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Academy of Jewish Religion
BIB 305: Biblical Historiography—Introduction and Methodologies
Summer 2007

PURPOSE:

The goal of this mini-mester course is to give students a selective view of the historiography of the biblical period as it appears in the Bible and as it is interpreted by current biblical scholarship.

This is not a biblical text course. Rather, selected biblical texts will be studied for what they reflect of Israelite historiographic approaches. Secondary readings are a significant component of course material. The course will cover elements of the historiography of ancient Israel, the relationship of biblical Israel to the cultures of the ancient Near East, and an introduction to the variety of modern critical approaches to biblical study.

REQUIREMENTS:

The primary requirement is to come to class each session having prepared all the biblical and secondary readings. Text recitation and class discussion of the material are the heart of the course. Please bring a Hebrew Bible and your notes to every class. In addition, if you require it, please bring an English translation, preferably the edition of the Jewish Publication Society, Tanakh--the Holy Scriptures.

This course will be graded Pass/Fail. More than 2 absences for any reason will automatically prevent a student from achieving a grade of Pass. For purposes of grade calculation, two latenesses equal one absence.

Written Assignments:

Requirements for this course include several group and individual written and oral exercises during the course of the semester, based on weekly assignments.

There will be a book report due and a short take-home final assignment. All assignments are due on the date indicated.

- NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**
- submission must be made in HARD COPY** directly to me;
- no electronic submission of any kind will be counted.**
- Please format your paper according to the style preferences provided elsewhere in this syllabus.**

Required Secondary Readings:

When two sessions are noted together, the READINGS are due on the first date of the assignment. In addition to the Bible, which is our primary text, secondary readings are assigned from several books and from a Course Reader, which are essential to understanding the concepts and methodologies we consider in this mini-mester. The books are either available at the AJR Library, or may be purchased [used or new] for your personal library. A Master copy of the Course Reader will be made available to students on the first day of class, for you to duplicate and return to me. All readings are designated in the syllabus by author's last name and short title. Page numbers are given for textbook assignments.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Course reader (see contents, below)
2. Amit, Yairah. *History and Ideology: An Introduction to Historiography in the Hebrew Bible*. Translated by Yael Lotan. The Biblical Seminar 60. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999. [copy available for duplication]
3. Finkelstein, Israel et.al. *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts*, NY: The Free Press, 2001
4. Hayes, John H. *An Introduction to Old Testament Study*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979. [available for duplication]
5. Friedman, Richard E. *Who Wrote the Bible*, Summit Books, 1987 [or most current edition]

CITATIONS FOR COURSE READER

[in alphabetical order, NOT in order of assignment]

Time line & Map

- Aharoni, Y. "The Israelite Occupation of Canaan: an Account of the Archaeological Evidence," *BAR* May/June 1982, pp. 14-23.
- Carr, Edward Hallett. *What is History?* The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures Delivered at the University of Cambridge January-March 1961. New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1961. 3-35, 175-209.
- Friedman, A. B., ed. 1976. *The Penguin Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World*. New York: Penguin Books/Viking Press.
- Geller, Stephen A., "New Approaches to the Comparative Study of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Literatures: Approaches to Teaching the Hebrew Bible," in Olshen, B; Feldman, Y.; <eds>, *Approaches to Teaching Masterpieces of World Literature*, New York:Modern Language Association, 72-77, 1989;
- Greenstein, E. & D. Marcus, "The Akkadian Inscription of Idrimi," *JANES* 8 (1976), 59-96 [excerpts]
- Halpern, Baruch. "Erasing History: The Minimalist Assault on Ancient Israel." *Bible Review*, December 1995, 26-35, 47.
- Hayes & Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, John Knox Press, 1987, pp.92-100.
- Lemche, Niels Peter. *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988, chapter two.
- Sandburg, C. 1955. "Casey Jones." In *An American Songbag*, 367-69. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Shanks, H., ed. *Ancient Israel from Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, Prentice Hall, 1999.
- Yadin, Y. "Is the Biblical Account of the Israelite Conquest of Canaan Historically Reliable?" *BAR* March/April 1992, 16-23.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Session 1:

I. INTRODUCTION to BIBLICAL HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

A. Casey Jones & Critical Methods

Readings:

Sandburg, "Casey Jones" [course reader]

Friedman, Folk Ballad [course reader]

[STUDY QUESTIONS ARE BASIS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION]

Session 2:

B. General Background Readings:

Carr, 3-35, 175-209.

