

Course Code: THEO5216
Title in English: Narrative Art in the Hebrew Bible
Title in Chinese: 希伯來聖經中的敘述事藝術

Course overview:

Many parts of the Hebrew Bible is written in the Narrative form. In recent years, the literary approaches to the narrative in the Hebrew Bible are proliferating. This course aims to explore the artistic and literary features of the narrative in the Hebrew Bible. Students will learn how to appreciate the so-called poetics of the narrative in different parts of the Hebrew Bible, including the Pentateuch, the Former Prophets and the short story of Jonah and Ruth, and acquire skills to analyze these narratives from a literary perspective. Furthermore, students will reflect on how the literary nature of the narrative in the Hebrew Bible influences our view on the Bible as History and Scripture.

Learning outcomes:

- After this course, students should be able to
- recognize and describe different artistic features in the Biblical narrative
 - appreciate the narrative art in the Hebrew Bible
 - analyze the narrative in the Hebrew Bible from a literary perspective
 - theorize the relationship between Biblical narrative, literature, history and theology
 - reflect and design on the various use of Biblical narrative in different contexts.

List of topics

| Topic | Contents/ fundamental concepts |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Bible as Literature | In the class, the students will learn how to distinguish literary understanding with scientific understanding for biblical narrative, and by this realized that the multi-valence of narrative meaning. We will explore the concept of fictionality, and narrative ethics associated with such literary understanding. We will also explore the importance of literary competence in the study of biblical narrative and discuss how one can enhance such competence. |
| Plot | Various concepts related to the plot will be discussed, such as the basic structure of plot (Beginning-Middle-End), the use of exposition at the beginning of the plot, how author build conflict and climax, and how the narrative come to closure and resolution. Examples from the Hebrew Bible will be used to demonstrate the relevant concepts and skills. The use of Type-Scene in biblical narrative suggested by Alter will also be discussed. |
| Character | Various concepts related to characterization will be discussed, such as the different of telling and showing; the use of epithet and outer description, and the various skills an author can use to explore the inner-self of a character. Examples form the Hebrew Bible will be used to demonstrate the relevant concepts and skills. How biblical narrative use reticence in its characterization, as suggested by Alter will also be discussed. |
| Dialogue | The use of dialogue and its various effect will be introduced in the classes. How monologue and dialogue are functioning in the biblical narrative, and the socio-ideological meaning of a character's literary voicing will be explored; How dialogue-bound narration is used in the biblical narrative as suggested by Alter will also be explained. |
| The narrator and the narration skills | The essential yet always neglected topic of the narrator and narration skills will be introduced. How the biblical narrator makes use of point-of-view, repetition, reader programming, and comments will be discussed. |
| Narrative as History and Scripture | Beside literary skills used in the biblical narrative, we will go beyond the technicality and discuss the meta-critical issues related to the biblical narrative. What does it mean calling biblical narrative as narrated history? How literary fictionality related to truth? We will also explore using narrative in different contexts such as in Church setting like visitation, counseling and preaching or in constructing Christian theology. |

Learning activities

This course mainly consists of lectures, student participation 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 |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 2 per week | 0.5 hr | 0.5 per week | 3 per week | 15 hr |

