

Course Code: THEO5319
Title in English: The book of Ezra-Nehemiah and the books of Chronicles
Title in Chinese: 以斯拉－尼希米記與歷代志上下

Course overview:
This course focuses on the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible, which are important parts of Hebrew Bible Historiography reflecting the situation of the Jews in the Second Temple Period. The scholarship associated with the Second Temple/Persian Period is also soaring in new and exciting frontier which we hope this course can help students to follow such a trend. Issues including textual criticism, authorship and readership, sources, theme and theology will be discussed.

- Learning outcomes:**
- After this course, students should be able to
 - recognize and describe the historical context of the composition and readership of the biblical books;
 - appreciate the significance and relevance of studying the biblical books;
 - analyze the passages from the biblical books using various perspectives;
 - theorize the ideology and theology in/of the biblical books;
 - reflect and design on the various use of the biblical books in different contexts.

List of topics

Topic	Contents
Second Temple period	We will investigate why the Second Temple Period was a time when Jewish literary activities were most vibrant and how this was the formative period that the early Judaism and Christianity main ideas emerged. The matter on how to understand and call this post-exilic period when the Israelites ruled under the Persian empire will be raised in the class. Second Temple period is a term better than the term intertestamental period which traditionally regards as a time of silent in Divine revelation.
Persian colonization and Yehud province	In order to establish the historical and sociological context of the biblical books, the history of Persian empire and its colonization program will be introduced and discussed. Yehud as a province of Persian colonization and its significance in the Jewish self-understand and political make-up will be discussed,
Different Social Identities of the Jews: Exclusive and Inclusive Jewish Community	We will look into the different communities in the Second Temple Period, namely the diaspora in different region, the Golah in Babylonian soil, the returnee and “the people of the land”/local population. We will examine how these groups formulated and articulated within the Hebrew Bible their concerns and viewpoints on various issues, especially on these communities’ manner toward outsiders, either they were inclined toward an exclusive policy or a more inclusive policy.
Aramaic Session of the Hebrew Bible	Parts of the Hebrew Bible are written in Aramaic, the <i>lingua franca</i> in the Second Temple Period. We will study the Aramaic session within the book of Ezra and discuss the reason behind this diaglossia phenomenon. As a result, we will learn how different scholars’ reconstruction the history behind these Aramaic texts within the Hebrew Bible.
Temple worship and Temple Personnel in the Persian Period and the Prestly Ideology/Theology	As the Second Temple built during Persian period resulted in a re-installment of temple worship in the Jewish religious life, the various topics regarding this theme, from the meaning of temple worship in before and after the exile to the change of activities of different temple personnel in the post-exilic time and their ideology/theology, will be explored during the course.
Prophecy in the Second Temple period	Did prophecy cease during the Second Temple Period? How were the old prophecies interpreted during this time? This part of the course explores the interpretation activities regarding the divine messages in the Second Temple Period.

the new understanding of Historiography and its ideology	The writing of a nation's past can take many different forms. How the book of Ezra-Nehemiah as a Biographical Memoir and the book of Chronicle as a Utopia Literature contribute to the new understanding of historiography in the scholarly world will be discussed.
Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles as Christian Scripture	Various themes relating to Christian theology such as Retribution, Restoration, Canonization and the Pastoral aspect of the biblical books concerning our course will be explored.

Learning activities

This course mainly consists of lectures, student participations through class discussion and research activities. All activities are mandatory.

Lecture (hr) in class	Class Discussion (hr)/week in class	Web-based teaching (hr)	Course Reading and research (hr)	Written Assignments (hr) / course
1.5 per week	1 hr	0.5 per week	3 per week	15 hr

