

Department of Theology

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: **Fall 2008**
Instructor: Dr. John D. Zemler
Course #: Theo 102
Section: 1001
Course Title: Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament Selected Books
Course Sub-Title: The Pentateuch

Description:

In the Jewish faith the first five books of the Hebrew Bible are known as the Torah. In the Christian faith the first five books of the Old Testament are generally known as the Pentateuch. In each tradition they contain the same material. These books contain stories which are formative for Judaism, Christianity and, in at least one case, Islam. We will explore and discover the historical aspects of each book of the Pentateuch, e.g., authorship, dating, and composition theories. Beyond this, we will examine how the stories were interpreted in the times of Second Temple Judaism, the Talmud, and in early Christianity. Additionally, how the scrolls are employed in Christian liturgy and prayer will be one of our topics. The text will also be examined from the perspective of biblical folklore, poetics, and intertextuality.

Required texts:

- 1. *Saint Mary's College Study Bible: New American Bible*, ISBN = 0884899071.
This Bible includes several articles and charts we will use and test from.
- 2. James L. Kugel, *The Bible As It Was*, ISBN = 0674069412
- 3. There will probably be one or two more texts required for this course