

**CH 161 – ORIENTATION TO THE OLDER TESTAMENT: PENTATEUCH AND
FORMER PROPHETS—Hybrid Version**

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Instructor: Dr. Carolyn J. Pressler cpressler@unitedseminary.edu 651-255-6132

GOALS OF THE COURSE:

This class is designed to orient students to critical study of the Older Testament and to introduce you to the history, literature, and theologies of the Pentateuch and the first part of the former prophets (i.e., Joshua-2 Kings). Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Outline the content of key blocks of the Pentateuch and Former Prophets; [assessed through posts and final exercise].
- Summarize their major theological emphases; [assessed through weekly posts, and final exercises].
- Sketch the historical contexts from which the OT materials were written; [assessed through expositions of biblical passages, posts and final exercise].
- Read closely a brief passage of scripture in ways that
 - are attentive to the historical/sociological contexts from which that passage emerged;
 - demonstrate awareness of and appropriateness to the students' interpretive communities, including their social location(s) and faith stance(s); and
 - that recognize the literary constraints of a given passage; [assessed through weekly expositions of assigned biblical passages].
- Negotiate different reading patterns or strategies, including the ability to engage with and learn from interpreters whose contexts and theologies are different from one's own. [assessed through on-line posts, responses to each others' expository papers and in-class discussions]

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Brueggemann, Walter. *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003. (*Introduction*)
2. Hayes, John H. and Carl R. Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, 3rd edition, Louisville: Westminster, John Knox, 2007. (H&H)
3. Newsom, Carol A., and Sharon H. Ringe, eds. *Women's Bible Commentary, Second Edition*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998. (*WBC*)
4. *The New Oxford Annotated Study Bible with the Apocrypha, New Revised Standard Version, Third Edition (Oxford Study Bible)*.
5. Course pack (CP)

REQUIRED ARTICLES:

ON-LINE (Posted on course web page under week that the article is assigned)

1. Pressler, Carolyn "Things I Think about When I Grade Exegetical Papers"
2. Nysse, Dick, Assessing Effectiveness of Student Participation in Online Discussions
3. Weis, Richard D. *A Guide to Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible*.
4. Weis, Richard D. "The Process Of Composition Of The Torah/Pentateuch" (lecture notes)

5. Pressler, Carolyn "Doing a Word Study *ratsach*"
6. Pressler, Carolyn, "Apodictic and Casuistic Forms of Law"
7. Pressler, Carolyn. *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. Joshua 6, pp. 44-53. (on-line)
8. Pressler, Carolyn. *Joshua, Judge, and Ruth*, "Deborah and Barak," pp. 152-166. (on-line)
9. Warrior, Robert Allen. "A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians," in *Voices from the Margin*, pp. 277-285. (on-line—ATLA; *Linked* to course page)

TO BE HANDED OUT

1. Hiebert, Theodore. "Poetry," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 1065-1068.

IN COURSE PACK

1. Tiffany, Frederick C., and Sharon H. Ringe. "Locating the Readers and the Reading Context," in their *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996, pp. 25-49.
2. Nelson, Richard, "The Historical Context" in *The Historical Books*. Nashville: Abingdon. 1998. Pages 30-44.
3. Brueggemann, *Genesis*, (Interpretation), Atlanta: John Knox, 1982, pp.150-153
4. Tamez, Elsa. "The Woman Who Complicated the History of Salvation," in *New Eyes For Reading*, ed. J. S. Pobee and B. Von Wartenberg-Potter. Bloomington, IN: Meyerstone, 1986, pp. 5-17.
5. Weems, Renita, "Do You See What I See?" *Church and Society* 82, 1991.
6. Asian Work Group. "An Asian Feminist Perspective: The Exodus Story," in *Voices from the Margin*, pp.255-266.
7. Childs, Brevard S *Exodus* (OTL). pp. 237-239
8. Anderson, Gary A. "Sacrifices and Offerings," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, pp. 1148-1150.
9. Nelson, Richard "What Are We Reading" in *The Historical Books*. Nashville: Abingdon. 1998. Pages 17-29.
10. Devers. William, "How to Tell a Canaanite from an Israelite" in Hershel Shanks, ed. *The Rise of Ancient Israel*, Biblical Archaeology Society, 1993, pp. 26-60.
11. Plaskow, Judith. *Standing Again at Sinai*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990, pp. 128-134.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE:

Time expectations. If you were taking this course on campus, you would be meeting for 3 hours per week. The expectation would be that you would spend 3 hours of additional study time per hour spent in class, making 12 hours of work per week. The expectation is similar for an on-line class. You should be spending 10-12 hours per week at work on this class: reading, exegeting the assigned focus passage, writing up the results of your exegesis, participating in threaded discussion, engaging in assigned exercises, and attending the F2F sessions.

