

History of the Old Testament

Class time: Thursdays 1:35-3:05

Mr. Dan E. Downey 908-7294

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Course Description: This course surveys the history of the Old Testament

Course elements and Requirements:

***Notebook: Class notes, maps, nations/empires, famous people, timeline**

***Weekly reading assignments: text, handouts, web sites and videos**

***Written and oral quizzes (in-class/out of class): frequently**

***Tests (take-home and/or in class): at least two**

***Participation in discussions -- Be open and ready to defend your study and opinions.**

***Be prepared for class by completing the assignments and reviewing before class.**

***Take notes in and out of class. This is your responsibility. Do it your own way, but well.**

*Primary Text:

- Old Testament, in readable form

*Non-required, but helpful text:

- New Testament

Other Requirements:

* Notebook or binder. This will be the central organizer!

Keep all work in order: assignments, primary sources, written work, maps, on-going lists, etc.

Section dividers would be good, but not necessary.

Keep this syllabus in the binder/notebook.

Computer

It is essential that students have a **COMPUTER** and **PRINTER** in peak working condition, which includes access to the Internet, at least Windows 98 or higher. Macs are equally fine, but you must have a way of sending WORD and PDF.

You must be able to open and send attachments (most often *Word* or PDF). Your weekly assignments will be sent via e/mail with attachments. Your computer may interpret these weekly notes as "spam", as they will be sent to multiple addresses at one time. Both your and your parents' e/mail program should be configured (anti-spam software usually has instructions) to accept the class e/mails.

You must also be able to view internet-based videos, including Mr. Downey's short video clips.

Quizzes, tests and exams will be sent to parent's e/mail address. Make sure that this is not a problem and they are prepared to receive such *bulk* e/mails. Make sure to check the SPAM folders.

Students must notify Mr. Downey by e/mail or telephone in case of inoperative equipment and make adjustments to their schedule to complete assignments by the **TUESDAY and THURSDAY** deadlines. [See "**Deadlines and Reduced Assignments**" below.]

Course Description:

The Old Testament course is designed to cover the history of ancient events, major nations, geography, and personalities in the Biblical Middle East. Students will read extensively throughout the course.

The course is designed for motivated, college-bound students looking to demonstrate academic achievement, higher order thinking skills, and **the ability to work independently**.

There is an expectation to not only complete weekly reading and written assignments essential to the classroom lecture and discussion, but students must pursue excellence with openness to an atmosphere of learning. Written quizzes (approximately every other week) and longer tests (2-3 per semester) are an important element to fully prepare students.

In addition, there will be several required films (movie). We may meet as a group to watch one of these films. However, most films will be viewed on our own.

The class is 16 weeks (not counting holidays and breaks) and begins **Thursday, January 4, 2018**. There will be assigned reading over the Easter and spring break. The final week will be review-oriented.

The first assignment is due by the 2nd class meeting.

The course relies on primary sources and text readings that will be approached from a Judeo-Christian viewpoint and background. In addition, internet assignments will be incorporated into the curriculum.

The Old Testament course is an academically rigorous course that can easily become overwhelming if a student gets behind in the work. There are substantial weekly reading assignments, at home and in-class quizzes. Though the course does NOT require a term paper, page-length narrations and short essays are occasionally assigned.

Tentative weekly topics:

1. Genesis 1-11; archaic; geography; Mesopotamia
2. Genesis 12-22: Abraham; First Covenant
3. Genesis: Isaac, Esau, Jacob
4. Jacob; Twelve Tribes
5. Joseph and Egypt
6. Egypt and Moses; Passover; Exodus [Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy]
7. Re-Entry to Israel; Joshua
8. Judges; Israel; Middle East geography
9. Saul, David, Solomon; [Samuels, Kings, Psalms]
10. Temple; Solomon; Middle East; Proverbs
11. Israel and Judah as nations
12. Prophets and Assyria
13. Prophets and Babylon
14. Prophets and Persia [Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah]

General Overview of Weekly Assignments

Class meets every Thursday, 1:35 – 3:05

By every Friday students receive an e/mail, confirming, changing or detailing the assignments. Students are expected to check their e/mail daily until the assignment is received.

All assignments are graded on a 10-point scale (90-100 = A), unless otherwise noted. Most work must be submitted by **THURSDAY class time**. Assignments received AFTER this will be considered late and receive a deduction of 10%. For each additional day (24 hours) an assignment is late, the grade will suffer a 10% deduction.

