

# SYLLABUS - REL 1121: **Hebrew Bible Introduction**

Catawba College, Fall 2013

Dr. Barry R. Sang

**Office:** 304 Administration Building. Hours are posted on the door. Please feel free to come visit. 704-637-4354 [bsang@catawba.edu](mailto:bsang@catawba.edu)

## Course Description

REL 1121 is a course examining the history and religious perspectives of ancient Israel as revealed through study of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and of pertinent Near Eastern texts. The focus of study is upon the content of the Hebrew Bible in light of its historical background as this is revealed through modern critical research, utilizing literary and historical methodologies. Although the course is designed for beginners with no prior knowledge of the discipline, it can be taken at any stage in the student's college career.

*“A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text.”* (Donald A. Carson)

## Departmental Learning Outcomes:

<b>Expected Learning Outcomes <i>Each Student Should Be Able to:</i></b>	<b>Means of Assessing Those Outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate in writing an introductory knowledge of the historical setting for representative portions of the Hebrew Bible, together with the impact of that setting on the Bible itself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two, in-class examinations ("objective" and essay questions)</li> <li>Final Examination (cumulative)</li> <li>Occasional announced and pop quizzes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate in writing knowledge of the basic characters, stories, and prophetic messages found in representative portions of the Hebrew Bible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Examination (cumulative)</li> <li>Occasional announced and pop quizzes</li> <li>Prophets Chart</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate in writing knowledge of Ancient Near Eastern texts relevant to the writing of representative portions of the Hebrew Bible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasional announced and pop quizzes</li> <li>Two, in-class examinations ("objective" and essay questions)</li> <li>Genesis Creation Paper</li> <li>Final Examination (cumulative)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate in writing the ability to read and use relevant primary and secondary source materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two, in-class examinations ("objective" and essay questions)</li> </ul>

## General Education Learning Outcomes: Interpretive Perspective

<b>Expected Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Means of Assessing Those Outcomes</b>
<p>Students will read and understand primary works in literature, religion, philosophy, or the fine arts.</p>	<p>Three, in-class examinations and a final examination ("objective" and essay) in which students demonstrate in writing an introductory knowledge of the basic characters, stories, and theologies found in representative portions of the Hebrew Bible. This knowledge is informed by the historical-analytical approach to study of the Hebrew Bible which</p>

	emphasizes the impact that the historical, cultural, and social contexts of the texts impact the texts themselves.
Students will analyze how these works reflect, respond to, or shape social, political, religious, and/or intellectual contexts.	Three, in-class examinations and a final examination (“objective” and essay) in which students demonstrate in writing an introductory knowledge of the basic characters, stories, and theologies found in representative portions of the Hebrew Bible. This knowledge is informed by the historical-analytical approach to study of the Hebrew Bible which emphasizes the impact that the historical, cultural, and social contexts of the texts impact the texts themselves.
Students will write about these works from rhetorical, aesthetic, analytical, or ethical perspectives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A “Genesis Beginnings Stories in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context” paper requiring students to compare and contrast the Genesis beginnings stories with their Ancient Near Eastern counterparts.</li> <li>2) Essay questions on the in-class and final exams requiring students to write persuasively about the various subjects covered in the course.</li> <li>3) A classical prophets “chart” requiring students to analyze and synthesize the historical context and prophetic themes of each of the classical prophets.</li> </ol>

**Textbooks**

The following are required for responsible participation in this course:

*The Harper Collins Study Bible. New Revised Standard Version.* New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-06-078684-7. I highly recommend this translation, though the particular edition is not critical. Please see me for any exceptions. **NOTE: Your Bible must be brought to all class sessions.** The approximate cost of this book is \$29.

John H. Tullock, *The Old Testament Story.* 9th ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2012. ISBN-10: 0205097839. The approximate cost of this book is \$75.

**Attendance Policy**

Attendance will be checked promptly each day at the beginning of class. **If you are late you must speak with me at the end of class or you will be counted absent.** Four absences are allowed during the semester. Each absence beyond the four permitted will result in a two-point reduction in the final grade for the course. Any student missing more than one quarter of the sessions during the semester will automatically be given an F or an I for the course, depending on the circumstances. Tardiness should be a rare exception. Should late arrivals persist, they will be counted as absences.

Except for sanctioned college activities, and other circumstances over which you have absolutely no control (e.g., court dates, your hospitalization, etc.), if you are not in class, you will be counted as absent. If you miss class for sickness or for a sanctioned college activity, you are still responsible for the information covered in that class so you will be prepared for the next class. Missed Tests can be made up ONLY if you present to me on the day of your return to class a justifiable and verifiable excuse. Missed quizzes cannot be made up, although the lowest quiz score will be dropped from your final quiz tally.

*One Final Note:* You are expected to do your “toileting” in between your class sessions at Catawba College. Please do not use class time for such activities because your departure and return to class are usually disruptive. This is also the case with examinations during which you will not be excused to use the bathroom except for emergencies.

**Cell Phones:** As a courtesy to all, please turn your cell phone notification system off when you enter the classroom. You are not permitted to send or receive messages of any kind (including texting) during class time. **If you use your cell phone during class, I will count you as absent from class.**

**Laptop Computers** may be used in class. In fact, they are often the most useful way to take notes. However, while in class **you may use your computer for course-related purposes only. If this becomes a problem, you will not be allowed to use your computer in class.**

### Summary of Grade Distribution

2 Tests	35%
Quizzes	20%
2 brief papers	30%
Final examination	15%

### Grading Scale:

100-92:	A	Clearly superior college-level performance
91-90:	A-	
89-87:	B+	
86-83:	B	Good college-level performance
82-80:	B-	
79-77:	C+	
76-73:	C	Acceptable college-level performance
72-70:	C-	
69-67:	D+	
66-63:	D	Minimally-acceptable college-level performance
62-60:	D-	
≤ 59:	F	Failure to achieve college-level performance

## TOPICS AND PREPARATIONS

Dates for the following information are approximate. This means that **it is your responsibility to follow our progress through the course and to insure that you are prepared for each class session.**

### **Part I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

8/21            A.        Course Introduction

- B. Bridging the Hermeneutical Gap  
**Preparation:** “Strategies for Reading Scripture,” John Barton, in *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, pp. xxxix-xliii—found in Course Documents in our Blackboard course.
- 8/23 C. Overview of the Old Testament
- 8/26 D. Canonization of the Old Testament  
**Preparation:** Tullock, Ch. 1.
- 8/28,30 E. Literary Analysis of the Torah  
**Preparation:** Review Tullock, pp. 13-15 + handout.

## Part II: THE CREATION OF A PEOPLE

- 9/1 **No Class: Labor Day Break**
- 9/4,6 A. Pertinent Pre-History of the Fertile Crescent  
**Preparation:** Tullock, Ch. 2.
- B. The Migrations and Descendants of Abraham  
**Preparation:** Gen. 12-13; 15-19; 21-22; 27; 35; 37; 39; Tullock, pp. 47-60.
- 9/9 C. The Exodus  
**Preparation:** Ex. 1-24; 32-34; Tullock, pp. 61-75.
- 9/11,13 D. The Covenant on Mt. Sinai and Ancient Near Eastern Parallels  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 75-86; **Hammurabi's Law Code Worksheet** (A hand-out, **graded as three quizzes**. Also available in Course Documents). Be careful to note the similarities and differences between Hamm.'s Code and the covenant codes and Decalogue concerning such topics as the kinds of crimes covered, which offenses carry the most severe penalties, and etc. What do you make of the similarities and differences? What do these tell us about the values in the two civilizations? The **grading rubric** for this assignment may be found in Course Documents in Blackboard.

