

Messianic Jewish Theological Institute

S 101 – Introduction to the Tanakh

Instructor: Jonathan Kaplan

Blogsite: <http://sjs.typepad.com/s101/>

Dates: October 18 – December 21, 2009 (1st Quarter of 2009-2010 Academic Year)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a college-level, guided study introducing students to the social and historical background of the Tanakh/Hebrew Bible as well as various approaches to its interpretation.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM

A critical, college-level introduction to the Tanakh is a prerequisite for graduate level courses in Tanakh and the Master of Jewish Studies degree. This course fulfills that prerequisite but does not count toward any graduate degree or certificate requirements at the MJTI School of Jewish Studies.

RELEVANCE

As a central text of Jewish life, the Tanakh describes Israel's covenant relationship with God. Understanding the central themes, events, persons, chronology and theological diversity of the Tanakh is essential for all followers of Yeshua, especially lay and rabbinical leadership within the Messianic Jewish community.

PREREQUISITE

None

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

This is an on-line course. The student must have a computer and high-speed Internet access, including the ability to listen to podcasts.

COURSE FORMAT

The student will independently read assignments from Brettler's *How to Read the Bible* and *The Jewish Study Bible*. Students will read selections from the Tanakh for exposure to various genres and critical methods of study. Asynchronous online discussion (by blog) will be used to answer student questions; podcasts will be used to supplement the readings.

REQUIREMENTS

- Completion of all assigned readings
- Listening to all podcasts
- Completion of assigned reading review worksheets
- Submission of one question per week on the readings to the instructor
- Completion of a pass/fail final examination

REQUIRED TEXTS (The publication dates indicate the required edition of each text)

- Brettler, Marc Tvi. *How to Read the Bible*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2005.
- Berlin, Adele and Marc Tvi Brettler. *The Jewish Study Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Birch, Bruce C. *et al.* eds. *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Louisville: WJKP, 2003.
- Collins, John J. *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2007.

- Coogan, Michael D. *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Harrison, R. K. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson, 2004.
- Longman III, Tremper and Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Second Edition*. Zondervan, 2006.
- Lucas, Ernest C. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Psalms and Wisdom Literature*. Exploring the Bible. IVP Academic, 2004.
- McConville, Gordon J. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Prophets*. Exploring the Bible. IVP Academic, 2008.
- Provan, Iain W, et al. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville: WJKP, 2003.
- Satterwaite, Philip and Gordon J. McConville. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Historical Books*. Exploring the Bible. IVP Academic, 2007.
- Sparks, Kenton L. *God's Words in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Weiss Halivni, David. *Revelation Restored: Divine Writ and Critical Responses*. London: SCM Press, 2001.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Pentateuch*. Exploring the Bible. IVP Academic, 2008.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

1. Reading assignments

Students should complete all reading assignments BEFORE listening to each corresponding podcast. Students should read the scripture readings S-L-O-W-L-Y to enable maximum comprehension of this difficult material.

2. Listening to all podcasts

On Sunday of each week, I will post four 25-minute podcasts on the course website. Students should plan on listening to the podcasts AFTER completing the corresponding reading assignment.

3. Completion of weekly reading review worksheets

On Sunday of each week, I will also post a reading review worksheet for that week's readings and podcasts. Students are to complete the worksheets as they complete the course reading and podcasts for that week. The worksheets will consist of 10–12 terms or concepts the students should be able to identify in one to two sentences, 4–5 quotes from Scripture that the students should be able to identify in one to two sentences, and 1–2 short essays. All material on the worksheet will be drawn from that week's reading or podcasts. Students are to submit the completed worksheet to me by Thursday at midnight EST via email attachment. Six of the eight worksheets must be turned in to me. In addition to the first week when students do not need to turn in the worksheet, students will have one additional week of their choosing during the quarter when they do not have to turn in the review worksheet (a BUY week). Worksheets will be graded on a completion basis. The questions for the final exam will be drawn from the worksheets.

4. Submission of one question per week to the instructor on the previous week's course material

By Thursday at midnight EST of each week, students should submit a minimum of one question to the instructor on that week's course material by email. The question(s) can focus on clarification of course reading, interpretation of scripture covered that week, or ask the instructor to give his opinion on an issue presented in that week's material. The instructor will then select three to four questions from those submitted to post answers to on the course website by Monday of the following week.