Deadlines and Reduced Assignments:

Unless you ask for in advance and receive an extension from Mr. Downey, your assignments start losing points after **THURSDAY**. An extension is usually granted but only with a good reason, and only if you talk to Mr. Downey in advance. Also, if you let Mr. Downey know in advance of a major commitment (family event or college visit, for example) your weekly work load may be reduced slightly. If sick, have a parent e/mail or phone to reduce your assignment.

**** Stay away from turning in assignments late with such explanations as "I had a busy week," or "I had to do a lot of homework for my other teachers." It's up to the student to pace oneself. ****

Also, if a class is missed for any reason, the student is responsible for getting the class notes and assignments from another student. There is usually an audio of class available upon request. If absent the student is still responsible for turning in assignments and taking assigned quizzes/tests.

Weekly assignments vary, but generally include some of the following:

* Read the text and other reading site, usually two or three OT chapters every week. This reading is a focused reading, including all primary documents, graphs and maps.

* Take an in-class quiz on class material/notes and reading assignments.

* Write a "narration" and/or essay at least once a month, typically on a primary source, major event, or comparison of issues. Specific narrations will be assigned and generally are between 1-2 pages maximum.

The narration/essay is an integral part of the course. Gradually students will learn to write the kind of formal essay expected. They will learn about developing a thesis, presenting supporting evidence, and making analytical comparisons.

Narrations/Essays are graded on a 10 point scale. (90-100 = A)

* Research assigned web site pages by taking notes, answering questions, writing brief bios, exploring animated features, etc.

* Label a map.

* There are usually two longer tests: mid-term and final exam.

Movie and Multimedia

Students are strongly encouraged to watch movies with historical content relating to all time periods and regions studied. There will be required movies and short videos to watch that will be hand-picked for content. Some films will be documentary, as well as internet sites to research on a weekly basis as part of the written work.

Extra Credit Work

Students are encouraged to earn extra credit. A maximum of 100 points will add 10% to their final grade. It may consist, but not restricted to, any of the following:

* Extra narrations, essays, or site work.

* Writing a review of a book, sermon, lecture, mission work, movie, web site or museum visit.

Grading

Students receive grades on all work: essays, narrations, quizzes, tests and exams. There is a participation element (classroom and on-line) to the final grade.

The final semester grade is broken down approximately below:

* Written assignments 40-50%

* Quizzes and Tests 40-50%

* Participation and extra credit work 5-10%

Progress Report

A regular progress report will be sent via e/mail at the end of the six and nine-week periods (approx. February 15 and March 8). Also, there will be an end-of-semester grade in May.

Attendance

* The class has 16 regular meetings each lasting 90 minutes. Attendance is not required, but ALL WORK (assignments, notes, research, movies, narrations, quizzes, test, etc) must be delivered (in person, via post or e/mail) to Mr. Downey by the due date. In the event of sudden illness or unforeseen absence from class, students are responsible for getting the class notes from another student.

*Most classes are recorded and an audio will be available by e/mail. It is encouraged to use this opportunity to solidify the classroom material.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN MR. DOWNEY'S CLASS:

***Attend all classes.**

***Be prepared for class by following these details:**

*** Be seated with notebook and pen/pencil 1-5 minutes before the start of class.**

*** In the morning before class, read over previous class notes and assignments due. This will especially help for pop-quizzes.**

***Take good, thorough, speedy notes on what is discussed, spoken, as well as written on board.**

***Participate in class by answering and asking questions.**

***Complete and turn in all assignments on time, even when absent from class.**

Other Miscellaneous basics:

*Try to visit the bathroom before class. Emergencies of this kind are fine without permission; just leave the room. But every student is responsible for missed material. Do not interrupt class with questions if out of the classroom.

*Doodling is fine in class, but students are responsible for getting class notes from other students.

*Turn off phones before entering class. Emergency calls must be taken outside of class.

*Be on time for class. Repeat offenders of this rule will lose participation points to grade.

*Lap-top computers are fine as long as used for classroom work. Random internet and other activity during class are not acceptable.

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First Assignments (approximately two hours): Due THURSDAY January 11.

1. Read the book of Genesis, chapters 1-11.

Take very basic notes on the major names of people and places that you encounter in this reading. This will be an important introduction and basic historical and cultural background to our study of the region.

2. Print and label the attached (e/mail) map “The Modern Middle East”

Bring the completed map to class and be prepared for a quiz using a similar map. Yes, the first day. Quiz will be labeling all present-day Middle East countries. [No cities, seas, mountains, etc.]