

**CUYAMACA COLLEGE**  
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES 160 – INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE: THE FIRST TESTAMENT**

3 hours lecture, 3 units

**Catalog Description**

Introductory survey of the contents, themes, literary genres, canons, historical background, and modern critical methods for analysis and interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures.

**Prerequisite**

None

**Course Content**

- 1) Origins and development of Hebrew biblical literature
- 2) Differing canons/collections of Jewish scriptures
- 3) Brief overview of modern critical methodologies used in the analysis and interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures
- 4) Survey of the *Tanak* (Hebrew bible) from the standpoint of modern critical scholarship:
  - a. *Torah* (Law/Pentateuch)
  - b. *Nevi'im* (Prophets)
  - c. *Kethu'bim* (Writings)
- 5) Apocrypha or “deuterocanonical” books

**Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- 1) Identify the key themes, divisions, literary genres and narrative strands of the Hebrew scriptures.
- 2) Explain the historical circumstances which gave rise to the differing collections of Jewish scriptures; in particular, the Palestinian and Alexandrian collections, but also the so-called Apocrypha or “deuterocanonical” texts.
- 3) Examine selected passages of the Hebrew scriptures from the standpoint of modern critical approaches, such as historical-critical methodology, form criticism, literary criticism, textual criticism, narrative criticism, hermeneutical methodologies, etc.
- 4) Situate the respective writings within the historical contexts out of which they arose and by which their specific viewpoints were conditioned.

**Method of Evaluation**

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration, or where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Exams
- 2) Essays or term papers
- 3) Periodic quizzes, written assignments

**Special Materials Required of Student**

None

**Minimum Instructional Facilities**

Smart classroom

**Method of Instruction**

Lecture and discussion

**Out-of-Class Assignments**

- 1) Short essays and written assignments that identify and analyze the narratives, motifs, themes, and points of view in biblical texts.
- 2) Written homework assignments (worksheets, journals, etc.) which summarize and/or reflect upon the assigned reading material.
- 3) Research papers that examine biblical themes, historical contexts, and modern scholarly viewpoints in a more comprehensive manner.

**Texts and References**

- 1) Required (representative examples):
  - a. Frank S. Frick, *A Journey through the Hebrew Scriptures*, 2nd edition, Wadsworth, 2002.
  - b. *The Bible with the Apocrypha*. New Revised Standard Version, any edition.
- 2) Supplemental: None

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and discuss the principle themes and divisions of the Hebrew Bible.
- 2) List and explain the principle narrative strands of the Pentateuch, as identified by modern scholarship.
- 3) Situate biblical passages within the historical contexts out of which they arose and by which their specific viewpoints were conditioned.