

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: **Fall 2010**
Instructor: Joshua Ezra Burns
Course #: THEO 2010
Sections: 101, 102, and 104
Course Title: **Hebrew Scriptures: Old Testament Selected Books**
Course Sub-Title: Biblical Literature of the Persian Period

Description:

This purpose of this course is to introduce students to the portions of the Hebrew Bible written during the age of Persian dominion over Israel and Judah, ca. 539-330 B.C.E. The Persian period witnessed a renaissance of Israelite culture following the dark years of the Babylonian Exile culminating in the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple and the restoration of its sacrificial service. Along with this development evolved a number of new beliefs and institutions that would become central to formative Judaism and Christianity, including the centralization of Jewish worship, the operation of an independent priesthood, and the doctrine of the Messiah. Considering these and other key theological developments through the literary and historical lenses of the biblical text, students will learn how the realities of Jewish life under Persian rule helped shape the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

The course will follow a seminar format, so regular attendance and preparation of reading assignments will be expected of all students. Course grades will be determined on the basis of class participation, a research paper approximately 8-10 pages in length, and two examinations at the middle and at the end of the term. The course is designed for students with little or no background in the study of the Hebrew Scriptures, although students with prior knowledge of the subject material are encouraged to attend as well. All reading assignments will be in English.