

NT/OT 3XA3/5XA5  
**The Apocrypha**



Image from "The Story of Hanukkah" by Ori Sherman. (Magnes Collection of Jewish Art, University of California, Berkeley)

Term: Spring/Summer 2022  
Dates: May 31 – June 30  
Programs: MDiv, MTS, Cert CS,  
DPT  
Specializations: BS, PS

Instructor: Phil Strickland, PhD  
Email: [strickpd@mcmaster.ca](mailto:strickpd@mcmaster.ca)  
Office: 213  
Office Hours: By appointment only  
(virtual)

Format: Online  
Tuesdays (synchronous meetings via Zoom)  
Time: 10:00-11:50 AM  
Meeting Dates: May 31, June 7, 14, 21, 28

Fridays  
(asynchronous content posted)

**I. Course Description:** This course examines the "hidden" books which have come to be known collectively as "The Apocrypha." These books, absent from most modern English Bibles in the Protestant tradition but recognized as "deuterocanonical" in the Roman Catholic Church and as part of the Old Testament in the Orthodox tradition, are important for understanding the development of early Judaism and Christianity. These books especially provide a vital historical, cultural, and literary bridge between the worlds of the Old and New Testaments. This course will explore these ancient texts (Tobit through 4 Maccabees), their historical contexts, composition, meaning, and how they can further our understanding of the development of Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible that has come down to us from them.

## II. Objectives:

### Knowing

- Gain a better understanding of the texts of the Old Testament Apocrypha, their content, and their importance for early Judaism and Christianity.
- Develop greater knowledge of the history of Israel “between the testaments.”

### Being

- Be shaped spiritually and intellectually by encountering these texts which provide a further record of God’s work among his people.
- Become a better expositor of Scripture by becoming more well-rounded in your understanding of the Bible and its world.
- Develop a greater appreciation for the diversity of Christianity within and outside the Protestant tradition vis-à-vis encountering how the Apocrypha has influenced the Biblical tradition of the church.
- Develop an appreciation for how the Apocrypha can help us also to read and better understand the canonical Old and New Testaments.

### Doing

- Read the Apocrypha and become better acquainted with these important primary texts.
- Engage with relevant biblical/theological scholarship on the Apocrypha.

## III. Course Requirements:

### Required Texts

DeSilva, David. *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018.

*The Apocrypha* (New Revised Standard Version).

Schiffman, Lawrence H. *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*. Honoken: Ktav, 1991. **(NB: This book is required for DPT students only)**

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College’s book service, The Hurlburt Family Bookstore, McMaster Divinity College (Across from Cullen Hall). For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; text: 416 668 3434; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

\*\* Other course materials will be posted on the course website on Avenue2Learn. Online access to the course will be given upon registration.

### Recommended for Further Reading

#### Commentaries

Dunn, James D. G., and John W. Rogerson, eds. *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 2003.

The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary Series on the Apocrypha. 5 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press.

The Brill Septuagint Commentary Series on the Apocrypha. 5 vols. Boston: Brill.

#### Dictionary Entries / Essays / Articles

Charlesworth, James H. "Old Testament Apocrypha." In *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, edited by David Noel Freedman, 1:292–94. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Delcor, M. "The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Hellenistic Period." In *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, edited by W. D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, 2:409–503. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

DeSilva, D. A. "Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha." In *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999.

#### Books/Monographs

Collins, John J. *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

Evans, Craig A. *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005.

Harrington, Daniel. *Invitation to the Apocrypha*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Helyer, Larry R. *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period: A Guide for New Testament Students*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.

Kugel, James L. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Metzger, Bruce M. *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957.

Wills, Lawrence M. *Introduction to the Apocrypha: Jewish Books in Christian Bibles*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021.

Nicklelsburg, George W. E. *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

#### Texts and Translations

Charles, R. H., ed. *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. Volume I: Apocrypha*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913.

Charlesworth, James H., ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–85.

Coogan, Michael, et al., eds. *The New Oxford Annotated Apocrypha*. 5th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Kohlenberger III, John R. ed. *The Parallel Apocrypha*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Rahlfs, Alfred, and Robert Hanhart, eds. *Septuaginta*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.

Stone, Michael E., ed. *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

#### IV. Assignments:

##### MODULE

##### WEEKLY READING

Week 1 - Module 1: Introduction to  
“The Apocrypha”

DeSilva, 1–57; Martin Luther’s preface to the  
Apocrypha

Module 2: Hellenism and the  
Struggle for Judaism

DeSilva, 264–305; 1–2 Maccabees

Module 3: Stories from the Diaspora	DeSilva, 58–110, 333–354; Tobit, Judith, 3 Maccabees
Module 4: The Flower of Israel's Wisdom	DeSilva, 131–210, 390–422; Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Ben Sira, 4 Maccabees
Module 5: Old Testament <i>Redux</i>	DeSilva, 111–130, 211–263, 324–332; Baruch, Letter to Jeremiah, Additions to Esther, Additions to Daniel, Psalm 151, Prayer of Manasseh
Module 6: Apocalypse and Resistance (asynchronous)	DeSilva, 306–323, 355–389; 3–4 Ezra [1–2 Esdras]