1. **Regular participation. Please note: This is *not* a self-paced course.** The value of this class will grow out of the interactions we have with one another. You are expected to attend and participate in the face to face class sessions on Friday and Saturday, September 24-25, and December 17-18. During the interim weeks, you should plan on logging on to the course web page three or four times a week; typically there will be postings due on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday,

though that may vary. (See “Schedule” for specific assignments and due dates). Regular and timely participation is the single most important factor in the successful completion of this course. **Missing two or more required posts or F2F class sessions will jeopardize your ability to successfully complete this course. If you are late in posting materials, your grade will be docked one grade for each day of tardiness. Unexcused lateness to a F2F session will count as missing ½ session.**

2. **Reading the assigned materials.** You are responsible for the materials listed under “Required Readings.” With one exception, (week two, see “Study Guide, Readings” for that week), you should begin by spending a significant amount of time (3-4 hours) with the assigned biblical texts. You will be provided study guides to the longer block of scripture and to the shorter focus text assigned each week. After you have worked through the biblical texts carefully, then consult the secondary (i.e., non-biblical) readings. These readings are “conversation partners” intended to help you read the Pentateuch and Former Prophets more richly by understanding their historical, sociological and literary contexts, their literary features, and so forth. They are to help you understand the primary subject of this course—that is, the scriptures. They are not themselves the primary subject matter. Please note: lecture notes and your classmates’ postings and expositions are required secondary reading. Four times during the semester, you will be expected to view power point presentations (available on Moodle). Many weeks, links to supplemental readings will be found on the Moodle course web page in order to provide resources for students pursuing issues of special interest. Students are *not* expected to read all supplemental materials on a weekly basis!
3. **Weekly posts on the assigned biblical materials and “conversation partners”** Weeks 3 through 10, you will participate in threaded discussions in lieu of F2F class sessions. The starting point for these discussions will be the initial posts that each of you make. These posts may be a response to one of the study guide questions for the larger narrative biblical assignment or may have to do with some other question or issue that arose from your engagement with the longer biblical narrative assignments and/or the secondary readings. These initial post are due by the end of your day each Tuesday. They should be about two paragraphs long.
4. **Expositions of specific biblical texts.** Each week (except weeks 1 and 12), you will be assigned a particular text that will be the focus of our exegetical threaded discussion that week. Typically, you are asked to prepare a 500-600 word exposition of that passage. The syllabus includes a set of questions related to each assigned text to help guide your preparation. These questions are intended to help you “get into” the text—to stimulate your thinking. They are not an outline of the paper you will write, nor does exposition of a text consist of a series of answers to the questions in the study guide. Rather, the expositions should be coherent interpretations of the text from your context. (See: “Things I Think about When I Grade Exegetical Papers” at the top of the course web page). Typically, these expositions are due on Wednesday. The first such exposition, of Genesis 2:4a-25, is due Wednesday, September 22. The expositions that you write during weeks 2 and 12 will be discussed during the F2F class sessions. You will be allowed one grace week, when you do not have to submit an exposition. If you submit all ten expository papers, your tenth one will be counted as extra credit.
5. **Responses to classmates’ expositions and posts.** Between weeks three and ten, you are required to respond weekly to at least one of your classmates’ posts on the larger narrative assignment, and to at least one of your classmates’ expositions of the focus text. This is a minimum requirement. Your engagement in discussion with your classmates is

key to your learning in this course. Hopefully, you will respond to several of your classmates' posts and expositions.

