HINE 112A
GREAT STORIES FROM THE HEBREW BIBLE

Course aim: to achieve an enhanced appreciation for the techniques of ancient Israelite literature, through comparison with other ancient and modern narratives. We will analyze biblical stories, retell them in modern dress, convert modern stories into quasi-biblical narratives, and throughout the course improve our biblical literacy.

Instructor: William Propp. Office HSS 4012; phone 534-6187; email wpropp@ucsd.edu. Office hours: Wed, Fri 2-3.

Required Readings:
1. The Old Testament/Hebrew Bible/Tanakh (any translation)
4. Coursepack (at AS Soft Reserves)
5. Books on Reserve at SHH
   i. Robert Alter, *The David Story* (SHH Reserves)
   ii. Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*
   iii. Richard Friedman, *The Hidden Book in the Bible*
   iv. Richard Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*
   v. Richard Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed*
   vi. Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*
   vii. The Bible (Revised Standard Version)

Assignments:
1. 2-page literary analysis (10%) *(use translations in coursepack)*
2. Same paper rewritten and expanded into 3-4 pp. (20%)
3. An English short story of your choice rewritten in 1-2 pp. in the biblical style (10%)
4. 5-page analysis of another biblical story, 15-50 verses long (30%) *(if possible, use translation on reserve [Torah and Samuel]*)
   i. Biblical literacy final (20%)
   ii. Class participation (10%)

1. 1/5
   **Introduction**
   Discussion: what is the Bible; how to cite it; who were the Israelites?
   Basic Geography
   *Assignment (due class 3):* write a 500-600-word literary analysis of either Exodus 2:11-14 or 1 Kings 21:1-28 *(using translations in coursepack)*

2. 1/7
   **Basic Concepts and Assumptions**
   Reading: Levitt Kohn and Moore, chaps. 1-2; Alter pp. xvi-xlvi
Discussion: What is a literary approach to the Bible? Does it differ from traditional Bible Study? What special challenges confront a translator from Hebrew to English?

3. 1/9  Modern Discoveries
Reading: Gilgamesh tablet XI
   - Genesis chaps. 6-9 (2 versions)
   - Birth of Sargon
   - Exodus chaps. 1-3
Discussion: How does ancient mythology affect our understanding of the Bible? How does the recognition that the Bible is a composite affect our understanding? How do modern, academic Biblical Studies differ from traditional Bible Study? Are they compatible? In which camp does a pure literary approach fall?

3. 1/12  Characters
Reading: Berlin, 13-42

4. 1/14  Viewpoint
Reading: Berlin, 43-82, 135-139

5. 1/16  Modern vs. Biblical Narrative
Reading: the Book of Jonah
   - Father Mapple’s Sermon

6. 1/21  Literary Convention
Reading: Alter, 3-62

7. 1/23  Narrative Techniques
Reading: Alter, 63-113

8. 1/26  The Bible’s Reticence
Reading: Alter, 114-189

9. 1/28  Applied Biblical Storytelling
Reading: Genesis 22
   - Discussion: how might a modern writer tell the same story?
   *Assignment (due class 11): take any English short story; xerox it and rewrite it in 1-2 pages as the Bible might tell it; submit both stories*

10. 1/30  Genesis chap. 1

11. 2/2  Genesis chaps. 2-3

12. 2/4  Genesis chap. 24

RECEIVE PARTICIPATION GRADE (TENTATIVE)
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**Key passages in Alter:**

20-21 “Accustomed as we are…verbal formulas?”
32-33 “From this distance…God’s universality,”
35-36 “Let us direct…host of other characters.”
47-62 entire chapter
65-68 “In regard to the proportions…interior speech or dialogue.”
74-75 “From all I have said…force of language.”
79-80 “Of the two other general…time of the story proper.”
91-94 “Up to this point…master, slave, and house.”
95-97 “1.Leitwort…trial in the wilderness.”
97-101 “Such attention is particularly crucial…obscure warning.”
114-126 “How does the Bible…typical methods of presentation.”
178-189 entire chapter
4. 1 Kings 22:1-28 (Tadmor and Cogan, *1 Kings*, 39-41)
7. Composite Genesis 6-9 (Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* 50-60)
8. The Birth Legend of Sargon (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 819-20)
11. Father Mapple’s Sermon (Melville, *Moby Dick*, chap. 9)