

Spring, 2011  
William H. C. Propp  
HINE 162

ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE HEBREW BIBLE  
NEXT TIME MAKE IT “TOPICS” NOT “CLASSES”

Office HSS 4012; hours Wed. 2-4; [wpropp@ucsd.edu](mailto:wpropp@ucsd.edu); 858-534-6187.

Course Goal: To explore various topics in the Hebrew Bible through the interpretative lens of Cultural Anthropology.

Course Format: The class will be divided into two “teams,” A and B. After a general orientation session, for each special topic the class will divide between “Israelites” and “Anthropologists,” exchanging roles after each topic. Each group will be responsible for different background readings, whether of anthropological theory, case studies from the field, anthropological analyses of the Bible, or the Bible itself. In a simulation of the ethnographic encounter, during class the two groups will ask each other questions informed by their readings. (Don’t forget: “subjects” are entitled to interrogate anthropologists!) In this way, we can begin to understand the biblical worldview from both the subjective and objective perspectives.

Often, readings will be duplicated, both because you’ll be switching roles, and because we will interrogate the text from different perspectives. The biblical readings may seem unduly lengthy, but remember: you’re skimming for specific information. This you should **sort into various categories in your notes, and come armed to class with the most pertinent passages**. The Israelites will sometimes divide up the biblical assignments to lighten the load and to replicate the fieldwork experience by yielding multiple, incomplete perspectives. ***It is imperative that each student comes to class fully prepared, having considered possible questions/answers beforehand.***

Course Requirements: one 3-page (900-word) paper (10%, **due class 4CHECK**), one 15-page (4500-word) final paper submitted twice (30%, 40%, **due classes 16 and 19**), class participation (20%). For the essays, you must submit a marked-up penultimate draft in addition to the final draft.

Required Books:

1. Bible/Tanakh. Any reputable translation will do. Christian and Jewish Bibles differ in the order of the books, and also occasionally in the numbering of chapter and verse. (This syllabus follows the Hebrew/Jewish system.) There is much to be said for using an online or software Bible: you can do word-searches and print out passages you need for class.
2. *Other People’s Worlds (OPW)*, J. Hendry (photocopy available at the Book Store)
3. *Creation of the Sacred (COTS)*, W. Burkert (available at the Book Store)
4. Coursepack at A.S. Soft Reserves (Old Student Center)

Required Books (on reserve at Geisel Library):

1. *Slaying the Dragon*, B. Batto
2. *Human Universals*, D. Brown
3. *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, J. Day
4. *Yhwh’s Combat with the Sea*, C. Kloos

5. *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, R. J. Clifford
6. *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament*, T. H. Gaster (useful for finding essay topics)

Coursepack (CP) Readings:

1. Y. Aharoni, "The General Setting"; "The Land of Many Contrasts," *The Land of the Bible*, pp. 3-42 (1-21)
2. S. Nanda, R. Warmes, "Chapter 9: Marriage, Family, and Domestic Groups"; "Chapter 10: Kinship," *Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 195-239 (22-66)
3. W. Propp, "Kinship in 2 Samuel 13," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55 (1993) 39-53 (67-82)
4. S. Nanda, R. Warmes, "Coming of Age in Cross-Cultural Perspective," *Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 130-136 (83-89)
5. V. Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," *The Forest of Symbols*, pp. 93-111 (90-99)
6. W. Propp, "Symbolic Wounds: Applying Anthropology to the Bible," *Le-David Maskil*, pp. 17-24 (101-4)
7. W. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, pp. 31-36, 429-39 (105-114)
8. W. Propp, "That Bloody Bridegroom (Exodus IV 24-6)," *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993) 495-518 (115-27)
9. S. Nanda, R. Warmes, parts of "Chapter 6: Learning Culture Throughout Life"; *Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 137-142 (128-33)
10. E. Bloch-Smith, "Burials," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* I, pp. 785-89 (134-38)
11. W. Propp, "Exorcising Demons," *Bible Review* 20.5 (2004) 14-21, 47 (139-47)
12. T. H. Gaster, "Sacrifice," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* IV, pp. 147-159 (148-60)
13. W. Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, pp. 674-707 (161-76)
14. R. R. Wilson, "Prophecy in Modern Societies," *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, pp. 21-88 (177-211)
15. R. Robbins, "The Cultural Construction of Violent Conflict," *Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 231-258 (212-39)
16. S. Nanda, R. Warmes, "Chapter 11: Gender," *Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 241-262 (240-61)
17. W. Propp, "Acting Like Apes," *Bible Review* 20.3 (2004) 35-40, 46 (262-69)
18. J. A. Wilson (trans.), "Creation and Myths of Origin," *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, pp. 3-6 (270-73)
19. A. K. Grayson (trans.), "A Babylonian Theogony," *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, pp. 517-18 (274-75)
20. T. W. Hall, R. B. Pilgrim, R. R. Cavanagh, "Sacred Stories," *Religion: An Introduction*, pp. 43-57 (276-83)
21. W. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, pp. 607-613 (284-87)

