



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Retelling Biblical Figures - 17218

Last update 19-09-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Hebrew Literature

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Yael Fisch

Coordinator Email: yael.fisch@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Yael Fisch

Course/Module description:

This seminar will be dedicated to the transformations of biblical figures throughout the Second Temple period, rabbinic literature, and early Christianity. We will explore various issues in Jewish biography, fiction and pseudepigraphy in antiquity as we delve into questions of construction (or deconstruction) of characters in ancient Jewish and Christian interpretative works. The focus on characters, their development and decline, provides an excellent prism through which to examine the afterlife of the biblical narrative and delve deep into ancient interpretation and its trends. We will be able to see how, through diverse practices of rewriting, expansion, refinement, editing, and deconstruction, different groups in antiquity shaped the Bible and its protagonists according to their own preference, and often in opposition to one another.

Course/Module aims:

1. Examine the transformations of biblical figures across different periods and traditions:

- * Second Temple period literature*
- * Rabbinic literature*
- * Early Christianity*

2. Develop an understanding of how biblical interpretation evolved across different periods and traditions in antiquity.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

To better navigate Midrashic literature, rewritten scriptures, and early Christian interpretations. To read and discuss these texts from diverse literary perspectives and in historical context.

Attendance requirements(%):

90

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:

Course/Module Content:

- 1 | Introduction: Biography, Rewriting, and Midrash*
- 2 | Enosh*

3	<i>Dinah and Shechem 1</i>
4	<i>Dinah and Shechem 2</i>
5	<i>Melchizedek 1</i>
6	<i>Melchizedek 2</i>
7	<i>Pharaoh's Daughter</i>
8	<i>Hezekiah (and Manasseh)</i>
9	<i>Sarah 1</i>
10	<i>Sarah 2</i>
11	<i>Presentations 1</i>
12	<i>Presentations 2</i>
13	<i>Summary</i>

Required Reading:

Preliminary reading list:

Athalya Brenner and Jan Willem van Henten (eds.), *Recycling Biblical Figures: Papers Read at a NOSTER Colloquium in Amsterdam, 12-13 May 1997*. Leiden: Brill, 2021.

Koen De Temmerman (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi (eds.), *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11," *JBL* 86 (1967): 25-41.

———. "Melchizedek in the MT, LXX, and the NT," *Biblica* 81 (2000): 63-69.

Yael Fisch, *Written for Us: Paul's Interpretation of Scripture and the History of Midrash*, (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

Steven D. Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation: Scriptural Translation and Interpretation in Late Antiquity*. University of Pennsylvania, 1980.

———. "Enosh and His Generation Revisited." In *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, edited by Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren, 59-86. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998.

Lowell K. Handy, "Rehabilitating Manasseh: Remembering King Manasseh in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods, In *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods: Social Memory and Imagination*, edited by Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi, 221-35. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.

———. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

———. "4Q369" Prayer of Enosh" and Ancient Biblical Interpretation." *Dead Sea Discoveries*, 1998, 119-48.

Martin McNamara, "Melchizedek: Gen 14,17-20 in the Targums, in Rabbinic and Early Christian Literature." *Biblica* 81 (2000): 1-31.

Eva Mroczek. "Hezekiah the Censor and Ancient Theories of Canon Formation." *JBL* 140 (2021): 481-502.

Deborah W. Rooke, "Jesus as Royal Priest: Reflections on the Interpretation of the Melchizedek Tradition in Heb 7." *Biblica* 81 (2000): 81-94.

Devora Steinmetz. "Switched before Birth: Dinah and Joseph in Bible and Midrash." *In Bible and Women: Rabbinic Literature*, edited by Tal Ilan, Lorena Miralles-Maciá, and Ronit Nikolsky, Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2022.

Michael E. Stone and Theodore A. Bergren. *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 1998.

Matthew Thiessen. "Protecting the Holy Race and Holy Space: Judith's Reenactment of the Slaughter of Shechem." *JSJ* 49 (2018): 165-88.

Helena Zlotnick. *Dinah's Daughters: Gender and Judaism from the Hebrew Bible to Late Antiquity*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

מנחם קיסטר, "על זיקה ותחרות בין דמויות מקראיות בספרות הבתר-מקראית", מגילות י (2013), 115-35

יהושע לוינסון, "האם והאום: זהויות ספרותיות במציאות משתנה", ישראל ל' לוין (עורך), רצף ותמורה: יהודים ויהדות בארץ ישראל הביזנטית-נוצרית, ירושלים תשס"ד, 464-485

Additional Reading Material:

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 70 %

Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 30 %

Additional information: