

## COURSE SYLLABUS

RELS 6602  
Seminar in the Religion of Ancient Israel  
W 3:30-6:15  
Dr. John C. Reeves  
Macy 204B  
Office hours: WR 2:30-3:30; or by appointment  
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[Home Page of John C. Reeves](#)

‘Claims of faithfulness in copying suggest, and tales of texts discovered in miraculous circumstances directly reveal, the presence of the forger.’<sup>1</sup>

‘Together, discourse and force are the chief means whereby social borders, hierarchies, institutional formations, and habituated patterns of behavior are both maintained and modified.’<sup>2</sup>

**Course description:** ‘Current and seminal issues related to the study of the religion of ancient Israel.’ The topic for this fall’s seminar is **Josiah and Deuteronomy: The Politics of Fraud?** We will engage in the close study of a variety of biblical and extrabiblical texts which treat the reign of the Judaeen king Josiah (ca. 640-609 BCE), the alleged ‘discovery’ of an ‘ancient’ scroll in the Temple by the high priest Hilkiah, prophetic ‘authentication’ of this scroll by its advocates and apparent resistance to its import by critics, and the broader imperial context (Assyrian, Egyptian, Neo-Babylonian) wherein the program of cultic reform is represented as having taken place. Significant attention will be devoted to varying scholarly assessments of these and related issues from the early nineteenth century to the present. **Prerequisite:** the successful completion of at least one year of study of introductory biblical Hebrew (or its equivalent) at the university level or the verbal permission of the instructor.

### Required textbooks:

K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977), or later reprints of this edition. Alternatively, one may use the relevant portions of the *Miqra’ot gedolot* or just about any other Hebrew language edition (e.g., Koren; Kittel; Letteris) provided there is no western translation adjacent or in near proximity to the Masoretic Text.

Supplementary readings and/or exercises will be assigned or distributed by the instructor as needed.

### Course requirements:

a. *Diligent attendance and preparation.* Almost perfect attendance (see below) is an essential requirement for this course. Each class meeting builds upon the knowledge gained and queried during our previous meetings. Moreover, oral recitation and group study/discussion comprises practically the entirety of every class session. Preparation for class usually involves the completion of a series of required Hebrew and English language readings; brief written assignment(s) or lexical investigations are also possible. Individual students may sometimes be asked to initiate and guide our collective examination and discussion of the weekly topics. Students are expected to contribute in an informed manner to the public analysis and discussion of any assigned topic. The instructor’s collective assessment of one’s attendance, weekly class preparation, brief written assignments, and oral presentations will constitute 60% of the final course grade.

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3.

b. *Research project.* One (1) formal research project will be presented in oral and written form (at least 20 double-spaced pages, exclusive of notes and list of sources) that focuses upon a particular topic relevant to the study of the ideological dimensions of the Deuteronomic revolution. After a close reading of primary and secondary sources and in consultation with the instructor, the student should select a topic of individual interest that permits such an extended exposition, analysis, and/or evaluation. The topic for one's project should be selected no later than the October 13 class meeting. The project will be presented orally (approximately 15-20 minutes) during the required final class meeting (December 15); the formal written version of the papers are due by 12:00 PM on Thursday, December 9. The research project accounts for 40% of the course grade.

c. *Zakhor (Remember!):* Mastery of the assigned readings, the timely completion of all assignments, and diligent class attendance are necessary prerequisites for the successful completion of this course. Each student is responsible for all lectures, class discussions, hand-outs, assignments, and announcements, whether or not s/he is present when they occur.

**Miscellaneous information:**

a. The grading scale used in this course is as follows:

91-95+	A	=	demonstrable mastery of material—outstanding performance
81-90	B	=	satisfactory performance of assignments
71-80	C	=	inadequate and/or faulty understanding of material
0-70	U	=	unacceptable graduate-level work

b. One of the requirements of this course is to complete the work of the course on time. Sometimes there are legitimate reasons for late work—an illness or other emergency. 'Emergency,' however, does not include your social involvements, travel plans, job schedule, disk and/or printer failures, the state of your love life, your obligations to other courses, or general malaise over the state of the world. The world has been in a mess as long as anyone can remember, and most of the world's work is done by people whose lives are a mass of futility and discontent. If you haven't learned yet, you had better learn now to work under the conditions of the world as it is. Therefore:

1) All missing work is averaged as a 0 in the computation of the course grade.