**1. Welcome (3/30)**

Introductions  
Requirements  
Resources

Terms: Bible, exegesis, canon, Tanakh (Torah-Nevi'im-Ketuvim), Old Testament, Hebrew Bible, Torah, Pentateuch, Scripture; A.D./B.C./C.E./B.C.E.; Canaan, Israel, Judah, Palestine; Jew; Israelite; Israeli; Hebrew; God/Elohim/LORD/Yahweh

Basic facts: when and where Hebrew Bible was written; languages; sources; basic story; chapter and verse

THE PROBLEM: in addition to the readings below, you must immediately read *one* of the materials on e-reserve for this course. If you have had Christian Bible instruction, you *must* read Gonzalez; if you have had Jewish Bible instruction, you *must* read Stern. Anyone else may read whichever they like (or both)!

How to Write

**First Essay Assignment:** Can we “do” anthropology of the Bible? What are the possible problems and limitations? What are the potential gains? What are the challenges of teaching a course on the topic? What challenges does Bible study present for students? **Submit a 3-page paper examining some (not all) of these issues. (due class 4 CHECK)**

## 2. Culture: A General Introduction (4/6)

*OPW* Introduction and Chapters 1, 5

*COTS* Chapter 1

*Human Universals* (chap. 6) (on reserve; you may also wish to skim a list extracted from Brown, on-line at <http://condor.depaul.edu/mfiddler/hyphen/humunivers.htm>).

Based on the readings and your general knowledge, what are the methods and aims of Cultural Anthropology? Is there any relationship to biology? Other problems?

## 3. Realia: Bible and Archaeology (4/6)

A. *OPW* Chapter 12

B. “The General Setting”; “The Land of Many Contrasts” (*CP*)

Discussion: the effect of topography and climate upon culture, in general and upon ancient Israel

## 4. Family, Kinship and Ethnicity (4/13)

B. *OPW* Chapter 11

“Marriage, Family and Domestic Group,” “Kinship” (*CP*)

“Kinship in 2 Samuel 13” (*CP*)

**A1.** L. Stager, "The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260 (1985) 1-35 (available through JSTOR - <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1356862>)

**A2.** Genesis chh 2-50; Exodus 20:4-6; 21:1-11; 22:15-16; 43:10-16

**A3.** Leviticus ch 18; 19:17-20; 20:10-21; ch 21; 24:10-14; 25:23-55; Numbers 20:14-21; 36:1-12; ch 26; Deuteronomy 21:15-21; 23:1-9; 24:1-4; 25:5-10; Joshua chh 7; 13-19; Judges 9:1-3; 11:1-3; 12:1-7; chh 19-21; 1 Samuel 1:1-8; 13:19-22; 2 Samuel chh 2; 3; chh 12-14; Ezekiel ch 18; Ruth; Ezra ch 2; 8:1-12; chh 9; 10; Neh 13:23-31; 1Chronicles chh 1-9 (**just skim the genealogies, but know the basic tribal structure**)