6. **Library and Internet Searches and assessments.** Four times this semester, you will be asked to do an internet search and either to report on or to incorporate into your exposition or other work the results of your search. The librarians will work with you during the first face to face class meeting to learn how to find resources and, most importantly, to learn on how to assess them. You will be asked to use the criteria that the librarians provide you to assess the sites you have identified each time you have a search assignment.
7. **Additional Exercises.** Occasionally, you will be asked to complete an exercise instead of or in addition to the weekly postings on larger sections of text or the exposition of the focus biblical text. E.g., during week four, you are asked to role play an interpreter of Genesis 16, rather than to exegete the chapter from your own perspective. During week five, you will work with your classmates to use a wiki to create a document sketching out at least one current scholarly theory of the formation of the Pentateuch. During week six, you will complete a chart identifying the genre of certain verses.
8. **A final, summative exercise.** As a way of pulling together your learning from this semester, you will be asked to complete an open-book, summative exercise, to be posted by the last day of the term (**December 21**). You will be given this assignment by the middle of November, and will be encouraged to work on it in pairs or small groups.

PLEASE NOTE:

All posts and expository papers must be written in 11 or 12 point font. If you use secondary sources for your expository papers, they should be properly **footnoted**, following the guidelines in the **Student Handbook**. You may use either Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers and Dissertations* or the Social Science Style Sheet as a guide for footnotes

All work in this class is expected to follow the **Inclusive Language Policy**, as stated in the Student Handbook.

All work is to be handed in at the end of class the day it is due. Late papers and makeup exams will be accepted **only with the permission of the instructor and only in cases of emergency. Extensions will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. If a congregation would regard the circumstances you describe as a reason not to preach on Sunday morning, I will accept the circumstances as a reason for an extension.**

Be aware of the definition of "**plagiarism**" in the Handbook. **Plagiarism will result in an F for the course and may be grounds for dismissal from the Seminary.**

EVALUATION

Participation in posts and F2F class sessions: 42 pts (3 pts/week, 13 weeks)

Expository Papers: 28 pts (4 pts/exposition, 7 expositions)

Library and internet searches: 16 pts (4 pts/exercise, 4 exercises)

Final exercise: 14 pts

For criteria by which postings, papers, and final exercise are assessed, please click on rubric entitled 'Assessing Effectiveness of Student Participation in Online Discussions' (Course Web Page)

SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE SEPTEMBER 13-19

Reading Assignments

1. Download and read the page called "Read Me First," (located above) as it introduces you to the various parts of the Course Web page.
2. Please also download and read the Class Syllabus, the Netiquette page, the rubric "Assessing Effectiveness of Student Participation in Online Discussions" and the Policy on Inclusive Language, all of which are located at the top of the course web page.

Writing/Posting Assignments

1. **As soon as possible and no later than Wednesday:** In the Discussion Forum entitled "Introductions", (below) please briefly introduce yourself. Tell us your name, what program you are in (in any), and what your denomination or religious affiliation is (if any). Tell us what you hope to get out of this course—and, more specifically, why have you chosen to take the hybrid section of the class. Feel free to briefly note anything else you might think it helpful for people to know about you. This shouldn't be long; just a paragraph or so.
2. **By Thursday:** There is one 4-5 paragraph written assignment for this week. You are each to write an "O.T. Autobiography" and post it in the small group forum discussion for week one. You will find guidelines for this "Autobiography" by clicking on the assignments icon. Please post your OT autobiography in forum entitled "OT Autobiographies" (below) --which is visible only to members of your small group. This post is due by Thursday. Please read the OT autobiographies of each member of your small group.
3. **By Sunday:** You are expected to respond to at least one of your classmates' autobiographies by Sunday.

WEEK TWO: IN THE BEGINNING –SEPT 20-26

Reading Assignments:

What You Bring to the Dialogue with the OT

This week, and this week only, you are asked to read and reflect on secondary (that is, non-biblical) literature before you begin working with the biblical passages. Please begin your work this week by reading Tiffany and Ringe, "Locating the Readers and the Reading Context" (CP) If you have not yet been able to purchase the course pack, or to locate a copy of Tiffany and Ringe's book, *Biblical Interpretation: A Roadmap*, for now, you may consult the outline of their chapter, found on the course web page and the back-up CD.