Assessment scheme

| Task nature | Purpose | Learning Outcome | Weight |
|--|---|--|--------|
| <p>1. Reading Assignment</p> <p>Either the English or Chinese version of the textbook: Robert Alter, <i>The Art of Biblical Narrative</i>. You must track ALL your reading by filling in the Reading Log and submit them by 15 Dec 2024, to the instructor in class. Failure to submit the Reading Log on time means no marks for this requirement.</p> | To ensure the student has read the textbook. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire an overview of the features of the biblical narrative that will be discussed during class lecture. 2. Comprehend Alter's viewpoint on various topics regarding biblical narrative. | 10% |
| <p>2. Reading Report</p> <p>Write a reading report not less than 2500 words on one of the following books and submit by 05 Nov 2024:</p> <p>Yaira Amit, <i>Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible</i> Or Adele Berlin, <i>Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative</i> Or David M. Gunn, and Danna Nolan Fewell. <i>Narrative in the Hebrew Bible</i>. Or Robert S. Kawashima, <i>Biblical Narrative and the Death of the Rhapsode</i> Or Stuart Lasine, <i>Weighing Hearts: Character, Judgment, and the Ethics of Reading the Bible</i>. Or Greger Andersson, <i>Untamable Texts: Literary Studies and Narrative Theory in the Books of Samuel</i> Or any book that is approved by the instructor. The format and requirement of the Report will be discussed in Class 1.</p> | To engage the student with different scholarship regarding the literary study of the biblical narrative and give a space for them to reflect on the material they read during the course. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how scholar formulates the literary approach in studying biblical narrative. 2. Appreciate the scholarship of literary perspective in studying biblical narrative. 3. Compare and reflect on different viewpoints on the use of the literary approach in studying biblical narrative. | 20% |
| <p>3. Class presentation</p> <p>Students can work in a group or as an individual. They will have 10 mins in class to present one of the three topics: 1) Biblical Narrative as Literature; 2) Biblical Narrative as History, and 3) Biblical Narrative as Scripture. The students also need to lead a 10mins class discussion. Class Participation will be counted on the final marks.</p> <p>OR:</p> <p>In case class presentation cannot be arranged, student can write a reflective essay not less than 1500 words to fulfil this part of the course. Detail will be announced during class time.</p> | To give a space for the student to reflect and discuss on the material they read regarding the more meta-critical matter of the course. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how scholar theorizes the meta-critical matter regarding the literary approach in studying biblical narrative. 2. Reflect on the more theoretical aspects on the literary approach in studying biblical narrative. 3. Formulate and articulate the student's viewpoint on the meta-critical matter of the course | 20% |

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| <p>4. Term Paper</p> <p>Write a term paper not less than 4000 words on a continuous narrative in the Hebrew Bible. Students should be able to analyze and comment on the narrative by using the concepts and the narrator's technique discussed in the classes. The scope and format of the paper will be announced on Class 1</p> <p>Paper MUST be submitted via the Webpage of the Chinese University Plagiarism Identification Engine VeriGuide: https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK by 15 Dec 2024. A soft copy should be posted onto the BLACKBOARD and 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 tutors.</p> | <p>To let student showcase their understanding of the topics and skills of literary approach in studying biblical narrative.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the literary skills in studying biblical narrative. 2. Apply the literary approach in various biblical text and analyze the text by literary means. 3. Construct implications of the ideas in the text generated by literary means. | <p>50%</p> |
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**** A Hebrew option can be chosen to replace either assignment 2 or 3. Student who has completed the courses on Biblical Hebrew I and II can write an essay by using the knowledge of Biblical Hebrew to analysis of a narrative portion in the Hebrew Bible. Detail will be discussed with individual student who choose this option.**

Grading Criteria:

A Paper-grading Rubric

| CATEGORY | <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. |

I. Required Readings:

- 奧爾特, 黃愈軒、譚晴譯。《聖經敘述文的藝術》(香港: 天道書樓) = Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Rev. & Exp Ed., N.Y.: Basic Book, 2011(1981))。
- 劉意青, 〈聖經文學性研究介紹〉。收劉意青編著, 《《聖經》文學闡釋教程》(北京: 北京大學出版社, 2010), 頁 291-313。
- 李均熊, 〈上主在說話——初探聖經敘事的巴赫金式研究〉, 《中國神學研究院期刊》, 第 55 期 (2013 年七月)。
- Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Ch. 6, 9, 10.
- 梁工, 〈聖經敘事的重複藝術〉, 《聖書之美: 梁工教授講聖經文學》(北京: 中央編譯出版社, 2014)。
- David Jobling, "What, if Anything, Is 1 Samuel", *SJOT* 7/1 (1993) 17-31.
- Anthony Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, p.566-575.
- Gabriel Fackre, "Narrative Theology: An Overview", *Interpretation* 37/4 (1983) 340 – 352.
- Jacques Berlinerblau, "The Bible as Literature?" *Hebrew Studies* 45 (2004) 9-26.