## **5. Rites of Passage (4/13)**

**A.** *OPW* Chapter 4

*COTS* Chapter 2-3

"Coming of Age in a Cross-Cultural Perspective," "Betwixt and Between" (*CP*)

**B.** "Symbolic Wounds," "About Exodus," "Comment," "Bloody Bridegroom" (*CP*)

Genesis chh 17; 22; 34; Exod 4:21-26; chh 12; 13; 29; Leviticus ch 12; Joshua chh 3-5

## **6. The Dead and Mourning (4/20)**

**B.** *OPW* Part of Chapter 4 (pp. 76-77)

"Old Age, Death and Dying" (*CP*)

**A1.** Genesis ch 23; 25:7-11; ch 27; 35:27-29; 37:29-35; 47:28-50:26; Exod 13:18-19; Leviticus ch 10; 19:26-31; 21:1-6; Numbers 16:27-35; 20:22-29; Deuteronomy 14:1; 21:22-23; 26:13-14; chh 31-34; Joshua 24:29-33; 1 Samuel chh 28; 31; 2 Samuel ch 1; 3:28-39; 11:26-27; 12:14-23; 21:7-14; 1 Kings 1:1-2:11; 13:11-32; 2 Kings 13:20-21; 22:16-20; 23:16-18

**A2.** "Burials" (*CP*); Isaiah 65:3-4; Jeremiah 16:1-9; 48:36-38; Ezekiel 24:15-23; 26:19-21; 27:30-36; 32:17-32; 37:1-14; Psalms 30:7-13, chh 49; 88; 90; 115:17; Proverbs 15:11; Job chh 1-3; Lamentations; Ecclesiastes chh 2; 3; 7:2; 9:3-6, 2 Chronicles 35:22-25

## **7. Demonism-Divination-Sorcery-Medicine-Oaths-Curses (4/20)**

**A.** *OPW* Chapters 7-8

*COTS* Chapters 2, 7

"Demons and Doorposts," "Exorcising Demons" (*CP*)

**B1.** Genesis ch 15; 28:10-22, 30:25-43; 32:23-33; 37:5-11, 40:1-41:36, Exodus chh 3; 7-12; 15:22-26; ch 17; 22:17; Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, Numbers 5:11-31; 20:1-13; 21:4-9; chh 22-24; 27:21; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 13:1-6, 18:9-22; chh 27;

28; Joshua chh 6; 7; 8:18-29; 10:12-14; Judges 6:11-40; 7:12-22; 11:29-40; 16:4-17; 1 Samuel 12:16-18; 14:24-26; 23:1-13; ch 28; 30:6-8; 2 Sam 5:22-24

**B2.** 1 Kings ch 17-2 Kings 8:15; 13:14-19; Isaiah 8:19-20; 65:4-5; Jeremiah 34:17-22; Ezekiel 21:26-27; Zechariah 10:2; 2 Chronicles 16:12

## **8. Taboo (4/27)**

**B.** *OPW* Chapter 2

“Godliness and Cleanliness” (*CP*)

**A1.** Genesis chh 2; 3; 9:1-6,20-27; 12:10-20; 19:30-38; 31:17-35; 32:23-33; ch 34; Exodus chh 12-13; 19:1-15; 20:1-14; 21:28; 22:28-30; 23:10-12,18-19; 31:12-17; Leviticus 3:16-17; 7:22-27; chh 10-20; 23:22