5. Completion of a pass/fail, take-home, open book final examination

The student will have 2 hours in which to complete an open book final exam covering the readings and podcasts. All questions will be drawn from the weekly reading review worksheets. The exam will be sent to the class via e-mail attachment on the evening of Monday, December 14, 2009. Students should not open the exam until they are prepared to take it. Students should observe the strict two-hour time limit

and will be asked to sign a statement stating they adhered to this requirement. The exam must be returned to the instructor by e-mail attachment before 5:00pm local time on Monday, December 21, 2008. My e-mail address is jkaplan@mjti.org.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 – Introduction and the Creation Narrative

(71 pages of reading)

Start date: October 18, 2009

1. Introduction to the Course
2. Traditional vs. Historical Critical approaches to the study of Scripture
 - a. Brettler 1–6
3. What is the Bible and the Canon?
 - a. Brettler 7–17, 273–278
4. The Big Picture of Israel’s History
 - a. Brettler 19–28
5. Creation
 - a. Brettler 29–47
 - b. JSB 1–18 (Gen 1:1–3:24 including all introductions and all textual notes)

Week 2 – Torah 1: The Patriarchal Narratives and the Beginnings of Israel

(94 pages of reading)

Start date: October 25, 2009

Reading review worksheet and question deadline: October 29, 2009

1. The Patriarchal History, Part 1: Abraham
 - a. Brettler 49–55
 - b. JSB 30–47 (Gen 12:1–22:24 including all textual notes)
2. The Patriarchal History, Part 2: Joseph
 - a. Brettler 55–59
 - b. JSB 74–101 (Gen 37:1–50:26 including all textual notes)
3. Israel in Egypt and the Beginning of the Exodus
 - a. JSB 102–133 (Exod 1:1–13:16 including all introductions and all textual notes)
4. Crossing the Red Sea
 - a. JSB 133–39 (Exod 13:17–15:27 including all textual notes)

Week 3 – Torah 2: Legal Material and the Wilderness Wanderings

(89 pages of reading)

Start date: November 1

Reading review worksheet and question deadline: November 5, 2009

1. Biblical Law
 - a. Brettler 61–72
 - b. JSB 145–163 (Exodus 19:1–24:18 including all textual notes)
2. Ritual in Ancient Israel
 - a. Brettler 73–83
 - b. JSB 203–206, 243–247 (Lev 16 including all introductions and all textual notes)
3. Wandering in the Wilderness and Preparing to Settle the Land
 - a. JSB 281–284, 344–349 (Num 31:1–32:41 including all introductions and all textual notes)
4. Moses’ Last Words
 - a. Brettler 85–94
 - b. JSB 356–366, 370–378, 391–394, 437–440 (Deut 1, 4, 5, 12, 31 including all introductions and all textual notes)

Week 4 – Prophets 1: The Deuteronomistic History

(126 pages of reading)

Start date: November 8

Reading review worksheet and question deadline: November 12, 2009

1. Settling the Land
 - a. Brettler 95–105
 - b. JSB 451–455, 462–479, 505–507 (Joshua 1–12, 24 including all introductions and all textual notes)
2. Ruling in the Period of Judges
 - a. Brettler 112–115
 - b. JSB 508–517, 548–557 (Judges 1–3, 18–21 including all introductions and all textual notes)
3. The Rise of Kingship in Ancient Israel
 - a. Brettler 107–112
 - b. JSB 558–561, 574–598, 619–632 (1 Samuel 8–18; 2 Samuel 1–7 including all introductions and all textual notes)
4. From Divided Monarchy to Exile
 - a. Brettler 117–127
 - b. JSB 668–689, 694–703, 761–779 (1 Kings 1–7, 9–12; 2 Kings 18–25 including all introductions and all textual notes)

Week 5 – Prophets 2

(122 pages of reading)

