



**FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND RELIGION
COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2021**

COURSE NUMBER: RELS 301

COURSE NAME: Studies in the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament

CLASS DAYS & TIMES: WF 9-9:50 on Zoom

INSTRUCTOR NAME AND CONTACT:

Brigidda Bell

brigidda.bell@ucalgary.ca

OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 11-12 and by appointment via Zoom. Please email instructor to set up the appointment date.

INSTRUCTOR EMAIL POLICY: Please note that all course communications must occur through your @ucalgary email. I will respond to emails sent via student's @ucalgary emails within 48 hours.

COURSE CALENDAR STATEMENT:

An introduction to the critical study and reading of the books of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in English translation. The course focuses on the Bible as religious literature.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course we will spend time diving into the texts of the Hebrew Bible, with a particular focus on *how the texts depict a relationship and communication between the Israelite people and their god*. Our reading will be guided by intersectional critical lenses that will help us to approach our text with a decolonizing ethic and midrashic expansions that seek to recapture the voices and experiences of traditionally neglected figures. We will spend time with several prophets, individuals who communicate directly with God, from the theophanies experienced by Hagar, Moses and Ezekiel, to the visions and auditions of Deborah and Miriam. Cultures of the Near East understood gods to communicate with humans through natural and induced signs and wonders, as well as directly, through human mediums. Our close reading of select texts of the Hebrew Bible will be informed by ancient prophetic and divinatory contexts.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND COURSE LOGISTICS:

This course will take place **online** via Desire2Learn (D2L) and Zoom. To best succeed in the course, students are encouraged to participate in the asynchronous learning tasks using the D2L learning environment and synchronous Zoom sessions.

Synchronous sessions will take place twice a week (WF 9-9:50). During Wednesday sessions students will perform structured learning activities that will grow the skills required for the final project. Friday sessions will be dedicated to discussion and supplementing asynchronous learning content as needed.

Synchronous sessions are valuable for maintaining a sense of classroom community and cultivating a learning environment that helps address student needs through collaboration. Sessions may be recorded and uploaded to D2L depending on the content of the session and its estimated value outside of addressing immediate concerns of the synchronous activity and discussion.

When unable to participate live due to the time difference or unforeseen circumstances, please inform the instructor in advance and (if absent from Wednesday session) complete and submit the activities on your own time or (if absent from Friday session) your discussion contribution and brief critical reflection to the week's discussion board.

***COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Courses are structured to help students learn. Learning in the Arts should constantly challenge how you see the world which means that learning will not always be comfortable. The following section outlines what you should be learning in this class. Check back often and reflect on whether you are being challenged in these areas and what growth you observe.

In this course you will:

- **Develop your reading skills** *through required readings and Weekly Reading Quizzes.* We will develop skills in close reading and comparison of primary sources through historical-critical analysis.
- **Develop your research skills** *through the Weekly Activity and various components of the Scaffolded Research Project.* We will navigate the library website, create bibliographies, assess thesis questions, and much more.
- **Improve your oral and written peer communication skills** *through group work on Zoom and engagement with discussion boards on D2L.* We will be talking to each other about what we're learning and assessing each other's ideas critically, respectfully, and constructively.
- **Create new ideas** *through our Scaffolded Research Project.* We will critically engage passages of the Bible and explore how they were understood in their original context, creating new knowledge and arguments about how to read old texts.
- **Become a better writer** *through our Weekly Reading Quizzes and Scaffolded Writing Project, and writing exercises within modules.* We become better writers by writing. This course will prompt you to write.
- **Think historically** *through our Weekly Reading Quizzes and our Scaffolded Research Project.* Through our growing historical knowledge, we will analyze passages from the Hebrew Bible to better understand the cultural logic at play in the texts.
- **Develop critical perspective** *through all components of this class.* Ultimately, this class will allow you to see the Bible and much of its cultural legacy in a new light.

Course content objectives:

By the end of this class you will be able to:

- Provide an overview of the content and structure of the Hebrew Bible, as well as in-depth accounts of particular stories, characters, and ideas from close readings
- Understand the various texts of the Hebrew Bible as addressing concerns of their original historical context through a relation between the Israelite people and their god

- Identify cross-cultural influences on the conceptualization of divine communication in biblical texts
- Communicate and discuss orally with peers several major critical issues in the study of the historical context of the Bible
- Consider the value of employing decolonial and intersectional critical lenses to the reading of the Bible

ASSESSMENTS:

Date	Assessment	Weight (%)	Required pass/fail
Due Wednesdays at end of class	<p>Weekly activity</p> <p>Wednesday Zoom sessions are dedicated to building postsecondary research skills and information literacy that will allow you to complete your final projects for this course and other coursework for classes throughout your university careers.</p> <p>Activities will take place during Wednesday sessions and will benefit from group collaboration towards completion.</p> <p>If you are not able to attend a live session, students may <u>inform the instructor in advance</u> or as soon as they are able and then complete and submit the activity independently.</p> <p>Activity details for the week are outlined in the Weekly Modules.</p> <p>Learning goal: develop basic research skills and information literacy. Completion of activity is designed to demonstrate competency.</p>	<p>20%</p> <p>(13x1.5% and rounded up by 0.5%)</p>	
Due Fridays weekly; students select dates	<p>Weekly reading responses</p> <p>Each week there will be a single question based on the primary and/or secondary sources for the week. This question will be provided to you alongside your readings. Before you do your readings for the week, take a look at the reading guide and the reading question, then read with this in mind.</p> <p>Responses will be submitted through the Quiz tool on D2L. There is no time limit, infinite attempts, and a 250 word max. You may a response each week if desired for a total of 13 responses, but only your best 10 will be counted.</p> <p>Learning goal: improve critical reading skills by reading towards a goal and synthesising your thoughts through writing.</p>	<p>30% total</p> <p>(10X3%)</p> <p>13 weeks of options, best 10 count towards grade</p>	
Scaffolded Final Research Project: Research Paper OR Contemporary Midrash			

Various dates (see below)	<p>The total project is worth 50% of your grade. Each component has a separate grade. “Final submission” of entire project required for course credit.</p> <p>For the final project you have the opportunity to choose either a Research Paper or a Creative Research Midrash. Details of both options available on D2L under Assignments. Both assignments have scaffolded frameworks that involve the submission of various components over time. This allows students to receive feedback on their projects as they progress. All final projects will be posted on D2L for class viewing.</p> <p>Research Paper In this writing assignment you will choose a scene from the Hebrew bible that depicts an attempted act of communication (successful or unsuccessful) between a human and a divine being and formulate an argument that contextualizes the passage and explains its significance.</p> <p>Contemporary Midrash In this assignment you will develop a narrative or artistic midrash (a commentary or creative interpretation and/or narrative elaboration that fills potential gaps or explains perceived inconsistencies) of a scene from the Hebrew bible that depicts an attempted act of communication (successful or unsuccessful) between a human and a divine being. Your final project may be written or visual art (accompanied by written research and reflection pieces).</p>	50% total	
Feb. 12	Thesis Question or Midrashic Problem	5%	
Feb. 26	Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	15%	
March 12	Outline	5%	
March 26	Draft	Optional	
Apr 9	Final Submission for class viewing	25%	Required

***LEARNING RESOURCES**

Students will not be required to purchase a textbook for this course. Instead, all required learning materials will be made available through D2L, open source resources, and the library. We will be reading and viewing entries from the scholar-populated, open-access source [Bible Odyssey](#), as well as scholarly articles.

Should you wish to purchase a study bible, I recommend [The Jewish Study Bible](#) (2nd edition), edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler.

***LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES AND REQUIREMENTS**

As this course takes places completely online, students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer or tablet with supported operating system, as well as the latest security, and malware updates;
- A current and updated web browser;
- Webcam (built-in or external);
- Microphone and speaker (built-in or external), or headset with microphone;
- Current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection.

MISSED OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS*

If students miss a required component of the course, they must contact the instructor in writing within 24 hours to discuss options to submit and/or make-up for that component. Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Life happens and sometimes you need **extensions**. As much as you can, please reach out as soon as you realize that a deadline is not going to work for you. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis and with the understanding that we continue to operate under special circumstances due to the ongoing public health crisis. If in doubt, please email your instructor or drop by office hours.

***GRADING**

A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme, used within the Department of Classics and Religion:

A+	100 – 96%	A	95 – 90%	A-	89 – 85%
B+	84 – 80%	B	79 – 75%	B-	74 – 70%
C+	69 – 65%	C	64 – 60%	C-	59 – 55%
D+	54 – 53%	D	52 – 50%	F	Under 50%

Rubrics for each assessment will be provided on D2L.

A student's final grade for the course is the sum of the separate assignments. It is not necessary to pass each assignment separately in order to pass the course.

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITING

All written assignments will be assessed for understanding of course content, ability to assess and critique sources, and facility in constructing an original argument. Writing skills are important insofar as they allow us to communicate our ideas clearly and effectively. If a reader misunderstands an argument because of errors or a lack of clarity due to difficult writing, then it is the writer's task to be clearer. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers **must be properly documented** to allow readers to clearly distinguish your great insights from the ideas of others.