2) All written work falls due on the dates scheduled in the syllabus, or on the date announced by the instructor in class (usually the next class meeting). 'Late' work will not be accepted from those who were privy to its oral evaluation and discussion (i.e., you were present while we 'went over it' but you neglected to do it beforehand). In the event of one's absence, 'late' submissions bear the following penalties: one day late/one letter grade; two days late/two letter grades; three or more days late/U. Please note: these 'days' are calendar days, not class meeting days. For accounting purposes, letter grades bear the following values: A=95; A-=92; B+=88; B=85; B-=82; C+=78; C=75; C-=72; U=35. Seminar papers are assessed according to the following formulae:  $\sqrt{+} = A$ ;  $\sqrt{-} = B$ ;  $\sqrt{-} = U$ . An untyped paper or final project automatically receives the grade U, as do those typed submissions which violate the required parameters or which the instructor deems physically or grammatically substandard.

3) Since your diligent physical participation is critical for the success of this course, attendance at class meetings will be monitored by the instructor. One absence is regrettable; two absences are the limit of tolerability. Three (3) or more absences will result in an automatic U for the course. Please note that – with the exception of religious holidays – the instructor does not distinguish 'excused' from 'unexcused' absences. Unsanctioned late arrivals and early departures will be tallied as absences.

4) Policy regarding Audits: the instructor expects auditors (whether formally enrolled as such or not) to meet the same attendance, preparation, and oral participation standards as those students who are taking the course for credit. The instructor does not expect auditors to prepare and submit any written assignments.

d. Assistance and solicitation of criticism is your right as a member of the class. It is not a privilege to be granted or withheld. Do not hesitate to request it nor wait too late in the course for it to be of help.

e. A number of lexical and grammatical aids are available for student consultation in the [Cuneiform Studies Laboratory](#) (Macy 216). For assistance, please see the instructor.

f. This class will not be meeting on the following three days: September 8 ('Erev Rosh ha-Shanah); September 22 ('Erev Sukkot); November 24 (Musaf SBL/'Erev Thanksgiving).

## PRIMARY TEXTS

### **Biblical passages:**

Deut 6:10-7:11; 9:1-10:11; 12:1-13:19; 16:18-18:22; 30:1-10  
1 Kgs 12:25-13:34  
2 Kgs 22:1-23:30  
2 Chr 34:1-35:27  
Isa 8:16-9:6; 10:5-12:6  
Jer 1:1-3; 2:1-6:30; 7:1-8:12; 11:1-23; 19:1-20:6; 22:1-30; 30:1-31:40; 36:1-32  
Amos 7:1-9:15  
Zeph 1:1-3:20

### **Parabiblical passages:**

1 Esdr (= 3 *Ezra*) 1:1-33  
Sir 49:1-4  
11Q Temple (11Q19) 56.12-59.21  
*Syriac Apoc. Bar.* (= 2 *Bar.*) 66:1-8  
Josephus, *Antiquitates* 10.47-80 (= LCL 6:182-201)

### **Rabbinic and medieval passages:**

*Seder 'Olam Rabbah* §24  
*t. Soṭah* 13.1 (ed. Lieberman); cf. *t. Yoma* 2.14-16 (ed. Lieberman)  
*y. Šeqal.* 6.1, 49c; *y. Soṭah* 8.3, 22c  
*b. Yoma* 52b; *Ta'an.* 22a-b; *Hor.* 12a  
*Tg. Ezek* 1:1  
*Yalq. Šim.* ad 2 Chron 35 §1085  
Radaq *ad* 1 Kgs 6:19; 2 Chron 35:3  
Wertheimer, *Oṣar midrashim*, 2:53.  
Rambam, *M.T. Hilkhot Bet ha-beḥirah* 4.1

### **Patristic passages:**

Jerome *ad* Ezek 1:1

## SECONDARY TEXTS

Minimally, students are expected to acquire a comfortable familiarity with the contents of the following works regardless of whether or not they have been 'formally' assigned by the instructor:

- Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (2 vols.; trans. John Bowden; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 1:195-242; 344-67.
- John Marco Allegro, *The Shapira Affair* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1965).
- Gilbert Bagnani, "On Fakes and Forgeries," *Phoenix* 14 (1960): 228-44.
- W. Eugene Claburn, "The Fiscal Basis of Josiah's Reforms," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973): 11-22.
- R. E. Clements, "Deuteronomy and the Jerusalem Cult Tradition," *Vetus Testamentum* 15 (1965): 300-12.
- Frank Moore Cross, Jr., "The Themes of the Books of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," in idem, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 274-89.
- S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 69-103.
- A. J. Droge, "The Lying Pen of the Scribes: Of Holy Books and Pious Frauds," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 15 (2003): 117-47.
- Moshe Elat, "The Economic Relations of the Neo-Assyrian Empire with Egypt," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98 (1978): 20-34.
- Wen Fong, "The Problem of Forgeries in Chinese Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 25 (1962): 95-140.
- Lisbeth S. Fried, "The High Places (Bāmôt) and the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah: An Archaeological Investigation," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122 (2002): 437-65.
- Stanley Brice Frost, "The Death of Josiah: A Conspiracy of Silence," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87 (1968): 369-82.
- Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909-38), 4:281-83; 6:376-79.
- M[oshe]. H. Goshen-Gottstein, "The Shapira Forgery and the Qumran Scrolls," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 7 (1956): 187-93.
- Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
- Baruch Halpern and David Vanderhoft, "The Editions of Kings in the 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 62 (1991): 179-244.
- Gary Knoppers, "'There was None Like Him': Incomparability in the Books of Kings," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54 (1992): 411-31.
- A[braham]. Kuenen, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch* (2d ed.; trans. Philip H. Wicksteed; London: Macmillan & Co., 1886), esp. 51-52; 107-38; 214-26.
- Anti Laato, *Josiah and David Redivivus: The Historical Josiah and the Messianic Expectations of Exilic and Postexilic Times* (ConBibOT 33; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1992).
- Norbert Lohfink, "The Cult Reform of Josiah of Judah: 2 Kings 22-23 as a Source for the History of Israelite Religion," in P. D. Miller, Jr., P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride, eds., *Ancient Israelite Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 459-75.
- Menahem Mansoor, "The Case of Shapira's Dead Sea (Deuteronomy) Scrolls of 1883," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* 47 (1958): 183-225. Available online [here](#).
- Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 3-24.
- Nadav Na'aman, "The Kingdom of Judah under Josiah," *Tel Aviv* 18 (1991): 3-71.
- Richard Nelson, "Josiah in the Book of Joshua," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981): 531-40.
- Johannes Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (4 vols. in 2; trans. A. Møller and A. I. Fausbøll; London: Oxford University Press, 1926-40), 4:569-92; 750-52.
- Oskar K. Rabinowicz, "The Shapira Forgery Mystery," *Jewish Quarterly Review* n.s. 47 (1956-57): 170-83.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Shapira Scroll: A Nineteenth Century Forgery," *Jewish Quarterly Review* n.s. 56 (1965-66): 1-21.
- John W. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (London: SPCK, 1984).
- \_\_\_\_\_, *W. M. L. de Wette, Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism: An Intellectual Biography* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).
- Herbert Edward Ryle, *The Canon of the Old Testament: An Essay on the Gradual Growth and Formation of the Hebrew Canon of Scripture* (2d ed.; London & New York: Macmillan, 1904), esp. 47-74.
- J. B. Segal, "Popular Religion in Ancient Israel," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 27 (1976): 1-22.

- Christopher R. Seitz, "The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101 (1989): 3-27.
- Morton Smith, "Pseudepigraphy in the Israelite Literary Tradition," in Kurt von Fritz, ed., *Pseudepigrapha I: Pseudopythagorica, lettres de Platon, littérature pseudépigraohique juive* (Vandoeuvres-Genève: Fondation Hardt pour l'Étude l'Antiquité Classique, 1972), 191-215.
- Marvin A. Sweeney, "Jeremiah 30-31 and King Josiah's Program of National Restoration and Reform," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 108 (1996): 569-83.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- Zipora Talshir, "The Three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical Historiography," *Vetus Testamentum* 46 (1996): 213-36.
- Moshe Weinfeld, "Deuteronomy, Book of," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 2:168-83.
- Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies; Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885).
- D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956).
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon," *Iraq* 20 (1958): 1-99 + plates.