Start date: November 15

Reading review worksheet and question deadline: November 19, 2009

1. Telling the Story a Different Way – Chronicles
 - a. Brettler 129–136
 - b. JSB 1714–1718, 1723–1725, 1750–1751, 1775–1778, 1817–1823 (1 Chron 1, 5, 20; 2 Chron 7, 33–35 including all introductions and all textual notes)
2. The Rise of Prophecy in Ancient Israel
 - a. Brettler 137–147
 - b. JSB 455–461, 711–735 (1 Kgs 17–2 Kgs 4)
3. Eighth Century Prophecy 1 – Amos
 - a. Brettler 149–160
 - b. JSB 1176–1192 (Amos 1–9 including all introductions and all textual notes)
4. Eighth Century Prophecy 2 – Isaiah 1–39
 - a. Brettler 161–171
 - b. JSB 780–782, 784–789, 796–799, 804–808, 809–811, 822–823, 845–846 (Isa 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 20, 31 including all introductions and all textual notes)

Week 6 – Prophets 3

(118 pages of reading)

Start date: November 22

Reading review worksheet and question deadline: November 25, 2009 (one day earlier due to thanksgiving)

1. A Parody of Prophecy? – Jonah
 - a. JSB 1198–1204
2. Sixth Century Prophecy 1 – Jeremiah
 - a. Brettler 173–183

- b. JSB 917–932, 927–929, 956–958, 960–963, 966–969, 979–980, 982–983, 988–991, 1000–1002, 1039–1041 (Jer 1, 3, 15, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26, 28, 31, 36, 52 including all introductions and all textual notes)
- 3. Sixth Century Prophecy 2 – Ezekiel
 - a. Brettler 185–197
 - b. JSB 1042–1062, 1067–1071, 1084–1086, 1106–1122, 1136–1138 (Ezek 1–11, 16, 23, 33–40, 48 including all introductions and all textual notes)

Week 7 – Writings 1

(122 pages of reading)

Start date: November 29

Reading review worksheet and question deadline: December 3, 2009

- 1. Comforting the Exiles – Lamentations and Isaiah 40-66
 - a. Brettler 199-208
 - b. JSB 1587–1602, 782–784, 860–866, 872–877, 887–889, 891–892, 894–895, 908–910 (Lamentations; Isa 40, 41, 44, 45, 51, 53, 55, 63 including all introductions and all textual notes)
- 2. Rebuilding the House – Haggai, Ezra, Nehemiah
 - a. JSB 1243–1248, 1666–1670, 1684–1687, 1699–1670, 1709–1711 (Haggai; Ezra 9–10; Neh 8, 13 including all introductions and all textual notes)
- 3. The Emergence of Apocalyptic Literature – Zechariah, Daniel
 - a. Brettler 209–218
 - b. JSB 1249–1252, 1254–1255, 1256–1258, 1640–1655, 1657–1661, 1665 (Zech 1, 2, 5, 7, 8; Dan 1–6, 8, 9, 12 including all introductions and all textual notes)
- 4. Israel’s Hymnbook – Psalms
 - a. Brettler 219–229
 - b. JSB 1280–1285, 1286–1287, 1289, 1296–1297, 1308–1309, 1341, 1414–1415 (Psalms 1, 3, 6, 14, 15, 24, 53, 118 including all introductions and all textual notes)

Week 8 – Writings 2

(99 pages of reading)

Start date: December 6

Reading review worksheet and question deadline: December 10, 2009

- 1. Wisdom Literature – Proverbs and Ecclesiastes
 - a. Brettler 231–241
 - b. JSB 1447-1451, 1457–1460, 1463–1465, 1481–1485, 1494–1498, 1603–1610, 1614–1617, 1618–1619, 1620-1622 (Prov 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 22, 23, 30, 31; Eccl 1–3, 7–8, 10, 12 including all introductions and all textual notes)
- 2. The Foreigner in our Midst – Ruth and Esther
 - a. Brettler 267–272
 - b. JSB 1578–1586, 1623–1639 (Ruth; Esther including all introductions and all textual notes)
- 3. In What Way Wisdom? – The Song of Songs
 - a. Brettler 257–266
 - b. JSB 1564–1577 (The Song of Songs including all introductions and all textual notes)
- 4. With Such Knowledge . . .
 - a. Brettler 279–283

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course successfully, the student will be able

- To discuss the historical and canonical shape of the Tanakh

- To explain the various literary genres and forms within the Tanakh
- To engage debated issues such as authorship, date and setting for the books of the Tanakh covered in this course
- To comment on the content and major themes of the books of the Tanakh covered in this course
- To demonstrate a familiarity with historical-critical methods in reading and interpreting the Tanakh

ASSESSMENT

A Pass/Fail grade will be determined on the basis of the Final Exam. The student must receive a grade of C or higher on the Final Exam in order to pass the class.