II. Recommended Reading:

- 西蒙·巴埃弗拉持著, 李鋒譯。《聖經的敘事藝術》(上海: 華東師範大學出版社, 2011) = Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989)。
- 福克爾曼著, 胡玉藩、伍美詩、陳寶嬋譯。《聖經敘述文體導讀》(香港: 天道書樓, 2003) = J. P. Fokkman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introduction Guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999)。
- 史笏著, 《"我們的祖先說..." : 希伯來敘述文分析簡介》(香港: 公教真理學會) = Jean Louis Ska, "Our Fathers Have Told Us": *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*. (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1990)。
- 梁工著, 《聖經敘事藝術研究》(北京: 商務印書館, 2005)。
- , 《當代文學理論與聖經批評》(北京: 人民出版社, 2014)。
- , 《聖書之美: 梁工教授講聖經文學》(北京: 中央編譯出版社, 2014)。
- 程小娟著, 《聖經敘事藝術探索》(北京: 宗教文化出版社, 2009)。

Biblical Narrative and Literature

- Robert Alter, *Ancient Israel: The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings: A Translation with Commentary*
- , *The World of Biblical Literature*
- Yaira Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*
- Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*
- Robert Walter Funk, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*
- J. C. L. Gibson, *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament*
- David M. Gunn, and Danna Nolan Fewell. *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*.
- Robert S. Kawashima, *Biblical Narrative and the Death of the Rhapsode*
- Daniel Marguerat, Yvan Bourquin & Marcel Durrer, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism*
- Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*
- Jerome T. Walsh, *Style and Structure in Biblical Hebrew Narrative*
- Tolmie, Francois. *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide*. Eugene: Wip & Stock, 1999.

Literature theory, Narrative Studies and Narratology

- Abbott, H. Porter. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*.
- Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
- Chatman, Seymour B. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1980.
- Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1983(1961).
- Eagleton, Terry. *How to Read Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980.
- . *Narrative Discourse Revisited*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Onega Jaén, Susana, and José Angel García Landa, eds. *Narratology: An Introduction*. London: Longman, 1996.
- Prince, Gerald. *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative*. Janua Linguarum 108. Berlin: Mouton, 1982.
- Scholes, Robert E, James Phelan, and Robert L. Kellogg. *The Nature of Narrative: Fortieth Anniversary Edition, Revised and Expanded*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Toolan, Michael J. *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction*. Psychology Press, 1988.

Resource for topics: Biblical Narrative as History

- Barr, J. (1976), "Story and History in Biblical Theology", *Journal of Religion*, 56, 1-17.
- Barr, J. (2000), *History and Ideology in the Old Testament Biblical: Studies at the End of a Millennium* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Cook, A. S. (1988), *History/Writing* (New York: Cambridge University Press).
- Deist, F. (1999), "Contingency, Continuity and Integrity in Historical Understand" in V. Philips Long (ed.), *Israel's Past in Present Research Essays on Ancient Israelite Historiography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns) 373-390.
- Halpern, B. (1988), *The First Historians: the Hebrew Bible and history* (San Francisco: Harper & Row).
- Long, V. P. (1994), *The Art of Biblical History* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan).
- Millard, A. R. (1994), "Story, Histoy, and Theology", in A. R. Millard, J. K. Hoffmeier, & D. W. Baker (eds.), *Faith, Ttradition, and History Old Testament Historiography in its Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns) 37-64.
- Nicholson, E. (1994), "Story and History in the Old Testament" in S. E. Balentine, & J. Barton (eds.), *Language, Theology, and the Bible: Essays in Honour of James Barr* (New York: Oxford University) 135-150.
- Provan, Iain W., V Long, and Tremper Longman. *A Biblical History of Israel*. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003.
- Raney, D. C. (2003), *History as Narrative in the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles* (Lewiston, N.Y: E. Mellen Press).
- Van Seters, J. (1997), *In Search of History: Historiography in the Ancient World and the Origins of Biblical History* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns). Kofoed, Jens Bruun. *Text and History Historiography and the Study of the Biblical Text*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005.