We will be working on developing some of these writing skills throughout this course, however you are **encouraged** to use writing support services in the Learning Commons. These services are in place to help YOU develop your writing skills, no matter how you feel about your writing. For further information, please refer to the official online University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, E. Course

Information, E.2: Writing Across the Curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Expectations for student conduct in this course:

This course examines writings that many people, including some of your peers, hold to be sacred and/or of special cultural, historic, and religious value. As with all religious texts, we approach our inquiry with respect for the beliefs of others, and we approach our peers as humans with diverse opinions and experiences. We learn best when we listen carefully and speak from a place of mutual respect.

While we acknowledge the differences that exist between us and the different experiences we bring to the reading of these texts, in this course we will be learning to talk about sacred texts from a critical—not confessional or faith-based—perspective. We will respect the opinions of others *and* we will respect the process of critical inquiry.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to attend synchronous Zoom class sessions regularly and to be fully present and engaged in class activities and discussions by using their microphones, the chat function, and synchronous learning tools provided. In-class activities constitute part of your grade (Weekly Activity). If students miss a class session, please inform the instructor in advance and (if absent from Wednesday session) complete and submit the activities on your own time or (if absent from Friday session) your discussion contribution and brief critical reflection to the week's discussion board.

Please know that being an active participant in synchronous sessions in the ways that you are able will help you immensely in your learning. It is our joint task to create an environment that is safe and conducive to experimenting with challenging ideas. These sessions are opportunities for you to connect with your peers and I hope that you can find ways to communicate your ideas (whether with the microphone, the chat function, the whiteboard, or other learning tools).

CONDUCT

Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

GUIDELINES FOR ZOOM SESSIONS

Zoom is a video conferencing program that will allow us to meet at specific times for a “live” video conference, so that we can have the opportunity to meet each other virtually and discuss relevant course topics as a learning community.

To help ensure Zoom sessions are private, do not share the Zoom link or password with others, or on any social media platforms. Zoom links and passwords are only intended for students registered in the

course. Zoom recordings and materials presented in Zoom, including any teaching materials, must not be shared, distributed or published without the instructor's permission.

The use of video conferencing programs relies on participants to act ethically, honestly and with integrity; and in accordance with the principles of fairness, good faith, and respect (as per the [Code of Conduct](#)). When entering Zoom or other video conferencing sessions (such as MS Teams), you play a role in helping create an effective, safe and respectful learning environment. Please be mindful of how your behaviour in these sessions may affect others. Participants are required to use names officially associated with their UCID (legal or preferred names listed in the Student Centre) when engaging in these activities. Instructors/moderators can remove those whose names do not appear on class rosters. Non-compliance may be investigated under relevant University of Calgary conduct policies (e.g. [Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy](#)). If participants have difficulties complying with this requirement, they should email the instructor of the class explaining why, so the instructor may consider whether to grant an exception, and on what terms. For more information on how to get the most out of your zoom sessions visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/guidelines-for-zoom/>

The instructor may record online Zoom class sessions for the purposes of supporting student learning in this class – such as making the recording available for review of the session or for students who miss a session. Students will be advised before the instructor initiates a recording of a Zoom session. These recordings will be used to support student learning only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

COURSE EVALUATIONS AND STUDENT FEEDBACK

Students are welcome to provide feedback at any point in the course by emailing the instructor directly. A midterm survey of teaching will be sent out to provide students an opportunity for anonymous feedback, for the instructor to adjust their approaches to teaching and learning, and continuously improve the course. Student feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the standard University Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) and Faculty course evaluation forms.

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY POLICIES AND SUPPORTS

***ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior which compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure please visit:

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>

<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-procedure.pdf>

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity Website at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.

***ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The Student Accommodations policy is available at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations>.

Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities.pdf>). Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than Disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

***INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

***FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY**

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

***COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION**

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright-policy.pdf>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

***MEDIA RECORDING**

Please refer to the following statement on media recording of students: https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Media-Recording-in-Learning-Environments-OSP_FINAL.pdf

***Media recording for lesson capture**

The instructor may use media recordings to capture the delivery of a lecture. These recordings are intended to be used for lecture capture only and will not be used for any other purpose. Although the recording device will be fixed on the Instructor, in the event that incidental student participation is recorded, the instructor will ensure that any identifiable content (video or audio) is masked, or will seek consent to include the identifiable student content to making the content available on University approved platforms.

***Media recording for self-assessment of teaching practices**

The instructor may use media recordings as a tool for self-assessment of their teaching practices. Although the recording device will be fixed on the instructor, it is possible that student participation in the course may be inadvertently captured. These recordings will be used for instructor self-assessment only and will not be used for any other purpose.

***Media recording for the assessment of student learning**

The instructor may use media recordings as part of the assessment of students. This may include but is not limited to classroom discussions, presentations, clinical practice, or skills testing that occur during the course. These recordings will be used for student assessment purposes only and will not be shared or used for any other purpose.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE POLICY

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

***OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk