



MESSIANIC JEWISH

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

Teaching and living a prophetic vision of Jewish life renewed in Yeshua

S501 – Tanakh: The Beginnings of Judaism and the Jewish People

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October 3 – December 5, 2021—Fall Quarter 2021-22

Populi: <https://mjti.populiweb.com>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the Tanakh as the story of the Jewish people and as the foundation of Jewish thought, life and traditions. The course covers early Jewish history focusing on the role of the Jewish people in the canonical narrative. The function of key writings and events in the formation of religion and culture in ancient Israel, as well as in the ongoing life of the Jewish people, will be addressed. Special emphasis is given to the historical, social and cultural setting of the Tanakh in the Ancient Near East.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM

This is a first-year foundational class, as such it introduces key theological points and ethos of MJTI. It is a core course required for all graduate programs and certificate tracks.

RELEVANCE

The Tanakh contains the foundational narratives of the Jewish people and is central to the development of Jewish thought, life and traditions. It also serves as the theological foundation for Christianity. Therefore, understanding its development and interpretation is essential for any student of the Bible. Equally important is Israel's covenantal role and responsibility within the Canonical Narrative. This course responds to the need for individual and communal understanding of the Tanakh, especially as the foundational witness to the relationship between God and Israel. In order to address this need, we study core Tanakh texts from the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings concerning this tumultuous relationship in dialog with Jewish interpretative tradition and reflect on them in light of the Apostolic Writings in order to know and respond to God more deeply in the present moment.

PREREQUISITE

There are no prerequisites for this course, but basic familiarity with Hebrew is helpful.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

This is an online video-conference course. The student must have a computer, headset, and high-speed internet access. Please contact Joyce Klayman, our IT assistant, for technical help at jbklay@gmail.com.

COURSE FORMAT

Online webinar and asynchronous online discussion.

REQUIREMENTS

- Full participation in video conferences, online discussion threads, and a final paper.
- Each week I may also assign each student the responsibility of presenting some of the day's assigned reading to the class.
- Please have your *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh* available for each class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Revised Ed. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
- Brettler, Marc Zvi. *How to Read the Bible*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2005.
- Shanks, Hershel, ed. *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, 3rd ed. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1999.
- Tullock, John H. *The Old Testament Story*, 6th ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2002. – **Please especially note the edition of this text, as it will save you money.**

RECOMMENDED READING

- Dever, W.G. *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001.
- Dunstan, William E. *The Ancient Near East*. Belmont: Thomson/Wadsworth, 1998.
- Frank, H.T., ed. *Hammond's Atlas of the Bible Lands*. Union, NJ: Hammond World Atlas, 2007.
- Friedman, Richard E. *Who Wrote the Bible?* New York: Harper San Francisco, 1997.
- Heschel, Abraham J. *The Prophets*. New York: Perennial/HarperCollins, 2001.
- Kugel, James L. *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now*. New York: Free Press, 2008.
- Miller, J. Maxwell and John H. Hayes. *History of Ancient Israel*, 2nd edition. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2006.
- Newsome, James D. Jr., ed. *A Synoptic Harmony of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles: With Related Passages from Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezra*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, reprint, 2006.
- Pritchard, J.B. *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, vol. 1. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.
- Schniedewind, William M. *How the Bible Became a Book*. Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2004.
- Soulen, R. Kendall. *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- Walton, John H. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

Classes will be held once a week on Sunday mornings at 10:30am EST. We will meet via Zoom for a live two (2) hour interactive webinar.

Full participation in video conferences, online discussion threads, and a final paper. I will also occasionally assign each student the responsibility of preparing and presenting some of the day's assigned reading to the class.

There will be a final paper around 3,000 words. The assignment will be posted on Populi on Friday, November 26th and must be uploaded to Populi no later than Sunday, December 5th by 11:59pm.

There will also be a final paper not to exceed 3,000 words. The assignment will be sent to the class via email on Friday, December 11th and must be returned to the instructor by email attachment no later than Sunday, December 20, 2021, by 11:59 pm EST (submit on Populi).

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at rebyosh@simchatyisrael.org.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week & Date	Title of Lesson	Required Reading
Week 1 Oct. 3-7	Introduction / The Bible in its Historical Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brettler, 5-12, 24-28 • Tullock, 1-8, 13-36 • Alter, ix-24
Week 2 Oct. 10-14	Biblical Interpretation / Torah: Creation and the Patriarchs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullock, 8-13, 37-59 • Brettler, 13-17, 29-47 • Alter, 25-54 • Shanks, 1-31 (<i>skim</i>)
Week 3 Oct. 17-21	Torah: Exodus and Desert Wanderings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullock, 60-98 • Brettler, 61-94 • Alter, 55-78 • Shanks, 33-54 (<i>skim</i>)
Week 4 Oct. 24-28	Conquest and Confederacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullock, 99-122 • Brettler, 95-105 • Alter, 79-110 • Shanks, 55-89 (<i>skim</i>)
Week 5 Oct. 31-Nov. 4	United Monarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullock, 123-168 • Brettler, 107-115 • Alter, 111-141 • Shanks, 91-120 (<i>skim</i>)
Week 6 Nov. 7-11	Divided Monarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullock, 169-206 • Brettler, 117-127 • Alter, 143-162 • Shanks, 129-199 (<i>skim</i>)
Week 7 Nov. 14-18	Prophecy and Exile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullock, 263-306 • Brettler, 137-160, 209-218 • Alter, 163-192 • Shanks, 1210-229 (<i>skim</i>)
Week 8 Nov. 21-25	The Writings / Final Paper Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tullock, 307-359 • Brettler, 219-241, 267-272 • Alter, 193-235
Final paper is due by Sunday, December 5, 2021 at 11:59pm (submit on Populi).		

