

Hero, Savior, Marauder, Murderer: The Many Faces of King David in the Hebrew Bible

B486

McCormick Theological Seminary

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Summer 2019
MWF May 13–24
9:00–3:30 (half-hour break for lunch)

Course Description and Goals

This course will investigate the portrayal of King David in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). We will compare the presentations in Samuel-Kings, Chronicles, the prophets, and Psalms to understand the significance of David for different authors across time. We will also consider the contribution of archaeology to our knowledge of David in history. Throughout, we will return to the questions, who is the “real” David, who gets to decide, and why do we want to know? As we consider David’s theological significance, historical background, and role in contemporary thought and rhetoric, we will aim to become more sensitive and responsible interpreters of the Bible.

By the end of this course, students will have had the opportunity to

- think critically—by practicing exegesis of biblical texts and engagement with modern scholarship
- communicate effectively—through class discussions, written assignments, and a final presentation
- exhibit cross-cultural competence—by listening to their fellow students and to the ancient authors of the Bible

This is an intensive course. We will meet for six hours (with a half-hour lunch break) three days a week for two weeks. Because of the condensed schedule, attendance at all six days of class is required except in cases of medical or family emergency.

Requirements

Preparation and participation: you will read all assigned texts slowly and carefully and come to class ready to engage in thoughtful discussion with your classmates. Use of inclusive language (e.g., “humankind” instead of “mankind”) is expected in discussions. Biblical texts should be read in *The Jewish Study Bible* along with the notes. Other texts will be made available through Moodle.

Response papers: you will write a short paper (roughly 300 words, or about one page double-spaced) responding to the readings before each class. These papers must be uploaded to Moodle by **9 pm on the day before class**. The purpose of the papers is to give you a chance to process the readings and prepare to discuss them in class. The papers are also an opportunity to practice communicating your ideas in writing. They should be clear and well-considered. See guidelines below.

Final paper: for the final paper (roughly 12 pages double-spaced) you will compare and contrast portrayals of David in two passages and propose a way to use this material in the context of ministry. A full description of the assignment will be handed out on the first day of class. Drafts of each analysis must be submitted on **Friday, May 17 and Wednesday, May 22**. These drafts will receive written feedback but no grade. The final paper is due **Friday, June 7**.

Presentation: at our last class meeting, you will give a 10–15 minute presentation of your final paper for your fellow students.

Evaluation

Preparation and participation: 25%

Response papers: 25%

Presentation: 10%

Final paper: 40%

Response papers will be evaluated on how well you have met the requirements laid out in the guidelines; see last page.

The final paper and presentation will be evaluated on how well you do the following things:

- state your claim about how David is presented in your two passages
- analyze your passages persuasively
- point to specific verses that support your analysis and explain *how* they support your analysis
- relate your analysis of each passage to your claim about David
- propose a clear and specific way to use the conflicting portrayals of David in the context of ministry
- have a clear structure with an introduction and conclusion
- cite primary and (if applicable) secondary sources accurately, following the guidelines in Turabian (9th ed.)*
- avoid errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation*

*not applicable for presentation

Required text

The Jewish Study Bible, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler. Second edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. (The first edition is an acceptable alternative.) ISBN 978-0199978465; \$27.18 on Amazon

Technology policy

Computers are permitted for limited use during class provided they are not a distraction to you or to your classmates.

Course Schedule

Monday, May 13: Introduction and orientation

Reading: Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, “Memories of a Golden Age?” (Ch. 5 of *The Bible Unearthed*), available on Moodle; TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS

Wednesday, May 15: David in Psalms and prophecy

Reading: Pss 3, 18, 34, 59, 93, 98, 122, 124; Isa 11; Jer 23:1–8; 33; Ezek 37

Friday, May 17: David’s early days

Reading: 1 Sam 13–20, 25, 27–29; James Harding, Introduction to *The Love of David and Jonathan : Ideology, Text, Reception*, available on Moodle
Due: draft of an analysis of the first passage for your final paper

Monday, May 20: David’s successes

Reading: 1 Sam 30; 2 Sam 1–8

Wednesday, May 22: David’s troubles

Reading: 2 Sam 11–19:1; 1 Chr 20:1–5; Lillian Klein, “Bathsheba Revealed” (from *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings*, ed. Athalya Brenner), available on Moodle
Due: draft of an analysis of the second passage for your final paper

Friday, May 24: The Temple and the death of David; student presentations and conclusion

Reading: 1 Kgs 2:1–12; 5–6; 1 Chr 22–23, 28–29

Guidelines for response papers

The response papers are intended to be a tool to help you read actively—by which I mean absorbing the reading and engaging with it—and to help you prepare for class discussion. They are also a chance to practice writing. They should be clear, easy to follow, spell-checked, and proofread. Response papers should be roughly 300 words. They are due by 9 pm on the day before class meets.

Response papers must include the following:

1. A brief summary of the assigned reading (no more than two to three sentences)
2. If the reading assignment includes a modern text, a statement of the author's thesis/claim (for example, "Finkelstein and Silberman argue that _____"), and a description of the evidence that supports the thesis/claim

In addition, you must write about **two** of the following things:

1. something that was surprising or unexpected in the reading and why
2. something that bothered you in the reading and why
3. something that excited or inspired you in the reading and why
4. how the reading compares to what you knew about David before the course
5. how the reading compares to something else we've read in the course (you will only be able to write on this after a few weeks of reading)

Be sure to give citations for any passages you talk about (for example, 1 Sam 1:1–4, or Finkelstein and Silberman p. 50).