THE GRADING SYSTEM

The basic letter grades have the following significance:

A Exemplary

B Adequate

C Passing, but requiring substantial improvement

P Passing (for use only if the Pass/Fail option is available and selected)

F Failed

Grades have been assigned the following numerical values for the purpose of computing the grade point average:

A 4.0 | A- 3.7 | B+ 3.3 | B 3.0 | B- 2.7 | C+ 2.3 | C 2.0 | C- 1.7 | F 0.0

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Preparation:** Each student is expected to be prepared for, and to participate, in the online class discussions.
2. **Dishonesty and plagiarism:** Any form of dishonesty (copying from another student's work or allowing your work to be copied) or plagiarism (passing off another's work as your own, not giving appropriate credit to another's ideas) will not be tolerated. Such misconduct will result in an automatic "F" grade for the class and a permanent notice placed in the student's academic record. If you are unsure whether an action is permissible or not, please check with the instructor.
3. **Incompletes:** Incompletes will only be granted when the instructor and Provost agree that significant extenuating circumstances have prevented a student from finishing the course work by the stipulated Due Date. Extenuating circumstances are major, unplanned, unanticipated, and unavoidable disruptions in one's life or work. To request an incomplete, the "Request for Incomplete" form must be downloaded from the MJTI website "Schedule" page and submitted to the course Instructor for approval. If the Instructor rejects the request, he/she will inform the student of the decision. If the Instructor supports the request, he/she will sign and date the "Request for Incomplete" form, send it to the MJTI Registrar, who will refer the matter to the Provost for final approval. If the Incomplete grade is granted, the completed course work is due to the Instructor by the final assignment Due Date of the following quarter. If the work is not completed within this time, the Instructor determines whether a reduced grade or a grade of F is warranted, based on the amount and quality of the work that has been completed. Further extensions of time (which can only be granted by the MJTI Provost) are normally not granted.
4. **Medical Leave: For students who are temporarily unable to continue their studies due to medical or psychological issues.** Medical leave is a category of non-academic leave. While on leave the student is not considered to be currently enrolled in MJTI but is considered to be in good standing. A medical leave of absence is granted by the Director of the School of Jewish Studies. Because a medical leave is sometimes needed to cope with sudden emergencies, there is no deadline or form for application. The medical leave must, however, be approved/granted prior to the end of finals for the academic semester or, in the case of an incomplete, by the end of finals the following semester. The Director granting or approving the medical leave will notify the

Registrar of the School of Jewish Studies of the leave of absence. The student may request reinstatement for a period of one year from the end of the academic quarter in which the leave was granted.

5. **Extensions.** Extensions of the Due Date for the final assignments are not permitted. Students who do qualify for an Incomplete should submit as much work as possible by the Due Date so that the Instructor has time to grade all work in time to meet the instructor's deadline for submitting grades to the MJTI office. At the instructor's discretion, work may be accepted later than the Due Date, with a deduction of grade for each late day.
6. **Change of Student Status:** A student who has registered to take a course for credit may switch to the status of auditor up to, and including, the last day of the last week of class by making the request in writing, but the tuition differential will only be refunded if the switch is made in writing by the end of the fourth week of the course.
7. **Blog privacy:** The course blog is accessible only with the user name and password provided to you. To ensure a positive forum for course interaction, access to the course blog will only be granted with the instructor's permission. Likewise, students are asked to refrain from excerpting lessons or threaded discussions from the blog in any format. This will enable the cultivation of a safe and honest forum for dialogue.
8. **Instructors and Email:** Regardless of the course format, instructors shall be available during the course week for private contact from students via email. Instructors are required to respond within 24 hours of receipt (Sunday – Wednesday) of student inquiries made via email. These guidelines apply both to email from students and to student questions asked of the instructor in asynchronous discussion.
9. **Questions:** If you have any questions regarding assignments, feel free to e-mail them to me at jkaplan@mjti.org

STRUCTURED WORK HOURS

42 hours	841 pages of assigned reading
3 hours	Completion of 6 weekly reading review worksheets
16 hours	32, 25-minute podcasts
2 hours	Completion of take-home, open book final examination
63 hours	Total structured hours