<u>Written Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Journal 1	June 03
Journal 2	June 10
Journal 3	June 17
Journal 4	June 24
Journal 5; Book Review (DPT)	July 02
Major Paper	July 08

#### NT/OT 3XA3 (master's students)

Class Participation and Reading: Attendance of all synchronous online sessions is mandatory, and students are expected to be prepared and ready to engage in class discussions. Additionally, students are required to view all recorded lectures each week. Students must also complete all required course readings, including any supplemental readings assigned throughout the course not on this syllabus, and will be asked to provide a report on the percentage of readings they have done. Percentage points will be deducted for incomplete work.

Journal and Discussion Groups (value: 25%): To encourage intellectual and spiritual formation, students will keep a journal of their insights from, and reflections on, the Apocrypha. How are these texts impacting your understanding of the Bible, of Judaism, of Jesus and the early church, or of the nature of faith itself? Is there anything in these texts that you find inspiring, challenging, controversial, surprising, or strange? How are the course readings and class discussions impacting how you read and understand these texts? These and other relevant questions should be explored in each entry. Thoughtful interaction is key. Your entries will also serve as a basis for breakout group discussions each week which will be a feature of our livestream meetings. Each entry should be at least 1-2 pages (double-spaced) per week, a total of 5 entries, and should contain reflections on the readings, lecture, and discussion from the previous week.

Quizzes (value: 35%): Each week will feature a quiz which covers material from the lectures and assigned readings from the previous week. Quizzes will be posted on Avenue to Learn and instructions provided.

Major Paper and Oral Presentation (value: 40%): The research paper (10–15 pages) should be on a topic which highlights an example of how the Apocrypha (either a particular text or corpus) can help us to understand issues in either the Old or New Testament. The topic should be selected in consultation with the instructor of this course. Students will also be required to give a 5-minute precis of their papers on the last synchronous meeting of the course. Time for questions and answers will be included within the presentation time as well. The final version of your research paper is due to be turned in the week following the last day of classes.

#### NT/OT 5XA5 (DPT students)

Class Participation and Reading: Attendance of all synchronous online sessions is mandatory, and students are expected to be prepared and ready to engage in class discussions. Additionally, students are required to view all recorded lectures each week. Students must also complete all required course readings, including any supplemental readings assigned throughout the course not on this syllabus, and will be asked to provide a report on the percentage of readings they have done. Percentage points will be deducted for incomplete work.

Journal and Discussion Groups (value: 20%): To encourage intellectual and spiritual formation, students will keep a journal of their insights from, and reflections on, the Apocrypha. How are these texts impacting your understanding of the Bible, of Judaism, of Jesus and the early church, or of the nature of faith itself? Is there anything in these texts that you find inspiring, challenging, controversial, surprising, or strange? How are the course readings and class discussions impacting how you read and understand these texts? These and other relevant questions should be explored in each entry. Thoughtful interaction is key. Your entries will also serve as a basis for breakout group discussions each week which will be a feature of our livestream meetings. Each entry should be 2 pages (double-spaced) per week, a total of 5 entries, and should contain reflections on the readings, lecture, and discussion from the previous week.

Quizzes (value: 20%): Each week will feature a quiz which covers material from the lectures and assigned readings from the previous week. Quizzes will be posted on Avenue to Learn and instructions provided.

Book Review (value: 25%)– DPT students will read and write a review of Schiffman's book *From Text to Tradition*. Reviews should be 7–10 pages in length, should follow MDC style, and evince substantive, in-depth engagement with the book. A good review will include 1–2 pages of summary, 4–5 pages of thoughtful analysis and critique where appropriate, and 2–3 pages of concluding thoughts and evaluation.

Major Paper and Oral Presentation (value: 35%): The research paper (20–25 pages) should be on a topic regarding the Apocrypha's significance within the contemporary church, or within a particular Christian denomination/tradition. The topic should be selected in consultation with the instructor of this course. Students will also be required to give a 5-minute precis on what they are writing on during the last synchronous meeting of the course. Time for questions and answers will be included. The final version of your research paper is due to be turned in the week following the last day of classes.

## **V. Rules and Regulations:**

### Academic

Honesty Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including: plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences (e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College). Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

### Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

### Style

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for

Essays and Theses, which can conveniently be found online at <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. Attendance is mandatory for livestream sessions. Students are expected to be prepared and ready to engage. In the event of an emergency (e.g., serious health issue, family emergency), please be sure to contact the course instructor who will help to make appropriate arrangements for making up assignments.

### Technology

This is an online course. Students are expected to have access to the technology necessary to successfully complete the course. Students are expected to use their McMaster email accounts and Avenue to Learn. For IT information, see <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/educational-technology-help-page/>.

*Disclaimer: This syllabus is the property of the course instructor, who reserves the right to make changes and revisions to assignments until, and including, the first day of class.*