

Spring, 2009

HISTORY NEAR EAST 112b
GREAT POEMS FROM THE HEBREW BIBLE

Course aim: to achieve an enhanced appreciation for the techniques of ancient Israelite poetry. All poems will be read in English; students with advanced knowledge of Hebrew (Judaic Studies 102 or equivalent) may enroll for 5 units in HINE 112bl.

Instructor: William Propp. Office HSS 4012; phone 534-6187; email wpropp@ucsd.edu. Office hours: Wed/Fri 11:00-11:50

Requirements: one 2-3 page analysis of either Psalm 114 or Micah 6:1-8, due 4/3 (20%); same paper, rewritten 3-4 pp., due 4/20 (30%); final paper on a biblical poem of your choice (a psalm will be easiest; use Alter's translation), 5-6 pp., due 6/10 (40%); class participation (10%).

Textbooks:

1. The Old Testament/Hebrew Bible/Tankah (any translation)
2. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (for sale in campus bookstore)
3. Coursepack (available at A.S. Soft Reserves)

Coursepack:

1. Biblical Studies is Not Bible Study, Israelite Religion (R. Levitt Kohn and R. Moore, *A Portable God*, 1-7, 21-42)
2. The Refrain in David's Lament Over Saul and Jonathan (D. N. Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy*, 263-274)
3. The Structure of Psalm 119 (D. N. Freedman, in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells*, ed. D. P. Wright *et al.*, 725-756.
4. The Use of Inclusion in Habakkuk 3 (T. H. Hiebert, in *Directions in Biblical Poetry*, 119-140 [Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 40])
5. Excursus, Notes, Comment on Exodus 13:17-15:21 (W. H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 503-549, 562-572)
6. On the Interpretation of Psalm 133 (I. Berlin, in *Directions in Biblical Poetry*, 141-147)

Class Reserves (Geisel Library)

The Book of Psalms, trans. R. Alter

1. What is the Hebrew Bible? (3/30)
Read: Levitt Kohn and Moore, "Biblical Studies is Not"
(coursepack); Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 114
2. What you learned from Psalm 114 and Micah 6:1-8 (4/1)
Read: Alter, chap. I
3. The Dynamics of Parallelism (4/3)
Read: Alter, chap. II
4. From Line to Story (4/6)
Read: Alter, chap. III
5. Structures of Intensification (4/8)
Read: Alter, chap. IV
6. Truth and Poetry in the Book of Job (4/10)
Read: Alter, chap. V
7. Forms of Faith in Psalms (4/13)
Read: Alter, chap. VI
8. Prophecy and Poetry (4/15)
Read: Alter, chap. VII
9. The Poetry of Wit (4/17)
Read: Alter, chap. VIII
10. The Garden of Metaphor (4/20)
Read: Freedman, "The Refrain" (coursepack)
11. 2 Samuel 1:17-27 (4/22)
Read: Hiebert, "Use of Inclusion" (coursepack)
12. Habakkuk 3 (4/24)
Read: Berlin, "Interpretation" (coursepack)
13. Psalm 133 (4/27)
Read: Freedman, "Structure" (coursepack)
14. Psalm 119 (4/29)
Read: Propp, "Excursus" (coursepack)
15. Exodus 14-15 (5/1)
16. Deuteronomy 32 (5/4)
17. Deuteronomy 32 (5/6)
18. Isaiah 1 (5/8)
19. Isaiah 41 (5/11)

20. Isaiah 41 (5/13)
21. Psalm 74 (5/15)
22. Psalm 89 (5/18)
23. Psalm 89 (5/20)
24. Psalm 81 (5/22)
25. Proverbs 1 (5/27)
26. Proverbs 31:10-31 (5/29)
27. Lamentations 1 (6/1)
28. Song of Songs 1 (6/3)
29. Conclusion (6/5)