‘Claims of faithfulness in copying suggest, and tales of texts discovered in miraculous circumstances directly reveal, the presence of the forger.’

‘Together, discourse and force are the chief means whereby social borders, hierarchies, institutional formations, and habituated patterns of behavior are both maintained and modified.’

Course description: ‘Current and seminal issues related to the study of the religion of ancient Israel.’ The topic for this fall’s seminar is Josiah and Deuteronomy: The Politics of Fraud? We will engage in the close study of a variety of biblical and extrabiblical texts which treat the reign of the Judaean king Josiah (ca. 640-609 BCE), the alleged ‘discovery’ of an ‘ancient’ scroll in the Temple by the high priest Hilkiah, prophetic ‘authentication’ of this scroll by its advocates and apparent resistance to its import by critics, and the broader imperial context (Assyrian, Egyptian, Neo-Babylonian) wherein the program of cultic reform is represented as having taken place. Significant attention will be devoted to varying scholarly assessments of these and related issues from the early nineteenth century to the present. Prerequisite: the successful completion of at least one year of study of introductory biblical Hebrew (or its equivalent) at the university level or the verbal permission of the instructor.

Required textbooks:

K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977), or later reprints of this edition. Alternatively, one may use the relevant portions of the Miqra’ot gedolot or just about any other Hebrew language edition (e.g., Koren; Kittel; Letteris) provided there is no western translation adjacent or in near proximity to the Masoretic Text.

Supplementary readings and/or exercises will be assigned or distributed by the instructor as needed.

Course requirements:

a. Diligent attendance and preparation. Almost perfect attendance (see below) is an essential requirement for this course. Each class meeting builds upon the knowledge gained and queried during our previous meetings. Moreover, oral recitation and group study/discussion comprises practically the entirety of every class session. Preparation for class usually involves the completion of a series of required Hebrew and English language readings; brief written assignment(s) or lexical investigations are also possible. Individual students may sometimes be asked to initiate and guide our collective examination and discussion of the weekly topics. Students are expected to contribute in an informed manner to the public analysis and discussion of any assigned topic. The instructor’s collective assessment of one’s attendance, weekly class preparation, brief written assignments, and oral presentations will constitute 60% of the final course grade.

b. Research project. One (1) formal research project will be presented in oral and written form (at least 20 double-spaced pages, exclusive of notes and list of sources) that focuses upon a particular topic relevant to the study of the ideological dimensions of the Deuteronomic revolution. After a close reading of primary and secondary sources and in consultation with the instructor, the student should select a topic of individual interest that permits such an extended exposition, analysis, and/or evaluation. The topic for one’s project should be selected no later than the October 13 class meeting. The project will be presented orally (approximately 15-20 minutes) during the required final class meeting (December 15); the formal written version of the papers are due by 12:00 PM on Thursday, December 9. The research project accounts for 40% of the course grade.

c. Zakhor (Remember!): Mastery of the assigned readings, the timely completion of all assignments, and diligent class attendance are necessary prerequisites for the successful completion of this course. Each student is responsible for all lectures, class discussions, hand-outs, assignments, and announcements, whether or not s/he is present when they occur.

Miscellaneous information:

a. The grading scale used in this course is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91-95+</td>
<td>A = demonstrable mastery of material—outstanding performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-90</td>
<td>B = satisfactory performance of assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-80</td>
<td>C = inadequate and/or faulty understanding of material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-70</td>
<td>U = unacceptable graduate-level work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. One of the requirements of this course is to complete the work of the course on time. Sometimes there are legitimate reasons for late work—an illness or other emergency. ‘Emergency,’ however, does not include your social involvements, travel plans, job schedule, disk and/or printer failures, the state of your love life, your obligations to other courses, or general malaise over the state of the world. The world has been in a mess as long as anyone can remember, and most of the world’s work is done by people whose lives are a mass of futility and discontent. If you haven’t learned yet, you had better learn now to work under the conditions of the world as it is. Therefore:

1) All missing work is averaged as a 0 in the computation of the course grade.
2) All written work falls due on the dates scheduled in the syllabus, or on the date announced by the instructor in class (usually the next class meeting). ‘Late’ work will not be accepted from those who were privy to its oral evaluation and discussion (i.e., you were present while we ‘went over it’ but you neglected to do it beforehand). In the event of one’s absence, ‘late’ submissions bear the following penalties: one day late/one letter grade; two days late/two letter grades; three or more days late/U. Please note: these ‘days’ are calendar days, not class meeting days. For accounting purposes, letter grades bear the following values: A=95; A-=92; B+=88; B=85; B-=82; C+=78; C=75; C-=72; U=35. Seminar papers are assessed according to the following formulae: \(\sqrt{+} = A; \sqrt{-} = B; \sqrt{=} = U\). An untyped paper or final project automatically receives the grade U, as do those typed submissions which violate the required parameters or which the instructor deems physically or grammatically substandard.
3) Since your diligent physical participation is critical for the success of this course, attendance at class meetings will be monitored by the instructor. One absence is regrettable; two absences are the limit of tolerability. Three (3) or more absences will result in an automatic U for the course. Please note that – with the exception of religious holidays – the instructor does not distinguish ‘excused’ from ‘unexcused’ absences. Unsanctioned late arrivals and early departures will be tallied as absences.
4) Policy regarding Audits: the instructor expects auditors (whether formally enrolled as such or not) to meet the same attendance, preparation, and oral participation standards as those students who are taking the course for credit. The instructor does not expect auditors to prepare and submit any written assignments.
d. Assistance and solicitation of criticism is your right as a member of the class. It is not a privilege to be granted or withheld. Do not hesitate to request it nor wait too late in the course for it to be of help.

e. A number of lexical and grammatical aids are available for student consultation in the Cuneiform Studies Laboratory (Macy 216). For assistance, please see the instructor.

f. This class will not be meeting on the following three days: September 8 (‘Erev Rosh ha-Shanah); September 22 (‘Erev Sukkot); November 24 (Musaf SBL/‘Erev Thanksgiving).

PRIMARY TEXTS

Biblical passages:
1 Kgs 12:25-13:34
2 Kgs 22:1-23:30
2 Chr 34:1-35:27
Isa 8:16-9:6; 10:5-12:6
Amos 7:1-9:15
Zeph 1:1-3:20

Parabiblical passages:
1 Esdr (= 3 Ezra) 1:1-33
Sir 49:1-4
11Q Temple (11Q19) 56.12-59.21
Josephus, Antiquitates 10.47-80 (= LCL 6:182-201)

Rabbinic and medieval passages:
Seder ‘Olam Rabbah §24
y. Šeqal. 6.1, 49c; y. Soṭah 8.3, 22c
b. Yoma 52b; Tu’an. 22a-b; Hor. 12a
Tg. Ezek 1:1
Yalq. Šim. ad 2 Chron 35 §1085
Radaq ad 1 Kgs 6:19; 2 Chron 35:3
Wertheimer, Oṣar midrashim, 2:53.
Rambam, M.T. Hilḥot Bet ha-beḥirah 4.1

Patristic passages:
Jerome ad Ezek 1:1

SECONDARY TEXTS

Minimally, students are expected to acquire a comfortable familiarity with the contents of the following works regardless of whether or not they have been ‘formally’ assigned by the instructor:


