

WHO WROTE THE BIBLE AND WHEN?

Spring 2011: T&Th 2:30-4:00



Instructor: Steven DiMattei

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Texts: R. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, 1987

J. Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible*, 1992

W. Doorly, *The Laws of Yahweh: A Handbook of Biblical Law*, 2002

R. Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: An New View into the Five Books of Moses*, 2003

Course Description: Interested in knowing how the Bible came together? Who wrote the texts behind the Biblical Text, and when and why these once separate texts were edited together? Or perhaps you're interested in knowing why biblical scholars assert that the Bible is a composite of various, and often conflicting, texts in the first place. What textual evidence lies behind such bombastic claims? Or then again, maybe you're just a history buff interested in knowing about the historical circumstances (political and religious) that gave rise to the composition of the various texts that now make up the Bible? Whatever your persuasion, come join us. *Who Wrote the Bible and When* takes a close look at the compositional history of the Bible. We will focus most of our attention on the textual history of the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. Attentive reading of biblical books will be required, and methodological emphasis will be placed on source criticism (i.e., acquainting ourselves with the various textual traditions and sources that were used in composing the books of the Bible) and historical criticism (i.e., understanding the historical circumstances that prompted biblical writers to write what they did).

Course Objectives: This course will introduce students to the ways in which biblical scholars have read and understood the biblical texts, particularly in relation to the text's antecedent sources and historical context. The course aims to provide students with a thorough knowledge of the compositional nature of the Pentateuch. Upon successful completion of the course, students will:

- gain familiarity with historical and source critical approaches to the Hebrew Bible
- possess a good command of the literature, sources, and dates of composition behind the texts of the Pentateuch
- be able to identify and distinguish the various different sources of the books of the Pentateuch
- understand the reasoning behind the Documentary Hypothesis, and its criticisms
- understand the essential relationship between biblical texts and their historical contexts, intended audiences, and purpose of composition
- understand how these various texts, traditions, poetry, legislation, cultic narratives, etc., became the Bible
- gain familiarity with the intricate history of the northern and southern kingdoms and how they shaped the composition of the Bible

Grading: Grading for this course will consist of 3 small response essay type quizzes (out of class assignments, due on the days specified), and 3 paper assignments (4-5 pp.). Percentages break down as follows:

Class Participation and Preparedness	20%
3 quizzes	30%
2 Papers (4-5pp.)	30%
Final Paper (4-8pp.)	20%

Additional Resources and Books of Interest:

Introductions to the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, emphasizing historical/literary approaches

M. Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 2006

D. Carr, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: Sacred Texts and Imperial Contexts of the Hebrew Bible*, 2010

See also: *The Oxford Bible Commentary*

Pentateuchal Studies

A. Campbell & M. O'Brien, *Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions, Annotations*, 1993

D. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches*, 1996.

I. Knohl, *The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices*, 2003.

The Bible and Biblical Archaeology

I. Finkelstein & N. Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of its Sacred Texts*, 2001

W. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?: What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel*, 2001

W. Dever, *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?*, 2003

The History/Origins of Israelite Religion

F. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel*, 1973

M. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, 1990

W. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*, 2005

Writing in Ancient Israel

W. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*, 2004

K. Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 2007

WHO WROTE THE BIBLE AND WHEN?

– Daily Syllabus –

– THE QUESTION OF MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP AND THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS –

- Wk. 1 T Jan 18 Introduction to the Course, its Books, Methodologies, Assumptions, and Aims
“What is the Bible?”
- Th Jan 20 The Creation and refutation of Mosaic Authorship & the Hypotheses of Sources
Read: Friedman [1987], Introduction & ch. 1 (pp. 15-49); Blenkinsopp, ch.1 (optional)

- Wk. 2 T Jan 25 Who Wrote the Bible and When?: Introducing J, E, D, and P
Read: Friedman [2003], Introduction (pp. 1-31)

– GENESIS 1-18: DISCOVERING THE PRIESTLY (P) AND THE YAHWIST (J) WRITERS –

- Th Jan 27 Genesis 1-3: Two Creation Accounts
Read: Blenkinsopp, ch. 3 (pp. 54-67)

- Wk. 3 T Feb 1 Genesis 4-6: Two Genealogies
Read: Blenkinsopp, ch. 3 (pp. 67-76) & ch. 2 (pp. 31-52)

- Th Feb 3 Genesis 7-11: Two Flood Narratives and Two Dispersion of Peoples/Languages Tales
Read: Friedman, ch. 2 (pp. 50-61); Blenkinsopp, ch. 3 (pp. 77-94)