After reading Tiffany and Ringe, jot down what you see as the main things *you* bring to the dialogue with Genesis 2:4b-24. For more detailed guidelines, see "Study Guide, Reading, Week Two," (Course Web Page)

Bible

Larger Narrative: Genesis 1-3 For study guide questions, click on "Study Guide, Reading, Week Two" (Course Web Page)

Focus Text: Genesis 2:4b-25 After you have read through the "larger unit," work very carefully with the "focus text," this week, Genesis 2:4-25. For study guide questions to Gen 2:4b-25, click on "Study Guide, Reading, Week Two" (Course Web Page).

Reading assignments: Conversation Partners

****After**** you have spent significant time with the biblical texts, then complete the rest of the reading assignments.

1. *Introduction*, pp. 1-39
2. H&H, pp.1-33; and 178-190, especially 183-188.
3. *Oxford Study Bible*, 4th Ed. "Geography of the Bible" pp. 2234-2236; "Cultural Contexts: Ancient Near East and Ancient Israel to the Mid-First Millennium BCE," pp. 2236-2242; "Cultural Contexts: The Persian and Hellenistic Periods," pp. 2242-2247 . See also "Timelines," and Chronological Table of Rulers, pp. 2254-2257 and 2258-2260.
4. Your classmates' postings and
5. Your classmates' expositions of Genesis 2

Supplemental Reading Creation

1. Fretheim, Terence E. "Preaching creation: Genesis 1-2." *Word & World* 29, no. 1 (December 1, 2009): 75-83. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 23, 2010).
2. Lanser, Susan S. "(Feminist) Criticism in the Garden: Inferring Genesis 2-3." *Semeia* no. 41 (January 1, 1988): 67-84. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 23, 2010).
3. Trible, Phyllis. "Depatriarchalizing in biblical interpretation." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41, no. 1 (March 1, 1973): 30-48. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 23, 2010).

Supplemental Reading History of Ancient Israel (an alternative, "minimalist" reconstruction)

Handy, Lowell K. "Geographical and historical background for understanding ancient Israel." In *Chalice introduction to the Old Testament*, 15-28. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003.

Writing Assignments

1. **By Tuesday** Post your reflections on Genesis 1-3 in "Overall Discussion Forum." (See Course Web Page, "Study Guide, Written Assignments, Week Two" for guidelines)
2. **By Wednesday** Post your 500-600 word exposition of Genesis 2:4b-25 in the forum entitled "Genesis 2:4b-25" (See Course Web Page, "Study Guide, Written Assignments, Week Two, Focus Text" for guidelines)

FACE-TO-FACE SESSIONS, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, SEPT. 24-25

FRIDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 24 6:00-9:15

- A. Class structure and procedures, including Moodle Instruction by Adam Pfuhl
- B. Questions for the dialogue
- C. The Older Testament: One Perspective

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 9:00 A.M.-4 P.M.

- A. Finding and assessing library and Internet Resources—Dale Dobias and Sue Ebbers
 - B. Reading as a dialogical act: Genesis 2:4b-25
- LUNCH (12:00-1:15)
CHAPEL (1:15-1:45)
- C. Plenary-- Timeline of Ancient Israel
 - D. Plenary--Two (!) Creation Stories: Introducing the complex, composite nature of the O.T.

WEEK THREE THE PRIMEVAL NARRATIVES –SEPT 27-OCT 3

Reading Assignments

Bible

- **Longer Narrative: Genesis 1-11, "The Primeval Accounts"** For study guide questions, click on "Study Guide, Reading, Week Three" (Course Web Page)
- **Focus Text: Genesis 6:5-9:17.** For study guide questions, click on "Study Guide, Reading, Week Three" (Course Web Page)

Reading Assignments: Conversation Partners

1. *Introduction*, pp. 29-42
2. *WBC*, "Genesis," pp. 13-29
3. Pressler, *Notes to the Primeval Account*
4. Your classmates' reflections on the primeval stories
5. Your classmates' interpretations of the flood story

Supplemental Reading Flood Story

Fretheim, Terence E. "The God of the flood story and natural disasters." *Calvin Theological Journal* 43, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 21-34. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 23, 2010).

Activity: Internet/Library Search

Use the skills that Dale and Sue presented in class last weekend to find one of two things: either (a) a reputable translation of a Mesopotamian or Egyptian narrative parallel to one of the primeval accounts or (b) an article, lecture, sermon, or other relevant internet resource analyzing or challenging the racist, sexist, or heterosexist misuse of a primeval narrative (see "Literature Search Assignment" on the course web page for additional guidelines). Include with your summary the chart Dale and Sue provided, indicating which criteria made you consider the resource you chose a reputable one.

