



*God's special relationship with Israel and the law of Moses presupposed God's uniqueness as the only God. In the OT story, however, the Israelites constantly broke this covenant by worshipping other deities as shown by the above stelae, altars, and statues dedicated to other deities.*

**COURSE:** Rel 204 **010 MC (SECTION # 1)** and **020 MC (SECTION # 2)**  
**SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**TERM/YEAR:** FALL Semester, 2023  
**SESSION:**

**SCHEDULE**  
**AND CLASSROOM:** Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays  
**SECTION # 1: 9:00 – 9:50 AM, LAWSON # 104**  
**SECTION # 2: 10:00 – 10:50 AM, LAWSON # 104**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Aquiles Ernesto Martínez  
Professor of Religion  
Religion Program Coordinator

**OFFICE HOURS:** You may call or email me to make an appointment via TEAMS or at my office.  
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**CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION.** A panoramic view of the content, main characteristics, and message(s) of the Hebrew Bible considering their social context and as literary expression of the faith, life, and history of Ancient Israel.

**RELIGION PROGRAM OBJETIVES (RPO).**

1. To enable students to understand the various major religions of the world (RPO 1).
2. To enable students to clarify their vocation (RPO 2).
3. To assist students to understand the Christian tradition (RPO 3).
4. To enable students to think critically and be able to express those ideas in writing, speech, and visual media (RPO 4).
5. To help students become familiar with a variety of research methods appropriate to the field of religion, particularly those relevant to the study of primary Sources (RPO 5).
6. To help students develop their own understanding of moral and spiritual issues (RPO 6).

**LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COURSE OBJECTIVES.** Considering the general objectives of the Religion Program, the main purpose of this course is to introduce you to the basic elements that define a collection of Ancient Jewish documents called “the Old Testament” or “Hebrew Bible” (which is foundational for understanding Judaism and Christianity). More specifically, after completing this course, you will be able

1. To define the nature, scope, and purpose of the Hebrew Scriptures (**RPO 1**)
2. To discuss the significant impact the OT has had in Judaism, Christianity, and Western society (**RPO 1, 3, 4 and 5**)
3. To provide a brief explanation of the origin and formation of the OT as "Sacred Scripture" or Canon in Judaism and Christianity (**RPO 1, 3, and 4**)
4. To draw a picture of the socio-cultural background that served as the matrix and socializing environment of the OT and its participants (i.e., The Ancient Near East) (**RPO 1**)
5. To identify some of the main historical, literary, theological, and socio-cultural features of the OT (**RPO 1 and 5**)
6. To describe the plot of the Hebrew Bible and identify some its main theological themes (**RPO 1**)
7. To summarize the basic message of some of the books of the OT (**RPO 1**)
8. To use a few practical strategies for reading the OT critically but with relevance and creativity (**RPO 1 and 5**)
9. To view the Hebrew Bible as a source of insight, inspiration, thought, faith, pleasure, and ethics (**RPO 1 and 6**).

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING SYSTEM.** Your academic performance will be evaluated based on a **100 point-scale**. All the points you earn for every assignment need to be added to your accumulated total, not averaged out. At the end of the course, the points you accumulate will give you the corresponding letter grade according to the following scale: **F (0 -59); D (60-69); C (70-79); B (80-89); A (90-100).** **Grades will NOT be rounded (unless you participate in class and/or do extra-work on the tests; see explanation below)** (for example, an accumulation of 79.5 points is not literally a B but a C). The assignments with their corresponding point-values will be distributed as follows:

**1. OPEN-BOOK TESTS (90 POINTS) (RPO 1, 3 AND 4).** Considering the learning objectives for this course, there will only be **5 TESTS** measuring your knowledge of some BASIC FACTS about the OT (from a literary, cultural, social, religious, and historical perspective) and the basic points of the OT story. To prepare for these tests, you must study (before every class) the handouts posted in CANVAS and my presentations. These tests will also have a section that will measure your ability to THINK CRITICALLY and APPLY the topics covered to your lives. This last section will have questions requiring short answers that you will have to work on before the day of

the test and turn them in that day with the rest of the tests. I will provide you with some TEST GUIDELINES or INSTRUCTIONS ahead of time so you can do well.

The point-distribution for these tests will be as follows:

*Test # 1 – 15 points*

*Test # 2 – 15 points*

*Test # 3 – 20 points*

*Test # 4 – 20 points*

*Test # 5 – 20 points*

Finally, you must take these tests on the designated dates. No exceptions! In cases of emergencies, I must be notified ahead of time. For the dates of these tests, please check *The Calendar of Topics and Assignments* below.

**2. PARTICIPATION IN CLASS (RPO 1-9) (10 POINTS).** Since all of us are part of a course that seeks to create a culture of teaching and learning, you are expected to intentionally participate in class with your insights, good observations, arguments from other perspectives, words of clarification, and meaningful questions, to contribute to an environment that is conducive to the personal understanding and the growth of all your classmates. We are partners in this undertaking! Thus, you must be willing and open to engage in conversations with the professor and others to be successful and get credit for it.

Taking notes, being silent in class, trying to participate, and coming to class **DO NOT count as participation**. Depending on the quantity and quality of your pro-active participation, and at my discretion, I will assign you a 0, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 points for this part of the course. The rule is at least **ONE PARTICIPATION PER CLASS**. AFTER THE SECOND WEEK OF CLASS, I will start **KEEPING TRACK** of your participation and assigning a tentative grade (as if it were the last day of class). This tentative grade can and/or will change depending on you.

Finally, any violations of the code of ethics as explained under “Formal Course Policies and Expectations” explained below will result in **AN AUTOMATIC 0/10** for the present evaluation category (for example, using your phones in the classroom or an unauthorized and inappropriate use of your laptops/tablets).

**AN IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING ALL ASSIGNMENTS.** Students who participate more than what is required or walk the extra mile on the tests will be considered for **EXTRA CREDIT** and/or for **GRADES TO BE ROUNDED** at the end of the semester.

**NO** academic work can be **RESUBMITTED**. However, **DRAFTS OF ANSWERS TO the SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS OF THE TESTS** can be sent ahead of time for review so you can do well on the tests.

**AN IMPORTANT NOTE FOR ATHLETES.** Those of who play sports for Reinhardt must contact me and let me know ahead on time when you will be missing class because of games, injuries and/or emergencies so I could make the corresponding adjustments. You must **NOT** rely on your coaches’ notifications sent to me. You must contact me individually about these issues.

**CREDIT HOUR STATEMENT**. Over 15 weeks, students will spend 150 minutes per week in lectures, class discussions, and examinations (37.5 hours for the semester). Instructional time includes a 3-hour final exam. Out-of-class work includes papers, reports, service as volunteers, visits to religious places, and preparation for exams, and is estimated at around 300 minutes per week (75 hours for the semester).

**CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS.** For those students needing help with their papers, study habits, note-taking, and preparation for test-taking, please make an appointment at “the Center for Student Success” (Lawson, bottom floor). They will more than happy to help you out. I am willing to give you a hand outside of the classroom as well.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.** Students with learning disabilities must read and comply with the following statements: *“The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a documented disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Academic Support Office (ASO). Reinhardt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Therefore, if you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the Academic Support Office (ASO). ASO is in the basement of Lawson Building. Phone is 770-720-5567. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper ASO letters/forms.”*

**COURSE FORMAL POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS.** Having in mind that education is about equipping students with the values, skills, knowledge, and experiences to interact with the world in relevant and transformative ways, it is expected that student will honor a set of ethical, professional, and civil principles that will guide their actions in this course. We hereby outline some of the most important ones:

1. **ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES.** To create a culture of learning, professionalism, and civility, all students are expected **to attend class faithfully and on time**. Although the Reinhardt Catalog states that attendance is an “obligation,” please remember that attending class is also a privilege. Formal education is a blessing not too many people enjoy. **Missing too many classes (without any legitimate justifications) will have negative implications on your final grade.** In the case of an emergency or justified absences, please contact me via email ahead of time to indicate the reasons why you were not or will not be in class.
2. **INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM.** Throughout this course the following ethical principles are assumed as norms of conduct:
  - a. **ANY FORM OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE AND WILL BE SERIOUSLY PENALIZED. PLAGIARISM or CHEATING will make you make you fail this course!!!!**
  - b. Good-in-class behavior is assumed as a norm. Any form of disrupting behavior is not acceptable. It is assumed that each student will follow the Reinhardt’s code of conduct as explained in the student handbook.
  - c. This class is a **FREE-CELL-PHONE ZONE**. Cell phones must be turned off and put in your pockets or back packs. Failure to comply with this requirement will have negative implications on you grade.
  - d. **LAPTOP COMPUTERS/TABLETS may only be used for TAKING NOTES and you must formally ask for permission to do so.** During class time, you are **NOT ALLOWED TO DO HOMEWORK FOR OTHER COURSES or USE SOCIAL MEDIA.** You must be fully present! Failure to comply with this requirement will have negative implications on you grade.
  - e. The conditions of this syllabus are binding and must be followed faithfully. I assume you all know its content. By deciding to take this course, you **ALL AGREE** to follow the norms ruling this course.
  - f. Any comment or suggestion that contributes to your growth as students, the improvement of this class, and a learning environment is welcome. I am here to help you learn, succeed and be a better human being. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to ask for help. Feel free to contact him at any time.