**A2.** Numbers 5:1-4; chh 6; 12; 16; 19; 35:30-34; Deuteronomy 12:13-25; 14:1-21; 23:10-15; 24:19-21; Joshua chh 6-8; Judges 13:1-14; 1 Samuel 6:19-20; 14:24-35; ch 15; 21:2-8; 2 Samuel 6:3-8; 11:1-13; 2 Kings ch 5; 15:1-5; Jeremiah ch 35; Ezekiel 4:9-15; 36:16-28; 2 Chronicles 26:16-23

## **9. Sacrifice (4/27)**

**A.** *COTS* Chapters 2, 5, 6

*OPW* Chapter 3

“Sacrifices and Offerings,” “Comment” (*CP*)

**B1.** Genesis ch 4; 8:20-22; ch 22; Exodus 12:1-13:16; 20:21-23; 21:14; 22:28-29; 23:14-19; 24:4-8; chh 25-31; 34:18-26; Leviticus chh 1-10; 17; Numbers ch 16

**B2.** Deuteronomy 12:13-28; 14:22-29; 15:19-23; 16:1-8; 18:1-8; Judges 6:19-27; 13:15-23; 1 Samuel chh 1; 2; 13:1-14; ch 15; 1 Kings 2:28-34; 8:62-64; 13:1-6; ch 18; 2 Kings 16:7-18; Isaiah 1:10-17; 43:22-24; 66:1-4; Jeremiah 7:21-26; Ezekiel 43:13-27; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:18-25; Micah 6:6-8; Malachi 1:6-14; Psalms 40:7; ch 51; Job 1:4-5; 42:7-10; Ecclesiastes 4:17; Ezra 3:1-7; 2 Chronicles 35:1-19

## **10. Spirit Possession-Altered States (5/4)**

**B.** *OPW* Chapter 7-8

“Prophecy in Modern Societies” (*CP*)

**A1.** Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; Numbers chh 11-12; Deuteronomy 13:1-6; 18:9-22; 1 Samuel chh 3; 9; 10; 19:18-24; ch 28; 2 Samuel ch 12; 1 Kings chh 13; 14; 17-22; 2 Kings chh 1-10

**A2.** Isaiah chh 6-8; Jeremiah ch 1; 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; chh 18-28; 36-37; Ezekiel chh 1-12; Hosea chh 1-3; Joel 3:1-2; Amos chh 7-9; Zechariah chh 1-6

## **11. Conflict Resolution (5/4)**

A. *OPW* Chapter 9

B. Genesis ch 4; 9:5-6, ch 31; Exodus 2:11-21; chh 18; 21:1-23:9; Leviticus 25:23-55; Numbers 5:11-31; ch 16; 35:9-34; Deuteronomy 1:9-18; 15:1-18; 16:18-17:13; chh 19; 21-25; Joshua chh 7; 20; Judges chh 19-21; 1 Samuel 8:1-5; 12:1-6; 2 Samuel 3:12-16; 8:15; ch 14; 15:1-6; 1 Kings ch 3; 12:1-24; ch 21

**12. Warfare (5/11)**

B. "The Cultural Construction of Violent Conflict" (*CP*)

A1. Genesis ch 14; Exodus 15:1-18; 17:8-16; Leviticus ch 26; Numbers chh 1; 2; 10; 13; 14; 21; 22; 31; Deuteronomy 1:19-45; chh 7; 20; 21:10-14; 23:10-15; 25:17-19; 28:7,25-26; Joshua chh 1-12; Judges

A2. 1 Samuel chh 4-7; 11; 13-15; 17; 21:2-7; chh 23; 28-31; 2 Samuel chh 2-5; 8; 10; 11; 15-20; 23:8-39

A3. 1 Kings

A4. 2 Kings; Isaiah chh 10; 31; 63:1-6; Joel ch 4; Micah 4:1-5; Psalms ch 18; 46:9-12