Writing Assignments

Because you have spent the past weekend in class, posts are due a little later this week than they normally will be.

1. **Thursday**--Post your reflection on the primeval stories (the forum is entitled "Genesis 1-11). See "Study Guide, Readings, Week 3" on the course web page under
2. **Friday**--Post your source analysis and interpretation of the flood story. (For more instructions on this paper, see Study Guide, Readings, Week 3 on the course web page.)
3. **Sunday**--deadline for replying to at least one post in the Genesis 1-11 forum and to at least one interpretation of the flood story.
4. **Sunday**—Summary of internet/library search assignment due.

WEEK FOUR ANCESTRAL TALES OCTOBER 4—OCTOBER 10

Reading Assignments

Bible:

- **Longer Narrative: Genesis 12-50** (The study guide for this unit lists a few passages to read slowly; the rest, you may skim)
- **Focus Text:** Genesis 16:1-15

Please download the study guide questions for Gen 12-50 and for Gen 16 before you begin working through the Biblical texts. You will find the questions by clicking on "Study Guide, Readings, Week Four."

Reading Assignments: Conversation Partners

1. *Introduction*, pp. 43-51
2. Pressler, Notes to the Ancestral Tales
3. Your classmates' postings

Supplemental Reading Genesis 16

1. Trible, Phyllis. "Hagar: the desolation of rejection." In *Texts of Terror*, 9-36. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1984.
2. Weis, Richard D. "Stained glass window, kaleidoscope or catalyst: the implications of difference in readings of the Hagar and Sarah stories." In *Gift of God in due season*, 253-273. Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Pr, 1996.

Activity: Review Power Point Presentation

Download and watch "*Biblical Interpretation as Dialogue*" (see Course Web Page). If you do not have Microsoft Office on your computer, you will need to download the power point viewer found at the top of the course page in order to do this.

Activity: Internet/Library Search

Search the internet to find out more about the social location and faith stance of the interpreter whom you have been assigned. Incorporate what you find into your role play of that interpreter. Append to your role play the URLs of at least two sites you found that provided helpful information; append also the chart indicating why you found that site trustworthy.

Writing Assignments

1. **Tuesday:** A 1-2 paragraph reflection on some issue raised for you by the ancestral narratives. This may be a response to one of the study guide questions, or it may be some other question or issue raised for you by the biblical materials. This is to be posted in the all class forum by the end of the day Tuesday.
2. **Wednesday:** Your "focus text" exercise this week differs from those of other weeks. This week you will work carefully with Gen 16:1-15, then read three interpretations of the chapter by scholars from a range of social locations and faith perspectives. You will be assigned one of the interpreters, whom you will role-play. (see the notes under "focus text" in the writing assignment guidelines for instructions.) Post this "role play" in the Sarah/Hagar/Abraham forum by Wednesday. Append to your "role play" post an annotation of the internet resource(s) that you used to identify the social location and faith stance of the interpreter whom you role played. (This is your "internet search assignment" for this week.)
3. **Friday:** Responses to at least one of your classmates' posting in the all-class forum are due by the end of the day Friday.
4. **Friday:** A question directed to one of the three interpreters of the Hagar story whom you did not role-play is also due by the end of the day on Friday. (See writing assignments guidelines for further instructions.)

WEEK FIVE—THE EXODUS and PENTATEUCHAL FORMATION— OCTOBER 11-17

Reading Assignments

Bible:

1. **Longer narrative: Exodus 1-15** --Unlike last week, this unit is short enough to work through carefully, rereading until you have a sense of the flow of the narrative. Please do download and read through the study guide questions as you work with the biblical materials.
2. **Focus text: Exodus 14-15**--We will look at the emphases of the three sources found in these texts, using both source criticism and new literary criticism, much as we analyzed the flood story. Please see "Reading assignments" and "Written Assignments" for instructions.