- 9/16 E. The Conquest of Canaan, Part I  
 1. The Land and People of Canaan  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 86-98.
- 9/18 2. Joshua and the Tribal Confederacy  
**Preparation:** Josh. 24; Tullock, pp. 98-104; Arthur E. Cundall, "Antecedents of the Monarchy in Ancient Israel," *Vox Evangelica* 3 (1964): 42-50 (Found in Course Documents. There is also good material here about the different judges.)

9/20 **EXAM I: PARTS I - II**

**Part III: THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES**

- A. The Conquest of Canaan, Part II
- 9/23 1. The Judges  
**Preparation:** Judges 2.6 - 16.31; Tullock, pp. 104-116.
- 9/25 2. The Decline of the Tribal Confederacy  
**Preparation:** I Samuel 1-12.

**Part IV: THE UNITED MONARCHY**

- 9/27 A. Saul, Samuel, and David  
**Preparation:** I Sam. 13 - II Sam. 1; Tullock, Ch. 117-133.
- 9/30 B. David's Life and Accomplishments  
**Preparation:** II Sam. 2-24; Tullock, pp. 134-144.
- 10/2 C. Solomon's Life and Accomplishments  
**Preparation:** I Kings 1-11; Tullock, pp. 145-155.

**Part V: THE FORMATION OF EARLY ISRAELITE EPICS**

- 10/4,7 A. The Creation Narratives and Ancient Near Eastern Parallels  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 37-45; Gen. 1-5; *Enuma Elish*: go to: <http://www.cresourcei.org/enumaelish.html>
- 10/9 B. The Flood Story and Ancient Near Eastern Parallels  
**Preparation:** Gen. 6-11; Tullock, pp. 45-47. The Flood Story portion from the *Gilgamesh Epic* (found in Course Documents). Should you wish to read one of the most popular myths of the ANE, the entire *Gilgamesh Epic* is available in a nice translation at <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&ved=0CFIQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.aina.org%2Fbooks%2Fegog%2Fegog.pdf&ei=NSH4UarTLJsw8Q5dj4GgDw&usq=AFQjCNFmGTdbnlbACK0n2OF4-clZ5Vwx1A&bvm=bv.49967636,d.eWU&cad=rja>

**WRITE** a brief paper (no more than 5, double-spaced pages) on the topic, "The Genesis Beginnings Stories in Their Near Eastern Context." Providing as many examples as possible to support and clarify your claims, explain what you think the purpose of the Genesis narratives was, and how that purpose is made clearer by studying the Atrahasis Epic, Enuma Elish, and Gilgamesh Epic. What implications do the similarities and/or differences among these stories have for our understanding of the intended meaning of the Genesis beginnings stories? You are NOT to use any other sources for this paper, except for your Bible, Tullock, or the texts in translation, if you wish. If you do use Tullock, you **MUST** properly document your source. Please see me if you have any questions about the MLA format for documentation. ***Be sure to follow the Paper Policy given on pp. 7-8 of this syllabus.*** A Recommended Outline for this paper is available in the Instructions portion of the assignment in Blackboard. **DUE DATE:** To be announced in class and posted on Blackboard, but it will be approximately one week after we have finished Part V, section A of the Syllabus.

#### Part VI: THE DIVIDED MONARCHY AND EARLY PROPHECY

- 10/11            A.     The Historical Background for 9th-8th century Prophecy: Israel, Judah, Syria & Assyria  
**Preparation:** I Kings 12; 14.21 - 16.34; II Kings 9-17; Tullock, pp. 155-177.
- (10/14)            **Fall Break: No Class**
- 10/16,18        B.     Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy  
**Preparation:** "Prophecy: Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy," Herbert B. Huffmon. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5. New York: Doubleday, 1992. Pages 477-482. Reference Section.
- 10/21,23        C.     Early Israelite Prophecy  
**Preparation:** I Kings 17-19; 21-22; II Kings 2.1 - 9.13; Review Tullock, pp. 160-168.
- 10/25            **EXAM II: PARTS III - VI**

#### Part VII: CLASSICAL PROPHETS OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

- 10/28,30; 11/1    A. Amos  
**Preparation:** Amos; Tullock, pp. 280-284.
- B. Hosea  
**Preparation:** Hosea; Tullock, pp. 269-278.