**13. Political Organization (5/11)**

A. *OPW* Chapter 10

*COTS* Chapter 4

B. Genesis 23; Exodus chh 3-6; 18; 24; Numbers chh 1; 11; 12; 27:12-23; Deuteronomy 1:9-18; 16:8-20; chh 17; 18; 21:1-9; 22:13-19; 25:7-9; ch 31; Judges; 1 Samuel chh 1-3; 8; 2 Samuel 5:1-3; 19:9-15; 1 Kings 8:1-5; ch 21; 2 Kings chh 10; 11; 21:23-24; 23:28-35; 25:18-19; Isaiah 37:2; Jeremiah ch 26; Ezekiel ch 8; 20:1-4; ch 22

**14. Political Organization continued: Kingship (5/18)**

B. "Sacred Kingship" (*Britannica Online* [via UCSD network <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/515559/sacred-kingship>])  
*OPW* Chapter 10

A1. Exodus 22:27; Deuteronomy 17:14-20; Judges chh 9; 21; 1 Samuel chh 8-12; 15-16; 2 Samuel 5:1-3; chh 7; 11; 14:1-20; 15:1-6; 16:20-22; 19:28; ch 20

A2. 1 Kings chh 1-7; 9-12; 21; 2 Kings ch 9; Isaiah 8:21; 9:1-6; 10:33-11:16; Jeremiah 30:9; 33:19-26; Ezekiel 43:6-9; Zechariah 12:7-8; Psalms chh 2; 18; 45; 89; Proverbs 16:10-15; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26, 28; 21:1; 22:11,29; 24:21; 25:1-7; 29:4, 14; Ecclesiastes 4:13-14; 8:2-4; 10:16-19

**15. Gender (5/25)**

**A.** “Gender,” “Acting like Apes” (*CP*)  
“Kinship in 2 Samuel 13” (*CP*)

**B1.** Genesis chh 1-3; 12-34; 38-39; Exodus chh 1; 2; 13:11-15; 34:11-16;  
Leviticus chh 4; 12; 15; 18; Numbers 5:11-6:8; ch 25; 27:1-11; chh 30; 31;  
Deuteronomy 5:16,18; 22:5,13-29; Judges

**B2.** 1 Samuel chh 9-20; 25; 30; 2 Samuel 1:17-27; 3:1-11; 6:12-23; chh 11-14;  
16:20-22

**B3.** 1 Kings chh 1; 2; 11; Isaiah 3:16-26; Ezekiel chh 16; 23; Hosea chh 1-3;  
Amos 4:1-13; Psalms ch 45; Proverbs chh 5-8; 31:10-31; Song of Songs; Ruth;  
Ecclesiastes 7:26; Esther

## 16. Cosmology and Creation (5/18)

### B. "Sacred Stories" (CP 234-241)

Creation myths worldwide available at

[www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/CS/CSIndex.html](http://www.gly.uga.edu/railsback/CS/CSIndex.html) (I do not vouch for the accuracy of translations)

"Creation and Myths of Origin," "A Babylonian Theogony" (CP)

OPW Chapter 7

**A1.** One of the following books (all on reserve at SSSL):

1 *Slaying the Dragon*, B. Batto

2 *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, J. Day

3 *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea*, C. Kloos

4 *Creation accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, R. J. Clifford

**A2.** Genesis chh 1-9; 1 Samuel 2:8; 2 Samuel 22:5-20; Isaiah 11:15-16; 14:5-20; 17:12-14; 26:21-27:1; 40:12-14; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; 50:2-3; 51:6,9-11; 66:1-2; Jeremiah 4:23-28; 5:22; 31:35; 51:15-16; Ezekiel 28:11-19; 29:3-5; 32:2-10; Amos 7:4; 9:2-6; Nahum 1:3-8; Habakkuk ch 3; Malachi 3:10; Psalms chh 24; 29; 33:4-15; 44:20; 46:3-8; ch 65; 69:14-16; 74:12-17; 75:4; 82:5; chh 89; 93; 104; 144:5-7; chh 147; 148; Proverbs 8:12-31; Job 7:12; 9:2-13; chh 26; 38; 40:15-41:26