Conversation Partners

1. *Introduction*, pp. 53-60
2. *H&H*, "Tradition Criticism" pp.115-126
3. Asian Work Group, "An Asian Perspective: The Exodus Story" (CP)
4. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, pp. 237-239 (CP)
5. Warrior, "A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians" On line. Link provided on course web page.
6. "Introduction to the Pentateuch," Oxford Study Bible, 4th Ed
7. Weis, Richard "The Process of Composition of the Torah/Pentateuch" (on-line)

Supplemental Reading-- Pentateuch Formation Highly recommended: Coogan, Michael D. "The Formation of the Pentateuch." In *The Old Testament: a Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 21-30. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Supplemental Reading—Exodus Ela, Jean Marc. "A Black African perspective: an African reading of Exodus." In *Voices from the margin*, 256-266. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991.

Writing Assignments

1. **By Tuesday:** Post a 2-3 paragraph reflection on the overarching narrative of Exodus 1-15. This may be a response to one of the study guide questions, (Click on "Study Guide_Readings_Week 5" below for the questions) or may be about some other issue or question that arose from your engagement with the biblical narrative. This post, to the forum entitled "Discussion, Exodus 1-15," is due the end of the day Tuesday.
2. **By Wednesday:** Post your exposition of Exodus 14-15 in the small group forum, "Exodus 14-15" by the end of the day on Wednesday. Because there is a third written project, this exposition may be a little shorter than usual--around 300-400 words. Click on "Reading Assignments" and "Writing Assignments" for instructions.

3. **Tuesday through Sunday:** Together, you are to create a Wiki that explains at least one and preferably two current theories about how the Pentateuch came into being.

WEEK SIX—LAW AND COVENANT—OCTOBER 18-24

Reading Assignments

Bible:

- **Longer Narrative:** Exodus 19-24; Leviticus 15, 18, 19, 25-26; Deut 5; Psalm 19
- **Focus Text:** Exodus 20:1-17 (the Decalogue)

Conversation Partners

1. *Introduction*, pp. 60-66, 67-74
2. H&H, "Form Criticism," pp.104-114; and "Grammatical Criticism," pp. 72-89
3. Pressler, Notes: "Form Critical Approaches to Law and Covenant" and "Law and Covenant"

Supplemental Readings--Biblical Law

1. Milgrom, Jacob. "Biblical diet laws as an ethical system." *Interpretation* 17, no. 3 (July 1, 1963): 288-301. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed July 21, 2010).
2. Patrick, Dale. "Studying biblical law as a humanities." *Semeia* no. 45 (January 1, 1989): 27-47. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed July 21, 2010).

Activity: Internet/Library Search

Use "Atlas" or Google Scholar to find on the internet an article, lecture, sermon, or other helpful resource about the Decalogue or one of the individual commandments. Write a paragraph about what you learned from that resource and post in on the all class forum entitled "Literary Search" by the end of the day on Sunday.

Activity: Download and Watch short video on Simchas Torah (Paris).

Writing Assignments

1. **Tuesday** Post your weekly 2-3 paragraph reflection on the larger biblical unit by the end of the day Tuesday. (Click on the "Reading Assignments" icon for the list of assigned texts, and for the study guide questions.)
2. **Wednesday** The first is to engage in form criticism of a set of laws and commandments. When you click on "Reading Assignments," at the bottom of the study guide questions you will find instructions for that assignment, and a chart that you are to fill in, copy, and post in the "All Class Discussion" by Wednesday.
3. **Friday** Review the power point presentation on conducting a word study using Blue Letter Bible, then experiment with doing your own word study of any term from the Decalogue that you consider important. Report your experience with the word study and share what you have learned about the term in the forum entitled "Word Studies" by Friday.

4. **Sunday**--Internet Search/library exercise is due.

Note: The *Focus Text* this week is the Decalogue (or "ten commandments")--Exodus 20:1-17. You are expected to read this passage with great care, several times, using the Focus Text study guide to help you engage the text. There is no written expository assignment this week, although you are encouraged to post any observations or questions you wish to share in the forum entitled "The Decalogue."

OCTOBER 25 – NOVEMBER 1 IS READING WEEK—You have no additional assignments this week. Please use the time to catch up on any reading you may have missed during the first half of the semester.