- 3. COMMUNICATION MODE.** All of you are responsible for **constantly checking CANVAS (Files, Announcements, etc.)** and your **Reinhardt email accounts** regarding issues pertaining to this course (materials, lectures, announcements, class schedule changes, grades, etc.). When you communicate with me, you must follow a **formal, respectful protocol**. You must be **polite and/or use manners**. **Do NOT use your personal emails!**

**4. IMPORTANT REINHARDT ACADEMIC DATES**

**August 15,** Tuesday Final day to add P-designated online courses

**August 21,** Monday Final day to change schedule, end of drop/add

**August 28,** Monday Last day to submit a graduation application for May 2024 degree completion without a late fee.

**October 10,** Tuesday Final date to withdraw with grade of W, full semester classes

**October 16-27** Advising/Registration for Winter Term 2023, and spring and summer 2024

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF STUDENT SUCCESS.** Your job is to do well in this class, be responsible, take initiative, follow my instructions carefully, listen, and be open to new understandings, skills, knowledge, and methodologies. My job is to make sure that these goal are achieved giving all of you my best. It is a relational undertaking. To this end, the following principles may help us get there:

- I. **HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES**
- II. **YOU CAN AND WILL RISE TO THE OCCASION**
- III. **THE QUALITY OF YOUR EFFORT IS THE KEY**
- IV. **YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE WITH YOUR IDEAS, QUESTISM KNOWLEDGE, AND EXPERIENCES**
- V. **LISTEN TO OTHER VOICES AND CONSIDER OTHER PERSPECTIVES**
- VI. **MAKE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES RELEVANT**
- VII. **BE ATTENTIVE, RESPONSIBLE, TAKE NOTES, AND PARTICIPATE**
- VIII. **REVIEW THE MATERIAL DAILY**
- IX. **DEVELOP FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIPS**
- X. **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT**

**REQUIRED READINGS.**

Any version of the Bible (preferably the NIV). I strongly recommend the Harper/Collins Study Bible.

Selected OT passages and presentations in class. Also, handouts to be downloaded from CANVAS.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS** (for those of you who would like to deepen your understanding of the OT).

Boadt, Lawrence. Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction. New York: Paulist Press, 1984.

Craigie, Peter C. The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth & Content. Nashville: Abingdon, 1986.

Holladay, William L. Long Ago God Spoke: How Christians May Hear the Old Testament Today. Fortress.

Laffey, Alice L. An Introduction to the Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.

Rendtorff, Rolf. The Old Testament: An Introduction. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991.

**CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS.**

**YOU MUST STUDY THE HANDOUTS AND PRESENTATIONS BEFORE COMING TO CLASS!**  
**SOME DAYS HIGHLIGHTED IN "BLUE" BELOW, WE WILL HAVE NO FORMAL CLASS AND HAVE BEEN SET APART FOR STUDYING AT HOME.**

<b>WEEK # 1</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
August 14	<i>Course Description</i>	
August 16	<i>What's the OT? A Panoramic View</i>	Study handout and presentation  Participation in class
August 18		Study handout and presentations  Participation in class

<b>WEEK # 2</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
August 21		Study handout and presentations  Participation in class
August 23		Study handout and presentations
August 25		Study handout and presentations

<b>WEEK # 3</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
August 28	<b>STUDY TIME - NO CLASS</b>	Study handout and presentations
August 30	<i>The Ancient Near East: Understanding the Matrix and Socializing Environment of the Hebrew Bible</i>	Study handout and presentations

		Participation in class
September 1		Study handout and presentation Participation in class

<b>WEEK # 4</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
September 4	<b>LABOR DAY – NO CLASS</b>	Study handouts and presentations
September 6	<i>Ethnic Communities and their Lands: The Scenario of the OT Messages</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
September 8	-----	<b>TEST # 1 - OPEN BOOK (TO BE TAKEN ONLINE VIA VIA CANVAS)</b>

<b>WEEK # 5</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
September 11	<i>The Laws of Moses: Ideological Foundation of Hebrew Faith, Identify, and Practice</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
September 13	<i>Genesis (selected passages)</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
September 15	<b>STUDY TIME - NO CLASS</b>	Study handout and presentations

<b>WEEK # 6</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
September 18	<i>Exodus (selected passages)</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
September 20	<i>Leviticus (selected passages)</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
September 22	<b>STUDY TIME - NO CLASS</b>	Study handouts and presentations

<b>WEEK # 7</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
September 25	<i>Numbers (selected passages)</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
September 27	<i>Deuteronomy (selected passages)</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
September 29	-----	<b>TEST # 2 - OPEN BOOK (TO BE TAKEN ONLINE VIA VIA CANVAS)</b>

<b>WEEK # 8</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
October 2	<i>"A Land Flowing Milk and Honey:" Israel's Conquest of the Promised Land</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class



October 4	<b>FALL BREAK – NO CLASS</b>	Study handouts and presentations  Participation in class
October 6	<b>STUDY TIME – NO CLASS</b>	Study handouts and presentations

<b>WEEK # 9</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
October 9	<i>Canaanite Religion and Culture</i> <i>Binding Back: Religion in Israel and its Covenant with God</i>	Study handout and presentation  Participation in class
October 11	<i>“A King Like Those of Other Nations:” The Establishment and Early Years of the Monarchy in Israel</i>	Study handout and presentation  Participation in class
October 13	<b>STUDY TIME - NO CLASS</b>	Study handouts and presentations

<b>WEEK # 10</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
October 16	<i>King Saul</i> <i>King David</i>	Study handout and presentation  Participation in class
October 18	<i>King Solomon</i>	Study handout and presentation  Participation in class
October 20	-----	<b>TEST # 3 – OPEN BOOK (TO BE TAKEN ONLINE VIA CANVAS)</b>

<b>WEEK # 11</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
October 23	<i>Israel versus Judah: The Division of the United Monarchy</i>	Study handout and presentation  Participation in class
October 25	<i>God's Voice to a People in Crisis: The Great Prophets of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BCE</i>  <i>The Fall of the Northern Kingdom - Israel: The Assyrian Exile Begins</i>	Study handout and presentation  Participation in class
October 27	<b>STUDY TIME - NO CLASS</b>	Study handouts and presentations  Participation in class

<b>WEEK # 12</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
October 30	<i>The Fall of the Southern Kingdom - Judah: The Babylonian Exile Begins</i>	Study handout and presentation  Participation in class
November 1	<i>Life During the Babylonian Exile: Home Away from Home</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
November 3	<b>STUDY TIME - NO CLASS</b>	Study handouts and presentations

<b>WEEK # 13</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
November 6	-----	<b>TEST # 4 – OPEN BOOK (TO BE TAKEN ONLINE VIA CANVAS)</b>
November 8	<i>Life After the Babylonian Exile: The Israelites Go Back Home and Struggle to Restore What Was</i>	Study handout and presentation

	<i>Lost</i>	Participation in class
November 10	<b>STUDY TIME - NO CLASS</b>	

<b>WEEK # 14</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
November 13	<i>Insights for Pious Living: The Wisdom Traditions Between the Old and New Testaments</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
November 15	<i>What's In and What's Out? The Rise and Formation of the OT as Scripture</i>	Study handout and presentation Participation in class
November 17	<b>STUDY TIME - NO CLASS</b>	Study handouts and presentations Course Evaluation

<b>WEEK # 15</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
November 20		

<b>WEEK OF FINAL EXAMS</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<b>SECTION # 1 WEDNESDAY, NOV 29<sup>th</sup>, 11:15 AM</b>		<b>TEST # 5 – OPEN BOOK (TO BE TAKEN ONLINE VIA CANVAS)</b>

<b>SECTION # 2</b> <b>MONDAY,</b> <b>NOVEMBER 27<sup>th</sup></b> <b>8:00 AM</b>		<b>TEST # 5 – OPEN</b> <b>BOOK</b> <b>(TO BE TAKEN</b> <b>ONLINE</b> <b>VIA CANVAS)</b>
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