

Final Exam Instructions – CB 39 Fall 2013

The final exam will consist of ID's, passage identification/discussion, and two non-essays, and a mysterious bonus essay question (see #1).

1. When you last chatted with your mother she asked you what you were learning in your Hebrew Bible course. You replied that you could best respond at the end of the course. Well, the course is now at an end. Compose a careful and substantive summary of the content of the course for her (typical length: two pages) and submit it as hard-copy when the final exam is distributed (unless your TF makes other arrangements). (No credit, but it will redound to your benefit to have done this).
2. 10 IDs (drawn from the ID list on the course page; session 12 and onwards). (25%)
3. Identify the source, explain the meaning, and *assess the significance*, of five biblical passages (not more than one paragraph apiece). The passages will be drawn from the list below. (25%).
4. The final exam will have two non-essays, one general, drawing on material from the entire course, and one specific, drawing on material *primarily* (but not necessarily exclusively) from the second half of the course (session 12 and onward). These are non-essays: begin with a thesis statement; then write an outline or bullet points, and only enough prose so that your meaning is clear. In your non-essay cite specific passages from the Bible to back up your assertions, as well as relevant material from Kugel, and the lectures. (approx.. 25% each = 50%)

General essay: drawing on material *from the entire course*, either A or B or C. On the final exam you may be given a choice -- or not.

A. Is the Hebrew Bible a single coherent thing or not? That is, does it have a point, a thesis, an argument, or is it a chaotic assembly of this and that, bits and pieces that have little to do with each other? In your answer, be specific. Explain the criteria by which you are constructing your answer; acknowledge too the arguments on the other side of the question.

B. What is the image of God in the Hebrew Bible? Is he (is it a he?) accessible to humans, or inaccessible? Like a human, or totally other? Loving and friendly, or stern and bellicose? Fair and trustworthy, or fickle and capricious? Universal and cosmic, or particular and local?

C. In general, is the Bible "objective" or is it "ideological?" Does the Bible have biases? If so, what are some of the most important? What alternative points of view can we reconstruct or imagine existing in ancient Israel and Judah concerning the Bible's subject matter?

A and B and C: : Illustrate your answer with examples drawn from the biblical books that we treated in the first part of the term (the Torah) as well as from the biblical books that we treated in the second part (Prophets and Writings). Use in the first instance passages that were assigned or that were discussed in the lectures/readings.

Specific non-essay: answer either 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5. The final exam may give you a choice, or not.

1. What are the distinctive features of P and D? How do they conceive of God and the community of God's worshipers (=Israel)? According to each, what demands does God make of the Israelites, and how should they fulfill those demands?
2. What is the significance of the literary prophets? What is their message? Do the prophets oppose the ritual of the Temple? Why do the prophets spend so much time talking to/about the nations? What does the future hold according to the prophets?
3. What is Wisdom Literature? What are its major characteristics and concerns? Does Wisdom Literature affirm or undercut traditional Israelite beliefs about God?
4. After the destruction of the temple in 587 BCE, how were the Judaeans, both in the homeland and in exile, to relate to the foreign powers under whom, and amidst whom, they lived? Compare the responses, both explicit and implicit, of Jeremiah, II Isaiah, and Daniel. (extra credit if you can do Esther too.)
5. Compare and contrast the role(s) that the Hebrew Bible plays in Judaism with the role(s) that it plays in Christianity. Discuss how Jews claim the Hebrew Bible for Judaism, and Christians claim it for Christianity.

Date and place for the final exam: Sat 14 December 9 AM, Harvard Hall 104

Passages you should know for passage identification and discussion:

Leviticus 16 and 19

Deuteronomy 4; 6:4-9; 7:1-2; 12

Judges 1-2

1 Samuel 8-9

2 Samuel 7

1 Kings 3; 5; 11; 12; 14; 18; 21

2 Kings 4;

Isaiah 1; 7:10-16; 9:1-6; 10; 11:1-9; 45:1-7; 52:13-53:12; 56; 58;

Jeremiah 7; 25; 26; 29; 31;

Ezekiel 37;

Proverbs 1; 8

Psalms 2; 23; 74; 110; 145.

Job 1-3; 28

Daniel 1; 3; 7; 12