WEEK SEVEN—ON THE EDGE OF THE LAND NOVEMBER 2-8

Reading Assignments

Bible:

- **Longer Narrative:** Review Leviticus 15, 18, 19, 25-26 and read Numbers 1-4; 6; 11-15; 22-24; Deuteronomy 1-6; 12; 15; 24; 26-30
- **Focus Text:** Num 6:22-27

Conversation Partners—Priestly Writers

1. Anderson, "Sacrifices and Offerings" (CP)
2. Introduction, pp. 75-83
3. H&H, Review "Grammatical Criticism," pp. 72-89
4. WBC, "Leviticus," "Numbers," pp. 40-56
5. Pressler, Notes on the Priestly Writers
6. Your classmates' postings

Conversation Partners—Deuteronomy

1. *Introduction*, pp. 85-93
2. *WBC*, "Deuteronomy," pp. 57-68
3. Pressler, *Notes on Deuteronomy*
4. Your classmates' postings

Supplemental Reading—Numbers 6:22-27 (Aaron's Blessing)

1. Korpel, Marjo C A. "The poetic structure of the priestly blessing." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* no. 45 (October 1, 1989): 3-13. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed July 23, 2010).
2. Miller, Patrick D. "Blessing of God: an interpretation of Numbers 6:22-27." *Interpretation* 29, no. 3 (July 1, 1975): 240-251. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed July 23, 2010).

Supplemental Reading--- Persian Period Yehud (Judah)

1. Douglas, Mary. "Responding to Ezra: the priests and the foreign wives." *Biblical Interpretation* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 1-23. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed July 21, 2010).

Activity: Internet/Library Search

Two polarities are central to the priestly world view: "clean and unclean" and "holy and profane." Find a reputable article or biblical dictionary entry on-line or at a library that helps you understand one of those two polarities. By Sunday, post your understanding of the set of terms you have chosen to examine. Provide bibliographical information for the resource(s) you consulted and, using the criteria that Dale and Sue provided, indicate why consider the resource(s) trustworthy.

Writing Assignments

1. **Tuesday** Post on "Priestly Writers and Deuteronomy" due.
2. **Wednesday** Exposition of Num 6:22-27 due.
3. **Sunday** Response to at least one classmates' posting in the all class discussion and at least one classmate's exposition of Numbers 6:22-27 due.
4. **Sunday** Internet/library Search post due. (See above, "Activity" or "Writing Assignments" for instructions).

WEEK EIGHT THE DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY and ISRAEL'S EMERGENCE IN ITS LAND NOVEMBER 9-15

Reading Assignments

Bible: (Note: there is no distinction between "larger narrative unit" and "focus text" this week.)

Joshua 6; 9-12; Judges 1 (there is no distinction this week between the larger unit and the focus text; these are the passages relevant to scholarly discussions of how Israel came to be in its land. You will work with them in detail. See "reading assignments" and "writing assignments."

Conversation Partners

1. H&H, "Historical Criticism," pp. 53-71
2. Nelson, "What Are We Reading?" pp. 17-29, 30-44
3. Power Point Presentation: the Deuteronomistic History

After you have worked with the study guide concerning the emergence of Israel in the land, and have posted a response to the questions assigned to you, then read:

1. Driver, William, "How to Tell a Canaanite from an Israelite" in Hershel Shanks, et al. *The Rise of Ancient Israel*, Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, pp. 27-56(cp)
2. Pressler, Notes on the Emergence of Israel in Its Land.

Activity—Investigating the Emergence of Israel in Its Land

This week you are invited to play “detective”—finding, assessing, and putting together “clues” about the early history of Palestine. The “clues” will include both biblical evidence and archaeological findings. Each member of your small group will be assigned one set of clues: Josh 6; 9-12, Judg 1; or archaeological evidence. You will put together the portrayals of ancient Israel's conquest of the land in Joshua (on the one hand) and Judges (on the other), compare the two depictions to each other and to the archaeological data, and see what seems likely and what seems unlikely. After that, you will read what some scholars have to say. This activity is your exposition for the week. You do not have to offer a literary interpretation of a text. ‘

Activity: Internet/Library Search

Find reputable information from the internet or a library to supplement William Diver’s description of archaeological evidence related to the rise of Israel in its land. This might be an archaeological report on digs at a specific site mentioned in Joshua, an article that surveys the archaeological evidence, a lecture of the rise of ancient Israel that includes scholarly analysis of the archaeological evidence, or the like. Assess the resource according to the Dale/Sue criteria. You do not need to summarize the information unless you wish to (if you do, post that summary in your small group forum), but you are required to annotate it, and to show why you consider the resource reputable.

