

HISTORY 413  
ANCIENT ISRAEL  
TuTh 9:30—10:45  
MJ 101

Art Marmorstein  
TC 363  
Phone: 626-2608  
Hours: M 2-3, W 1:00-4:00  
TuTh 11-12

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The people of ancient Israel left no great works of art or architecture. They made virtually no contributions to astronomy, medicine, physics, or biology. They created no mighty empire. And yet the Israelites are probably the most important of all ancient civilizations in terms of their impact on subsequent civilization. As more than one modern scholar has noted, no member of Western civilization can consider himself fully educated if he is not familiar with the Israelites and their one contribution to subsequent civilization, the Bible.

This course will provide the familiarity with ancient Israel necessary to a good understanding of Western civilization. It will include a survey of Israelite history from the time of the Patriarchs to the time of the Great Diaspora (1900 BC--AD 70). It will also include extensive readings from the Old Testament and the Deuterocanonicals.

## **ON-LINE:**

My e-mail address is [art.marmorstein@northern.edu](mailto:art.marmorstein@northern.edu). You will be able to find on-line help for this class via D2L, but you might find it quicker to go to my regular website, [www.marmorstein.website](http://www.marmorstein.website). There is also an official blog for this course: *Torah, Torah, Torah 2025* (<http://torahtorah2025.blogspot.com>).

## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

You will need a Bible for this class. Having a good study Bible will help a lot. In past versions of the course, I have asked students to purchase the ESV study Bible.

I will also be having you read selections from Thomas Winton's *Documents from Old Testament Times*. You can probably find inexpensive used copies online, but this "flipbook" edition online will probably be sufficient: <https://archive.org/details/documentsfromold00insoci>.

Please be sure to do all the assigned readings \*before\* class on the day assigned, and add a comment on the reading to that day's blog post. We will be discussing the readings in class.

## **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS:**

- 1/14 Introduction: Survey of Hebrew History
- 1/16 A Very Good Place to Start (Genesis 1-11)
  
- 1/21 To Begin the Beginning (Genesis 12-50)
- 1/23 A Strange Interlude: Approaches to the Torah

- 1/28 Yes, Jean-Paul, There is an Exit (Exodus 1-20)  
 1/30 Torah, Torah, Torah (Exodus 21-40)
- 2/4 As Moses Said in His Last Exciting Lecture (Deuteronomy 1-15)  
 2/6 Choose Life (Deuteronomy 16-33)
- 2/11 **\*\*\* Midterm I \*\*\***  
 2/13 Warts with Heroes (Joshua/Judges 1-21)
- 2/18 The Tragical History of Eli (I Samuel 1-14)  
 2/20 The Tragical History of Saul (I Samuel 15—31)
- 2/25 The Tragical History of David (II Samuel 1-24)  
 2/27 The Tragical History of Israel and Judah, Part I (I Kings 1-22)
- 3/4 TTHOIAJ, Part II (II Kings 1-17)  
 3/6 TTHOIAJ, Part III (II Kings 18-25)
- 3/8-16 **\*\*\* Spring Break: No Class \*\*\***
- 3/18 Review/Catch-up  
 3/20 **\*\*\* Midterm II Exam\*\*\***
- 3/25 The Prophet's Lot is Not a Happy One (Amos 1-9)  
 3/27 A Burden Worth Bearing (Isaiah 1-66)
- 4/1 Cry me a River... (Jeremiah 1-30)  
 4/3 ...I Cried a River Over You (Jeremiah 31-52)
- 4/8 Dem Bones Gonna Rise Again (Ezekiel 1-48)
- 4/10 To Everything, There is a Season (Ecclesiastes 1-11)
- 4/15 The Words of the Wise (Proverbs 1-3 carefully, skim the rest)  
 4/17 The Problem of Evil I (Job 1-5, 19, 37-42)
- 4/22 The Problem of Evil II (Habakkuk, Daniel)  
 4/24 Temple to Temple (Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi)
- 4/29 Catch-up Day  
 5/1 The Exciting Conclusion to this Course!

FINAL EXAM: Friday, May 9, 7:30-9:30 (MJ 101)

### **GRADING:**

There will be three major exams for this course (two “midterms” and a final), each of which will count approximately 25% when I determine your final grade. The remaining 25% of your

grade will be based on your blog entries, attendance and participation.

### **BLOG:**

For each day scheduled for a discussion of primary sources (almost every day the class meets!), I would like you to add an entry to the class blog (<http://torahtorah2025.blogspot.com>). In general, what I want you to do is pick out a key verse/passage from the assigned reading and either:

1. Explain why you think this verse is the key to understanding what the selection is about.
2. Explain why you think this verse is the best/most memorable in the assigned reading.
3. Explain why you think this verse is the most difficult/hard to understand in the passage.

