

HEBREW 371

Topics in Jewish Civilization: Exodus and Its Interpreters

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Spring 2008

Class: T/R, 11:00-12:15 p.m., 587 Van Hise

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Office Hours: Tues. 10:00-11:00a.m. or by appointment

Course Description:

The book of Exodus tells a powerful story of redemption, deliverance, and the formation of a new nation of people: the Israelites. This story of deliverance has captured the imagination of generations and throughout history it has been alluded to, transformed, and studied. In addition, the book of Exodus is foundational to critical ideas in Judaism and in Christianity.

This course will take a two-pronged approach to the book. First, we will study the book of Exodus on its own as we look at historical, literary, and interpretive issues. Second, we will look at responses to the book by later readers. We will start with the biblical writers themselves and end with modern interpreters and the ways they have wrestled with Exodus' themes in recent times.

Goals:

1. To become familiar with the contents of the Book of Exodus--its literary features, themes, and theology.
2. To understand historical and interpretive issues surrounding the book.
3. To develop skills for reading ancient biblical literature
4. To understand and examine the presuppositions, techniques, and conclusions of later interpreters of the book, from ancient to modern.

Textbooks: → *always bring each day's materials with you to class so we can discuss them*

- *New Revised Standard Version Bible*
- Meyers, Carol. *Exodus*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Coursepack available at Student Print-Memorial Union

Requirements and Grading:

1. Attendance: you are expected to attend class. Please don't disrupt the class by arriving late or leaving early.
2. Reading: every reading assignment must be completed on the indicated day. Lectures and class discussion will be based on the assigned readings so it is important to be prepared.
3. Assignments (30%): there are regular written assignments (20 total) connected with the readings. These assignments will guide you in your reading, allow you to discuss topics intelligently in class, and assist you in studying for your exams. **Assignments are due at the beginning of each class and must be submitted in typed hardcopy** (i.e., not emailed, not handwritten). **Late assignments will NOT be graded**, because the topics they cover will be discussed in class on the day they are due. Individual assignments will be graded on a three-point scale: late/not turned in (zero credit); incomplete/inadequate (1/2 credit); complete/adequate (full credit). I will drop the two lowest assignment grades.
4. Papers (15% each): There will be two 5-6 page papers. These must be typed in 12-pt., Times New Roman font with 1" margins. If the paper involves research, sources must be properly documented. Please see <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Documentation.html> for information on citing sources and plagiarism.
5. Exams (40%): There will be two exams in the course, a midterm on March 6 and a final on May 13. You must take the exams at the scheduled time; missed exams may be made up only in the case of an emergency.

Grading scale: A	94.0 - 100	C	70.0 - 75.9
AB	88.0 - 93.9	D	60.0 - 69.9
B	82.0 - 87.9	F	0 - 59.9
BC	76.0 - 81.9		

Office hours and Special Accommodations:

I am available during office hours and by appointment. Please see me as soon as possible if you are having difficulty with the course.

Students needing special accommodations for disabilities should provide documentation from the McBurney Center at the beginning of the semester.

Schedule:

1/22 **Syllabus/Intro to book**

1/24 **Intro to book/ Prologue 1:1-7**

- Due: Index card w/ photo ID
- Due: Meyers, pp. 1, 16-20, and *skim* pp. 21-31
- Due: Burns, "The Book of Exodus" pp. 11-21
- Due: Assignment #1

1/29 **Exodus and History (Problems and Views)**

- Due: Meyers, pp. 2-16
- Due: Provan, Long, Longman, pp. 125-137
- Due: Assignment #2

1/31 **Exodus 1:8-2:22 = Oppression and birth of Moses**

- Due: Read Exodus 1:8-2:22
- Due: Meyers, pp. 32-46
- Due: Assignment #3
- *In class:* Sign up for topics for Paper 1

2/5 **Exodus 2:23-7:7 = Call of Moses and first audience with Pharaoh**

- Due: Read Exodus 2:23-7:7
- Due: Read Jeremiah 1:1-10
- Due: Read Judges 6:11-18
- Due: Read Meyers, pp. 51-71
- Due: Assignment #4

2/7 **Exodus 7:8-12:36 = Plagues & Passover**

- Due: Read Exodus 7:8-12:36
- Due: Read Fretheim, pp. 385-396
- Due: Assignment #5

2/12 **Exodus 12:37-15:21 = The Exodus event**

- Due: Read Exodus 12:37-15:21
- Due: Read Meyers, pp. 110-123
- Due: Read Patterson, pp. 42-54
- Due: Assignment #6

PAPER 1 DUE

2/14 **Exodus 15:22-18:27 = Wilderness Wanderings**

- Due: Read Exodus 15:22-18:27
- Due: Read Meyers, pp. 128-140
- In class: Sign up for topics for Paper 2

2/19 **Exodus 19:1-24:18 = Theophany, Law, Tabernacle (part 1)**

- Due: Read Exodus 19:1-24:18
- Due: Read Sarna, pp. 273-276
- Due: Read Greenberg, pp. 12-28

2/21 **Exodus 19:1-24:18 = Theophany, Law, Tabernacle (part 2)**

- Due: Read Meyers, pp. 148-154, 179-208
- Due: Assignment #7

2/26 **Exodus 25:1-31:18 = Theophany, Law, Tabernacle (part 3)**

- Due: Read Exodus 25:1-31:18
- Due: Meyers, pp. 219-227, 248-249
- Due: Klein, pp. 264-276
- Due: Assignment #8

2/28 **Exodus 32:1-34:35 = Response: Disobedience**

- Due: Read Exodus 32:1-34:35
- Due: Read Meyers, pp. 258-266
- Due: Fass, pp. 171-183

3/4 **Exodus 35:1-40:38 = Response: Obedience**

- Due: Read Exodus 35:1-40:38
- Due: Read Meyers, pp. 275-283

3/6 ----->

MIDTERM EXAM

3/11 **The Text and the Interpreter**

- Due: Read Langston, pp. 1-10
- Due: Read Greenspahn, pp. 87-90
- Due: Assignment #9

3/13 **The Bible interprets Exodus**

- Due: Read Fishbane, pp. 19-37
- Due: Read Joshua 3:9-17; 5:1-12
- Due: Read Psalm 77:11-20
- Due: Assignment #10

SPRING BREAK

- 3/25 **The Bible interprets Exodus**
- Due: Read Zenger, pp. 22-33
 - Due: Read Isaiah 40-43
 - Due: Assignment #11
- 3/27 **The Rabbis and Exodus**
- Due: Read Kasher, pp. 547-594
 - Due: Assignment #12
- 4/1 **The Rabbis and Exodus**
- Due: Holtz, pp. 177-205
 - Due: Assignment #13
- 4/3 **Early Christians and Exodus**
- Due: Read Gonzales, pp. 83-95
 - Due: Read Luke 22:1-20
 - Due: Assignment #14
- 4/8 **Early Christians and Exodus**
- Due: Read Wilson, pp. 550-571
 - Due: Galatians 1-6
- 4/10 **Medieval Jewish Commentaries on Exodus**
- Due: Read Greenstein, pp. 213-259
 - Due: Assignment #15
 - *In class:* Sign up for topics for Paper 3
- 4/15 **Medieval Jewish Commentaries on Exodus**
- Due: Assignment #16
- 4/17 **Kabbalah/Zohar on Exodus**
- Due: Read Seltzer, pp. 426-450
 - Due: Assignment #17
- 4/22 **Documentary Hypothesis – The roots of Exodus**
- Due: Read Viviano, pp. 35-57
 - Due: Read Exodus 3:1-14
 - Due: Assignment #18
- 4/24 **Documentary Hypothesis – The roots of Exodus**
- Due: Read Exodus 7:8-12:36
 - Due: Assignment #19
- 4/29 **Redaction Criticism – Assembling Exodus**
- Due: Read Barton, pp. 45-60
 - Due: Assignment #20

5/1 **Liberation Theology – Exodus today**

- Due: Read Young, pp. 93-99
- Due: Read Dussel, pp. 83-92

PAPER 2 DUE

5/6 **Feminist Criticism – Exodus today**

- Due: Osiek, pp. 181-187
- Due: Read Plaskow, pp. 28-34

5/8 **Synthesis/Review**

5/13 -----> 2:45-4:45 p.m.

FINAL EXAM