#### Part VIII: CLASSICAL PROPHETS OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

- 11/4,6            A.     I Isaiah  
**Preparation:** Isaiah 1-11; 28-32; II Kings 15.32 - 20.21; Tullock, pp. 208-220.

- B. Historical Background for 7th-Century Prophecy  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 174-186.
- 11/8,11 C. Jeremiah  
**Preparation:** Jer. 1; 7; 8.1 - 9.3; 11.18 - 12.6; 15.10-21; 18.1-23; 20.7-18; 22.10-30; 26-29; 31; 36; Tullock, pp. 234-252.
- D. Exile and Its Meaning for Israel's Faith: Ezekiel and II Isaiah
- 11/13 1. Ezekiel  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 194-196, 252-268; Ezek. 1-24; 33-39.
- 11/15 2. II Isaiah  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 197-201, 221-233; Isaiah 40-55.

**WRITE:** Prepare a chart of the prophets we have discussed in class, **except** Amos. Summarize the following information about the prophets Hosea, I Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and II Isaiah:

- [1] Prophet's name;  
 [2] His dates and important kings who reigned in his day;  
 [3] Major national and international developments during his time;  
 [4] Major events in his life;  
 [5] Major emphases in the prophet's message (i.e., charges, sentence, option for hope, etc.). The information you list may be brief, but it should be as informative as possible in setting forth basic distinguishing characteristics of the prophets. Be sure to include some of the imagery that is unique to each prophet, e.g., Amos's plumb-line vision. The **due date** will be approximately one week after we have finished discussion of the classical prophets; the specific date will be announced in class and will be posted on Blackboard. Please see the example of the prophet Amos provided at the end of this syllabus.

#### Part IX: THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD

- 11/18 A. Historical Background: The Reconstruction  
**Preparation:** Ezra 1-3; Nehemiah 1-2; 4; 6.15-19; 8.1- 9.3; Tullock, pp. 201-207.
- B. The Writings
- 11/20 1. Wisdom in Israel  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 300-308, 317-320; Proverbs 1-13; Ecclesiastes 1-3; 7; 9.
- 11/25 2. Job  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 308-317; Job 1-2; 4-15; 21; 31-33; 38; 42.

11/27,29                      Thanksgiving Break: No Class

12/2                              2. The Psalms  
**Preparation:** Tullock, pp. 320-333; Psalms 12; 13; 23; 29; 30; 33; 42-43; 74; 84; 96-97.

**Part X: THE HELLENISTIC AGE**

12/4                      A.      Post-exilic Judaism; Ruth, Esther, Daniel  
**Preparation:** Tullock, Ch. 14.

12/6                      B.      Summary, Conclusions, Review, Evaluation  
**Preparation:** Prepare review questions and other outstanding questions pertaining to the course.

**FINAL EXAMINATION: Monday, December 9, 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

## Paper Policy

The papers submitted in this course are expected to reflect those qualities epitomized by a liberal arts education. *Your grade will be directly affected by grammar, syntax and spelling. After determining your paper's grade, I will deduct 2 points for each grammatical error, and 1 point for each spelling and punctuation error. The greatest total penalty, however, will only be 10 points (i.e., one letter grade).* The simplest way to avoid such penalties is to have a reliable friend proof-read your paper before submitting it for a grade. For further information on plagiarism and the Honor Code consult the appropriate pages in the *Catawba College Catalog*.

