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### **INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE HB500**

**PURPOSE:** This first half of the full-year Foundational Core Course will be based in a serious and scholarly engagement with the literature of the Hebrew Bible. Several lines of approach and areas of knowledge will be developed through the year. First, the study of the history of ancient Israel in its ancient Near East context will help us focus on how that history interacts with the literature of the HB. Second, in a series of graduated exercises, we will build skills in the critical methods used to study the HB, become familiar with the resources for that study, and develop the ability to do basic interpretation of a HB text. Finally; through readings, discussion and reflection we will develop an understanding of the theologies of the HB as expressed in its texts; and also develop the ability to reflect critically on the use and interpretation of the HB in the church, in religious settings, and in contemporary culture. The fall semester addresses introductory matters of background and method and covers the Biblical books of Genesis through 2 Samuel (beginnings to the emergence of the monarchy). The spring semester builds competence in background and method and covers 1 Kings through Malachi (United Monarchy to early Judaism). No prerequisites.

**COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:** In successfully completing this course, a student will be able to:

- ***Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the Hebrew Bible:***
  - Identify major time periods, events and peoples in the history of ancient Israel and the ancient Near East
  - Identify major locations and interactions in the geography of ancient Israel and the ancient Near East
  - Identify and discuss the narrative/poetic artistry, content, and theological issues of Hebrew Bible texts, particularly those assigned in the course
  - Discuss the interactions of the historical and geographical context of ancient Israel with the content and theological issues in Hebrew Bible texts, particularly those assigned in the course
- ***Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the methods used in Hebrew Bible:***
  - Demonstrate familiarity with the major resources for critical study of the Hebrew Bible
  - Define and identify and describe the use of the major critical methods
  - Apply critical methods to the interpretation of texts following models demonstrated in class
- ***Demonstrate at an introductory level a willingness and ability to discuss interpretive issues arising from contemporary readings of the Hebrew Bible:***
  - Identify one's own social location, starting assumptions and interpretive principles in reading Hebrew Bible texts
  - Summarize the interpretive principles of interpreters from social locations other than one's own
  - Identify the complexities involved in interpretive questions and discuss how such complexities may change one's own interpretive position

- ***Demonstrate the skills and attitudes necessary for graduate level Hebrew Bible study:***
  - Gather and select information from reading appropriate to task assigned
  - Communicate clearly in both oral and written forms, using good organizational formats and proper research formats
  - Show a willingness to assess ones' own work
  - Demonstrate ethical behaviour, taking responsibility for the expectations of the course and showing respect and willingness to listen in the learning atmosphere of the class room, including class discussions and small groups

**FORMAT AND CONTENT** Work in the course consists of weekly classes including lectures, discussions, and small group exercises; assigned readings; exercises both handed-in and for class discussion; a journal; and a final exam.

**Texts**—available at UBC Bookstore

Bible (modern critical translation required; Oxford Annotated or HarperCollins New Revised Standard Version suggested)

Michael Coogan, *The Old Testament : A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* ["Text" in calendar]

**EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA**

1. Attendance as specified by VST requirements; reading all required assignments before class, participation in class discussions, and preparation of in-class discussion exercises. Evaluative criteria: comments and questions show adequate preparation, an understanding of the assigned readings and exercises, and a readiness to apply readings to interpretive questions and insights.
2. Skills and methodology exercises: Two written exercises to gain specific skills and learn critical Biblical study methods. Described below and due as specified in calendar. Evaluative criteria: concise and clear writing, and completeness and accuracy in carrying out tasks assigned.
3. Journal as described below. Due as specified in calendar. Evaluative criteria: completeness and depth of reflection and insight.
4. Final exam: identification, short answer, essay. Evaluative criteria: answers are correct, comprehensive, insightful and clear.

A student must receive an "approved" evaluation in attendance and all of the written expectations to pass the course.