



McMaster Divinity College

PHD-CHTH G105-C05 MA - OT 6ZI6

THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL Winter 2024

Class Schedule: Wednesdays 9:00am-10:50am in Camelford classroom

Professor: Dr. Paul S. Evans

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Office: 236

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:

- Bill T. Arnold, and Richard S. Hess eds. *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014
- Brad Kelle and Brent Strawn. *Oxford Handbook of the Historical Books of the Bible*. Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Iain W. Provan, Philips V. Long, and Tremper Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*. 2nd edition. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2015.
- Articles distributed to the class or posted on Avenue to Learn

Recommended Texts:

- William G. Dever, *Beyond the Texts: An Archaeological Portrait of Ancient Israel and Judah*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017.
- 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: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Evans, Paul S. *Sennacherib and the War of 1812: Historical Reconstructions of the Assyrian Campaign of 701 BCE in Light of Military History*. Library of Hebrew Bible /Old Testament Studies 736. London: T. & T. Clark, 2023.

Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

Course Evaluation

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

- 30% - Class Participation:** This course is designed as a graduate seminar. Classroom experiences will be collaborative, with both students and professor engaged in the learning process together.
- a) Attendance.** Students must attend every class and come prepared to actively contribute to class discussions.
- b) Readings.** Assigned readings and research must be completed before class time in order for both the individual student and the broader class to benefit. Students will prepare at least two pages of review notes on each week's assigned readings with comments and questions. These notes will be posted to Avenue to Learn before class time each week.
- c) Presentation.** During the first month of the course students will give a 10-minute presentation to the class (with PowerPoint and bibliography) on an important piece of extra-biblical evidence often used in historical reconstructions of ancient Israel (presenting Jan 24 and 31).

30% - Research Paper on chosen historical 'period': 20 pages. Draft due Feb 16 posted to A2L. Students will give a brief presentation of their paper (10–15 minutes) which will be followed by a class discussion. Dates for presentations and discussion are: Feb 28 and Mar 6. Students will then revise their paper in light of the feedback received and submit the final version to the professor by Mar 13.

Paper (25%) 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.

Reviews (5%): Each student will write a two-page review of the papers in their assigned group and email them to the professor before the class in which the papers will be presented and discussed, and to the student who wrote the paper(s) after the class.

35% - Research Paper on Chosen Historical 'event.' 25 pages. Draft due Mar 15, posted to A2L. Students will give a brief presentation of their paper (10–15 minutes) which will be followed by a class discussion. Dates for presentations and discussion are: Mar 20, 27. Students will then revise their paper in light of the feedback received and submit the final version to the professor by Apr 3.

Paper (30%) 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.

Reviews (5%): Each student will write a two-page review of their fellow student's papers and email them to the professor before the class in which the papers will be presented and discussed, and to the student who wrote the paper(s) after the class.

5% - Reflection Paper on Hermeneutical Implications. 5 pages. Due Apr 3, posted to A2L. 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.

Class Schedule

In Class	Kelle et. al	Arnold & Hess	Provan et al.	Assignments due	A2L readings
Jan. 10 - Intro to the study of Israel's History	--	--	--	--	--
Jan. 17 - Methods for Studying Israel's History	Ch. 1–2	Introduction	Ch. 1, 5	--	--
Jan. 24 - Survey of Israel's History * Student Presentations of extra-biblical evidence*	Ch. 3–4	Ch. 1	pp. 155–174	--	--
Jan. 31 - Survey of Israel's History * Student Presentations of extra-biblical evidence*	Ch. 5–6	Chs. 2–3	pp. 189–198	--	--
Feb. 7 - Survey of Israel's History	Ch. 7–8	Ch. 4–5	Ch. 7	--	--
Feb 14 - Survey of Israel's History	Ch. 9–10	Ch. 6	Ch. 8	Draft Research Paper on Historical Period due Feb 16	--
Feb. 21 – READING WEEK • NO CLASS					
Feb. 28 - Presentations and discussion of Peer's papers**	Ch. 11–13	Ch. 7–8	Ch. 9	--	--
Mar. 6 - Presentations and discussion of Peer's papers**	Ch. 14–17	Chs. 9–10	Ch. 10	Final version of Historical paper due Mar 13	Knauf.pdf Mayer.pdf Na'aman.pdf
Mar. 13 - Historical Issues in the reigns of Hezekiah & Manasseh	Ch. 21–22	Chs. 11	Chs. 2–4	Draft Research Paper on Historical 'Event' due Mar 15	Bellis.pdf EvansJHS.pdf Knauf.pdf Kelly.pdf
Mar. 20 - Presentations and discussion of Peer's papers***	Ch. 23–24	Ch. 12	Ch. 11	--	Davies.pdf Thompson.pdf
Mar. 27 - Presentations and discussion of Peer's papers ***	Ch. 25–26	Ch. 13	Ch. 12	--	Evans.JBL1.pdf Knoppers.pdf
Apr. 3 - Evaluating the field and reflection on historical issues and faith	Ch. 27–28	Ch. 14	Appendix	Final version of Event paper & Reflection paper due Apr 3	Person.pdf Evans.JBL2.pdf

* 10 minute presentation on extra-biblical evidence

- Seminar participants will present with PowerPoint and bibliography on an important piece of extra-biblical evidence often used in historical reconstructions

**10-15 minute presentation of Paper on Historical Period

- Seminar participants will present papers providing an overview of relevant Historical Periods identifying the main evidences available for historical reconstructions

***10-15 minute presentation of Paper on Reconstructing of Historical Event. Seminar participants will present papers on their chosen historical event, 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 –especially their use of the Bible in the historical reconstruction

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

<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

All papers must be in pdf format only and posted to the appropriate place on A2L.

Include your last name in the file name of your paper (e.g., evans.paper.pdf). To avoid late marks papers must be received by 11:59pm on their due date. Late assignments receive no critical feedback.

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 requests 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 days (including weekends) and 4% per day after that. All assignments must be received by the last day of class (April 5) in order to avoid a failing grade in the class. Late assignments receive no critical feedback.

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, for example, the following: NRSV (2021), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of

deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

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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