- Wk. 4 T Feb 8 Genesis 12-18, 23: The Abrahamic Narratives: Two Covenant Accounts
Quiz #1

– GENESIS 18-50: E AND ISRAEL, J AND JUDAH –

- Th Feb 10 Genesis 16, 18-22, 24-26: The Abrahamic and Isaac Narratives: E and J
Read: Blenkinsopp, ch. 4 (pp. 98-118)

- Wk. 5 T Feb 15 Genesis 27-36: J and P
Read: Carr, “Genesis 26:34-5; 27:46-28:9: The Background of Jacob’s Departure,” in *Reading the Fractures of Genesis*, pp. 85-88 (handout).

- Th Feb 17 Genesis 27-36: E’s and J’s Jacob Cycle, and E’s northern cults
Read: Friedman, ch. 2 (pp. 62-69); Blenkinsopp, ch. 4 (pp. 118-130)

- Wk. 6 T Feb 22 Genesis 37-50: E’s and J’s Joseph Cycle: E’s Jeroboam and J’s Solomon
Paper #1

– MOSES, AARON, REVELATION, CULT, AND COVENANT TRADITIONS IN J, E, AND P –

- Th Feb 24 Exodus 1-11: Moses, Aaron, Yahweh’s revelations, and the Plague Traditions
Read: Blenkinsopp, ch. 5 (pp. 134-154)

- Wk. 7 T Mar 1 Exodus 12-18; Num 11 & 20: The Passover, Sea of Reeds, and Manna Traditions
Read: Blenkinsopp, ch. 5 (pp. 154-178)
- Th Mar 3 Exodus 19-24: Sinai and Covenant Traditions
Read: Doorly, ch. 1 & 2 (pp. 1-26); Schniedewind, “How the Torah Became a Text,” in *How the Bible Became a Book*, pp. 118-138 (handout)
- Wk. 8 T Mar 8 Exodus 32-34; 1 Kings 12:20-33; Num 12: The Golden Calf Incident and Jeroboam
Read: Friedman, ch. 3 (pp. 70-88)
Quiz #2

– JOSIAH’S REFORMS AND THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY –

- Th Mar 10 Deuteronomy 12-26
Read: Levinson, “The Innovation of Cultic Centralization in Deuteronomy,” in *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation*, pp. 23-52 (handout)

– Spring Break –

- Wk. 9 T Mar 22 Deuteronomy 12-26; 2 Kings 22:1-23:27
Read: Doorly, ch. 3 (pp. 27-46)
- Th Mar 24 Deuteronomy 12-26
Read: Friedman, chs. 4-5 (pp. 89-116); Blenkinsopp, ch. 6 (pp. 209-212)
- Wk. 10 T Mar 29 Deuteronomy 5-11 & 27-28:62: The Josianic Deuteronomist
Read: Friedman, ch. 6 (pp. 117-135); Blenkinsopp, ch. 6 (pp. 213-217)
- Th Mar 31 Deuteronomy 1-4 & 28:63-31:20; 2 Kings 17: The Post-exilic Deuteronomist
Read: Friedman, ch. 7 (pp. 136-149)
Paper #2

– THE PRIESTLY WRITER’S POST-EXILIC RESPONSE –

- Wk. 11 T Apr 5 Exodus 25 – Lev 1-7: The Cult and the Aaronids
Read: Friedman, ch. 8 (pp. 150-160)
- Th Apr 7 Leviticus 8-16
Read: Blenkinsopp, ch. 6 (pp. 217-225)
- Wk. 12 T Apr 12 Leviticus 17-27: The Holiness Code
Read: Doorly, ch. 4 & 5 (pp. 47-79)
- Th Apr 14 Num 1-10
Read: Friedman, ch. 11 (pp. 188-206)
- Wk. 13 T Apr 19 Num 12, 16, 25: The Priestly Ideology of the Aaronids

Quiz #3

– OTHER EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC WRITINGS –

Th Apr 21 Ezra (selections); Second Isaiah (selections); Zechariah (selections): The Exiles Return
Read: Blenkinsopp, ch. 7 (pp. 229-242); Friedman, ch. 13 (pp. 217-233)

Wk. 14 T Apr 26 Malachi, Nehemiah (selections) & 2 Chronicles (selections)

Th Apr 28 Concluding Reflections: The Making of the Torah

Final Paper Due: May 5th (in my box in the Honors College)