

**Course Title: THEO5311 INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE**

Second Term 2023-2024 Wed 2:30pm-5:15pm CCT T31

Lecturer: Dr Li Kwan Hung Leo (Email: khileo@cuhk.edu.hk)

**Course Description:**

This course orientates students to the diverse scholarship which encompasses the study of the Hebrew Bible: from archaeology, historical-critical, grammatico-historical, socio-historical and ideological/theological methodologies to the history of composition of the biblical books, languages, religions and literature of the period before the common era. Inevitably, it also introduces the world of the ancient Near East — its history, religions and literature, which the Hebrew Bible belonged and related to. This course traces the challenges confronted by the nation of Israel from its beginning up until the period of the Second Temple.

**Course Objectives:**

1. The students will know and understand
  - a. the general overview of the contents in the Hebrew Bible
  - b. the direct relationship of the composition of the books to her contexts
  - c. a general grasp of the scholarship pertaining to the study of the Hebrew Bible
  - d. the meaning of the Hebrew Bible as Christian Canon/Scripture
  
2. The students can describe, explain and discuss
  - a. the main issues related to the critical study of the books in the Hebrew Bible
  - b. the main issues of critical scholarship concerning the composition and redaction of the books, as well as the origin and identity of Israel
  - c. the proposed historical contexts of the Hebrew Bible
  - d. the relationships or/and tensions between the traditions underlying the theological motivations and the contemporary situation/s of the text
  - e. the various ways to engage further research for the Hebrew Bible
  
3. The students will appreciate
  - a. the making/compilation of the Hebrew Bible
  - b. the necessity for language acquisition in the study of the Hebrew Bible
  - c. the diverse research faculties in the study of the Hebrew Bible

## Course Requirements:

### 1. Reading Assignment (10%)

Either the **English or Chinese** version of Brueggemann Walter, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003) [[Library online access to Third edition \(2020\)](#)]. **You must track ALL your reading by filling in the Reading Log** and submit them **by 17 April 2024** via Blackboard.

Failure to submit the Reading Log on time means no marks for this requirement.

### 2. Reflection (30%)

#### 1. Reflective Essay: (15%)

Write a reflective essay, not less than 1500 (Eng)/2000 (Chi) words and reflect on your understanding of the Hebrew Bible before, during and after this course. You should interact with, by summarizing and commenting, the content of the lectures and your readings. **Marks will be given when you show you are engaging with the course material.** If you need to, only cite the bible references, BUT NOT the bible text itself.

**(Due Date: 21 April 2024)**

#### 2. Comments and discussion:(15%)

This course requests each student to actively participate in class discussion through raising **AT LEAST THREE** relevant questions or comments both on Brueggemann's viewpoint in our textbook and contents during lectures. **Using your learning in class to response to present, real-life situation is highly recommended.** Questions or comments must be verbally raised in class or posted in our course chat group and/or course blogging site. It needs to be submitted in writings at the end of the course together with the term paper, recording the date and questions raised and/or comments made.

**(Due Date: 12 May 2022)**

**NOTE: Attendance in lectures and tutorial are expected. Tutor will mark attendance for both. Less than 70% attendance is not accepted and will affect overall grade.**

### 3. Exegetical Term Paper (60%)

To facilitate your preparation and writing of the Exegetical Term Paper, the assignment will be divided into 3 tasks and the marks distribution is as follow:

*Task 1+2: Paper proposal and Oral presentation (20%)*

*Task 3: Exegetical Paper (40%)*

#### Task 1. Paper Proposal

Write at least 2 pages and not more than 5 pages of proposal for your exegetical term paper. The following should be included:

- a. the proposed title and the aims of the paper;
- b. preliminary: What critical issues associate with the Hebrew Bible you want to investigate? Why you want to explore in this area? Which passage(s) are you going to analyses? What is/are the reason(s) that you make such proposal and choose such Biblical text? What is your intention to write such a paper?
- c. the thesis statement and/or research question(s) [See class notes]
- d. What will be the methodology? Or what will be the interpretative approach used?
- e. an outline of your term paper (with appropriate explanatory notes) ;
- f. the expected result of the paper; and
- g. a preliminary book list (at least 5 books that you intended to read/consult, including at least 2 to 3 biblical commentaries).