Assessment scheme

Task nature	Purpose	Learning Outcome	Weight
<p>1. Reading Assignment</p> <p>You will be given a reading list for the course. You have to track ALL your reading by filling in the Reading Log and submit them by the end of the course to the instructor. Failure to submit the Reading log on time means no marks for this requirement.</p>	To ensure the student has read the assigned readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire an overview to the topics relating to the biblical books that will be discussed during class lecture. 2. Comprehend scholar's viewpoint on various topics regarding the biblical books. 	10%
<p>2. Class Participation</p> <p>This course will request each student to actively participate in class discussion by raising AT LEAST THREE relevant questions or comments in the entire course. Questions or comments must be verbally raised in class and submitted in writing at the end of the course, together with the term paper, recording the date and questions raised and/or comments made. Questions or comments in the form of posts on the Telegram class group or course blog page are also acceptable (these elearning tools will be introduced during the first lesson).</p>	To give space for the student to reflect and discuss on the critical issues regarding to the biblical books	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect on the critical issues on the biblical books. 2. Formulate and articulate the student's viewpoint on critical issues on the biblical books. 	15%
<p>3. Reading Report</p> <p>Writ a reading report not less than 2000 words on one of the following books:</p> <p>Becking, Bob. <i>Ezra, Nehemiah, and the construction of early Jewish Identity</i>.</p> <p>Kelly, Brian E. <i>Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles</i>.</p> <p>Schniedewind, William M. <i>The Word of God</i></p>	To engage the student with different scholarship regarding to the critical issues on the biblical books.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how scholar formulates the critical issues on the biblical books. 2. Appreciate the scholarship of the critical issues on the biblical books. 3. Compare and reflect 	20%

<p><i>in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period.</i> Schweitzer, Steven James. <i>Reading Utopia in Chronicles.</i></p> <p>OR Introduction+ Chapters in: Japhet, Sara. <i>The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought.</i> Japhet, Sara. <i>From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period.</i> Ben Zvi, Ehud. <i>History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles.</i> Kalimi, Issac. <i>The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles.</i> Kalimi, Issac (ed.). <i>New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation.</i></p> <p>OR any other relevant books (which should be approved by the instructor).</p> <p>Deadline: 26 March 2024</p>		<p>on different viewpoints on how to handle the critical issues on the biblical books.</p>	
<p>4. Term Paper</p> <p>Write a term paper not less than 4500 words and not more than 6000 words on a passage from either Ezra-Nehemiah or the books of Chronicles. Students should be able to analyze on the passage by different exegetical methods (Part I Exegetical) and to respond and comment to critical issues posted by scholars (Part II Critical issues). The scope and format of the paper will be announced on Class 1.</p> <p>Sessions will be arranged for students to present their proposal of their term paper, including the text and critical issues they want to handle and the methodology they will employ.</p> <p>Paper MUST be submitted via the Webpage of the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine VeriGuide: https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/log_in_CUHK on 5 May 2024. A soft copy should be post onto the BLACKBOARD <u>and</u> give a hardcopy together with a print out of receipt and signed Academic Honesty Declaration Statement from VeriGuide (received via e-mail after you have submitted your assignment) to their instructor.</p>	<p>To let student showcase their understanding and analysis of the critical issues on the biblical passage in the set texts.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the exegetical methods the student used in the critical handling of the biblical passage. 2. Analyze the biblical passage critically. 3. Relate the critical result to the scholarly discussion of the critical issues of the biblical books. 4. Construct implications of the ideas in the biblical passages critically and in a scholarly manner. 	<p>10% (presentation) + 45% (term paper)</p>

Grading Criteria:

A Paper-grading Rubric

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor/ Inadequate</i>
Introduction/ Thesis _____	*exceptional introduction that grabs interest of reader and states topic. **thesis is exceptionally clear, arguable, well-developed, and a definitive statement.	*proficient introduction that is interesting and states topic. **thesis is clear and arguable statement of position.	*basic introduction that states topic but lacks interest. **thesis is somewhat clear and arguable.	*weak or no introduction of topic. **paper's purpose is unclear/thesis is weak or missing.
Quality of Information/ Evidence _____	*paper is exceptionally researched, extremely detailed, and historically accurate. **information clearly relates to the thesis.	*information relates to the main topic. **paper is well-researched in detail and from a variety of sources.	*information relates to the main topic, few details and/or examples are given. **shows a limited variety of sources.	*information has little or nothing to do with the thesis. **information has weak or no connection to the thesis.
Support of Thesis/Analysis _____	*exceptionally critical, relevant and consistent connections made between evidence and thesis. **excellent analysis.	*consistent connections made between evidence and thesis **good analysis.	*some connections made between evidence and thesis. **some analysis.	*limited or no connections made between evidence and thesis. **lack of analysis.
Conclusion _____	*excellent summary of topic with concluding ideas that impact reader. **introduces no new information.	*good summary of topic with clear concluding ideas. **introduces no new information.	*basic summary of topic with some final concluding ideas. **introduces no new information.	*lack of summary of topic.
Organization/ Development of Thesis _____	*exceptionally clear, logical, mature, and thorough development of thesis with excellent transitions between and within paragraphs.	*clear and logical order that supports thesis with good transitions between and within paragraphs.	*somewhat clear and logical development with basic transitions between and within paragraphs.	*lacks development of ideas with weak or no transitions between and within paragraphs.
Citation/ Bibliography Format _____	*conforms to academic rules for formatting and citation of sources are perfect.	*conforms to academic rules for formatting and citation of sources with minor exceptions.	*frequent errors in academic format.	*lack of academic format/numerous errors.