## 17. National Myths (5/25)

A. "About Exodus," "Comment" (CP), "Eternal Return (Eliade)" (Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternal\\_Return\\_\(Eliade\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternal_Return_(Eliade)))

**B1.** One of the following books (all on reserve):

1 *Slaying the Dragon*, B. Batto

2 *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, J. Day

3 *Yhwh's Combat with the Sea*, C. Kloos

4 *Creation accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, R. J. Clifford

**B2.** Exodus chh 14-17; Numbers 20:1-13; 21:16-18; Deuteronomy 32:7-9; Joshua chh 3-8; Isaiah ch 35; 37:25-26; 41:17-20; 43:16-20; 44:24-45:8; 48:20-21; 49:8-13; 51:3,9-11; 55:9-13; 58:8-14; Jeremiah 16:14-15; 23:7-8; ch 31; Ezekiel ch 16; 20:33-40; 36:24-38; 47:1-12; Hosea 2:16-25; 13:4-6; Joel 4:18; Zechariah 10:3-12; 13:1; 14:1-9; Psalms 36:6-10; 46:2-8; chh 65; 77; 78; 81; 105; 106; 107:33-38; ch 114; Nehemiah chh 9-10

## 18. God, the Gods and Man (5/25)

B. OPW Chapters 7-8



**A1.** Genesis chh 1-3; 5:18-24; 6:1-4; 9:4-6; ch 11; Exodus 3:1-6; 12:12; 15:11; 20:1-5; chh 33; 34; Leviticus 19:1-4; Deuteronomy 4:9-20; 13:7-19; 27:15; 29:25; 32:7-9 (N.B.: original reading in v 8 is “sons of God” not “[sons of] Israel”); Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 6:11-24; 11:23-24; ch 13; 1 Samuel ch 5; 1 Kings 11:1-10; ch 18; 22:19-23; 2 Kings 2:1-12; 6:15-18; ch 10; 18:19-19:19;

**A2.** Isaiah ch 6; 14:7-20; 40:12-28; 41:4-7; ch 44; 46:5-7; Jeremiah 2:5-28; 10:2-16; 11:9-13; 51:15-19; Ezekiel chh 1; 8; Hosea 2:4-15; Habakkuk 2:14-20; Psalms chh 8; 29; 82; 89:6-15; chh 96; 97; 103; 104; 115; 135; 144:3-4; Proverbs ch 8; Job chh 1-2; 4:17-19; 38:4-7; Nehemiah 9:6

**19.** Your research projects (6/1)

## GUIDELINES FOR THE FINAL ESSAY

Your paper should be an original contribution, 15 pages in length, using both primary sources (i.e., the Hebrew Bible, and other texts or archaeological artifacts if relevant) and secondary sources (books; use the Internet for general orientation but cite only published work by serious scholars). Document all assertions.

Topics may be those covered in class or others, such as:

Animal/Plant symbolism  
Wet vs. Dry  
Storm symbolism  
Desert vs. Sown  
Farming vs. Herding  
The Bible's own anthropology  
Cities  
Pilgrimage  
Light vs. Dark  
Priesthood vs. Kingship vs. Prophecy  
Social Contract  
Imagined ideals  
Ethnicity (us vs. them)  
Local etiologies  
Autochthony vs. Allochthony  
Love vs. (?) Marriage  
The Temple/Tabernacle/High Place  
Symbolism of the four directions  
Shame vs. honor  
Sin and impurity  
Sacred Mountain/Trees/Springs  
Healing  
Music  
Forbidden mixtures  
Revering elders  
Human sacrifice (?)  
Relation to the land  
Counting people

If you choose to investigate your own topic of interest (highly encouraged!), you must clear it with the instructor. A good source of topics is *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament* (on reserve in SSH)—but don't rely on the data in this century-old book. Another good source of ideas (questions, not answers) is Brown's *Human Universals*.