### Special Instructions for Submitting Papers

It is a requirement of this course that you submit your papers to me via *Blackboard*. You must follow the following instructions carefully:

1. Compose your paper in a recent edition of **WORD (not in WORKS)**. If you do not compose your paper in WORD, then you must convert it to WORD format before sending it to me. **This is a must.**
2. The paper must be titled and must conform to all of the paper requirements stated above.
3. **Your name must appear at the top of the first page. If it is not there, I will deduct five points from your paper's grade.**
4. Save the paper in WORD, noting where you saved it. (Of course, always back up your paper to a thumb drive or some similar, secure storage device.)
5. Log in to Blackboard.
6. Go to this course and click on the *Assignments* link.
7. Find the assignment for which your paper has been written, and click on the hyper-link for that assignment.
8. To attach your file, use this sequence of commands:

Browse; Choose File, Open, Submit (don't forget this one): **CLICK SUBMIT ONLY ONCE**. Blackboard will tell you whether the submission was successful.

## The Writing Center

The Catawba College Writing Center provides free, one-on-one consultations to *all* Catawba students. Writing Center tutors have been intensely trained, and while they won't rewrite students' papers for them, they will give students feedback and encouragement at all stages of the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, revising, polishing). Students who use the Writing Center should be prepared to discuss the assignment they are working on and to begin making revisions, with the tutor's guidance, during the session.

All appointments take place face-to-face. The Writing Center is open afternoons (in ADMN 211) and evenings (in the Library, Study Room #5). Walk-ins are welcome, but the Writing Center honors appointments first. Appointments can be scheduled online at [www.catawba.edu/writingcenter](http://www.catawba.edu/writingcenter). We also encourage students to "Like" our Facebook page at [facebook.com/catawbawriting](https://facebook.com/catawbawriting)

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### *PRE- AND POST-EXILIC PROPHETS*

## Sample

### AMOS

**Period & Kings:** c. 770-760 BCE

Israel: Jeroboam II  
Judah: Uzziah

#### **National & International Developments**

- Internationally there is peace (due in part to the Syro-Israelite Coalition's defeat of the Assyrians in 853 at Qarqar), but the Assyrian Empire is growing even stronger.
- National: Israel saw great economic prosperity which resulted from the trade routes recently opened after the battle at Qarqar. Taking advantage of these opportunities, Israel's economy boomed, but the sudden prosperity benefited only the rich, and the gap between them and the poor grew larger. Social injustice, therefore, was a major problem.

#### **Major Events in the Prophet's Life**

- A native of Tekoa in Judah
- Shepherd & Fig-Pricker
- Directed his message toward the people of the northern kingdom, creating no little

resentment on their part. On one occasion (Ch. 7), acting as an independent prophet he faces off with the king's court prophet.

### Emphases in the Prophet's Message

- Opening chapters show us a brilliant rhetor indicating that Israel, like all of the nations, will be held accountable for its breach of the covenant.
- **Major Concern** is morality—specifically, social injustice
- 2:8: Drink wine in the Temple bought with money taken in fines = **loan-sharking** (see also 2:6—selling the righteous for silver...)
- 4:1: **Moral apathy**—they don't care for the plight of the poor
- 5:10: **Judges taking bribes**, thereby corrupting the court system “in the gate”.
- 5:21-4: **Piety means nothing without morality**: ‘I hate your solemn feasts and assemblies; take away the melody of your harps; but let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.’
- 8:4-5: While in worship the **rich are dreaming of how they may rip off the poor**.
- 8:5: Merchants use **false balances** to cheat the poor
- 8:6: Merchants **sell the “sweepings of the wheat”** which were to be left so the poor may glean them.
- Sentence: Destruction: “An adversary shall surround the land.
  - In Ch. 7 Amos intercedes on behalf of Israel, but no hope is apparent.
- **Is there hope in Amos's Prophecy?** No, at least not in its earliest form. Ch. 9:11-15 is a post-exilic addition. However, the canonical form of Amos offers hope.