**You are to submit your proposal to your lecturer at least 3 days before your oral presentation** (see below). **Marks will be given according to the degree of preparation** (e.g. details of notes of explanation, delimitation of scope, expected difficulties, preliminary readings...etc..). Some topics for paper will be suggested during the classes; or you can consult the lecturer and/or tutor.

#### Task 2. Oral presentation

Student is to make a presentation on his/her paper proposal individually or in group. Each presentation should NOT be more than 15 mins long and then open for class discussion. **The aim is to let the student orally present and test his/her idea in front of the others before committing to his/her final draft.** Marks will be given according to the clarity of the presented content, the organization of the presentation, and the manner of the response to the discussion questions. Presentation will be scheduled after the add/drop period.

#### OPTION IF PRESENTATION CANNOT BE ARRANGED: Introductory Essay

In the case that the class size is too big and not every student can be arranged to have an oral presentation, some students can opt for writing not less than 2000 words an **\*Introductory Essay\***. Content of the essay should include a literature review on EITHER an introduction to a methodology approach to the studies of Hebrew Bible OR an introduction to the content and critical issues of a biblical book. The essay is strongly suggested to be related to your exegetical term paper. **You are to submit it by 7 April 2024 with your term paper proposal.**

#### Task 3. Exegetical Term Paper

Write an Exegetical Term Paper not less than 4000 words and not more than 6000 words (and if you opt for writing an introductory essay, other than referring to this essay, no more than 10% of the content can be overlapped). The format of the Exegetical Term Paper has given in the paper proposal (task 1 of this assignment). Student should be able to analyze on the passage by different exegetical

and/or interpretative methods and to respond and comment to critical issues posted by scholars regarding to that passage and/or the biblical book under exploration. Marks will be distributed according to the following:

1. Describe the Thesis and critical issue at hand.
2. Describe the exegetical method(s) used in the critical handling of the biblical passage.
3. Analyze the biblical passage critically.
4. Relate the critical result to the scholarly discussion of the critical issues of the biblical passages/book (Brueggemann's view in our textbook must be included)
5. Construct implications of the ideas in the biblical passages/book critically and in a scholarly manner.

As a student enrolled in THEO5311 which is a course in post-graduate level, you are required to use what you have learnt in the identifying and solving of a research problem and give your comments and opinions on the research process. Description of content is necessary but not enough. You should demonstrate proper evidence-based reasoning in your works. Examples in order to clarify the requirements will be demonstrated during the first few tutorials. Also refer to the marking rubric at the end of this outline.

Paper MUST be submitted via the Webpage of the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine VeriGuide: [https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login\\_CUHK](https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK) on **12 May 2024**. A soft copy should be post onto the BLACKBOARD with the receipt and signed Academic Honesty Declaration Statement from VeriGuide (received via e-mail after you have submitted your assignment).

#### 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.

### Course Content and Schedule:

The class will meet three periods each week for lectures and discussion. Occasional Tutorial will be arranged.

Date	Topics	Key concepts	Basic Readings
Jan 10	<b>Introduction</b>	Course Introduction; Introduction: Imaginative Remembering; Literature and Genre	Brueg, Ch1-2
Jan 17	<b>Torah (1)</b>	Introduction to Torah Hebrew Bible as (Christian) Scripture	Brueg, Ch3
Jan 24	<b>Torah (2)</b>	Genesis; Exodus 1-18 Myth, Legend and ANET/Archaeology	Brueg, Ch4-5
Jan 31	<b>Torah (3)</b>	Exodus 25-40, Leviticus, Number 1-10 Cult and Priestly school	Brueg, Ch6-7
Feb 7	<b>Torah (4)</b>	Exodus 19-24, Numbers 11-36, Deuteronomy Law and Narrative	Brueg, Ch8-10
Feb 9-Feb15	Lunar New Year Vacation		
Feb 21	<b>Prophets (1)</b>	Introduction to the Prophets, Joshua, Judges History and Deuteronomistic History	Brueg, Ch11-13
Feb 28	<b>Prophets (2)</b>	1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings Narrative and Ideology	Brueg, Ch14-15
Mar 4-Mar 9	Reading Week		
Mar 13	<b>Prophets (3)</b>	Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel Literary Prophet and Their Social World	Brueg, Ch16-18
Mar 20	<b>Prophets (4)</b>	Minor Prophets Twelve prophets as a book	Brueg, Ch19-21
Mar 27	<b>Writings (1)</b>	Introduction to the Writings, Psalms The Canonical Study of the Psalms	Brueg, Ch22-23
Apr 3	<b>Writings (2)</b>	Job, Proverbs Wisdom Literature	Brueg, Ch24-25
Apr 10	<b>Writings (3)</b>	Five Scrolls, Ezra-Nehemiah Hebrew Bible and the early Judaism	Brueg, Ch26,28
Apr 17	<b>Writings (4)/ Conclusion</b>	Daniel, 1 and 2 Chronicles Inner Biblical Interpretation in Apocalyptic Literature and the Rewritten Bible Concluding Reflection: Hiddenness of God	Brueg, Ch27, 29-31 <b>Due: Reading log</b> <b>Due: Reflective essay</b> <b>(21/4)</b>

**May 12: Term Paper Due (including comments and discussion in written form)**

Brueg = Brueggemann, Walter. An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003). [CC-BS1140.3 .B78 2003] Second Edition, 2012. Third Edition, 2020.

Chapters in the reading is according to 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

(中譯本：布魯格曼著，許子韻譯《布氏舊約導論：正典與基督教的想像》香港：天道，2012)

The Old Testament: in English, preferred NRSV or NJB; in Chinese, preferred Revised Union Version.

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

Other Old Testament Introductory books:

Recommended Books:

Note: Drane's book has a good list of books. Here are others and these are the ones you should consult for your assignments:

Bible Dictionary:

Anchor Bible Dictionary (REF BS 440.A54 vols. 1-6)

Ancient Near Eastern Texts:

James Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to Old Testament Translators and Annotators (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969). (REF BS 1180.P83 1969)

Hallo, William W. and K. Lawson Younger. The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions, Monumental Inscriptions and Archival Documents from the Biblical World (3 vols. :Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997). (BS1180. C66 1997)

Barton, John (ed.). The Biblical World. (2 vols.; London; New York: Routledge, 2002).

Carr, David McLain, An Introduction to the Old Testament : sacred texts and imperial contexts of the Hebrew Bible (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K. ; Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). [CC -BS1130 .C37 2010]

Coggins, R. J. Introducing the Old Testament (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992/2001). (BS 1140.2.C64 2001) check the new edition (2001).

Collins, John C. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004).

Coogan, Michael D. A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament: The Hebrew Bible in Its Context (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Collins, John C. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004).

Dell, Katherine. *Opening the Old Testament* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

John Drane, *Introducing the Old Testament* (Oxford: Lion Hudson plc, 2011, 3rd Ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011, 3rd Ed.) [CC-BS1140.3.D73 2001] (中譯本：約翰·德雷恩著，許一新譯《舊約概論》北京：北京大學，2004) [CC-BS1197.D712 2004]

Perdue, Leo (ed.). *The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford/Mass.: Blackwell, 2001). [BS1171.3.B53 2001]

Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994). [CC-BS1140.2.D55 1994] (中譯本：狄拉德，朗文合著；劉良淑譯，《21世紀舊約導論》台北：校園書房，1999) [BS1140.2.D5512 1999]

Rendtorff, Rolf, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (London: SCM Press, 1985). [BS 1140.2.R3913]

Series:

Exploring the Old Testament (London: SPCK, 2003). [BS 1140.3.E97 2003]

Commentaries:

Anchor Bible Commentary, The New Interpreter's Bible, New Century Bible, Hermenia, Word Biblical Commentary

Chinese:

李熾昌。《古經解讀：舊約經文的時代意義》香港：香港基督徒學會，1997。

李思敬。《恩怨情仇論舊約》（簡體字版）香港：更新資源出版社，2013。

陳貽繹。《希伯來語聖經：來自考古和文本資料的信息（至公元前 586 年）》北京：昆崙出版社，2006。

游斌。《希伯來聖經的文本、歷史與思想世界》北京：宗教文化出版社，2007。

-----。《聖書與聖民：古代以色列的歷史記憶與族群構建》北京：宗教文化出版社，2011。

謝品然。《公理：舊約+世界》香港：研道社，2010。

-----。《轉向：聖經+公共》香港：研道社，2011。

彭國璋。《見證耶穌是基督》香港：研道社，2012。

黃天相。《希伯來聖經導論》香港：明道社，2010。

Contact details for teacher

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\*\*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://Blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk>

Name Exegetical Paper Grading Rubric

Description Students should be able to analyze on the passage by different exegetical methods and to respond and comment to critical issues posted by scholars | 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.

