



McMaster Divinity College

PHD-CHTH G105-C05 MA - OT 6ZI6 THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL Winter 2020

Class Schedule: Tuesdays 4:00pm-5:50am

Professor: Dr. Paul S. Evans

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Course Description:

- A thorough study of the history of Israel with attention to modern historical reconstructions and questions of historiography and historical method. This course will focus on a variety of evidences relevant for critical modern historical reconstructions such as, textual evidence, epigraphic evidence, and archaeological evidence. Areas to be explored include: the role of material evidence; dating archeological evidence, debate over the 'low chronology'; the role of memory in history writing; methods of ancient historiography; the question of verification, and the role of the biblical text in historical reconstruction.

Course Objectives:

Knowing

- To have a thorough knowledge of the various stages of ancient Israel within the context of ancient Near Eastern culture and context.
- To gain familiarity with the state of the field of research on the historiography of ancient Israel
- To gain an awareness of the various perspectives on Israel's history present in the OT guild today

Being

- To embrace the contemporary relevance of OT historical texts for the Church
- To grow closer to God through closer study of Old Testament texts

Doing

- To be able to discuss the relation of biblical historiography to history
- To be able to interpret the OT in its historical context
- To be able to apply knowledge of historical issues in the OT to contemporary audiences

Required Texts:

- Grabbe, Lester L. *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* London: T & T Clark, 2007.
- Anold, Bill T. and Richard S. Hess eds. *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014
- Brettler, Marc Zvi. *The Creation of History in Ancient Israel*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Provan, Iain W., Philips V. Long, and Tremper Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*. 2nd edition. Louisville, KY.: Westminster/John Knox, 2015.
- Articles distributed to the class

Recommended Texts:

- Bright, John, *A History of Israel*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2000.
- Long, V. Philips, David W. Baker, and Gordon J. Wenham eds. *Windows into Old Testament History: Evidence, Argument, and the Crisis of "Biblical Israel"*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

Course Evaluation

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

- 20% - Class Participation:** This course is designed as a graduate seminar. The professor will begin with some introductory lectures but the majority of the course will be student-led discussions and presentations. Classroom experiences will be collaborative, with both students and professor engaged in the learning process together. Students must attend every class and come prepared to actively contribute to class discussions. Therefore, assigned readings and research must be completed before class time in order for both the individual student and the broader class to benefit. During the first month of the course students will present to the class a summary (with PowerPoint) of an important piece of extra-biblical evidence often used in historical reconstructions of ancient Israel
- 30% - Research Paper on chosen historical period: 20 pages. Due Feb 4, 2020** via email to the professor who will distribute them to the class, who will then discuss them in class Feb 11, 25, & Mar 3. Students will then revise their paper in light of the feedback received and submit the final version to the professor by Mar 10, 2020. For this paper students will choose a historical period in the ancient Near East related to their chosen area of research for their dissertation. The paper will provide an overview of the period and

identify the main evidences available to support a historical reconstruction. The paper will also identify critical issues and problems for such reconstructions and argue for the best approach to these problems.

40% - Research Paper on Chosen Historical event. 25 pages. Due March 17, 2020 via email to the professor who will distribute the paper electronically to the class, who will then discuss them in class March 24, 31, & April 7. Students will then revise their paper in light of the feedback received and submit the final version to the professor by April 8, 2020. For this paper students will choose a historical event that occurred during the historical period chosen for the first paper. This paper will be more specific than the first paper in assessing critical historical reconstructions and arguing for their own historical reconstruction of the event utilizing all known evidences and outlining their methodology and approach to each piece of evidence, and especially their use of the Bible in their historical reconstruction.

10% - Reflection Paper on Hermeneutical Implications. 5 pages. Due Apr 7, 2020 via email to the professor. For this paper students write a reflection on implications of the issues and research covered in the course for a student’s view of the Bible as scripture.

In Class	Grabbe	Arnold & Hess	Provan et al.	Brettler
Jan. 7 –Intro to the study of Israel's History	--	--	--	
Jan. 14 –Methods for Studying Israel’s History	Ch. 1	Introduction	Ch. 1	Introduction & Chs. 1–2
Jan. 21–Survey of Israel's History	Ch. 2	Ch. 1	Chs. 2–3	Ch. 3
Jan. 28–Survey of Israel's History	Ch. 3	Chs. 2	Ch. 4	Ch. 4–5
Feb. 4 – Survey of Israel's History		Ch. 3	Ch. 5	Ch. 5
Feb. 11 –Student Presentations*	Chs. 4	Ch. 4	Ch. 6	Ch. 6
Feb. 18– READING WEEK – no class	Ch. 5	Ch. 5	Ch. 7	Ch. 6
Feb. 25 – Student Presentations*	Ch. 6	Chs. 6	Ch. 8	Conclusion
Mar. 3 – Student Presentations*		Chs. 7	Ch. 9	
Mar. 10 – Student Presentations**		Chs. 8–9	Ch. 10	
Mar. 17- Student Presentations**		Ch. 10	Ch. 11	
Mar. 24– Student Presentations**		Ch. 11	Ch. 12	

Mar. 31 – Student Presentations**		Ch. 12	Ch. 10	
Apr. 7– Student Presentations**		Ch. 13–14	Ch. 11	

College Style for Submission of Written Work

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 <http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All assignments must be in electronic format only (PDF format) —no hardcopies— and emailed to pevans@mcmaster.ca. Include your last name in the file name of your attachment (e.g., [evans.researchpaper.pdf](#)). To avoid late marks papers must be received by 11:59pm of the calendar day on which they are due.

Policy concerning late papers

Extensions for papers will not be given except in very exceptional circumstances. (serious illness, family crises, etc.). Busy-ness, computer problems etc. are not legitimate reasons to grant extensions and in the interests of fairness any request for extensions will take into account the entire class. Late assignments will be docked at the rate of 2% per day for the first 7 calendar days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. Late assignments receive no critical feedback. All assignments must be received by April 8, 2020 in order to avoid a failing grade in the class.

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 ~

<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

Gender 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).

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

Select Bibliography

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