Resource for topics: Biblical Narrative as Literature/Scripture

- Barton, John. *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study*. 2nd ed. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1996.
- . *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*. Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 2007.
- . *The Old Testament: Canon, Literature and Theology: Collected Essays of John Barton*. Society for Old Testament Study Monographs. Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.
- Comstock, Gary "Two Types of Narrative Theology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 55.04(1987), p.687-717.
- Fackr, Gabriel. "Narrative Theology: An Overview", *Interpretation* Vol 37. No. 4 (1983), p. 340-352.
- . *The Doctrine of Revelation: A Narrative Interpretation*. Edinburgh Studies in Constructive Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- . "Narrative Theology from an Evangelical Perspective" in Keith E. Yandell Ed., *Faith and Narratives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.188-201.
- Frei, Hans W. *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Hermeneutics*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974.
- . *Theology and Narrative: Selected Essays*. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher Ed.; New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Goldingay, John. *Models for Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- . "Biblical Narrative and Systematic Theology", in Joel Green and Max Turner Ed., *Between Two Horizons: Spanning New Testament Studies & Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, p. 123-142.
- . *Old Testament Theology, Volume One: Israel's Gospel*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Lindbeck, George. *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984.
- Perdue, Leo G. *The Collapse of History: Reconstructing Old Testament Theology*. Overtures to Biblical Theology; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
- Phillips, Timothy R. & Okholm Dennis L. ed. *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals & Postliberals in Conversation*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1996.
- Prickett, Stephen. *Words and the Word: Language, Poetics and Biblical Interpretation*. Cambridge: CUP, 1986.
- . *Narrative, Religion and Science: Fundamentalism versus Irony, 1700-1999*. Cambridge: CUP, 2002.
- Wright, T. R. *Theology and Literature*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1988.
- Watson, Francis. *Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- . *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997.
- 江丕盛。〈後自由神學宗教觀的教義與真理〉，《中國神學研究院期刊》，第二十二期(1997)，頁 141-164。

Other supplement readings will be delivered during class.

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.

Course schedule

| Week/Class | Date | Topic | Requirements |
|---------------------------------|---------|--|--|
| Week One/ Class 1 | 03 Sept | Course Introduction: Literary Studies of the Narratives in the Hebrew Bible | Read Alter ch. 1; 劉意青：〈聖經文性研究介紹〉。 |
| Week Two/ Class 2 | 10 Sept | Narrativity: Plot | Read Alter ch. 3. |
| Week Three/ No class | 17 Sept | Mid-Autumn Festival | |
| Week Four/ Class 3 | 24 Sept | Narrativity: Characters | Read Alter ch. 2; Sternberg, p.321-364. |
| Week Five | 01 Oct | National Day | |
| Week Six/ Class 4 | 08 Oct | Narrativity: Literary Voice and Dialogue | Read Alter ch. 4; 李均熊：〈上主在說話〉。 |
| Week Seven/ Class 5 | 15 Oct | Narrator and Narration: Repetition | Read Alter ch. 5; 梁工：〈聖經敘事重複〉。 |
| Week Eight/ Class 6 | 29 Oct | Narrator and Narration: Reticence | Read Alter ch. 6; Sternberg, p. 186-229. |
| Week Nine/ Class 7 | 05 Nov | Narrator and Narration: Does the Narrative has a Structure? | Read Alter ch. 7. |
| Week Ten/ Class 8 | 12 Nov | Narrative and Narration: Contrast and Irony | Read Alter ch 8. |
| Week Eleven/ Class 9 | 19 Nov | Short Story: Jonah and Ruth OR Narrative Cycle: Elijah and Ahab OR The So-called Deuteronomistic History and the story of First Samuel | Read Alter ch 9. |
| Week Twelve/ Class 10 | 26 Nov | Biblical Narrative in Life and in Church | Thiselton, p. 566-575; .Fackre, "Narrative Theology: An Overview". |
| Week Thirteen/ Make-up Class | 07 Dec | Conclusive Discussion: Could the Hebrew Bible be read as Literature? | Berlinerblau, "The Bible as Literature" |

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 Theology Building T31 |
| Teaching Time: | Every Tuesday, 7:00pm-9:30pm |

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://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk>**