Rubric Detail

Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
	Poor/Inadequate	Fair	Good	Excellent
<b>Thesis on the Critical issue of the Biblical books</b>	There is no thesis or central argument/proposal to tie the paper together, or the thesis is unclear.	The thesis is present, but a reader must work hard to reconstruct from the entire paper.	The thesis is easily detectable after reading the paper, but it is not presented in a single and clear statement.	A clear statement of what is being proposed or argued in the paper.
<b>Methodology and handling of the Biblical text</b>	There is no explanation of the method used and the method used to analyse the text is unclear. The text doesn't seem to be understood.	Methodology has been mentioned in the paper but not enough description and how it is used. Methodology has been used but reader must work hard to relate the application of the methodology and the text. The text has been interpreted but not adequately.	There is description of what and how the (exegetical) methodology is being used but less thorough. Application of the methodology to the Biblical text is less clear. The text has been interpreted but less convincingly.	Well description of what and how the (exegetical) methodology is being used and clear application of methodology to analyse the Biblical text is demonstrated throughout the paper. The text has been convincingly interpreted.
<b>Arguments</b>	Arguments to support the thesis are missing, irrelevant, or not convincing. The paper makes lots of claims or assertions that are not substantiated. There are few or no references to the biblical text in question to show why the proposed thesis is valid.	Arguments made to support the thesis are acceptable but sketchy or their relevance unclear. Some references are made to the biblical text in question to show why the proposed thesis is valid.	Arguments made to support the thesis are clear, but less thorough, relevant, and/or convincing. References are often made to the biblical text in question to show why the proposed thesis is valid, but this is done not as consistently.	Each reason, support, or argument to follow the thesis is made clear, thorough, relevant and convincing. Proper references are consistently made to the biblical text in question to show why the proposed thesis is valid.



Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
	Poor/Inadequate	Fair	Good	Excellent
<b>Counter-Arguments</b>	No awareness or acknowledgment of conflicting evidence, counter-examples, counter-arguments, or opposing positions.	The paper acknowledges and accounts for a few obvious conflicting evidence, counter-examples, and counter-arguments, but miss other obvious opposing positions. Or the paper acknowledges counter-arguments without accounting for them.	The paper acknowledges and accounts for obvious conflicting evidence, counter-examples, counter-arguments, and/or opposing positions.	The paper acknowledges, anticipates, and accounts for conflicting evidence, counter-examples, counter-arguments, and/or opposing positions, even ones that are not obvious or not yet been made in writings of others.
<b>Organization</b>	The paper does not flow well in terms of organization or for the argument of the thesis. Transitions from paragraph to paragraph or from one idea to the next are missing. The movement from introduction to the body and then the conclusion is non-existent.	There are signs of sensible and logical organization, but these are mixed with abrupt or illogical shifts and ineffective flow of ideas. The movement from introduction to the body and then the conclusion is not clearly distinguishable.	The paper's flow, from one paragraph to another, is largely sensible and logical. Transitions are mostly appropriate. The movement from introduction to the body and then the conclusion is distinguishable if not easy to follow.	The paper's flow, from one paragraph to another, is consistently sensible, logical, and always with clear transitions. The movement from introduction to the body and then the conclusion is easy to follow and coherent.
<b>Style</b>	The paper is written with many incomplete or grammatically incorrect sentences. Word choice is not understandable and definition of particular terms or words is not given even when needed. The paper has clearly not been spell-checked or proofread, and hence contains an excessive number of errors.	The paper contains some incomplete or grammatically incorrect sentences. Word choice is imprecise, at times not understandable, and/or not defined when needed. Not clear if the paper has been spell-checked and proofread because of the number of errors present.	The paper is written in complete sentence and grammatically correct sentences. Word choice is understandable, definitions are generally (though not always) provided if and when needed. Paper has been spell-checked, proofread, and contains only a few errors.	The paper is written in complete and grammatically correct sentences. Word choice is precise; definitions are provided if and when needed. Paper has been spell-checked, proofread, and contains no errors.
<b>Documentation</b>	Source materials are used without documentation.	Sources of information are not consistently documented. If they are, format is inconsistent or does not conform to required academic standard.	Notes to indicate sources of information are generally given when they are needed. Notes and bibliography are generally but not always consistent or conform to required academic standard.	Notes to indicate sources of information are given whenever they are needed. Both notes and bibliography use consistent and academically acceptable format.