ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE HEBREW BIBLE

Course Format: The class will be divided into two “teams,” A and B. After some general orientation sessions, for each special topic the class will divide between “Israelites” and “Anthropologists,” exchanging roles after each meeting. 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. (Hostile questions in either direction are perfectly OK.) In this way, we can gain begin to understand both the biblical worldview from both the subjective and objective perspectives. (Eager beavers, please do not do the other team’s reading, at least till after the session.)

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 paper (10%, due class 4), one 15- to 20-page final paper submitted twice (30%, 40%, due classes 16 and 20), class participation (20%)

Required Books (available at the Book Store):
1. Bible/Tanakh. Any translation will do, but I recommend The Jewish Study Bible, ordered for your convenience. 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 print out passages you need for class.
2. Other People’s Worlds (OPW), J. Hendry
3. Creation of the Sacred (COTS), W. Burkert
4. Coursepack at A.S. Soft Reserves (Old Student Center)

Required Books (on reserve at Geisel Library):
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
5. Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament, T. H. Gaster (useful for finding essay topics)
Coursepack (CP) Readings:

5. V. Turner, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage,” *The Forest of Symbols*, pp. 93-111
9. S. Nanda, R. Warms, parts of “Chapter 6: Learning Culture Throughout Life”; *Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 137-142
14. R. R. Wilson, “Prophecy in Modern Societies,” *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, pp. 21-88

1. **Welcome** (9/24)
   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

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 of these issues. (due class 3) Also bring to the next class a list of any questions you may have about the Old Testament.

2. Culture: A General Introduction (10/1)
   OPW Introduction and Chapters 1, 5
   COTS Chapter 1

   Based on the reading and your general knowledge, what are the methods and aims of Cultural Anthropology? Problems?

3. Realia: Bible and Archaeology (10/1)
   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 in particular

4. Family, Kinship and Ethnicity (10/1)
   B. OPW Chapter 11
   L. Stager, “Marriage, Family and Domestic Group,” “Kinship” (CP XXX)
   “Kinship in 2 Samuel 13” (CP XXX)

   A1. “The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel” (available on line; search for the title)


   A3. Leviticus chh 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 (10/8)
   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 (10/8)
   B. OPW Part of Chapter 4 (pp. 76-77)
   “Making a Living” (CP)

          Deuteronomy 14:1; 21:22-23; 26:13-14; chh 31-34; Joshua 24:29-33; 1 Samuel 

      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 (10/15)
   A. OPW Chapters 7-8
   COTS Chapters 2, 7
   “Demons and Doorposts,” “Exorcising Demons” (CP)

          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 (10/15)
   B. OPW Chapter 2
   “Godliness and Cleanliness” (CP)

          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

          23:10-15; 24:19-21; Joshua chh 6-8; Judges 13:1-14; 1 Samuel 6:19-20; 14:24-35;
9. Sacrifice (10/29)
   A. COTS Chapters 2, 5, 6
      OPW Chapter 3
      “Sacrifices and Offerings,” “Comment” (CP)


10. Spirit Possession-Altered States (11/29)
    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 (11/5)
    A. OPW Chapter 9


12. Warfare (11/5)
    A. “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 (11/12)
   A. OPW Chapter 10
      COTS Chapter 4
   

14. Political Organization continued: Kingship (11/12)
   B. “Sacred Kingship” (Britannica Online [via UCSD network])
      OPW Chapter 10


   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 (11/19)
   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


   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 (12/19)

B. “Sacred Stories” (CP 234-241)
Creation myths worldwide available at
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 SSHL):
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
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 (12/3)

A. “About Exodus,” “Comment” (CP), “Eternal Return (Eliade)” (Wikipedia)

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; Isaiah
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 (12/3)

B. OPW Chapters 7-8
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”);

A2. Isaiah chh 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
GUIDELINES FOR THE FINAL ESSAY

Your paper should be an original contribution, 15-20 pages in length, using both primary sources (i.e., the 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. Allocchthony
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.