Amit, 11-33

Lemche, "Text & History"

Halpern, "Erasing History"

Hayes, chapter 1 [through end of section 'close of Jewish canon']

Friedman, Who Wrote the Bible, chapters 1 -6

C. Moses & the Exodus

Readings:

Exodus 1-19

Amit 73-81

Shanks, 1-32, 33-54

Hayes, chapter 6

Finkelstein, 1-71

Friedman, Who Wrote the Bible, chapters 7-end

[PREPARE STUDY QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION]

Session 3:

D. Settlement in Canaan

Readings:

Deuteronomy 31 & Joshua 1 (Succession);
Joshua 6, 7, 8 (conquest);
Joshua 11:18-23 (settlement, version #1);
Judges 1 (settlement, version #2);
Aharoni (course reader)
Yadin (course Reader)
Amit 30-41, 65-72
Finkelstein, 72-122 [
Shanks, 55-89

[PREPARE STUDY QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION]

Written review of R. E. Friedman's *Who Wrote the Bible* **DUE TODAY**
[see guiding questions at end of syllabus]
NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED

Session 4:

E. Introduction to Tradition History

Readings:

Hayes, 119-154, 180-190

F. United Monarchy: Samuel, Saul & David

Readings:

1 Samuel 1-30 [especially 8-12, 16]
2 Samuel 1-24 [especially 6-7, 17-19]
Psalms 89, 132
1 Chronicles 13-20, 28-29
Amit 42-64
Finkelstein, 123-319;
Shanks, 85-129

[PREPARE STUDY QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION]

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE TODAY
[see questions and style sheet at end of syllabus]
NO LATE EXAMS ACCEPTED

1. Casey Jones & Critical Methods

Task:

Using the different versions of the “Casey Jones” song, plus the “report” in the handouts, please do the following:

- 1) In a sentence or two, state what actually happened in the original train incident.
- 2) Put the sources in chronological order as best you can, and describe in a few sentences the sequence of the evolution of the Casey Jones traditions. Be sure to note why the changes might have occurred at each stage. How long did it take for all the variations to appear? Do you consider this a swift or slow evolution?
- 3) For each point of transition from one source to the next, note the elements that change, or appear, or disappear at each transition from the original report to Sandburg. Be sure to consider categories of language/technical terms, plot elements, names, circumstances, etc. How do you think the intended audience for each version might have influenced the development of each variant?
- 4) Focus on Carl Sandburg’s version as the “canonical” version of what actually happened, and please address the following:
 - What was the “base” version used by Sandburg?
 - What sources were used as “additions?”
[identify by letter designation the sources Sandburg uses]
 - Does Sandburg add anything new, not found in his sources?
 - How does Sandburg acknowledge his sources?
 - What does Sandburg’s “copyright” information tell us?
 - Do you think he intended to do what he did?
 - What is your impression of Sandburg’s accuracy?
 - What was the impact of Sandburg as “editor” upon the “received tradition” of the Casey Jones songs?
- 5) Consider the differences between the forms and uses of “report” and “song.” How might these genre differences affect the information conveyed in each?
- 6) What does your experience in this exercise suggest about oral and written sources in the Hebrew Bible?

2. Moses, Exodus, and Sinai

- What is the controversy surrounding the Egyptian sojourn and the Exodus?
- What archaeological evidence do we have for these events? Other evidence?
- How does the controversy between minimalists and maximalists play out in this issue?
- What are some of the issues surrounding the nature of evidence for the Egyptian sojourn and the Exodus?
- How would you compare the views of Finkelstein and Sarna [see Shanks]?
- The Egyptian archaeologist Donald Kitchen has famously said “Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.” How would you apply this idea to the Exodus controversy?
- What power does the Exodus story hold for you if it can be proven historically?
- What effect would the Exodus story hold for you if it cannot be proven historically? Discuss any differences you would experience.

3. Conquest and Settlement Models

1) Please focus on the biblical readings from Joshua and Judges and the background as you discuss the following:

- Briefly summarize the differing accounts in the Bible of the conquest and settlement, being specific about which passages express which view.
- Do the same for scholarly approaches, being sure to note the names of the scholars along with their views.
- What do you think is the most likely scenario for the Israelite conquest and settlement of Canaan?
- How does the controversy between minimalists and maximalists play out in this issue?

4. Tradition History and the United Monarchy: The Hero and the Giant

As you prepare this assignment, keep in mind the principles of tradition criticism identified by Gunkel and his students [see Hayes], as well as your experience with the Casey Jones exercise and your other assigned readings. Be sure to consider political, theological, and transmission circumstances in your suggestions, the polemical agendas of the various sources, and Gunkel's principles as well.

In light of secondary readings on Tradition Criticism, please consider the following:

Compare these texts and note the differing traditions they represent:

- 1 Samuel 17
- 2 Samuel 21:19-22
- 1 Chronicles 20:5-8

[HINT: Be sure to use the Hebrew text for the two shorter selections; English translations may be misleading. Also, the Hayes reading will be really helpful]

- Note the principles identified by Gunkel that govern tradition history;
- Identify the genres of each of these texts using Gunkel's principles;
- Note which of Gunkel's principles might be operating on these examples;
- Identify significant differences in fact and attitude among the texts, and note in which sources they may occur. You may want to check out the relative dating of the sources in your secondary readings to suggest a relative chronology for the sources.
 - Do you agree with Gunkel's methodology in this case?
 - What is your opinion on the reasons for the differences?
 - What do you think accounts for the inclusion of differing accounts in the canonized text?

Questions for Review of R. E. Friedman's Who Wrote the Bible

Please use these questions as a guide in writing your review of the book Who Wrote The Bible by Richard E. Friedman. You may find it helpful to look at these questions as you read the book during the course of the semester to focus your attention on significant points. When you submit your written book review, please remember the following:

- submission must be made in HARD COPY directly to me;**
- no electronic submission of any kind will be counted.**
- no late assignments will be accepted.**
- Please format your paper according to the style preferences provided elsewhere in this syllabus.**

Overall questions:

- Why is the title of this book misleading?
- What is Friedman's overall assumption in analyzing biblical polemic?
- What is Friedman's major consideration in attributing authorship of various strands?
- What is Friedman's methodology in identifying 'who wrote the Bible'?
- What aspect of the Bible does Friedman's approach ignore?
- Where do you think he has gone too far? Why?
- What do you think Friedman's contribution is? Why?

Section Questions:

- Who does Friedman think J and E are?
- What kind of evidence does he bring to bolster his point?
(what is the nature of the evidence he brings?)
- What does Friedman say are the social and political settings for J? For E? do you agree?
- What fudge factors can you spot in his discussion?
- What do you find compelling about his argument nonetheless?
- Do you agree with his conclusions? Why or why not?

- Who does Friedman think wrote D?
- How many D sources does he identify and on what basis?
- How does Friedman arrive at his conclusions (nature of evidence, nature of argument)?
- What does Friedman suggest is D's social situation?
- What fudge factors can you find in his discussion here?
- Do you agree with his conclusions? Why or why not?

- Who does Friedman think P was?
- What does Friedman identify as the primary concerns of the P writer? How does he know?
- How many P sources does Friedman identify, and on what basis?
- What does Friedman suggest is P's social situation?
- What fudge factors do you find in his discussions of P?
- Do you agree with his conclusions? Why or why not?

- Who does Friedman think was the redactor or editor who put the whole thing together?
- Under what circumstances does Friedman think this redaction took place?
- What fudge factors are present in Friedman's discussion?
- What do you find compelling nonetheless? Why?
- Do you agree with his reconstruction? Why or why not?

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AJR BIB 305, Biblical Historiography
Take-Home Examination

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please do your own work, and please do not consult with one another in preparing or writing this exam. You may use any notes or reference books you like, as well as the biblical text. You should be able to complete this exam using the readings assigned for this course and your class notes.

- submission must be made in **HARD COPY** directly to me;
- no electronic submission of any kind will be counted.
- no late assignments will be accepted.
- Please format your paper according to the style preferences provided below.

STYLE:

[NOTE: IF YOU DO NOT FOLLOW STYLE REQUIREMENTS, YOUR EXAM WILL NOT BE READ!]

Please hand in your examination fully double spaced, with minimum margins of 1" all around, and maximum of 1 1/2".

Please use a new ribbon or printer with new cartridges for dark printing, and choose a simple, easy-to read font [like Times Roman].

Please use a 12 point font.

PLEASE USE PROPER FORM FOR BIBLICAL CITATIONS: ie, Joshua 1:4 [biblical book, space, number of chapter, colon, number of verse(s)]. Please cite every biblical reference you make, whether quotation, summary, paraphrase, or otherwise. You may assume I have a Hebrew Bible to refer to the passages you note.

SPELLING COUNTS, especially of foreign words, and I will consider clarity of expression, and good English usage, in evaluating your answers.

SUBMISSION:

Please submit your completed examinations on the date noted on the syllabus. Because this is a take-home exam, and because you have it so far in advance of its due date, absolutely no late papers will be accepted for any reason.

Do well!

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AJR BIB 305
Historiography of the Biblical Period
Take-Home Final Examination

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS:

Be sure to follow ALL the instructions on this page in discussing your answers; please follow the instructions on the previous page for format, style, submission, etc.

For EACH group of terms:

Please write a paragraph in which you clearly express your response for each group selected. Please adhere to the word limit noted in the STYLE section, below. In the course of your discussion, please be sure to give ALL of the following for each selection:

- a) What concept, principle, idea, or relationship connects the terms to each other?
- b) Define each term in the group, and describe its relationship to the other terms.
- c) Note the significance of each item in terms of our work in the course and/or for

Israelite historiography.

d) Please be sure to give specific biblical examples to support your discussion. Please give biblical notation, not quotation, when you support your answers with examples. In order to keep to the word limit, it is to your advantage to avoid extensive quotations in favor of brief reference [terse summary or paraphrase] and proper citation. If you do quote, be sure to write in the Hebrew first, followed by the English translation.

Your grade will depend on your doing each of the above tasks with each of the terms and groups of terms given.

Word limit: Please limit your answer for EACH GROUP of terms to a total of about 250 words. I will stop reading at about that limit. For best results, please make every word count!

Please submit your answers for EACH of the following four groups:

- 1) History/Historiography/Historicity/*Heilsgeschichte*/Minimalist and Maximalist
- 2) Moses/ Exodus/ Merneptah Stele/Hyksos/Red Sea/Sinai
- 3) Settlement/Occupation/Conquest/Joshua vs. Judges/Charismatic leadership
- 4) United Monarchy/David/Goliath the Gittite/ Gunkel/Elchanan of Jaare-Organ/ Lahmi

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