

JEWISH LITERATURE OF THE GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD

Classics 346/Jewish Studies 346/Religious Studies 346

Spring, 2016

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Objective

The goal of this course is for you to attain a foundational understanding of Jewish Hellenistic literature (including documents from Qumran) by studying selected texts within their historical, cultural and literary settings.

Requirements

1. Read the prescribed pages from the textbooks and the passages listed under the rubric “**Texts**” in each day’s assignment.
2. Attend class, ask questions, and take good notes. The assigned readings offer important introductions and discussions, but they are a starting point. The class sessions will supplement, clarify, and query those readings, especially as we examine specific, representative passages.
3. Write three examinations: February 19, April 2, and May 13. These exams will test your knowledge of the readings and the material covered in class. EACH EXAM COVERS ONLY THE MATERIAL SINCE THE PREVIOUS EXAM. Barring extraordinary circumstances, you are expected to take the exam at the time it is scheduled.
4. If you are registered for honors credit, please contact me early in the term.

Required Texts and Resources

Nickelsburg, George. *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*. Second edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011. ISBN 0800699157

VanderKam, James. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*. Revised ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010. ISBN 080286435X

Additional articles and texts will be supplied in digital form by the professor (marked **DC** in the syllabus). Readings from the Bible, the Apocrypha, and Jewish Hellenistic texts are accessible via links embedded in the online syllabus.

A class email list is available (classics346-1-s16), which I will use to announce new posts to the web site or any other communication relevant to the course. Moreover, anyone in the class may submit a query or comment for discussion outside of class.

All posts to the list are expected to be germane to the course and show proper respect for other class members.

Grades

Your final grade will be a composite of your grade on the exams, with the second and third exams weighted more heavily than the first (25%, 35%, and 40%).

Office Hours

I will be available in my office (958 Van Hise) 12:20-1:15 on Tuesdays and 10:00-10:50 on Wednesdays. If neither of these times is compatible with your schedule, please contact me (rltroxel@wisc.edu) to arrange an appointment.

Class Schedule

Key to abbreviations:

NB = George **N**ickels**u**rg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*

VK = James **V**ander**K**am, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*

DC = **D**igital **C**opy – Reading supplied by professor as a digital copy.

Texts = Readings from the Bible, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, etc., all of which are accessible via links in the online syllabus. (Some "Texts" are accessible via ER assignments, as noted.)

Week One

January 19 Israel's Origins and Traditions

WEB A narrative summary of Israel's history is available

January 21 Jewish Roots

NB 8-14

Texts Isaiah 56; Haggai 1-2; Jonah 1-4; Nehemiah 7:73-8:8

Week Two

January 26 Greek Origins

DC John Collins, "Retrieving the World of Ancient Judaism"

January 28 Hellenism

NB 41-43 (down to "Literature Attributed to Enoch")

Week Three

February 2 Bewilderment: Qoheleth/Ecclesiastes

DC James Crenshaw, "Ecclesiastes – Odd Book In"

Text Qoheleth/Ecclesiastes 1-12

February 4 Confrontation: 1 & 2 Maccabees

NB 102-110

Text 1 Maccabees 1-3; 2 Maccabees 3-6

Week Four

February 9 Confrontation: Daniel 7-12 and Apocalyptic

NB 17-26 (top), 77-83

Text Daniel 7-12

February 11 Confrontation: 1 Enoch

NB 43-53

Text 1 Enoch 1-36

Week Five

February 16 Assimilation: Ben Sirach

NB 53-63

Text Sira 1-5; 15; 44-50 (skim these final 6 chapters)

February 18 **EXAM**

Week Six

February 23 Apologetic: Letter of Aristeas

NB 196-199 (top)

Text The Letter of Aristeas

February 25 Adaptation: Aristobulous, 4 Maccabees

NB 256-259

DC (Text) Aristobulous

Text 4 Maccabees

Week Seven

March 1 Adaptation: Philo of Alexandria

NB 212-221

DC Louis Feldman, “Philo”

DC (Text) “On the Creation” §§17-19, 72-75 and “On the Special Laws” IV, §§100-115

March 3 Wariness: Testaments of the Twelve

NB 302-315

Text Testaments of Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar

Week Eight

March 8 Testament of Job, Life of Adam and Eve (& Apocalypse of Moses)

NB 315-322, 327-332

DC (Text) Testament of Job 1-27 (each chapter is *very* short)

Text Life of Adam and Eve

March 10 Exemplary characters: Joseph and Aseneth

NB 332-338

Text Joseph and Aseneth 1-21 (each chapter is short)

Week Nine

March 15 Exemplary characters: Judith, Tobit

NB 29-35, 97-102

DC Levine, Amy Jill “Tobit: Teaching Jews How to Live in the Diaspora”

Text Judith 1-16; Tobit 1-5

March 17 Rewritten Bible: The Book of Jubilees

NB 69-74

Text The Book of Jubilees 1-3, 6, 30:1-17

***** SPRING BREAK *****

Week Ten

March 29 Rewritten Bible: Psuedo-Philo (Book of Biblical Antiquities)

NB 265-270

DC (Texts) The Book of Biblical Antiquities 3, 32-33

March 31 **EXAM**

Week Eleven

April 5 Wisdom Literature: Wisdom of Solomon, 4Q184, 4Q185

NB 205-212

VK 67-68

Text Sira 24; Wisdom of Solomon 1-2, 7-8

April 7 TBA

Week Twelve

April 12 Jewish Hellenistic Psalms

NB 132-137 ("The Thanksgiving Hymns"), 238-247 ("The Psalms of Solomon")

VK 62-64

DC (Text) 1QH VIII X 10-30

Text Psalms of Solomon 3, 8, 17

April 14 Qumran: archaeology

VK 1-27

Week Thirteen

April 19 Qumran: identity and ideology

VK 64-119 (beginning with "5. Eschatological Works")

DC (Text) Rule of the Community

April 21 Qumran's Primary Legal Codes

VK 55-59 (through "c. The Temple Scroll")

NB 154-159

DC (Text) Selections from the Community Rule and the Damascus Document

Week Fourteen

April 26 Qumran: the sect's history

VK 43-54 (section on "Commentaries on Biblical Material"), 59-60 (on 4QMMT)

NB 127-130 ("Pesharim" through "Commentary on Psalms"), 147-149 (4QMMT)

DC (Text) Peshar on Habakkuk, 4QMMT

April 28 Romans and Jews: The Sybilline Oracles

NB 193-196 (top)

DC (Text) Sybilline Oracles 3 & 5

Week Fifteen

May 3 Romans and Jews: 3 Maccabees, 2 Baruch

NB 199-202, 277-283

DC (Text) 2 Baruch 16-20, 44-47

Texts 3 Maccabees 1-7

May 5 Romans and Jews: Josephus

NB 288-296

DC Louis Feldman, “Flavius Josephus”

EXAM May 10, 10:05-12:05 (location TBA)