Writing Assignments

1. **Tuesday**--Post your reflection in the forum entitled "Deuteronomistic History" on some aspect of the reading assignments concerning the DH. (See the study guide questions for the DH under "reading assignments").
2. **Wednesday**--Post your answer to the questions assigned to you concerning Israel's emergence in its land in the forum “Emergence of Israel”
3. **Friday**--After reading your classmates’ posts on the emergence of Israel and after reading Driver and Pressler on the rise of Israel in its land, post your understanding of how Israel came to be in Canaan in the Emergence of Israel.
4. **Friday-Sunday**--As your schedule allows, continue discussing theories about how Israel came to be in its land with your classmates.
5. **Sunday** -- Internet Search assignment due (in all class forum marked "literature search.")

WEEK NINE JOSHUA AND JUDGES: STORY AND POETRY NOVEMBER 16-22

Readings

Bible:

- **Larger Biblical Narratives:** Joshua 1-12, 23-24; Judges 2-8, 11-12 (skim)
- **Focus Text:** Judges 4-5

Conversation Partners

1. *Introduction*, pp. 109-130
2. Hiebert, Theodore. “Poetry,” in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, pp. 1065-1068 (to be handed out in class)
3. Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai* (CP)
4. Pressler, Notes on Joshua and Judges
5. *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. Joshua 6, 44-53. (course web page)

6. *WBC*, “Joshua” and “Judges,” pp. 69-83

Supplemental Readings Poetry

Berlin, Adele. “Introduction to Hebrew poetry.” In *New Interpreter’s Bible*, v.4, 301-315. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Supplemental Readings Violence and War

Fretheim, Terence E. “God and violence in the Old Testament.” *Word & World* 24, no. 1 (December 1, 2004): 18-28. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed July 23, 2010).

Activity

Download and view power point presentation on Poetry; If you have trouble accessing Moodle, please read the script for the presentation found in the backup CD.

Writing Assignments (See “Writing Assignments on class web page for further guidelines)

1. **Tuesday**--Post your reflection in the forum “Joshua and Judges”
2. **Wednesday**--Post your exposition of Judges 5
3. **Sunday** Response to at least one classmates' posting Joshua and Judges and at least one classmate’s exposition of Judges 5 due.

NOVEMBER 22-29—THANKSGIVING WEEK— You have no additional assignments this week. Please use the time to catch up on any reading you may have missed the past few weeks, and to begin working on the final exercise.

WEEK TEN—THE RISE OF KINGSHIP—NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 5

Note: this week and next week, you will be reading and writing in preparation for the face to face class sessions on December 17-18. Readings are somewhat lighter these two weeks as well, in order to leave you time to work on your final exercise.

Reading Assignments

Bible:

- **Longer Narratve:** Samuel 1-2 (skim); Psalms 2, 45, 47, 132
- **Focus Test:** 2 Samuel 7:1-17

Conversation Partners

1. *Introduction*, pp. 131-143
2. *WBC*, “1 and 2 Samuel,” pp. 91-101
3. *H&H*, Review “grammatical criticism”

No writing assignments—but do prepare carefully for our F2F discussion of the biblical texts, especially 2 Sam 7:1-17

WEEK ELEVEN-- FIRST AND SECOND KINGS--DECEMBER 6-12

Reading Assignments

Bible

- **Larger Narrative:** 1 Kings 1, 3, 8, 11-12, 17-22; 2 Kings 17-24 (skim)
- **Focus Text:** 1 Kings 22:1-40

Conversation Partners

1. Introduction, pp. 145-158
2. *WBC*, pp. 102-116.
3. *WBC* 102-116.

FACE-TO-FACE SESSIONS, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, DEC 17-18

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 6-9:15 pm

- A. Plenary: 1-2 Samuel, an Overview
- B. Royal Theology (2 Samuel 7: 1-17)
- C. Plenary Discussion of Royal Theology and its relevance to 21st Century congregations

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- A. Exegetical Discussion: 1Kings 22: 22:1-40
 - B. Holy War: A Theo-Ethical Issue
- LUNCH**
CHAPEL (optional)
- D. Plenary Power Point: Of Kings and Prophets: An overview of 1-2 Kings
 - F. Farewells