 16-21, 23-24, 26, 36-40; Book of Lamentations; Psalm 137; Lemos, “Apotheosis of Rage”*

3/15— Exilic responses to crisis: the Deuteronomists; Priestly circles; Deutero-Isaiah

Read: Genesis 1-3; 17; Exodus 24; 32; Book of Leviticus (read 10-23, 26 ; skim 1-9, 24-25, 27); Num 11-14, 16; 19; Deuteronomy 28-30; 2 Kings 21, 24-25; Ezekiel 40; Isaiah 40-55

3/22— Return from the Abyss: The Persian Era

Read: Cyrus Cylinder*; Haggai 1-2, Zechariah 1-8; Malachi 1-4; Ezra 1, 3-6, 9-10; Nehemiah 1-7, 13; Isaiah 55-66; Ruth 1-4; *Bible Unearthed*, 296-313; Esther 1-10; Daniel 1-6; Judith 1-16 (optional); Smith-Christopher*

Due: Prospectus (MTS/MDiv students)

3/29— Introduction to Wisdom Literature: The book of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes

Read: The Instruction of Amenemope*; Proverbs 1-10, 22-24, 31; Job 1-14, 38-42; Ecclesiastes 1-12

4/5— Hellenistic Judaism and the Hasmonean Revolt; Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature

Read: 1 Maccabees 1-6; 2 Maccabees 1-10; Mason*; Daniel 7-12; Enoch (excerpts)*

Due: Research paper (M.Div./MTS)

4/12—Final discussion

Final exam date: TBA

Additional Statements:

1. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

2. Statement on Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.”

3. Plagiarism-detecting Software/ Computer Marking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams, if used, may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

4. Support Services:

UWO Registrar’s Office: <http://www4.registrar.uwo.ca>

Huron’s Faculty of Theology, Office of the Dean:

http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_of_theology/info_for_current_students

srice@uwo.ca, 519-438-7224, ext. 289

Huron’s Writing Skills Centre: http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student_life/writing_services

UWO Student Support and Development Services:

http://communications.uwo.ca/current_students/student_services.htm

5. Accommodation for absences:

If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to your Faculty’s Dean’s office (or academic counselor), and not to the instructor. For the Faculty of Theology, all such documentation must be submitted to room A227. It will be the Dean’s office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

Non-medical absences and late work:

Students are each allowed two absences without penalty (excluding exam dates and assignment due dates). Each absence beyond two will result in a ten-point deduction from the student’s participation grade. Late written assignments will be penalized five points per day.

Medical absences: See also the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness – Undergraduate Students, at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

For work representing 10% or more of the overall grade for the course, a student must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic

responsibilities. Documentation must be submitted as soon as possible to your Faculty Dean's office (Huron Arts & Social Science students should take their documentation to the Academic Counsellor, through the Academic Services Centre at Huron), together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean's office in consultation with the instructor(s.) Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.

The UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) and Request for Relief are available at the Student Centre website (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>), Huron University College Academic Counselling website (www.huronuc.on.ca) or from the Dean's Office or Academic Services Centre at Huron.

Appendix to Course Outlines

Prerequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Conduct of Students in Classes, Lectures, and Seminars

Membership in the community of Huron University College and the University of Western Ontario implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. The academic and social privileges granted to each student are conditional upon the fulfillment of these responsibilities. In the classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Students can avoid any unnecessary disruption of the class by arriving in sufficient time to be seated and ready for the start of the class, by remaining silent while the professor is speaking or another student has the floor, and by taking care of personal needs prior to the start of class. If a student is late, or knows that he/she will have to leave class early, be courteous: sit in an aisle seat and enter and leave quietly. Please see the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* at: http://www.huronuc.ca/students/student_life/student_policies

Plagiarism Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at <http://www.huronuc.ca/library/Citing/>. In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library. Information about these resources can be found in LibGuides on the main page: <http://www.huronuc.ca/library>.

Students found guilty of plagiarism will suffer consequences ranging from a grade reduction to failure in the course to expulsion from the university. In addition, a formal letter documenting the offence will be filed in the Dean's Office, and this record of the offence will be retained in the Dean's Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Huron University College.

Statement on Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>

Policy on Special Needs

Students who require special accommodation for tests and/or other course components must make the appropriate arrangements with the Student Development Centre (SDC). Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/?requesting_acc

Additional Statements:

1. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices during Tests and Exams

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited to, laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can

inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

2. **Statement on Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html>.

3. **Plagiarism-detecting Software/Computer Marking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

B) Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

4. **Support Services:**

- UWO Registrar's Office: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>
- Huron's Faculty of Theology, Office of the Dean: http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_of_theology/info_for_current_students
- Faculty of Theology office: srice@uwo.ca, 519-438-7224, ext. 289
- Bachelor's Academic Advising at Huron: <http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/AcademicAdvisorsandServices>
- Huron's Writing Skills Centre: http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student_life/writing_services
- UWO's Mental Health website: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to this website for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
- UWO Student Support and Development Services: http://communications.uwo.ca/current_students/student_services.htm
- Services provided by Western University Student Council: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

5. **Accommodation for absences:**

If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to your Faculty's Dean's office (or academic counselor), and not to the instructor. For the Faculty of Theology, all such documentation must be submitted to room A227. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

- a) **Medical absences:** See also the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness —Undergraduate Students, at <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

For work representing 10% or more of the overall grade for the course, a student must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation must be submitted as soon as possible to your Faculty Dean's office (Huron Arts & Social Science students should take their documentation to the Academic Counsellor, through the Academic Services Centre at Huron), together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean's office in consultation with the instructor(s.) Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.

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