UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Fall 2011
Instructor: Joshua Burns
Course #: THEO 2010
Sections: 101 (Majors), 102, and 901 (Honors)
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 theological tradition.

The course will follow a lecture format. Course grades will be determined on the basis of attendance, class participation, a research paper approximately 6-8 pages in length, and two examinations at the middle and at the end of the term.