

Religions of Ancient Israel: Text and Material Culture

Fall 2016

Classics 373 and 799/Jewish Studies 431/ Religious Studies 400

COMP SCI 1257

M/W 2:30 pm-3:45 pm

Office Hours: W 4-6pm (958 Van Hise)

This course will survey the religions of ancient Israel/Palestine from the emergence of ancient Israel up through the construction of the Persian Period Temple in Jerusalem. The first part of the course will focus on the religious history of Israel as portrayed in biblical literature. The second half of the course will focus upon the material record. The secondary readings will serve as an introduction to the ways in which the history of religious studies has shaped past scholarship on the religions of ancient Israel and Judah. During the course, we will discuss some of the problematic aspects of how the ritual practices of these ancient communities have been reconstructed in the past. Overall, this course will provide a more diverse picture of religious practice in Israel and Judah by examining aspects of ritual practice that tend to be overlooked (e.g., death, mortuary rituals, conceptions of the afterlife, the role and location of magic in Israelite religious practice, techniques of divination in ancient Israel, the role that the human body played in religious practice, and the relationship between gender and religious expression). These topics will be examined along with descriptions of other important subjects, such as the priesthood, temple and sacrifice, household religions, and the development of monotheism.

Books:

Barton, John and Francesca Stavrakopoulou, *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah* (Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2010) (Referred to as RDAI)

Coogan, M. and Smith, M.S. *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (2nd ed.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012).

Smith, M. *Memoirs of God: History, Memory, and the Experience of the Divine in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004) (Referred to as MOG)

Additional Readings Available on the Course Website (Marked CW below)

Note: Dictionary of Deities and Demons (ed. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking and P.W. van der Horst; 2nd edition; Leiden: Brill, 1999) is abbreviated in course schedule as DDD.

Which Bible to Use?

The Hebrew Bible is a product of the Near East, and thus preserves many ideas and

concepts attested in other ancient cultures from this region. Students are advised to use either the New Revised Version, or the translation of the Jewish Publication Society. Please note that the King James Version is not acceptable for this class. The study bibles listed below are recommended, though they are not required:

The Jewish Study Bible, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003

The Harper Collins Study Bible, Student Edition, Harper Collins, 2006

The Oxford Study Bible, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992

*Students may also access free translations online at <http://bible.oremus.org/>.

Notice: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. Students in need of instructional accommodations should contact me via email by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Email Policy:

Please review the syllabus before you email me. Most logistical questions are anticipated and answered here. Please be professional and polite in your emails. I will not respond to emails that are impolite or are overly "textese" in style: "~~Hey when's class???~~ TTYL☺"

In order to ensure clear communication, I prefer to answer detailed questions about the course in person. For individual requests or questions about the content or the assignments, please come to office hours. This is the time each week that I set aside to answer your questions.

Grading for Classics 373/ Jewish Studies 431/ Religious Studies 400:

10% Participation and Attendance

40% 4 Quizzes (10% each)

50% Written Assignments

 10% Deity Report (Due Sept. 28th)

 10% Take Home Research Project, Write Up, and Peer Review (Due Nov. 28th)

 30% Final Paper (via turnitin.com Dec. 23rd by 5 pm)

Grading for Classics 799 (Graduate Students)

10% Participation and Attendance (including reading any extra readings that I assign)

40% 4 Quizzes (10% each)

10% Book Review (RBL-Style)

40% Final Paper (via turnitin.com Dec. 23rd by 5 pm)

Overview of Writing Assignments:

10% Deity Report

Due at the beginning of class (printed, stapled paper copy) and via turnitin.com Sept. 28th.
Goals for the Assignment: Practice researching a specific topic and selecting appropriate sources; practice creating a concise summary of research on a topic; mastery of Chicago style of citation.

Each student will choose a deity from ancient Canaan or Israel and write a 2-3 page essay that describes 1) the sources informing our knowledge about the deity and 2) the main characteristics of the deity according to these sources. The essay must contain a minimum of 5 academic sources, which may include *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* (see above under required texts), and Mark Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Mich, 2002). NO WEBSITES OR WIKIPEDIA!

**Students may choose: El, Asherah, Mot, Baal, Yahweh, 'Anat, or other deity upon consultation with the instructor.

10% Take Home Research Project and Write Up

In lieu of an in-class meeting on Nov 23rd, you have a take-home writing and research assignment. Goals for the assignment: practice describing an object; practice researching a specific topic and selecting scholarly sources; mastery of Chicago style of citation; and peer review. Use this work to build towards your final paper.

Two hard copies of your paper are due in class the Monday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 28th). We will spend time on a peer-review exercise. Your final grade on this assignment is contingent on your participation in the peer-review process.

Select a material object that was used in ritual in ancient Israel or Judah. This object can be something that we have looked at together in the course. Provide a 2-3 page detailed description of the object, its context, and its function. You should also include a bibliography with 3 sources on this object, where it was found, and/or an analysis of a comparable object. The bibliography does not count towards your total page count. The sources cannot be taken from the readings for the course. NO WEBSITES OR WIKIPEDIA! Your bibliography and any citations must be formatted according the guidelines in the Chicago Handbook of Style. Papers with an incomplete or incorrectly formatted bibliography will be marked down. Be prepared to defend your choice of sources. This is an important part of the assignment.

30% Final Paper: The Materiality of Ritual in Ancient Israel and Judah

Each student will write a 8 to 9 page essay that examines a ritual space in ancient Israel or Judah (temple, tomb, house, etc.) and the ritual practices taking place there. The paper will consist of two parts:

I. First, the paper will describe physical characteristics of the ritual space. This section of the paper should engage with Thomas Tweed's article "Space," and describe the ways in which the space is "differentiated" from and "interrelated" with other spaces. These two terms should be defined, explained, and used in your analysis of the space.

II. Secondly, the paper should describe any objects and/or inscriptions that were used in ritual in this space. This section of the paper should engage with secondary and primary sources. Primary sources can include inscriptions in the space (if relevant) and/or descriptions of similar practice drawn from the Hebrew Bible and/or other ancient Near Eastern sources. Secondary sources should include recent and relevant books or articles on Israelite religion and on the materiality of ritual as well discussions of the archaeology of the space.

A strong paper will describe the space, its ritual objects and/or inscriptions. It will include a clear summary of the chronology of the space (i.e., when and how it was created and used) and the types of rituals practiced there (according to current scholarship). A strong thesis statement will address the ritual significance of the space drawing from the primary and secondary sources and the archaeological evidence. Consider the creation of the space and how its purpose influenced its design. The essay must contain a minimum of 6 sources (not including the course textbooks or Tweed's article). Your paper must conform to the guidelines in the *Chicago Manual of Style* (1 inch margins; double spaced; number pages; Times New Romans 12-point font):
<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

For Classics 799 Students Only:

10% Each student will write an RBL-style book review of a recent work on the religions of Israel and Judah. The work should (ideally) engage with scholarly literature in the field of Religious Studies. Pre-approval for the book is highly recommended. The book should be from an academic press and published within the past 10 years. A strong review will provide a critical response, and go beyond mere summary. This assignment is due via email by Dec 15th.

***50% Final Paper: The Materiality of Ritual in Ancient Israel and Judah (Classics 799)**

Each student will write a 15-18 page paper considers the materiality of religious practice in ancient Israel or Judah through a discussion of religious spaces and/or the objects used in these spaces. A strong paper will demonstrate thorough research and understanding of the archaeological evidence. It is expected that the paper will wrestle with the problems involved in correlating certain archaeological data with the textual descriptions of the space and/or comparable ritual activity in ancient Israel and Judah. Any analysis of the space and /or objects should engage with the theoretical approaches used in the course (see the readings of week 6). The topic is intentionally open to allow students to research an aspect of Israelite religions that most interests them and is relevant to their own research.

The paper should be formatted according the SBL's style guide. It is due via turnitin.com Dec. 23rd by 5 pm.

Make up and Late Assignment Policy:

Make up quizzes will only be issued for documented medical emergencies. Assignments and papers that are late will be marked down 10% each 24-hour period after the deadline. Incomplete work will be marked down -5% per missing section or page (this also includes the bibliography and improper formatting).

*Final Paper: if there is a problem with turnit.com email your professor the paper BEFORE the deadline (otherwise it is late!)

Plagiarism:

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an F on the assignment. Repeat offenders will receive an F in the course. If you are unsure about how to cite a work or paraphrase, consult the PDF “Acknowledging, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Sources,” that I have provided in the course website. You can also come to my office hours and/or visit the Writing Center for further guidance.

Please review the following: <https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>

Misconduct includes the following, but is not limited to this list:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation (plagiarism)
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise (using notes for a closed-book online exam)
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records (having a friend sign you in for attendance when you're absent)
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others (tampering with another student's experiment)
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance (altering test answers and submitting the test for regrading)
- Assists other students in any of these acts

Course Schedule:

The Literary Sources: Mythology, Deities, and the History of Israel in the Hebrew Bible

Week One

Introduction to Course

1.1 Introduction to Ancient Israel and Judah (Sept. 7)

Reading: David Morgan, “The Matter of Belief;” read “Cultural Contexts,” (New Oxford

Annotated Bible) to gain an overview of the main periods of Israelite and Judean history in the Hebrew Bible; skim Smith, *Memoirs of God*, 7–38.

For class discussion: Be prepared to discuss Morgan’s critique of approaches that prioritize “belief.” What does he propose that scholars of religion do instead?

Week Two

2.1 New Approaches to Understanding the Religion(s) of Ancient Israel and Judah (Sept. 12)
Reading: RDAI Ch 3-4; Hendel, “Israelite Religion.”

Israelite and Canaanite Cosmogonies

2.2 Israelite and Canaanite Cosmogonies I (Sept. 14)
Reading: Enuma Elish; Hebrew Bible, Psalms 74, 89, and Genesis 1:1–2:4a; Smith, 86–123.

For class discussion: Compare and contrast Enuma Elish and Genesis 1-2:4a. Be prepared to discuss the differences and similarities in these stories.

Week Three

3.1 Israelite and Canaanite Cosmogonies II (Sept. 19)
Reading: Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 1–19 (“Introduction”); Coogan and Smith, *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 97–153 (“Baal”); Hebrew Bible/1 Kings 16:30-19:2; *skim Smith, “Death of the ‘Dying and Rising Gods.’”

Be prepared to discuss the portrayal of the cult of Baal in 1 Kgs 16-19.

Divine Convergence in the Biblical Literature

3.2 Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan/Israel I (Sept. 21)
Reading: Hebrew Bible/Genesis 14; 17; 22; Exodus 3, 6; 15, 19–20; 2 Chron. 3:1; Smith, *Memoirs of God*, 124–158 [skim 46–85]; “Yahweh” and “Yamm” (DDD); review RADI Ch. 3

In light of the struggle between Baal and Yam, what is another way to view the references to the sea in Exodus 15?

Quiz 1 (in class)

Week Four

4.1 Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan/Israel II (Sept. 26)
Reading: Hebrew Bible/Gen 49; 2 Kings 21; 23; Dever, *Did God Have a Wife*, 252–284; Nakhai, “Gender and Archaeology in Israelite Religion,” 512–528

*Guest Lecturer

Understanding the Priestly and Deuteronomistic Histories of Israel

4.2 The Priestly Duties and Notions of Ritual Purity (Sept. 28)

Reading: Leviticus 1-5; 11-18; Milgrom, "Israel's Sanctuary"; Klawans, "Sacrifice and Purity in Ancient Israel"

What is "purity" and how does our understanding what this means inform how we read priestly literature? Be prepared to discuss the two articles in class.

***Deity report due both in class and on Turnitin.com by the beginning of class**

Week Five

5.1 The Promise to David in the Deuteronomistic History (Oct. 3)

2 Samuel 5-7; 1 Kings 6-8; Ps 2, 89; Bernard Levinson, "The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah."

What argument does Levenson make about the Deuteronomists agenda?

5.2 What is Zion Theology? (Oct. 5)

Reading: 1 Kings 12-13; 2 Kings 18-19, 22-25; "Sennacherib's Campaign Against Judah," RADI Ch. 5; Jon Levenson "Zion Traditions," ABD 1098-1102.

Guest Lecturer

The Materiality and Spatiality of Religion in Ancient Israel

Thinking About Space and "Things"

Week Six

*This week we will read a bit of theory about how to go about studying the material evidence for Israelite religious practices. The theory in these articles will help you with your final paper. These are challenging articles. I suggest that you outline them. When you do not understand a term or a reference, look it up.

6.1 Redefining Space in the Study of Religion (Oct. 10)

Thomas Tweed, "Space;" Kim Knott, "Spatial Theory and the Study of Religion;" idem, "Inside, Outside and the Space in-between: Territories and Boundaries in the Study of Religion;" review Morgan, "The Matter of Belief."

Outline Tweed's article. Choose a space that you consider to be sacred/special. Be prepare to discuss how it is differentiated, kinetic, and interrelated with other spaces.

6.2 Thinking about "Things" (Oct. 12)

David Morgan, "Religion and Embodiment in the Study of Material Culture;" Webb Keane, "The Evidence of the Senses and the Materiality of Religion;" Nicole Bovin, "Grasping the Elusive and Unknowable: Material Culture in Ritual Practice."

Quiz 2 (in class)

The Diversity of Ritual Spaces and Practices in Ancient Israel and Judah

Week Seven

The Temples and Shrines in Ancient Israel and Judah

7.1 The Spatial Aspects of Temple Language: Non-Verbal Religious Language (Oct. 17)

Reading: Genesis 2; Genesis 22; 2 Chronicles 3:1; Exodus 25–32; 1 Kings 6–8; Stager, “Jerusalem as Eden;” Bloch-Smith, “Solomon’s Temple: The Politics of Sacred Space,” 83–94 (CW); Pictures of ‘Ain Dara and Tel Arad (CW).

7.2 Cultic Installations (Oct. 19)

Deut 12; Psalms 15, 24, and 121; Zevit “Architecture Parlante, Israelite Cultic Places” (see Zevit, Religion); Edelman, “Cultic Sites and Complexes Beyond the Jerusalem Temple.”

*Look up the locations of these offerings during your readings. Consider the diversity of religious practice. How does this contrast with Deut. 12?

Shechem (Gen. 12:6-7; 33:18-20; 35:4), Bethel (Gen. 12:8; 28:8- 20; 35:6-7, 9-15), Hebron (Gen. 13.18), Beersheba (Gen. 21.33; 26:25), Salem (Gen.14:17-20)

Week Eight

8.1 Kuntillet ‘Ajrud a Northern Shrine in Judah? (Oct. 24)

Reading: RDAI Chapter 6-7; Jeremy Hutton, “Local Manifestations of Yahweh and Worship in the Interstices: A Note on Kuntillet ‘Ajrud.”

From Households to Tomb: The Family In Life and Death

8.2 Women and the Religions of the Israelite Household (Oct. 26)

Reading: Hebrew Bible/Gen 30; 19; Judges 17–18; 1 Sam 1-2; “Teraphim” (DDD); RDAI Ch. 8; S. Ackerman, “The Queen Mother and the Cult in Ancient Israel.”

Be prepared to discuss the biblical passages.

Week Nine

9.1 The Tomb, Sheol, and the Afterlife in Ancient Israel and Judah I (Oct. 31)

Reading: Hebrew Bible/Psalms 49 and 88/1 Kings 13; RDAI Ch.2; Sanders, “Naming the Dead: Funerary Writing and Historical Change in the Iron Age Levant,” 11-36.

9.2 The Tomb, Sheol, and the Afterlife in Ancient Israel and Judah II (Nov. 2)

Osborne, “Secondary Mortuary Practice and the Bench Tomb,” 35–53 or Faust and Bunimovitz,

“The Judahite Rock-Cut Tomb,” 150–170 (choose one); Coogan, *Stories*, 57–63.

Guest Lecture

Week Ten

Ritual Specialization in Ancient Israel: Effective Words and Powers

10.1 Modes of Divination in Ancient Israel (Nov. 7)

Reading: Hebrew Bible/Gen 37-41; Deuteronomy 18:9–14; Judg. 6; 1 Sam 20; Zech 10: 1-2; Jer 29; Stökl, “How Unique Was Israelite Prophecy?” 53–64.

10.2 Is the Sotah Ritual Priestly Magic? (Nov. 9)

Reading: Numbers 5-6; Miller, “Another Look at the Magical Ritual for a Suspected Adulteress in Numbers 5:11–31;” T. Frymer-Kensky, “The Strange Case of the Suspected Sotah (Numbers V 11–31),” VT 34/1 (1984), 11–26.

Week Eleven

11.1 Divining the Dead in the Iron Age Levant (Nov. 14)

Reading: Hebrew Bible/1 Samuel 28; “Spirit of the Dead” and “Rephaim” (DDD)

11.2 Paper Overview and Strategies (Nov. 16)

*Due in class: outline and provisional thesis of paper.

Quiz 3 (in class)

Week Twelve

12.1 (Nov. 21)

Research and Library Overview

*We will meet in the Memorial Library Room 231

12.2 No Class Session (Nov. 23)

10% Take Home Research Project and Short Paper

*In lieu of class Monday Nov. 21st, you have a take home written assignment (see the description above). Your report is due in class the Monday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 28th). Bring two hard copies to class and be ready for peer-review.

13.1 Where are the Demons? (Nov. 28)

Reading: Hebrew Bible/Psalms 91/Numbers 6:24–26; Dictionary of Deities and Demons in Ancient Israel (entries for “Qeteb,” “Resheph,” “Deber,” and “Terror of the Night”).

13.2 Amulets (Nov. 30)

Hammond, “Magic—A Problem in Semantics;” Smoak, “May YHWH Bless You and Keep You from Evil: The Rhetorical Argument of Ketef Hinnom Amulet I and the Form of the Prayers for Deliverance in the Psalms.”

Week 14

Divine Representation and Description: God and the Body

14.1 The Body of God, with a Focus on the Divine Face (Dec. 5)

Reading: Hebrew Bible/Exodus 20; 24:9–11; 33:1–23; “The Ketef Hinnom Amulets” (CW); “Face” (DDD); Staubli and Schroer, *The Symbolism of the Body*, 85–89 (CW)

14.2 The Bodiless God and Religious Bodies in Ancient Israel (Dec. 7)

Reading: Hebrew Bible/Exodus 20:4–6; Deuteronomy 4: 12–24; Hendel, “The Social Origins of Aniconism in Early Israel” (CW); Review: Morgan, “The Matter of Belief” and Finch, “Rehabilitating Materiality: Bodies, Gods, and Religion.”

Week 15

15.1 Emergent Judaisms in the Second Temple Period

Reading: Ezekiel 44-49; Ezra 8-9; Mary Douglas, “Responding to Ezra;” Benjamin Sommer, “Monotheism and Polytheism in Ancient Israel” (CW); Machinist, “The Question of Distinctiveness in Ancient Israel”; RDAI Ch. 12

Be prepared to discuss Sommer and Machinist.

15.2 Final Discussion of the Paper

Quiz 4 (in class)

*Ritual Space Paper Due by 5pm Dec. 23 via Turnitin.com

Chronology of Ancient Israel (know the dates in bold)

1250–1000 Emergence of Israel in the highlands of Canaan
1000–960 King David; beginning of monarchy in Jerusalem
960–930 King Solomon; building of Jerusalem temple
930–928 Division of the monarchy into northern and southern kingdoms
722/721 Destruction of Samara, capital of the northern kingdom
715–686 Reign of King Hezekiah of Judah
701 Sennacherib’s campaign to Judah
687–642 Reign of King Manasseh of Judah
621 Reform of Jerusalem cult by Josiah, king of Judah

609 Death of King Josiah at Megiddo

597 First Babylonian deportations of Jerusalem

587/586 Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem temple

539 Destruction of Babylon by Cyrus, the Persian; Edict of Cyrus

520–515 Rebuilding of Jerusalem temple; “Second Temple” period

458 Ezra the priest travels to Jerusalem

445 Nehemiah travels to Jerusalem

336–323 Alexander the Great conquers the Persian Empire

312–198 Judea controlled by Ptolemies of Egypt

198 Jerusalem conquered by the Seleucids of Syria

164 Rededication of the Jerusalem temple by Maccabees

63 Conquest of Jerusalem by Roman general Pompey

70 CE Destruction of the Jerusalem temple by Romans

Archaeological Periods for History of Syria-Palestine

Bronze Age (3200-1200 BCE)

Early Bronze (3200-2000 BCE)

Middle Bronze (2000-1550 BCE)

Late Bronze (1550-1200 BCE)

Iron Age (1200-539 BCE)

Iron I (1200-1000 BCE)

Iron II (1000-539 BCE)

Persian Period (539-332 BCE)

Hellenistic Period (332-63 BCE)

Hasmonean Period (167-63 BCE)

Map of Israel/Palestine