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course successfully, the student will be able to: by

1. Explain the theological importance of the Jewish people and their covenant with ADONAI in the canonical narrative;
2. Grasp more deeply the characteristics of HaShem and His role in history;
3. Properly appropriate historical, social and cultural information from the Ancient Near East to deepen one's understanding and interpretation of the Tanakh;

4. Describe the lines of social, historical, and theological continuity and discontinuity between biblical Israel and the Jewish people today;
5. Read and analyze biblical texts in Hebrew at an intermediate level.

ASSESSMENTS

Grades will be awarded according to the following criteria: attendance and participation, including online discussion threads (40%), completion of assigned reading (20%) and a final 3,000-word paper (40%).

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades and grade point equivalents

A	100-94	C+	79.9-78
A-	93.9-90	C	77.9-75
B+	89.9-87	C-	74.9-70
B	86.9-83	F	Below 69.9
B-	82.9-80		

STRUCTURED WORK HOURS

20 hours	Video conference sessions
20 hours	Participation in asynchronous online discussion
30 hours	500 pages of assigned reading
20 hours	Final Paper (3,000 words)
90 hours	Total structured hours

STANDARD MJTI ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE DISCUSSION				
<i>Analytical Reflection</i>	<i>Evidence/Support</i>	<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Total</i>
30%	30%	30%	10%	100%
Demonstrates a serious attempt to grapple with the Unit material. Analysis is reasonable and gives opportunity for interaction. Asks relevant questions.	Supports discussion points with references to assigned readings, logical analysis, and examples. Gives citations (work, page number) for material quoted or paraphrased.	Interacts with the instructor and other students. Discusses agreement or disagreement with classmates' analytical reflections and provide explanation of logic; and/or respond to questions posed in classmates' analytical reflections, and when appropriate, reference assigned readings, logical analysis, and examples.	Writes in clear, concise, and grammatically acceptable terms.	

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR ESSAYS				
	<i>A (exemplary)</i>	<i>B (adequate)</i>	<i>C (passing)</i>	<i>F (failed)</i>
<i>Quality of thought</i>	Fresh or even original	Mostly derivative or clichéd	Fully derivative; clichéd	No evident effort to understand
<i>Engagement with subject</i>	Deeply engaged	Modestly engaged	Superficially Engaged	Disengaged
<i>Organization</i>	Well organized	Somewhat choppy	Poor	Disorganized
<i>Mechanics of writing and documentation</i>	Nearly error-free	Some errors or sloppiness	Many errors and very sloppy	Filled with errors and sloppiness
<i>Argument & support</i>	Well-argued and documented	Reasonable clarity and support	Roughly argued and poorly documented	No clearly supported argument or support

MJTI 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 Academic Dean 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, fill out the form "Request for Grade Incomplete" on the MJTI Webpage (<http://www.mjti.org/forms>). The form will be automatically be sent to the Registrar who will request permission from the Instructor and then the Academic Dean for final approval. If the Incomplete grade is granted, the completed course work is due to the instructor within 8 weeks of the final assignment of that quarter. If the work is not completed within this time, the instructor, based on the amount and quality of the work that has been completed, determines whether a reduced grade or a grade of F is warranted. Further extensions of time, justified by extreme circumstances, are granted only by the Academic Dean.
4. **Leave of Absence/Withdrawal:** MJTI programs are designed to permit students to pursue their studies while managing the many responsibilities they have as adult professionals. MJTI will consider a leave of absence for a student who is experiencing hardships that make effective progress in her/his academic program unusually difficult. Students who, due to unforeseen and serious circumstances (including personal, family emergency, medical, and military service) are unable to take or complete a course during the academic year may submit a Request for a Leave of Absence status to the MJTI Registrar's office. Such status is granted at the sole discretion of the Academic Dean.

Students desiring to drop or withdraw from courses after registering may do so by submitting a Change of Course Status form to the Registrar. If the course is dropped before the quarter begins, the only financial penalty charged is a \$30.00 drop/withdrawal fee. If the change is requested after the quarter begins, the student will be refunded according to the refund policy stated on page 28 of the current

catalog. Non-attendance does not constitute official withdrawal. A student who begins a course and does not officially withdraw will receive the grade earned for the entire course, which will usually be a failing grade. MJTI does not accept unofficial withdrawal from a class. A student who officially withdraws from a class will receive a W on their transcript.

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 fourth week of class by submitting a Change of Status request form to the Registrar (<http://www.mjti.org/forms>). The tuition differential will only be refunded if the request form is received by the end of the fourth week of the course.
7. **Discussion privacy:** The course discussion is accessible only to those registered for the class through Orbund. To ensure a positive forum for course interaction, students are asked to refrain from excerpting lessons or thread discussions from the course 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 – Thursday) 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 the instructor at rebyosh@simchatyisrael.org.