

SAMPLE SYLLABUS: CURRENT USERS
A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: Second Edition
John J. Collins

INSTRUCTOR	Dan Clanton
INSTITUTION	Doane College
COURSE TITLE	PRE 120: Undergraduate Core Curriculum: In Search of Meaning & Well-Being
SEMESTER	Fall 2014

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed as a one-semester introduction to the history and culture reflected in and the literature contained in the Hebrew Bible. We will read large portions of this library in order to understand the culture(s) that produced it, as well as its impact on our culture today. As with all courses fulfilling the *In Search of Meaning & Well-Being* Foundational Area of Knowledge, this course is designed so that you will consider the importance and significance of what it means to be human.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

There are two overlapping sets of Learning Outcomes (LO) in our class. One of them is specific to our course (“PRE 120 LO”), and the other is shared by all courses fulfilling the In Search of Meaning & Well-Being (ISMWB) Foundational Area of Knowledge (FAK) in the Undergraduate Core Curriculum (UCC). I will indicate in the syllabus below how specific assignments address specific learning outcomes by labeling assignments, e.g., “ISMWB LO (b)” or “PRE 120 LO (d).”

1. *Learning Outcomes Specific to PRE 120.* Students will work to:
 - a. Gain familiarity with as well as an appreciation of the literature in the Hebrew Bible.
 - b. Understand this literature in terms of its historical and cultural context (i.e., events; movements; values; ideologies; and self-understandings), as well as to engage it as literature.
 - c. Explore the influence these texts have and continue to have on our culture(s) and thought(s).
 - d. Successfully complete the course through developing (a) study skills and time-management talents; and (b) an informed view of the subject matter through reading primary and secondary sources; in-class discussion; and independent research.
2. *Learning outcomes common to all courses fulfilling the ISMWB FAK in the UCC.* Students will work to:
 - a. Consider the ways that humans have come to understand the meaning of existence.
 - b. Evaluate the philosophical or spiritual implications of human actions and policies.
 - c. Develop an understanding of their ethical values.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. *The HarperCollins Study Bible-Student Edition*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2006.
2. John J. Collins. *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. 2nd Ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. (Henceforth abbreviated as Collins)
3. Walter J. Harrelson. *The Ten Commandments for Today*. Louisville & London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006. (Henceforth abbreviated as Harrelson).

N.B. Collins’ text has a useful companion website at
<http://www.augsburgfortress.org/education/academic/introductiontothehebrewbible/>

COURSE CALENDAR

Date	Class Description	Reading Assignments
25 August	(Session 1): Introduction to Course (Syllabus; Readings; Assignments; Responsibilities; Academic Integrity; and Blackboard); and (Hebrew) Bible	<p>Recommended Reading: Collins, “Introduction,” pp. 1-13.</p> <p>Online Power Point: <i>Introduction to the Study of Religion and the Bible</i></p>
27 August	(Session 2): Historical and Cultural Background = <i>PRE 120 LO (b)</i>	<p>Reading: Collins, Ch. 1, “The Near Eastern Context,” pp. 17-29.</p> <p>Power Point Presentation: <i>Egypt and Mesopotamia</i></p>
29 August	(Session 3): The “J” Creation Story, Part 1	<p>Primary Reading: Genesis 2.4b-3.24</p> <p>Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 3, “The Primeval History,” pp. 41-45.</p> <p>Recommended Reading: Collins, Ch. 2, “The Nature of the Pentateuchal Narrative,” pp. 31-40.</p> <p>Online Power Point: <i>The Documentary Hypothesis and Genesis 1-3</i></p>
1 September	No Class	
3 September	(Session 4): <i>In-Depth 1</i> : The “J” Creation Story, Part 2 = <i>PRE 120 LO (b) and (c); ISMWB LO (a) and (c)</i>	Reading: Rabbi Harold Kushner, “What Really Happened in the Garden of

	In-Class Video: Excerpt from <i>The Simpsons</i> , “Simpsons Bible Stories” (Season 10; originally aired 4-4-99).	Eden?” in <i>How Good Do We Have To Be? A New Understanding of Guilt and Forgiveness</i> (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 16-33.
5 September	(Session 5): The “P” Creation Story and Beyond	Primary Reading: Genesis 1.1-2.4a; 4-11 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 3, “The Primeval History,” pp. 45-49.
8 September	(Session 6): The Patriarchs and Matriarchs, Part 1	Primary Reading: Genesis 12.1-25.18 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 4, “The Patriarchs,” pp. 51-58.
10 September	(Session 7): The Patriarchs and Matriarchs, Part 2 In-Class Activity: Discussion of Reading Questions on Genesis 24-35	Primary Reading: Genesis 25.19-35.29 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 4, “The Patriarchs,” pp. 59-60.
12 September	(Session 8): The Patriarchs and Matriarchs, Part 3 In-Class Activity: Discussion of Reading Questions on Genesis 37-50	Primary Reading: Genesis 37.1-50.26 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 4, “The Patriarchs,” pp. 60-62.
15 September	(Session 9): Exodus, Part 1	Primary Reading: Exodus 1-15 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 5, “The Exodus from Egypt,” pp. 63-72.
17 September	(Session 10): Exodus, Part 2	Primary Reading: Exodus 16-24; 32-34 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 6, “The Revelation at Sinai,” pp. 73-83.
19 September	(Session 11): Priestly Theology In-Class Activity: Small Group Questions on Leviticus	Primary Reading: Leviticus 16-26

		<p>Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 7, "The Priestly Theology," pp. 85-96.</p> <p>Pre-Class Video: Excerpt from <i>The West Wing</i>, "The Midterms," (Season 2; originally aired 10-18-00) = <i>PRE 120 LO (c)</i></p>
22 September	(Session 12): Deuteronomy	<p>Primary Reading: Deuteronomy 4.44-11.32; 29-31</p> <p>Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 8, "Deuteronomy," pp. 97-108.</p>
24 September	(Session 13): <i>Exam #1 (Please bring extra paper to class)</i>	
26 September	(Session 14): The Occupation of the Land	<p>Primary Reading: Joshua 1-10; 24</p> <p>Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 9, "Joshua," pp. 111-127.</p>
29 September	(Session 15): The Period of the Judges, Part 1 In-Class Activity: Small Group Questions on Judges 1-5	<p>Primary Reading: Judges 1-2, 3-5, 6-9, 10-12</p> <p>Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 10, "Judges," pp. 129-135.</p>
1 October	(Session 16): The Period of the Judges, Part 2 In-Class Activities: Feminist Interpretation & Delilah(s) in Music = <i>PRE 120 LO (c)</i>	<p>Primary Reading: Judges 13-16, 17-21</p> <p>Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 10, "Judges," pp. 135-138.</p>
3 October	(Session 17): The Stories of Samuel, Saul, and David, Part 1	<p>Primary Reading: 1 Samuel 1.1-15.35</p> <p>Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 11, "First Samuel," pp. 139-148.</p>
6 October	(Session 18): The Stories of Samuel, Saul, and David, Part 2	<p>Primary Reading: 1 Samuel 16-19; 24; 31; 2 Samuel 1-7; 11-13</p>

		Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 12, "Second Samuel," pp. 149-157.
8 October	(Session 19): <i>In-Depth 2</i> : David, Bathsheba, and Ethics in the Hebrew Bible = <i>PRE 120 LO (b)</i> ; <i>ISMWB LO (c)</i>	Reading: John Barton, "Ethics and Story," in <i>Ethics and the Old Testament</i> (2 nd ed.; London: SCM Press, 2002), 19-36.
10 October	(Session 20): Solomon, Early Prophecy, and the End of Israel	Primary Reading: 1 Kings 1-4, 8, 11, 17-19, 21; 2 Kings 2, 4, 9 Secondary Reading: Collins, Chs. 13-14, "First Kings 1-16," and "First Kings 17—Second Kings 25," pp. 159-184.
13 October	No Class—Fall Break	
15 October	(Session 21): <i>Exam #2 (Please bring extra paper to class)</i>	
17 October	(Session 22): Eighth Century Prophecy, Part 1	Primary Reading: Amos; Hosea Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 15, "Amos and Hosea," pp. 187-202.
20 October	(Session 23): Eighth Century Prophecy, Part 2	Primary Reading: Isaiah 1-12 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 16, "Isaiah," pp. 203-212.
22 October	(Session 24): Destruction and Prophecy In-Class Video: "Holy City, Holy Men," from Prophets: Soul Catchers (1995; 46 minutes)	Primary Reading: Jeremiah 1-3; 7-8; 18-20; 26-29; 30-31 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 17, "The Babylonian Era," pp. 213-224.
24 October	(Session 25): The Babylonian Exile, Part 1 In-Class Activity: Discussion of Reading Questions on Ezekiel	Primary Reading: Ezekiel 1-5; 8-11; 16-18; 36-37 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 18, "Ezekiel," pp. 225-237.
27 October	(Session 26): The Babylonian Exile, Part 2	Primary Reading: Isaiah 40-55

		Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch 19, "The Additions to the Book of Isaiah," pp. 239-246.
29 October	(Session 27): <i>In-Depth 3: Prophecy and Social Justice = PRE 120 LO (b) and (c); ISMWB LO (a) and (b)</i>	Reading: Allan Boesak, "Of Grass and Flowers and Living Words," in <i>Walking on Thorns: The Call to Christian Obedience</i> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 50-57.
31 October	(Session 28): <i>Exam #3 (Please bring extra paper to class)</i>	
3 November	(Session 29): Wisdom Literature, Part 1	Primary Reading: Proverbs 1-9 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 24, "Proverbs," pp. 307-316.
5 November	(Session 30): Wisdom Literature, Part 2 In-Class Video: <i>South Park</i> , "Cartmanland," (Season 5; originally aired 7-25-01). = <i>PRE 120 LO (c); ISMWB LO (a) and (b)</i>	Primary Reading: Job 1-7; 38-42 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 25, "Job and Qoheleth," pp. 317-323.
7 November	(Session 31): Wisdom Literature, Part 3 In-Class Video: <i>South Park</i> , "Raisins," (Season 7; originally aired 12-10-03). = <i>PRE 120 LO (c); ISMWB LO (a) and (b)</i>	Primary Reading: Qoheleth/Ecclesiastes Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 25, "Job and Qoheleth," pp. 323-328.
10 November	(Session 32): <i>In-Depth 4: Wisdom Literature, Part 4 = PRE 120 LO (b) and (c); ISMWB LO (a), (b), and (c)</i> In-Class Video: Excerpt from <i>Glee</i> , "Pilot," (Season 1; originally aired 5-19-09).	Reading: Ellen F. Davis, "Wise Ignorance: The Book of Proverbs," in <i>Getting Involved with God: Rediscovering the Old Testament</i> (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 91-103.
12 November	(Session 33): Postexilic Narrative, Part 1: Ruth In-Class Video: Excerpt from <i>Testament: The Bible in Animation</i> , "Ruth," (Season 1; originally aired 10-23-96) = <i>PRE 120 LO (c); ISMWB LO (a) and (b)</i>	Primary Reading: Ruth Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 26, "The Hebrew Short Story," pp. 329-332.

14 November	(Session 34): Postexilic Narrative, Part 2: Esther In-Class Video: Excerpts from <i>Veggie Tales</i> , “Esther . . . The Girl Who Became Queen” (2000; dir. Mike Nawrocki; 30 minutes) = <i>PRE 120 LO (c)</i> ; <i>ISMWB LO (a) and (b)</i>	Primary Reading: Esther Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 26, “The Hebrew Short Story,” pp. 332-337.
17 November	(Session 35): The Book of Daniel	Primary Reading: Daniel 1-6, 7-12 Secondary Reading: Collins, Ch. 27, “Daniel, 1-2 Maccabees,” pp. 339-348.
19 November	(Session 36): The Importance of the Hebrew Bible Today, Part 1 = <i>PRE 120 LO (b) and (c)</i> ; <i>ISMWB LO (a), (b), and (c)</i>	Reading: Harrelson, “Preface,” and Chs. 1-2, “Law is a Gift of God,” and “God is One,” pp. 11-40
21 November	<i>No Class--AAR/SBL National Meeting</i>	
24 November	<i>No Class--AAR/SBL National Meeting</i>	
26 November	<i>No Class--Thanksgiving Break</i>	
28 November	<i>No Class--Thanksgiving Break</i>	
1 December	(Session 37): The Importance of the Hebrew Bible Today, Part 2 = <i>PRE 120 LO (b) and (c)</i> ; <i>ISMWB LO (a), (b), and (c)</i>	Reading: Harrelson, Chs. 3-4, “Sabbath and Family,” and “Protecting Life and Marriage,” pp. 41-64.
3 December	(Session 38): The Importance of the Hebrew Bible Today, Part 3 = <i>PRE 120 LO (b) and (c)</i> ; <i>ISMWB LO (a), (b), and (c)</i> In-Class Video: <i>The Simpsons</i> , “Homer vs. Lisa and the 8 th Commandment” (Season 2; originally aired 2-7-91).	Reading: Harrelson, Chs. 5-6, “Ensuring Wholesome Life in Community,” and “Keeping the Commandments,” pp. 65-88. Optional Reading: Harrelson, Ch. 7, “Should We Post the Commandments in Public Places?” pp. 89-100.
5 December	<i>Extra Session in Case Something Comes Up...</i>	
9 December	<i>Final Exam from 8:00-11:00 (Please bring extra paper to class)</i>	