

Torah/ Pentateuch (Hybrid Learning)
Rabbi Barry R. Friedman

BIB-D506-01
3 credits

Course Description:

The Torah (Pentateuch) is a complex compilation of material, reflecting the beliefs, desires, and norms from ancient Israel. In this course we begin to understand the diversity of this material and the various approaches that have been taken toward it in the scholarly world. We will accomplish this by reading a significant portion of the Torah with commentaries in English, along with representative selections from secondary literature. Since the Torah (and by extension the entire Hebrew Bible) is a fundamental text of Jewish self-understanding and was written within the context of a Jewish milieu, we will approach the text from a Jewish historical, intellectual, and faith perspective.

Aquinas Mission: This course advances the Aquinas Mission to educate men and women to preach, to teach, to minister, and to lead.

Course Objectives:

- Engage in close reading of Biblical passages.
- Study Biblical commentaries to understand traditional Jewish insights into the text.
- Read articles using modern critical methods of understanding the Torah in its historical and social setting.
- Examine one Biblical passage in great depth.
- Experience personal intellectual and spiritual growth.

Expectations:

- Close reading of all materials assigned.
- Active participation in online discussions.
- Creative and respectful reflection on classmates' comments.
- Open and forthcoming discussion at Intensive.
- Deep examination into one Biblical passage for research paper.
- Thoughtful and well written research paper and reflection paper.

Requirements:

- Active participation in all class activities.
- Demonstration of knowledge of assigned reading materials and depth of comprehension and reflection through the quality of oral, written, and online work.

Course Evaluation:

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| • Quality of online participation | 25% |
| • Quality of Intensive participation | 25% |
| • Research paper of ten pages (plus bibliography) | 40% |
| • Reflection paper of two to three pages | 10% |

Required Texts:

1. Berlin, Adele; Brettler, Marc Zvi; Fishbane, Michael (editors), The Jewish Study Bible: featuring The Jewish Publication Society TANAKH Translation (Hardcover), Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN: 0195297512. (In this class, we will use the abbreviation JSB to refer to this text.) Throughout this course, whenever we study Biblical texts in JSB and other editions of the Bible, the assignment includes reading all accompanying commentaries.
2. Brettler, Marc Zvi, How To Read The Jewish Bible (Paperback), Oxford University Press, 2007. ISBN: 0195325222. (In this class, we will use the abbreviation HTRTJB to refer to this text.)
3. Other readings will be posted on the Web site.