BIBS 224/324

The Ten Commandments

Semester 2 2015

Intensive Course Outline

Department of Theology and Religion

University of Otago
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BIBS 224/324
Intensive Course: The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments (or The Decalogue) appear twice in the Hebrew Bible (= Tanakh, Old Testament): Exod 20:1-17 and Deut 5:4-21. They are among the best-known texts of the Bible and justly called ‘iconic.’ in a series of ten succinct prohibitions, the Ten Commandments proscribe certain conduct in relation to God, in relation to members of the family and with regard to the wider community.

This intensive course, taught over one week of classes, will closely explore these Commandments in their wider literary and social setting and investigate the following:

Why do these Commandments hold unique status in both Judaism and Christianity?
How far does the Torah (= Pentateuch) imply and resist monotheism?
Why is idolatry proscribed?
Is God imagined in anthropomorphic form?
What is so significant about the name of God?
How and why is the Sabbath so foundational?
What do the latter six commandments imply about social life and social values in Israelite antiquity?
Do we see the Ten Commandments enforced in Torah?
How important are the Ten Commandments today?

Aims

This paper aims to explore closely a significant text of the Hebrew Bible and to integrate it into its wider literary and social contexts. We will explore why Torah is sometimes translated ‘Law’ and how apt this designation really is. What do laws tell us about the human societies that produced them? What do we know about Moses and how significant is his association with Torah and the Ten Commandments in particular?

Close focus on and a full understanding of the Ten Commandments will go on to expand knowledge and understanding of the social and ritual background of Torah texts.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the paper students are expected to be able to:

1. navigate both narrative and legal texts of Torah;

2. demonstrate thorough knowledge of several Torah texts and be able to explore the social values reflected in and by these texts;

3. appreciate the resonance of ancient texts in modern contexts
Staff

The intensive will be taught by Dr Johanna Stiebert. Johanna is a citizen of both Germany and New Zealand. She studied Hebrew language and Hebrew Bible at the Universities of Otago, Cambridge and Glasgow. After starting her teaching career at St. Martin’s University College (Lancaster, UK), she taught at the University of Botswana and the University of Tennessee. Johanna is now back in England, teaching at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Leeds. Her interests lie in the Hebrew terminology of self-conscious emotions (such as shame and guilt), political subtexts in Hebrew prophecy, family dynamics in Hebrew Bible law and narrative, and social-scientific and African-centred approaches to Hebrew Bible texts. Her most recent book is Fathers and Daughters in the Hebrew Bible (Oxford University Press, 2013). She is currently writing a book on the incest laws of Leviticus. Johanna can be emailed at: j.stiebert@leeds.ac.uk.

The course coordinator for this paper is Paul Trebilco. He should be contacted for any issues not directly related to the teaching content of the course, or if the lecturer is unavailable. His email is: paul.trebilco@otago.ac.nz

Teaching

The course is taught as an Intensive block course in Dunedin, commencing at 1.00pm on Monday June 29th and concluding at 12.00pm on Friday 3rd July. The venue will be Castle C Seminar Room, University of Otago (see map enclosed).

NOTE: All students are required to attend the Intensive, and will need to arrange their own travel, meals and accommodation.

Resources

• The Course Book and this accompanying Course Outline.

• Readings, some of which are printed in the course book and some of which are available through the library’s Course Reserve


  Students should own a copy of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

• The 'Essential Information' web page

  This Is Important!

  You will find there is a lot of helpful information and resources on the Department’s website. In particular, we require you to check out the section called ‘Essential Student Information’. You’ll find it here: http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/

  This page provides a number of useful resources such as the Study and Style Guide and the Plagiarism Declaration Form you must attach to your assignments. It
supplies detailed information on assessment and student support. In particular, it contains guidance on the topics of plagiarism and deadlines, both of which can incur penalties if not heeded. This also is where you will find instructions for making online discussion posts and submitting assignments electronically if required. So it is very important you make yourself familiar with this material. Our assumption is that you have read it. This page also contains information particularly for our distance students regarding audioconferences and teaching days.

- The Department’s *Study and Style Guide*, which is available here: http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology/study/studentresources/

- The handbook: *Distance Learning Information and Support 2015* which can be downloaded from this page: http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/distance_study/

- Blackboard, the University's online teaching and learning tool. Please see the 'Essential Information' website for guidance on using Blackboard.

**Assessment**

- The course is assessed by a written report on a commandment in the wider Torah context, worth 20% of the final mark and

- two essays, worth 40% each. There is **no final examination** for this paper.

**Course Structure**

This course is divided into six modules:

**Module 1:** Introduction: The Text of the Ten Commandments

**Module 2:** The Context of the Ten Commandments

**Module 3:** The Social World of the Ten Commandments

**Module 4:** God and the Ten Commandments

**Module 5:** Human Interactions and the Ten Commandments

**Module 6:** Afterlives of the Ten Commandments
Intensive Course

Attendance at the one-week intensive course in Dunedin from June 29 to July 3 2015 is a compulsory component of this course. The venue will be Castle C, University of Otago (please see the map included with your course book). The intensive course will take place according to the following schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>PREPARATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 1.00-4.00</td>
<td>Module 1: Introduction and the Text of the Ten Commandments</td>
<td>Readings 1.0, 1.1, 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 9.00-12.00</td>
<td>Module 2a: The Context of the Ten Commandments</td>
<td>Readings: 2.1, 2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 1.00-4.00</td>
<td>Module 2b: Genesis Freud and Torah</td>
<td>Readings: 2.3, 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 9.00-12.00</td>
<td>Module 3a: The Social World of the Ten Commandments</td>
<td>Readings: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 1.00-4.00</td>
<td>Module 3b: The Social World – Women</td>
<td>Readings 3.4, 3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 9.00-12.00</td>
<td>Module 4: God and the Ten Commandments</td>
<td>Readings: 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 1.00-4.00</td>
<td>Module 5: Human Interaction and the Ten Commandments</td>
<td>Readings: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 9.00-12.00</td>
<td>Module 6: Afterlives of the Ten Commandments and Conclusions</td>
<td>Readings: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5</td>
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In order to prepare for the intensive course, it would be helpful to familiarize yourself with the Course Book, and, if possible, to read Readings 1.0 and 1.1. Also, please note that Reading 5.2 (by Wilma Ann Bailey) is more extensive. Please make a start with this text well ahead of time. Make notes of key points in the readings following the guidance offered in the relevant sections of the Course Book. Readings not available in the Course Book will be online or can be accessed and printed from the Library's electronic Course Reserve list for this paper.

Course Book

The Course Book is divided into two sections:

- First is the Study Guide containing introductory material and references to the essential readings. Each module contains a discrete sub-section. Much of the time will be spent reading and note-making, the rest includes your own reflections and assessment work.

- Second is the Readings section. These readings, which form the basis of each study unit, have been carefully chosen to help you in your reflection on the topic. To achieve the aims of the paper will require a close reading of these selected texts.

Please note that both the Study Guide and Readings Section are posted on Blackboard as PDF files. Individual readings may also be downloaded from the Library's e-reserve system.
**Recommended Text**

It is strongly recommended that you purchase or gain access to:


**Blackboard**

Minimal use of Blackboard will be made in this paper, but it will be necessary to submit assignments through Blackboard.

See the 'Essential Information' web page for advice and guidance on using Blackboard. Please contact the Department or your lecturer as soon as possible if you find you are unable to access course resources.

**Assessment Overview**

All students must complete the three compulsory pieces of assessment (worth 20%, 40% and 40%). Note that there is a slightly different set of essay topics for 200 level and 300 level.

Marks for both essays will be apportioned on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argument and Analysis</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of Reading</td>
<td>10% (demonstrated by means of bibliography and footnoting)</td>
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</tbody>
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Please read the section on Assessment on the 'Essential Information' web page carefully as it contains important guidance on grading, as well as topics such as plagiarism and deadlines, which can incur serious penalties if not followed.

**Submitting Written Work**

All assignments shall be submitted **electronically** via Blackboard by midnight on the due dates notified. For instructions on how to submit your assignments electronically via Blackboard, please refer to the 'Essential Information' web page. Essays should be attached in Word format.

Before you submit your essay, make a backup copy, either in electronic form or on paper, and keep it in a safe place.

*Your written work will be marked and returned to you electronically to your student email address.*
BIBS224 Assignments

Assignment 1

Length: 1500 words
Value: 20% of final mark
Date due: Friday 31 July

Topic: Choose any TWO of the Ten Commandments and describe how they relate to legal material in Exodus–Deuteronomy more widely.

Assignment 2

Length: 3000 words
Value: 40% of final mark
Date due: Wednesday 2nd September

Topic:

EITHER Describe and analyze how Genesis is both distinct from, and in relationship with, the remainder of Torah.

OR How and why does either the Genesis Apocryphon or the Book of Jubilees function as an apologetic for Genesis?

Assignment 3

Length: 3000 words
Value: 40% of final mark
Date due: Friday 2nd October

Topic:

Choose any TWO of the Ten Commandments NOT discussed in Assignment 1 and examine carefully what they reveal about the social context from which they emerged.

BIBS324 Assignments

Assignment 1

Length: 1500 words
Value: 20% of final mark
Date due: Friday 31 July
Choose any TWO of the first four Ten Commandments and describe how they relate to material in Exodus–Deuteronomy more widely.

Assignment 2

Length: 3000 words
Value: 40% of final mark
Date due: Wednesday 2 September

Topic:

EITHER How and why does either the Genesis Apocryphon or the Book of Jubilees function as an apologetic for Genesis?

OR What is reception criticism? Demonstrate and account for the significant presence of the Ten Commandments in 20th century film.

OR Describe and account for the different role and status of the Ten Commandments in Judaism and Christianity.

Assignment 3

Length: 3000 words
Value: 40% of final mark
Date due: Friday 2nd October

Topic: Choose any TWO of the latter six Ten Commandments and examine carefully what they reveal about the social and ideological context from which they emerged.

Library Resources and Student Support

Please see the 'Essential Information' page and the Distance Learning Handbook 2015 for information on Distance library services and links to support services at Otago University, including learning support, disability support, and support for Maori and Pacific Island students.

For distance learning queries please contact:

Katherine Rae, Administrative Assistant
Email: katherine.rae@otago.ac.nz  Phone: 03 479 8639 (Hours: 9 am - 2 pm)

It is recommended that you contact the Department as soon as possible if you have problems in accessing Distance learning resources or have not received a Course Book. Please also ensure that you check your University email regularly for updates and announcements.