Course schedule

Week/Class	Date	Topic	Requirements (read before class)
Week One/ Class 1	9 Jan	Introduction: The importance of Second Temple Period	“Persia’s Loyal Yahwists” by Kessler.
Week Two/ Class 2	16 Jan	Persian Period: A Survey	“Violence and Exegesis: The History of Exile” (p. 34-45) by Smith-Christopher.
Week Three/ Class 3	23 Jan	Ezra-Nehemiah: Critical Issues	“Composition and Chronology in the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah” by Japhet.
Week Four/ Class 4	30 Jan	Ezra 1-6: The Aramaic Section	“Bishalam’s Archival Search Report in Nehemiah’s Archive” by Steiner OR “The Narratological Purpose of Aramaic Prose” by Berman.
Week Five/ Class 5	6 Feb	Ezra 7-10: Memoir of Ezra	“ ‘Purity’ As Nonconformity” (p.150-162) by Smith-Christopher.
Week Six/ No Class	20 Feb	Public holiday – Lunar New Year	“Traditions from a literary POV” by Grabbe.
Week Seven/ Class 6	13 Feb	Nehemiah 1-7: Memoir of Nehemiah	“Prayer as Rhetoric in the Book of Nehemiah” by Boda.
Week Eight/ Class 7	27 Feb	Nehemiah 8-13: Restoration and Torah	“Literary and Ideological Aspects of Nehemiah 11” by Lipschits.
Week Nine/ No Class	5 March	Reading Week	
Week Ten/ Class 8	12 March	Chronicles: Critical Issues	“The Book of Chronicles: Another Look” by Ben Zvi.
Week Eleven/ Class 9	19 March	I Chr 1-9: the Genealogy	“1 Chronicles 1-9 and the Reconstruction of the History of Israel” by Braun.
Week Twelve/ Class 10	26 March	I Chr 10- II Chr 9 David, Solomon and the Temple	“The Founding Father” by Wright OR “Hierodules, Priests, or Janitors?” by Knoppers.
Week Thirteen/ Class 11	2 April	II Chronicles 10-36: Kings and Prophets	“‘Retribution’ Revisited” by Kelly OR “Prophets and Prophecy in the Book of Chronicles” by Schniedewind.
Week Fourteen/ Class 12	9 April	Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles: its place in Canon and in Church	“Several Canon-Related Concepts Originating in Chronicles” by Talshir OR OR “Chronicles and Pastoral Theology” by Allen.
Week Fifteen/ Class 13	16 April	Conclusion: The relevancy of Second Temple Period	To be confirm.

Recommended learning resources

- Antony F. Campbell. *Joshua to Chronicles: An Introduction* / Antony F. Campbell. Louisville, Ky.: Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
- Becking, Bob. *Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Construction of Early Jewish Identity*. Mohr Siebeck, 2011.
- Beentjes, Pancratius Cornelis. *Tradition and Transformation in the Book of Chronicles*. BRILL, 2008.
- Ben Zvi, Eud. *History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles*. Routledge, 2014.
- Boda, Mark J. *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and the Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*. Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.
- Brian E. Kelly. *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* / Brian E. Kelly. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series; 211. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- Chronicles and Its Synoptic Parallels in Samuel, Kings, and Related Biblical Texts*. Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Duke, Rodney K. *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis*. Sheffield: Almod P., 1990.