If earlier posters have argued for different verses as either key, best, or hardest, explain why you think your line is a better choice.

Since part of the goal here is to make sure you are prepared for class discussion, late blog entries will not be counted.

### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

As much as possible, I want this course to be a seminar and not a lecture class. Because of this, it is extremely important to have done the assigned reading before each class and be prepared to discuss those readings. Each student should have in mind at least three good questions based on that day's reading. These questions will be an important part of many class sessions.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY:**

Please make sure all electronic devices are turned off and put away before class begins. Cell phones, laptop computers, MP3 players, and similar devices are all distracting to other students. I do *\*not\** allow the use of electronic dictionaries during exams.

### **EXAM FORMAT:**

Midterms and Final exam--8 ID's, 1 essay

ID's will be selected from the terms put on the board at the beginning of each lecture. You will be asked not only to identify the terms, but also to explain their historical significance. I am impressed when students can include plenty of detailed information, but I am even more impressed when students can show how the ID terms relate to important themes discussed in this class.

Essay questions will deal with major themes discussed in the lectures. Most often, the exam question will be a generalization I have made in class with the additional word, "Comment."

A student who studies hard and does the required reading should have plenty to say in response to each of these questions. You will be given 75 minutes for each midterm and two

hours for the final exam. Most students will need the full time to do a good job.

What is a good job? I tell students over and over again that a good essay consists of a series of good generalizations based on the exam question and backed up with specific support from the lectures and the readings. I am particularly impressed when students include in their essays references to primary source material.

### **PREPARING FOR MARMORSTEIN EXAMS:**

1. Think! Do not just memorize facts.
2. Prepare the essay questions first.
3. Come up with a fairly detailed outline for each essay.
4. Think of good topic sentences for each paragraph of your essay.
5. Use the key words of the exam question in your topic sentences.
6. Choose good supporting evidence for your topic sentences.
7. Use the appropriate ID terms in your essays.
8. Learn the ID's in context. Do not use a "flash card" approach.
9. Do not wait until the last minute to study.
10. Do spend extra time studying the week of the exam.
11. Do not just memorize facts. Think!

### **EXAM DAY INSTRUCTIONS:**

Taking the exam:

- Bring a blue book. Make sure there are no pages torn out.
- Use pen—blue or black ink preferred.
- Don't sit by anyone with whom you studied.
- Plan on spending the full time writing your exam.
- Always do the ID terms first.
- If you run out of time on the essay, include an outline of the material you would have covered.
- If you have extra time (very unlikely), go back and add extra info to your ID and essay responses.
- Be sure to discuss the significance of each ID term. Why is the figure/term important? How does that figure tie in to major themes discussed in class?
- Do not put all your essay information into one long paragraph. Shorter paragraphs with good topic sentences work best.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

Cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct run contrary to the purposes of higher education. Cheating includes the use of any notes during the midterm or final exam. Please place no marks of any kind on or in your blue book before I give the signal to begin taking the exam. All exams must be taken on blank bluebooks. On at least one exam, bluebooks will be checked before the exam. Bluebooks that have not been checked, have missing pages, or pages with large erasures will not be accepted.

It is not cheating to study with another student, to share notes, or to prepare essays or ID's together. However, if you do study with another student, be sure you do not sit next to each other during the exam.

Please be especially careful to observe academic integrity standards on the take-home quizzes. The quizzes are intended to make sure you have done the primary source readings, and your comments should be based on your own observations, not someone else's ideas. Plagiarism (e.g. copying material from the internet or recycling work done by another student) is not allowed. I do sometimes allow "group work" on quizzes, but unless I have specifically indicated that you are allowed to work with other students, make sure your quiz comments are entirely your own.

Northern State University's official policy and procedures on cheating and academic dishonesty as outlined in the [Northern State University Student Handbook](#) applies to this course. Students caught cheating will receive a zero for the assignment, and, since zeros are worse than F's, they are likely to fail the course as a whole.

### **NSU DISABILITY POLICY:**

Northern State University recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional climate in which students with disabilities can thrive. If you have any type of disability for which you require accommodations, please contact the NSU Office of Disability Services (626-2371, Student Center 217) as soon as possible to discuss your particular needs.

### **BOARD OF REGENTS ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY:**

Under Board of Regents and University policy student academic performance may be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the academic dean administratively in charge of the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

### **NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY STATEMENT:**

Northern State University strives to build an academic community of people from diverse backgrounds and experiences who are committed to sharing diverse ideas in a mutually respectful environment. We value open discourse and consideration of multiple perspectives on issues of regional, national, and international importance, in which individuals are free to express their points of view. Our goal is a diverse learning community with equal opportunity for all.

