UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Spring 2011
Instructor: Joshua Ezra Burns
Course #: THEO 2010
Section: 102
Course Title: Hebrew Scriptures: Old Testament Selected Books
Course Sub-Title: Biblical Literature of the Hellenistic Period

Description:

This purpose of this course is to introduce students to the portions of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament written during the age of Greek or Hellenistic influence over Judaea, ca. the fourth through second century B.C.E. The Hellenistic period witnessed dramatic changes in the culture of the Jews following their renaissance under the Persians. The initial Jewish encounter with the west helped spur developments of utmost importance to formative Judaism and Christianity, developments which include the emergence of philosophical theology, the birth of the apocalyptic tradition, and the canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures. Considering these and other key developments through the literary and historical lenses of the biblical text, students will learn how the realities of Jewish life and thought in the Hellenistic world 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.