- Edelman, Diana Vikander. *The Origins of the "Second" Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem*. London; Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub, 2005.
- Eskenazi, Tamara Cohn. *In an Age of Prose: A Literary Approach to Ezra-Nehemiah*. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1988.
- Grabbe, Lester L. *Ezra-Nehemiah*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Grabbe, Lester L. *Leading Captivity Captive: "The Exile" as History and Ideology*. Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Hoglund, Kenneth G. *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation. Atlanta: Scholars Pr, 1992.
- Japhet, Sara. *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989.
- . *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies on the Restoration Period*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Johnstone, William. *Chronicles and Exodu: An Analogy and Its Application*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
- Kalimi, Isaac. *The Book of Chronicles: Historical Writing and Literary Devices*. Sifriyat Ha-Entsiklopedyah Ha-Mikra'it. Jerusalem: Bialik Inst, 2000.
- . *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles*. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
- . *The Retelling of Chronicles in Jewish Tradition and Literature: A Historical Journey*. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2009.
- Kleinig, John W. *The Lord's Song: The Basis, Function and Significance Of Choral Music in Chronicles*. JSOTSS 156. Sheffield: JSOT, 1993.
- Raymond F. Person. *The Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles [electronic Resource] : Scribal Works in an Oral World*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010.
- Min, Kyung-Jin. *The Levitical Authorship of Ezra-Nehemiah*. A&C Black, 2004.
- Moffat, Donald P. *Ezra's Social Drama: Identity Formation, Marriage and Social Conflict in Ezra 9 and 10*. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013.
- Pakkala, Juha. *Ezra the Scribe: The Development of Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah 8*. Walter de Gruyter, 2004.
- Saysell, Csilla. *According to the Law: Reading Ezra 9-10 as Christian Scripture*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012.
- Schniedewind, William M. *The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period*. JSOTSS 197. Sheffield: JSOT, 1995.
- Shaver, Judson R. *Torah and the Chronicler's History Work: An Inquiry Into the Chronicler's References to Laws, Festivals, and Cultic Institutions in Relationship to Pentateuchal Legislation*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989.
- Smith-Christopher, Daniel L. *A Biblical Theology of Exile*. Minneapolis: Fortress Pr, 2002.
- Southwood, Katherine E. *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10 An Anthropological Approach*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Sparks, James T. *The Chronicler's Genealogies: Towards an Understanding of 1 Chronicles 1-9*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008.
- Steven James Schweitzer. *Reading Utopia in Chronicles / Steven James Schweitzer*. New York: New York, 2007.
- Street, James M. *The Significance of the Ark Narrative: Literary Formation and Artistry in the Book of Chronicles*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.
- Tiño, Jozef. *King and Temple in Chronicles: A Contextual Approach to Their Relations*. FRLANT 234. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010.
- Throntveit, Mark A. *When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles*. Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1987.
- William Riley. *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History*. Sheffield: Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.

Williamson, Hugh Godfrey Maturin. *Studies in Persian Period History and Historiography*. Mohr Siebeck, 2004.

Collections of Essays:

- *Second Temple Studies, 1: Persian Period*. Sheffield, England: JSOT Pr, 1991.
- *Second Temple Studies, Vol 2: Temple Community in the Persian Period*. Sheffield, Eng: JSOT Pr, 1994.
- *The Chronicler as Historian*. A&C Black, 1997.
- *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*. A&C Black, 1999.
- *The Chronicler as Theologian*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003.
- *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003.
- *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century BCE*. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2007.
- *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context*. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2011.

New Perspectives on Ezra-Nehemiah: History and Historiography, Text, Literature, and Interpretation. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2012.

The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives. Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 2009.

The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times. Leiden: E J Brill, 1999.

Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011.

Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013.

Priests, Prophets and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp. Sheffield, Eng: JSOT Pr, 1992.

Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honour of Pancratius C. Beentjes. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011.

Commentary (only author's name cited):

[Chronicles]

Coggins, R. J.

Japhet, Sara

Klein, Ralph

Williamson, H. G. M.

Johnstone, William

Dillard, Raymond B.

Braun, Roddy

Allen, Leslie C.

Knoppers, Gary

McKenzie, Steven L.

McConville, J. G.

Selman, Martin J.

[Ezra-Nehemiah]

Allen, Leslie C.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph

Davides, Gordon F.

Fensham, F. Charles

Grabbe, Lester L.

Levering, Matthew

McConville, J. G.

Myers, Jacob M.

Coggins, R. J.

Throntveit, Mark A.

Williamson, H. G. M.

Other supplement readings will be delivered during class and over Blackboard.

Feedback for evaluation

Feedback for evaluation:

Two course evaluations will be conducted. The first will be done midway through the course which is tailored to facilitate better progress through the course. The second will be conducted by the university wide exercise.

Contact details for teacher

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	Lecturer
Name:	Dr. Li Kwan Hung Leo
Office Location:	YCT LG106
Telephone:	39435720
Email:	khileo@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	CCT T31
Teaching Time:	Every Tuesday, 2:30pm-5:15pm

Details of course website

Course material will be delivered via course webpage in <http://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk>

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

***The Course Outline will be subject to change due to class size and other circumstances; Please see the updated version via the course webpage in <http://elearn.cuhk.edu.hk>**